LSE
MIGRATION STUDIES UNIT

Migration Studies Unit Working Papers

No. 2010/07

Towards a Theory of "Skilled Diasporic Citizenship": Tertiary-Educated Chinese-Malaysians in Singapore as Citizens, Diasporas, and Transnational Migrants Negotiating Citizenship and Migration Decisions

Sin Yee Koh

ABSTRACT

This essay examines how the cases of tertiary-educated Chinese-Malaysians who are/were Singapore permanent residents and/or citizens inform a grounded theory of "skilled diasporic citizenship". By connecting two previously unlinked themes of "skilled diaspora" and "citizenship", I argue for a critical analysis of assumptions underlying notions of (diasporic) citizenship, identity, loyalty and belonging that have been left unquestioned with respect to skilled diasporas. I hypothesise that skilled diasporas' negotiations of such concepts (through reciprocal relationships with their sending and receiving states) inform their subsequent citizenship and migration decisions. The cases further complicate notions of "citizen", "diaspora" and "transnational migrant" in the context of Malaysia and Singapore's interlinked colonial and contemporary trajectories. This paper contributes by bringing forth the "human face of global mobility" (Favell et al., 2006).

Table of Contents

Tables and Figures

Abstract

This dissertation examines how the cases of tertiary-educated Chinese-Malaysians who are/were Singapore permanent residents and/or citizens inform a grounded theory of "skilled diasporic citizenship". By connecting two previously unlinked themes of "skilled diaspora" and "citizenship", I argue for a critical analysis of assumptions underlying notions of (diasporic) citizenship, identity, loyalty and belonging that have been left unquestioned with respect to skilled diasporas. I hypothesise that skilled diasporas' negotiations of such concepts (through reciprocal relationships with their sending and receiving states) inform their subsequent citizenship and migration decisions. The cases further complicate notions of "citizen", "diaspora" and "transnational migrant" in the context of Malaysia and Singapore's interlinked colonial and contemporary trajectories. This dissertation contributes by bringing forth the "human face of global mobility" (Favell et al., 2006).

Acknowledgements

Acronyms and Glossary

1. Introduction

Theoretical Context

Globalisation and the age of migration (Castles & Miller, 2003) have brought about challenges to the notion of "citizenship". These challenges can be understood through three domains. Firstly, *geographies* of citizenship – de-territorialised spaces, scales and boundaries (cities, regions, nation-states, global, transnational); secondly, *relationships* of citizenship – complexities in loyalty and social contract between citizenship-subjects and institutions conferring citizenships; and thirdly, *content* of citizenship – differentiation and/or expansion of rights (social, political, democratic).

At the same time, globalisation and increased ease of mobility have catalysed international skilled migration. Some have referred to this as "skilled diaspora" (Brinkerhoff, 2006), and positioned this vis-à-vis the migration-development nexus. Debates have shifted from pessimistic (brain-drain, brain waste) to positive (brain-circulation). Emphases are now placed on roles of (1) sending states in engaging their diasporas and facilitating their contributions; and (2) diasporas in initiating and participating in homeland-development projects[1]. For skilled diasporas, these take the form of diaspora networks (Kutznetsov, 2006), knowledge transfers and return migration (Iredale et al., 2003).

However, attention has been focused on economics of skilled diasporas from demand-side perspectives (remittances, competition for human capital). Consequently, there is a lack of critical examination of "citizenship" in these debates[2]. Firstly, underlying assumptions that skilled diasporas, by virtue of being citizens of sending states, are *obliged* or *genuinely desire* to contribute to development at home and/or return. Secondly, a lack of questioning of terms such as "citizens" and "nationals" in skilled diasporas' relationships to sending and receiving states. Thirdly, assumptions that diasporas are a *unified collective*, hence ignoring the significance of diversities within – where diversities are acknowledged, they often refer to heterogeneity of diaspora organisations (e.g. Kuznetsov 2006) or types of skilled diaspora (e.g. students, professionals, scientists), and not individuals. Fourthly, a lack of examination of these issues from *diasporas' perspectives* (i.e. supply-side).

---

[1] A third emphasis is on receiving states' responsibilities in tackling global inequalities as a result of skilled migration from developing to developed countries (Kapur & McHale, 2005).
[2] An exception is Liu (2009). Leitner and Erhkamp's (2006) study does so, but not specifically on skilled diasporas.

Empirical Context

Malaysia's New Economic Policy (NEP) and its legacies have created a push for emigration, especially of the Chinese-Malaysians[3] (Cartier, 2003; Freedman, 2001; Hing, 2000; Lam & Yeoh, 2004; Nonini, 2008; Yow, 2007). As Malaysia's largest "diaspora" (see Chapter 3), many Chinese-Malaysians in Singapore have taken up Singapore permanent residence (PR) or citizenship. However, most continue to consider themselves Malaysians, and Malaysia as "home" (Lam & Yeoh, 2004). Although some feel strongly about retaining their Malaysian citizenship and harbour an "imagined return" (Long & Oxfeld, 2004), many have not actually done so, and do not have real course of actions in contributing towards the development of "homeland" in terms of existing interpretations of "diaspora".

In March 2010, the Malaysian government announced the New Economic Model (NEM), aimed at achieving "high income", "sustainability", and "inclusiveness" with benefits for the *rakyat* (Abdul Razak, 2010). One of the key strategies is to revive its Brain Gain Malaysia (BGM) programme[4] by attracting the "Malaysian diaspora" home (Yakcop, 2009). However, this specifically targets "Researchers, Scientist, Engineers and Technopreneurs (RSETs)" (MOSTI, 2010), effectively ignoring the increasing exodus of tertiary-educated emigrants who may not be RSETs (*Table 1*).

Table 1 : Number of Malaysian migrants with tertiary education in OECD countries

Resident in	1990	2000	Increase (%)
Australia	34,716	39,601	14.07
Canada	8,480	12,170	43.51
New Zealand	4,719	5,157	9.28
United Kingdom	9,812	16,190	65.00
United States	12,315	24,695	100.53
Others	2,607	4,508	72.92
Total	**72,649**	**102,321**	**40.84**

Source: Docquier & Marfouk (2004)

---

[3] "Chinese-Malaysians" here refers to people of Chinese ethnicity born in Malaysia, or of Malaysian parents. For the latter, Malaysian citizenship is accorded by descent.

[4] Interestingly, the Malaysian High Commission in UK is compiling a database of "Malaysian experts and professionals residing in the UK" (Yahaya, 2010) under the BGM. However, "there is no specific offer or conditions under [the] programme as it would be based on mutually agreed principles on a case by case basis" (ibid.).

At the same time, amidst recent concerns on the increasing numbers of immigrants, PRs and naturalised citizens, the Singapore government has shifted its stand from open (skilled) immigration and naturalisation towards "ensuring quality and assimilability" (Wong, 2010:3). This will be implemented by moderating "the inflow of … foreign workforce over time" (ibid.), tightening the PR/citizen assessment framework (ibid.:4), and establishing "a greater distinction in privileges and benefits between Singaporeans and PRs in the areas of education and healthcare" (ibid.:5). In addition, the National Integration Council was set-up in 2009 to "promote mutual trust and understanding, and foster a common sense of belonging to Singapore" (MCYS, 2009).

This Study

These recent developments present a unique and timely opportunity to investigate skilled diasporas' politics of citizenship, identity and belonging in the Malaysia-Singapore context. The cases of tertiary-educated Chinese-Malaysians who are/were Singapore PR or citizens challenge notions of "citizens", "diasporas" and "transnational migrants". Caught in between two "umbilically linked" (Lam & Yeoh, 2004:142) countries, I argue that their negotiations of citizenship, identity, home and belonging, shaped simultaneously by institutional and everyday life processes, subsequently inform their citizenship and migration decisions. In other words, these decisions are not purely based on cost-benefit balances as economic-based migration theories suggest.

Although scholars calling for research grounded in everyday lives do so with respect to transnational migration (e.g. Conradson & Latham, 2005; Portes et al., 1999), I see this as equally relevant to (skilled) diaspora studies, especially in relation to issues of identity and belonging (see Walsh, 2006). Using Laguerre's (1997) and Siu's (2005) "diasporic citizenship" (see Chapter 2) as starting points, I propose a grounded theory of "skilled diasporic citizenship" as a conceptual and methodological tool to understand skilled diasporas' reciprocal relationships to both sending and receiving states in the Malaysia-Singapore context. The main research question is:

> **To what extent can the cases of tertiary-educated Chinese-Malaysians in Singapore inform a theory of "skilled diasporic citizenship"?**

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews relevant theoretical background. Chapter 3 provides empirical background and discusses research methods and limitations. Chapter 4 and 5 analyses empirical findings. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the research, highlighting theoretical and policy implications, and suggestions on improvements.

2. Theoretical Framework

Diasporic Meanings

"Diaspora" was originally used in reference to the Jewish dispersal from Jerusalem (Vertovec, 2009). Hence, the term has connotations of exile, displacement, loss, alienation and a yearning for return to the homeland (Vertovec, 1997). However, there has since been an expansion of interpretations beyond its original context (Braziel, 2008; Braziel et al., 2003; Cohen, 2008; Safran, 1991). "Diaspora" has been used to refer to a group, an identity, a process, a movement across space or border, and a state of mind. In reference to a group of people, it has been used to describe practically any "deterritorialised" or "transnational" community (Vertovec, 1997), even those uprooted for political or economic reasons (Knight, 2002).

Here, Vertovec's (1997) classification of "diaspora" as (1) *social form*; (2) *type of consciousness*; and (3) *mode of cultural production* is particularly useful in categorising and understanding the diversity of what we can mean when we use the term. This is important as I want to distinguish from using "diaspora" only in specific reference to a socio-political group, which may not be relevant to all skilled diasporas.

In viewing "diaspora" as *social form*, Vertovec includes (1) all specific kinds of social relationships (i.e. any community) bonded by a shared history and geography; (2) tensions of political affiliations resulting in divided loyalties between "home" and host country; and (3) all kinds of economic strategies. This effectively covers "diaspora" as any social construct – a group, an identity, a space, a process. However, these social constructs exist in a "triadic relationship" between (1) the globally-dispersed community with a shared belonging; (2) host contexts where the group reside in; and (3) "home" contexts where the group or their ancestors originated from (Sheffer, 1986; Safran, 1991). An example is an ethnic group forced to live outside its ancestral home, but has been able to maintain social connections to that home (Knight, 2002).

"Diaspora" as *type of consciousness* includes an "awareness of multi-locality" (Vertovec, 1997:282) and paradoxical duality. Hence, diasporas are constantly aware of a state of being "here" and "there", and of not fully belonging to either contexts. It is here that "diaspora" overlaps with "transnational migrant" – members of both groups live a life of

dual or multiple belonging – although these can be of different degrees of embeddedness and attachment. Safran (2004), for example, emphasises that being in a diaspora entails a *struggle* of being physically in one place, yet psychologically yearning for another. Transnational migrants, on the other hand, may maintain "multi-stranded social relations" (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995:48) across host and origin societies without necessarily yearning for either.

"Diaspora" as *mode of cultural production* sees the concept as a *process* of on-going social construction (Vertovec, 1997). Here, we are reminded of Hall's (1990, 1991a, 1991b) argument of identity being constantly in flux and never fixed, and that differences in identities are produced through *relational* processes. One way of establishing diasporic identities is through social construction of a collective memory rather than from an actual shared territory (Gilroy, 1999). Others include Anderson's (2006) "imagined communities" and Cohen's (1985) "symbolic construction of community" – the former refers to members of national communities (who may never meet in person) sharing an imagined membership and a nationalistic/patriotic allegiance, while the latter refers to how a community constructs its existence through symbols and boundaries. These shared symbols, however, may be ascribed different meanings by individual members of the community.

Diasporic Makings

Having mapped out what "diaspora" *can mean*, I move on to unpick what *makes* a "diaspora". Based on the Jewish diasporic experience, Safran (1991) defines "diaspora" as a group with the following characteristics: (1) involuntary dispersal from an original homeland; (2) a collective identity; (3) a sense of alienation; (4) belief that the homeland is the "ideal home"; (5) a sense of calling for restoration of the homeland; and (6) a continued relationship with the homeland.

Using these as starting points, Clifford (1994) and Cohen (1996) argue for the need to transcend beyond viewing "diaspora" as being victimised. Cohen (2008) follows this thought and (1) enlarges the definition of "diaspora" beyond limiting it to a traumatic origin; (2) suggests that the homeland could be imagined or constructed; and (3) dismisses the assumption that diasporas must experience a sense of alienation and loss. In other words, Cohen effectively disassociates "diaspora" from its original negative connotations: firstly, that it could emerge from non-victimised voluntary motivation; secondly, that it could lead to

creation of a common goal; and thirdly, that the diasporic experience could be positive, even possibly contributing to the host society.

Similarly, Braziel sees diasporas as "global capitalist economic formations" (2008:26). Her view echoes Cohen's (2008) in that diasporas could arise from positive (economic) motivations, and that members of the diaspora are active agents contributing to the host society. However, she underlines the importance of diasporic remittances, suggesting that not all economic migrants can be considered diasporas[5]. It is here that I disagree with her – using Vertovec's (1997) classifications, a skilled transnational migrant can be considered a diaspora if, for example, he/she experiences diasporic consciousness. Hence, whether he/she sends remittances or not is a *performance* issue, and not a *definition* issue.

Contrary to these departures from negative connotations of historic diasporas, Ang (2007) points out that the concept of "trauma" is still very much relevant to contemporary diasporas, such as discrimination faced at the host society. On the other hand, Parreñas and Siu (2007) suggest that some migrants choose diasporic lives as a strategy to facilitate their immigrant experiences. For them, being in a diaspora means "reformulating one's minoritized position by asserting one's full belonging elsewhere" (ibid:13). In other words, a diasporic existence might have been caused by external factors, but it is being continually perpetuated by *choice*, and more importantly, a *conscious emphasis on belonging elsewhere*. This dovetails Sheffer's observation of "the emergence of new diasporas as a result of migrants' autonomous decisions" (1995:17) rather than through forces "from above" (Guarnizo & Smith, 1998).

It is apparent that there has been a shift from viewing diasporas as being victimised and forced to disperse from their original homelands, towards increasing *agency* and *choice*. In other words, diasporas can be *self-identified* and *self-propagating*. However, some basic criterion remain – diasporas (1) reside in a location away from "home"; (2) possess or choose an awareness of not belonging to the socio-cultural context of the current or future location anywhere apart from "home"; and consequently (3) nurtures a constant (real or imaginary) yearning for return or for "home". How each of these criteria is formed, shaped and propagated can then be understood from Vertovec's (1997) classifications of three diasporic meanings.

---

[5] Braziel uses the term "diasporic workers" instead of labour migrants.

Diasporic Belongings and Loyalties

Belonging … chimes with commitment, loyalty and common purpose.

Crowley (1998:18)

Belonging, loyalty and sense of attachment are not parts of a zero-sum game based on a single place.

Vertovec (2009:78)

As diasporas are typified by the notion of not fully-belonging "here" or "there", this brings complications to their loyalties. Referring to ethno-national diasporas, Sheffer (2002) identifies the interplay of seven factors determining their patterns of loyalties: (1) the stage of historical development the group is going through; (2) the relative weight of factors determining their diasporic identity; (3) the depth of commitment to its diasporic identity, including connections to its homeland and other communities of the same origin; (4) strategies of daily lives in relation to host communities; (5) degree of organisation; (6) presence and significance of transnational networks and activities; and (7) socio-political environments of host societies and the international arena. Thus, diasporic belongings and loyalties are resultant of a *web of reactionary and iterative processes*, formed between diasporas' formal and informal relationships with their sending and receiving states and communities.

On the other hand, skilled diasporas, conceived as transnational migrants, could practice "citizenship of convenience" (Vertovec, 2009:92) by holding two or more passports to facilitate their transnational lifestyles. In taking-up more than one nationality, they demonstrate "an ambivalent political identity, multiple political identities or even an apolitical identity" (Koslowski, 2001:34). In other words, their multiple nationalities and citizenship could be a strategy in capitalising their privileged transnational (and diasporic) lifestyles. This does not necessarily compromise or contest their political allegiance and/or loyalties. However, this challenges normative understanding of citizenship, especially in relation to political membership, rights and loyalties.

Citizenship

"Citizenship" has been described with terms such as transnational (Bauböck, 1995), postnational (Soysal, 1994), cosmopolitan (Held, 1995; Delanty, 2000), multi-layered (Yuval-Davis, 2006), multicultural (Kymlicka, 1995) and differentiated (Young, 1989). Although different terms have been used, scholars across disciplines agree that traditional understanding of "citizenship" exemplified in Marshall's (1950) work (citizenship as status, membership and rights) can no longer capture the multi-scale and multi-dimensions of "citizenship" today (e.g. Castles & Davidson, 2000). In other words, citizenship, identity and belonging can no longer be understood as a direct, exclusive, equal and absolute contract between individuals and the nation-state.

A few contributions warrant attention as they highlight *approaches* to "citizenship" pertinent to this research. First, Ong's "cultural citizenship" emphasises the "process of self-making and being-made in relation to nation-states and transnational processes" (1996:737). This approach highlights the *reciprocal process* of citizenship meanings through citizen-subjects' reactions to processes "from above". Although Ong's conceptualisation pertains to ethnic minority immigrants' negotiations of cultural citizenship in host societies, I use her concept as an illustration of how skilled diasporas' citizenship and identities could be constructed through *reactions to institutional processes*.

Second, Ong's (1999) "flexible citizenship" informs how citizenship acquisition could be a strategy for transnational elites in propagating their transnational projects. Mavroudi's "pragmatic citizenship" suggests a similar interpretation, but goes one step further in highlighting the "negotiation of dual or multiple attachments to place and territory" (2008:310) that are being challenged by "de/re-territorialisation" (ibid.) processes in themselves. Both authors' ideas combined, inform how citizenship acquisition can (1) be a *strategic choice*; and (2) propagate further shifts in skilled diasporas' belongings and interpretations of their citizenships.

Third, Faist's (2000) "dimensions of citizenship" and "realms of membership" are important in distilling, contrasting and linking different aspects of "citizenship". However, his discussion is limited to assimilation and integration into receiving contexts, and hence comes from a normative perspective. Although he brings attention to the co-existence and tensions of *contractual* and *societal recognition* of "citizenship", he fails to address (1) the

emotional dimension of citizenship; and (2) how his framework can be applied to emigrants and their sending contexts.

Ho's (2009) "emotional citizenship" and her (2008) critique of citizenship studies are particularly useful in this respect. She calls for (1) a more comprehensive investigation of emotions experienced by migrants, particularly those "ordinarily experienced emotions in everyday settings" (ibid.:6); (2) more attention on sending state experiences instead of privileging receiving state perspectives; and (3) a focus on experiences outside Anglo-American and European contexts. All three suggestions underlie my concerns and objectives for this dissertation.

These approaches to "citizenship" highlight key points relevant to this research. Firstly, the *content* and *meanings* of citizenship can differ depending on whose perspective this is taken from. Secondly, citizenship negotiations are part of a continual and reciprocal *process*. Thirdly, *practices* of citizenship can be highly dependent on individual agency (e.g. following emotional meanings ascribed to citizenship, or citizenship as a strategy).

Diasporic Citizenship

Citizenship implies a sense of belonging. Hence diasporic citizenship implies belonging to at least two states. One can see that the intensity of one's relations to both states may not be equal. ... It is the politics of simultaneity that is the fundamental characteristics of diasporic citizenship.

Laguerre (1997:188)

Diasporic citizenship ... describes the processes by which diasporic subjects experience and practice cultural and social belonging amid shifting geopolitical circumstances and webs of transnational relations.

Siu (2005:5)

Laguerre (1997) uses "diasporic citizenship" to trace the politics of citizenship and belonging of the Haitian diaspora in America. Siu's (2005) "diasporic citizenship" examines cultural belonging as an on-going process interacting with geopolitics at both national and international scales. While Siu emphasises (1) the *reciprocal process* and (2) *cultural* belonging of "diasporic citizenship", Laguerre emphasises the *tensions* between diasporas' "personal agendas" (1997:12) and their "national and transnational outlook, attachment, and

commitment" (ibid.:13). Thus, they depart from each other in their approaches and differential emphases on the same theme.

While both perspectives are useful in setting-up a framework for studying relationships between "citizenship" and "diasporic belongings", theirs are derived from studies of diasporas in receiving contexts that are historically, ethnically, culturally, geographically and politically distinct from sending contexts (Haiti versus America; China and Taiwan versus Panama). The cases of Chinese-Malaysians in Singapore challenge this as (1) Malaysia and Singapore are "geographically adjacent countries sharing a common political history" (Lam & Yeoh, 2004:145); and (2) the Chinese are a minority in Malaysia (sending state), but a majority in Singapore (receiving state) (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1: Ethnic composition (Malaysia and Singapore)

Malaysia
(2004 estimates)

Singapore
(2000 census)
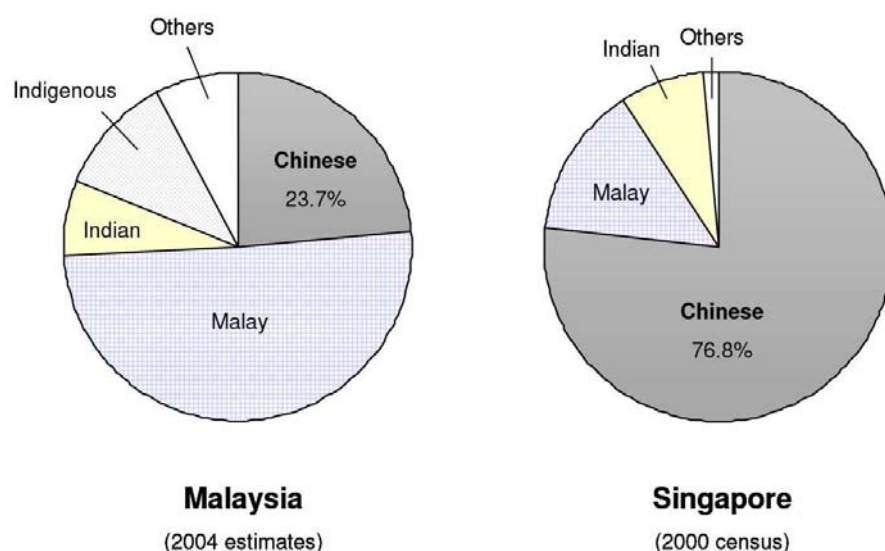
Source: CIA (2010a, 2010b)

Also, theirs highlight negotiations at a collective community scale[6], while I propose an examination at the individual scale. This is possible for two reasons. Firstly, a common cultural or community identity and belonging is not necessarily crucial to the existence of tertiary-educated migrants, as compared to ethnic-based diasporic communities such as Laguerre's (1997) Haitian diaspora and Siu's (2005) Chinese diaspora. Secondly, this approach does not necessarily mean that the individual does not conceptualise belonging to his/her communities.

---

[6] However, Laguerre mentions the need to consider the perspective of the citizen-subject in his conclusion.

In other words, my approach differs from theirs in *methodological* and *epistemological* terms – I commence the enquiry from each individual's perspective, and explore how their *conceptualisations* and *practices* of citizenship identity and belonging are part of an iterative process of relationships with their sending and receiving states. "Community" is embedded within, and could form a crucial dimension for skilled diasporas. Here, I refer to "community" in the broadest sense, encapsulating families, ethnicities, nationalities, etc.

Grounding the Individual

My choice of focusing on the individual is also in response to Favell et al.'s (2006) call to examine "the human face of global mobility" at the micro-level. I agree with their argument (specifically referring to skilled migration) that (1) the individual perspective has been largely neglected, especially in empirical studies; and (2) grounded studies of human agency of skilled migrants are crucial because their "mobility is linked more to choice, professional career and educational opportunities" (ibid.:4). Linking this to overlapping debates of citizenship and skilled diasporas, I further argue that choice is *contested* and *informed* by "skilled diasporic citizenship".

Bauböck (1998) argue that migration studies have developed along two tangents that seldom meet – the nation-state perspectives versus the migrants' perspectives. He further highlights the need to "relate the spatial structure of nation-states and the time perspectives of migrants' biographies and communities to each other" (ibid.:48). I agree with this argument, and suggest using "skilled diasporic citizenship" as a tool to investigate reciprocal relationships between skilled diasporas and their sending and receiving states, specifically in relation to their citizenship and migration decisions.

Skilled Diasporic Citizenship

Thus, "skilled diasporic citizenship" is a conceptual and methodological tool to examine how the politics of belonging of skilled diasporas in relation to both sending and receiving states exist in tension between the *legal-political*, *socio-cultural*, and *emotional* spheres (*Figure 2*). This constant flux of continual and overlapping process of shifting

identities, belonging and loyalties in turn inform, shape and transpire into skilled diasporas' citizenship and migration decisions.

Figure 2: Theoretical framework
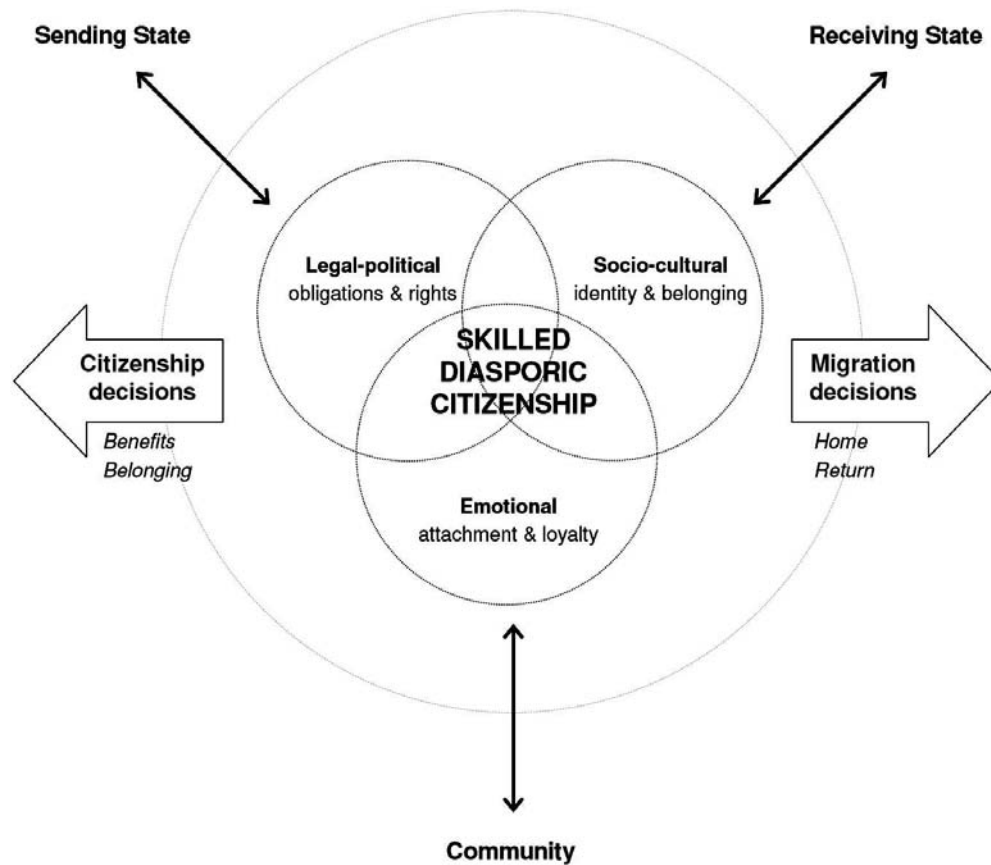
A final clarification on use of terms – "citizenship" is used to encapsulate legal rights and obligations, and more importantly, loyalties and belonging. "Skilled diaspora" is used to mean tertiary-educated migrants. However, I make a conscious departure from restricting this to only the highly-skilled (Malaysia's RSET) for reasons explained earlier.

"Diaspora" has been used interchangeably with "transnational migration" in the literature with respect to simultaneous belonging and cross-national negotiations of migratory experiences. I differentiate the two terms in that the former captures the notion of *not fully belonging* to any one particular context, while the latter suggests *equal, comparable or uncontested belonging* to all contexts. I stress this as "diaspora" captures the *tensions* in politics of multiple belonging where "transnational migration" does not. The term "diasporic" further amplifies the *experience* of these tensions, which in turn complicates negotiations of citizenship and migration decisions.

3. Chinese-Malaysians: Citizens, Diasporas, Transnational Migrants

Background

In Malaysia's context, "citizenship" (in general, and in reference to Chinese-Malaysians) arose from contested beginnings. This needs to be understood from a historical perspective of how the Malaysian nation-state came into being during the last stages of the British colonial period (1945-57), as well as the politics of multiculturalism and pluralism in colonial and postcolonial Malaysia.

Prior to Malaysia's independence, the British government had intended to accord equal citizenship on the basis of *jus soli* through its Malayan Union plan (Cheah, 2002). However, strong opposition by the Malay majority resulted in withdrawal of the plan. A "Social Contract" between ethnic-based political parties (UMNO, MCA, MIC) established the principles for "co-operation, partnership and administration" of the new nation-state (ibid.:3). This compromise set the stage for unresolved tensions between the Malays' desire to establish a *Malay* nation-state and non-Malays' claims for rights to the *Malaysia* nation-state.

The ethnic divide between the indigenous Malays versus immigrant Chinese and Indian communities had been further crystallised by European colonial policies of assigning different ethnic groups to specific economic activities (Hefner, 2001; Mariappan, 2002). This resulted in a paradoxical distinction between *bumiputera* (mostly Malays) and non-*bumiputera*. For example, the Malays, the majority ethnic group in terms of absolute numbers and political power, were economically disadvantaged compared to the Chinese who were businessmen and entrepreneurs.

In addition, the multicultural and multiethnic population pose challenges to nation-building (Wang, 2002). "Citizenship" and "national identity" have been conflated and intentionally left ambiguous. This is due to (1) inheritance of "independent states created out of territories under colonial administration" in Southeast Asia (Hill & Lian, 1995:18), where nation-state creation was a relatively quick process without civic struggles for democratic rights and equality (Castles, 2001); and (2) prioritisation of national unity (Cheah, 2002), resulting in a delay in resolving controversies of what "citizenship" entails in Malaysia's multiethnic and multicultural context.

Amounting tensions soon culminated in the racial riots of May 1969. The NEP was introduced in 1970 as an "economic solution to ethnic problems" (Khoo, 1999:133). Specifically, the NEP sought to increase *bumiputera* share of corporate equity from 1.9 percent in 1970 to 30 percent in 1990 (ibid.:135). This meant redistribution of Chinese-Malaysians' wealth to *bumiputera* (Freedman 2001). In addition, the Malays were prioritised in "job allocation, scholarships abroad, university seats" and "larger ownership stakes in Malaysian companies" (ibid.:418).

Hence, "citizenship" has been institutionalised as (1) differentiated ethnic-based rights (Hefner, 2001); and (2) membership to a national community (privileging national identity and multiethnic harmony over equality) in Malaysia's context. The failure of the Malayan Union sealed the Malays' political primacy and pro-Malay policies that have shaped the Malaysian nationality, social and political climate till today (see Cartier, 2003; Cheah, 2002; Daniels, 2005).

(Skilled) Chinese-Malaysian Diaspora

As a result of inequalities and discrimination subjected upon them, Chinese-Malaysians have emigrated as "second wave diasporas" (Cartier, 2003) The typical Chinese-Malaysian emigrant has been "a skilled, highly educated migrant" (ibid.:73) seeking better life opportunities. Another strategy is to convert "family economic capital" into other "deployable capital" (Nonini, 1997:209) such as overseas education for the next generation. These strategies are further facilitated by "Singapore's close geographical proximity, historical and economic ties, and relatively high wages" (Pillai, 1992:25). In addition, Singapore's active recruitment of students[7], skilled and semi-skilled labour from Malaysia presents a strong pull factor for the exodus of Chinese-Malaysians.

Statistics on Malaysian emigration, and in particular skilled Chinese-Malaysian diaspora, are generally not available[8]. Where they are, these are often expressed in vague estimations. For example, the NEM report mentions "[p]erhaps half a million talented Malaysians … live and work outside the country", of which 50% are tertiary-educated (NEAC, 2010:42). It is also estimated that of the 785,000 overseas Malaysians (3.3% of

---

[7] For example, Singapore's Ministry of Education (MOE) offers ASEAN scholarships for secondary, junior college and university studies.
[8] Chinese-Malaysians constitute 70% of those who refused to participate in the current population census (Hong, 2010).

population), about 40% were in Singapore (Mohamad, 2009). Between 2000 to 2006, 16,474 Malaysians gave up their citizenships, of which 87% were Chinese (Palaniappan, 2007).

Singapore publishes statistics on total numbers of Singapore PRs and new citizens, but exact numbers of Malaysians and Chinese-Malaysians are not made available. Requests for such statistics have been refused on the grounds of them being "confidential and sensitive" (Ahmad, 2002). Estimations are that 350,000 Malaysians work in Singapore, with 150,000 commuting from Johor Bahru (Malaysian city at the Malaysia-Singapore border), and the remaining residing in Singapore ("Malaysians in Singapore 'last to be let go'", 2009). This is a drastic increase from estimations in 1990s – 100,000 and 24,000 respectively (Pillai, 1992:25).

Although Lam and Yeoh (2004) acknowledge Chinese-Malaysians' diasporic identity *in Malaysia*, they choose instead to position Chinese-Malaysians as transmigrants *in Singapore*. On the other hand, Chee (2008) conceptualises Chinese-Malaysians in Singapore as a "diasporic community". He argues that despite relative similarities in cultural and historical (colonial) background, Chinese-Malaysians continue to retain their separate identities from Chinese-Singaporeans and maintain "diasporic spaces" in Singapore.

I agree with Chee's conceptualisation, and argue that Lam and Yeoh's (2004) "transmigrants" are effectively (skilled) diasporas. As I have set-out earlier, the term "diaspora" captures the *tensions* in politics of belonging, while "transmigrant" does not. This delicate state of conflict and contradictions is crucial to the research question:

> **How do the cases inform a grounded theory of "skilled diasporic citizenship"?**

Methods and Limitations

In conducting this research, I employed Charmaz's grounded theory, which emphasises "an interpretive portrayal of the studied world" (2006:10) situated in specific contexts. This departs from Glaser and Strauss's (1967) classic grounded theory in its constructivist rather than objectivist approach. This approach is suitable and appropriate as this research (1) explores the nuances embedded in a specific context; (2) seeks to understand respondents' interpretations of concepts and how this transpires into decisions

affecting their everyday lives, and (3) allows my identity as a Chinese-Malaysian and Singapore PR to contribute to the research process.

However, my identity also presents limitations to the research. My own experience necessarily framed the nature of inquiry. Nevertheless, I consciously refrained from imposing preconceived ideas by using respondents' inputs as starting points for questions in in-depth interviews. To remove ambiguities in my understanding of the respondents' narratives, I asked specific and chained questions and encouraged respondents to provide elaborations and examples to their answers. I constantly assured respondents of their anonymity (pseudonyms are used), offered opportunities for questions and suggestions, and addressed concerns whenever they surface[9].

At the same time, respondents opened up to me and shared their insights because we have similar backgrounds and histories. Rapport, a crucial element in qualitative research (Esterberg, 2002), were easily established. Discussions were immediately built upon common understanding. I understood respondents' use of colloquial terms in Malay, Mandarin and other dialects. At the end of each interview, respondents would in turn "interview" me. This presented opportunities for further discussions and helped consolidate my thoughts (see Appendix I for research process).

Respondents were selected through a combination of handpicked and stratified sampling (O'Leary, 2005) based on criteria of: (1) age 25-45; (2) university-educated and professional/skilled workers; and (3) normally resident in Singapore for at least 2 years. Age criterion focuses this research on Chinese-Malaysians who left Malaysia as (1) first generation skilled diaspora for education or work; and (2) second generation skilled diaspora following their Malaysian parents' family migration. The former typically spent at least 15 years growing up in Malaysia, while the latter were either born in Singapore or left Malaysia as infants.

15 self-administered questionnaires (including close and open-ended questions) were distributed as a pre-selection method, and to collate responses for follow-up interviews. 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with selected respondents based on responsiveness and overall representation of diversity (Appendix III).

---

[9] One respondent felt uncomfortable with the research questions, and is not included in this research.

With the exception of 1 face-to-face interview in London, interviews were conducted via instant messaging (msn, skype or facebook) and emails as I was in London and the respondents were in Singapore. This presents limitations due to lack of co-presence (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Firstly, I was unable to observe body language and detect speech nuances. Secondly, responses may not be instantaneous and interactive, even in real-time cases. This limits opportunities for probing reflective moments.

However, conducting the "interviews" remotely also present advantages as concepts discussed often overlap with each other. For example, Andy, a respondent, finds it "difficult and tricky" to discuss these issues in a "live setting". Instead, he finds it easier to have the questions "laid out" as he can "give a consistent picture" of his interpretations.

4. "Skilled Diasporic Citizenship" in Practice

Overview

8 of the 10 respondents are first generation Chinese-Malaysian skilled diaspora who left Malaysia for secondary, junior college or university education at an average age of 15.8 years. An exception is Michael, whose family migrated to New Zealand when he was 15. He came to Singapore at age 32 for work. 2 respondents are second generation skilled diaspora following their Malaysian parents' family migration – Dan left at age 2, while Andy was born in Singapore but retained his Malaysian citizenship.

4 respondents have taken up Singapore citizenship – Dan at age 12, while Tim, Lisa and Joy took theirs after age 30, having first taken-up Singapore PR (SPR). 4 respondents are currently Malaysian citizens and SPR. All 4 took-up SPR between 1-2 years working in Singapore. In addition to being a SPR, Michael is also a New Zealand PR. The remaining 2 respondents previously held SPR – Andy was a SPR by virtue of his parents, but gave this up before he was due to serve National Service (NS)[10], while May's SPR was not renewed after she relocated to London. May is currently a United Kingdom PR.

All respondents are based in Singapore, except for May who has been in London for 8-9 years, and Andy who has "returned" to Malaysia. 6 respondents practised "step migration", with Lisa being most mobile between Malaysia, UK and Singapore. The remaining 4 respondents have migrated once from Malaysia to Singapore.

5 respondents are married – 2 to Chinese-Singaporeans, 2 to Chinese-Malaysians who are SPR, and 1 to a Chinese-Malaysian. 3 of these respondents have a child each – (1) Tim has a Singaporean daughter with his Chinese-Singaporean wife, (2) Joy has a Singaporean son with her Chinese-Malaysian and SPR husband; and (3) Andy has a Malaysian son with his Chinese-Malaysian wife.

---

[10] Male Singaporean citizens are enlisted for 2-2.5 years at age 18 or 19. Male PRs who took-up SPR through their SPR parents are subject to the same requirement.

"Home" and Belonging

<u>Past, Present, Future</u>

Respondents' conceptualisations of meanings of "home" can be differentiated into past, present and future. "Home" in the past refers to "hometown", "childhood years" and "memories of growing up". "Home" in the present is linked to necessities of everyday lives such as "convenience", "safety", "comfortable", and "pursuit of interests". "Home" in the future is linked to "retirement", "settling down" and a "permanent place" for oneself or for one's future generation.

Such conceptualisations enable the respondents to possess multiple homes and juggle differential attachments and belongings to each "home" across time and space simultaneously. For example, John makes a clear distinction between his Singapore home for "work", while Malaysia is for "family and time-off". Tim considers Malaysia "home" because it is a place where he grew up in, and "still holds many memories" for him. Singapore is also considered "home", as he has "gotten used to the way of life", "having spent all [his] adult life in Singapore, got married and [had] a kid".

May makes a clear distinction between her "home" in the UK and in Malaysia:

There is a real difference between the concept of home in the UK and in Malaysia. Home in Malaysia is an ancestral one; it is factual and comes from the fact that I grew up as a kid there and that my parents are still there and the house I grew up in is still 'our house'. Home in the UK is a daily one; and one I am comfortable in my skin to be in.

Similarly, Andy puts this in a clear-cut manner: "I consider myself quite mobile. One is where I used to live and the other is the one where I'm currently live." Joy goes one step further in thinking about "future home" as "where [her] children will be rooted from here on". At the same time, she also alludes to "home in the past": "I don't equate home as a permanent place per [se] but more like "*kampong*", where my roots were and in some sense still are."

<u>Family</u>

At the same time, "home" is also equated to where "family" is. This conceptualisation transcends space and time, as family members continue to reside at

"home" while respondents lived elsewhere. For May, this takes the form of a physical "family house". Others simply think of the presence of family, such as Lisa who claims that her "heart is with [her] family and friends", so "it takes more than just geographical boundaries to define a home", and Paul who thinks about his "extended family at festive times ... when [he] cannot be back".

This conceptualisation of "family" as "home" is significant as it blurs into how respondents think about their sense of attachment and belonging to Malaysia as a country. Lisa identifies this "only insofar as [she] still ha[s] [her] mum and siblings in Malaysia". Otherwise, she no longer feels any sense of belonging to Malaysia. Similarly, Paul identifies his roots to his extended family in Sarawak[11], and emphasises "no sense of belonging [to the] country".

Malaysia versus Singapore

When asked which (Malaysia or Singapore) they consider as "home", responses are varied. Lisa's choice of Singapore as "home" is linked to her having to juggle her daily life and her desire to have friends and family close to her:

> I don't feel that I belong to Malaysia .... Conversely, I feel I belong more to Singapore because I have lived here enough years and make it my home. It is really a combination of things that makes me feel belong. I guess it is how I am able to 'function' as in work and my daily life here rather than having friends and family around, which though is essential, these things are not hemmed in by geographical boundaries.

Convenience of her daily life ultimately wins:

> Like the walkways are nicely paved without a sudden pot hole or loose tile on the pavement jutting out like in KL, the streets are well lit at night which leads to less crime in Singapore. Like the streets are without litter. Like the cabs here don't try to rip you off and things and the drivers are not some dodgy-looking fella asking you to lend them money. Stuff like these. I don't know why it matters but it does. And I find many Singaporeans take it for granted.

Others consider Singapore as "home" because Singapore offers them things unavailable in Malaysia. For Tim, this means amenities and culture to support his

---

[11] See Cheah (2002) for Sarawak state nationalism.

professional and personal interests in classical music and architecture. For John, this means work opportunities, professional challenges and his need to feel financially-comfortable.

On the other hand, Lucy considers Malaysia as "home" and Singapore as a transit place despite having lived equal durations in both. Home is "where the family is", somewhere she "can relate to which is filled with memories". In contrast, Singapore is a temporary base for her next move. This is reinforced by her acute sense of difference from Singaporeans versus her "imagined belonging" to Malaysians:

> *[I] think it's natural that you will tend to stick to people that are similar [to] you either in language or culture[e]. ... coming to Singapore when I was 16 , my opinion on general things have been formed. So that makes it easier to hang out with [people] that share the same views on things, or come from similar background. An example would be - ask most Malaysian[s] and they can probably recall growing up in a house, with neighbours and playing with the neighbours' kids. And the games [you] play at that time would be similar. Although [you] might not stay in the same neighbourhood. If you were to talk to a Singaporean their childhood memory will be different, referring to HDB and different districts ... be it Toa Payoh, Bishan etc and where they played/ hang out etc would be different.*

"Citizenship" and Belonging

<u>Meanings</u>

Respondents' conceptualisations of "citizenship" can be divided into the "pragmatic" and the "emotional". The former see citizenship as equivalent to "passport", "benefits" and "future generation", while the latter link citizenship to "loyalty", "pride" and "patriotism". In many ways, the "emotional" blurs boundaries between "citizenship" as *rights and obligations*, and "citizenship" conflated as *national or ethno-cultural belonging* to a socially- and culturally-constructed national community.

The pragmatists clearly separate citizenship as "benefits" from citizenship as "national belonging". For Joy:

> *Citizenship is more onward-looking, it means how this will change [your] future. It's like when [you] migrate [and] take up the citizenship say in Canada, it's for the future [and] future generation... Do [you] have a sense of belonging in Canada [?] I doubt so ...*

On the other hand, May identifies her emotional Malaysian pride as "a silly kind of pride":

I have no reservations about introducing myself as a Malaysian, even feeling proud about it. When you travel with a bunch of people, you know that you will be searched, or it's difficult to get through immigration because of the Malaysian passport. It's just more difficult, not as easy as a Singapore or US or UK passport. It's a silly kind of pride. I suppose it's birth right, kind of hard to diminish.

Others see "citizenship" as a form of membership, typically associated with positive connotations of progress and success. This is especially obvious for those who have taken-up Singapore citizenship. For Tim, this means being "part of a young, dynamic and vibrant city-nation", one that is "brimming with possibilities and opportunities for success to those who do not set limits to what they can achieve". Joy equates her Singapore citizenship as pride in a country that is "safe, orderly, has come semblance of a system in place, no clear corruption etc". Lisa sees citizenship as the "ability to enjoy benefits of the country", and took up her Singapore citizenship because she "wanted to feel settled and belonged".

Yet, it is possible to be a citizen of a country, while feeling belonging to another. Lisa, who is awaiting her official Singapore citizenship, describes this paradox:

[A]s a Singapore PR, I have always thought [of] myself as a Malaysian citizen, and I think I will always identify with being a Malaysian perhaps even after I [get] my Singapore citizenship. Not to mean any disloyalty to Singapore who has graciously accepted me but I will think of myself as a Malaysian but a Singapore citizen, if that makes sense.

However, her loyalties are further complicated between "social network" and "country":

My loyalty will always be with my family first and foremost. On the other extreme if Singapore and Malaysia is at war, I guess I will support Singapore, after bringing the rest of my mum and siblings over. But as things stand since I have family (and friends) in both Malaysia and Singapore, it is hard to choose to say where my loyalty lies.

Expectations, Disappointments, Reciprocal Relationships

As a Singapore citizen, Dan feels proud for Singapore's economic successes, and associates Singapore's identity with "intellectual and international" and its "corrupt-free

government". In exchange for his loyalty, he expects Singapore to reciprocate by continuing its "progress [and] maintaining living standards and job opportunities".

For Malaysian citizens, issues of expectations are often tinged with disappointments. For example, Michael has no expectations of the government:

I don't know if Malaysia will change in terms of governing policy, racial equality and complete harmony. In terms of development, it will still be hindered by corruption and policy. Human nature is hard to change, hence I have no expectations of Malaysia.

These feelings of disappointment are also contributed by perceived unequal treatments of Chinese-Malaysians. For Paul:

No longer understand what the [government] represents, whereby Chinese continue to live as [second] class citizens even though we are born there, pay taxes like everybody and contribute to the economy of the country.

In addition, Paul finds it difficult to be patriotic to a country that does not reciprocate equal rights to Chinese-Malaysians:

Author	:	*When you think of citizenship, do you think about it as a form of loyalty to a country?*
Paul	:	*Yes, very much so. No greater love than to give your life for the country.*
Author	:	*But that is not something you feel about your Malaysian citizenship?*
Paul	:	*But the country must give itself to you also. This is obviously not so in Malaysia.*
Author	:	*What do you mean by the country giving itself to you?*
Paul	:	*Disband all the [economic] privileges accorded to the Malays. Every citizen is equal.*

Despite these disappointments and lack of expectations, many speak of the potential Malaysia has, and a sense of pity that the country has not progressed. Lucy is "disappointed that the country does not seem to be progressing when there is so much potential", while May thinks that "Malaysia will be a whole different country if [people like her] go back".

Interestingly, none of the respondents have voted in Malaysian elections before. In terms of contributions to Malaysia's development, respondents are either not interested, or are non-committal. Those who indicated possibilities of contributing impose conditions to

their commitment. May prefers to contribute from afar (e.g. collaborating with a resident Malaysian architect) but will not return to work in Malaysia, as she feels she "will [get punished] for saying the wrong things". For Lucy: "Maybe, depending on what the contribution is. If it is related to politics, then I will probably not unless the *bumiputera* ruling is lifted."

Citizenship Decisions

In making their citizenship decisions, respondents are divided between those who place significance in retaining their Malaysian citizenships, versus those who readily converted to Singapore citizenships. Lisa sought her mother's consent before giving up her Malaysian citizenship, while May retains her Malaysian citizenship as her family is still in Malaysia. On the other hand, Tim's Malaysian citizenship did not mean much – his father, wife and daughter are Singaporeans. Growing-up, he spent holidays in his father's Singapore home, and had always been attracted to Singapore's "architecture, cleanliness [and] public infrastructure".

Despite criticising Malaysian citizenship as "not carrying weight" for a Chinese-Malaysian and experiencing unequal treatment in his previous Singapore civil service job, Paul is in no hurry to take-up Singapore citizenship:

> *When I was younger [and] still in the civil service, I was "coerced" to change to Singapore citizenship by words of delay in promotion, etc by my seniors. I didn't buy it then. That in a way has not impressed me a single bit. As a Malaysian, we are tasked to do sensitive work [between Malaysia and Singapore], but [are] required to leave the meeting room when the issues are discussed. No level of trust BUT required to work on it, isn't it ironic.*
>
> *So now that I am in [company X] (sort of a private entity), there is really no incentive for me to change unless there are really good perks from [Singapore government] to change. I did remind myself that 5 or 10 years from now, I may not be in Singapore. I just never know.*

Indeed, citizenship privileges are significant factors in citizenship decisions. Joy took-up Singapore citizenship for the benefits: "baby bonus, tax rebate, child care subsidy, monetary gain, school admission". Her husband, a Chinese-Malaysian and SPR, did not do so because there are "no immediate economic [and] social benefit[s]". In addition, he has property in Malaysia, and the couple did not want to complicate matters.

Taking-up SPR is also a hedge against unpredictable economic conditions. For example, Michael changed his mind and applied for SPR after working for 2 years in Singapore: "Bad economic condition in Singapore caused me to re-evaluate; being a PR [means] less likely chance of redundancy compared to a foreign worker."

Dan, having left Malaysia at age 2, took up Singapore citizenship naturally. On the other hand, Andy retained his Malaysian citizenship despite being born and bred in Singapore. He gave up his SPR as he was worried about NS. His Malaysian citizenship thus becomes a second option he has exercised – "the right to go back and live [and] work there".

Migrating

<u>Leaving</u>

When asked about reasons for leaving Malaysia, almost all respondents indicated "lack of opportunities" in Malaysia. Some, like Paul, experienced this firsthand – having completed his degree in Australia, he initially sought employment in Kuching, his hometown. However:

> *During my time, regardless of your academic results, as a Chinese there is no way of getting any scholarships to study overseas. After completing university studies, it's even an insurmountable task to find a job in Malaysia. … Singapore was advertising for vacancy [in the public service] in Kuching. I grab[bed] the chance.*

Those who left when they were younger did not have such firsthand experiences, and did not feel that they were forced to leave Malaysia. As May explains:

> *Being forced is more like seeking asylum; or being forced politically or legally from one's country - and I do not think I am in any way 'forced out' of the country. It is more the fact that my parents and I do not want me to be subjected to the lack of opportunities; the inherent inequality in place in Malaysia which would ultimately curtail and cut short my ambitions in life. Forcing is too strong a term in this case.*

However, Andy highlights the need to hedge against an unpredictable future:

> *I do not feel forced to leave Malaysia now, but having learnt more about Malaysian history and politics after I returned to Malaysia, I am very glad I*

have some savings in Singapore dollars, as you can never predict what might happen in future.

Returning

Some respondents harbour desires to return to Malaysia for retirement or for work. John is open to relocate back to Malaysia if there are equal job opportunities. Lucy is open to do so in the near future, only if she works in a multinational company where "cultures … are not dependent entirely on the local environment" as "it will not hinder career development as a Chinese-Malaysian". For her, returning to Malaysia is a personal choice as there can be no "true belonging" to any country except Malaysia. Hence, she has every intention to "return" as long as her family is there. Consequently, the NEM, or any government incentives would not attract her to "return".

Having strong attachments to Malaysia does not necessarily equate to intentions of "return" to Malaysia for Michael. He feels strongly about Malaysia as his "starting point" and returns regularly for short visits. However, he is weary of a permanent return:

> *I still think it's important to understand where you came from. Malaysia is afterall where I was born. [And] that connection has never been really broken. I've always brought my grandma back usually once every 2 years. The longest time away was 3 years I think. But between 2004-2007 I've been back every year.*
> *…*
> *It's also part of my formative years. I understand the Asian mentality much better [because] of it. And hence I don't think I would have trouble living there again. But do I really want to belong in that environment now? Probably not.*

He is acutely aware of his belonging to a Malaysia that has long past ("It's the curry rice in Brickfields or the friends that I don't see anymore"). For him to "return", Malaysia needs to provide an attractive offer, including making "the social situation there better, where every Malaysian is treated equally, where there is less corruption, where people's voices are heard".

Andy, who has "returned" to Malaysia, did so for a combination of factors:

> *Basically the crucial question is, why did I return? I have heard much of the opportunities in Malaysia, and also how non-Malays are treated poorly, and how it is near impossible to get Malaysian citizenship. My wife's parents are*

elderly, and I want to avoid NS, and for some other minor reasons. So I'm taking it like a trial, to see if I can prosper in Malaysia. I am still open to job opportunities in Singapore and the world beyond.

At the same time, "no place is guaranteed to be home forever", and he "will always go/stay if the conditions are right e.g. job, economy, school for kids". Thus, Malaysia is just another migration destination like any others, and not necessarily a "homeland" he chose to "return" to.

5. Discussion: "Skilled Diasporic Citizenship" by Choice?

[W]hat national entity do we belong to? In our perceptions and conceptions of this type of homeness, we routinely objectify ourselves, make ourselves into a part and a property of a given nation state. We somehow adhere to it, are organically bound up with it, and spring from it, by virtue of birth, blood, race, history, culture or customs.

Hedetoft (2004:34)

Are we really talking about citizens who do not belong? Or are we talking about people who themselves choose where they belong, ignoring the prescriptions (and sometimes proscriptions) and predefined frameworks of belonging provided by the nation states?

Christiansen and Hedetoft (2004:14)

The quotations above provide two contrasting perspectives to skilled diasporic citizenship. They raise an important question – **is skilled diasporic citizenship acquired and practised by choice**? Respondents have certainly demonstrated agency and choice in their citizenship and migration decisions. However, such decisions are dependent on a matrix of factors, including reciprocal feelings towards sending and receiving states, strength and nature of belonging, importance and attachments to "family" and "home", and personal attitudes towards migration.

May, the *remote citizen*, views Malaysia from afar, continues to think positively of Malaysia in ethno-national terms, but is weary of the political climate and Malaysia's "messy system" of "*duit kopi*". She feels less towards Singapore as it has always been a "transient place" for her. In addition, her SPR not being renewed means she has to go through Singapore immigration as a visitor ("Filling the white [embarkation] card is just a technicality but it's actually very psychological"), despite her having lived 16 years in Singapore. Hence, "return" to Singapore becomes "a mental block".

John and Lucy, the *potential returnees*, genuinely desire a "return" to Malaysia, but will only do so provided conditions of job opportunities and career progression are met. In contrast, Michael and Andy, the *mobile citizens*, will move anywhere (including Malaysia) for work and family. Paul, the *sceptical citizen*, experienced unequal citizenship rights firsthand and hence feels strongly for a Malaysia he equates to his family rather than to the

government or the country. He is comfortable as a SPR, and see no significant benefits in taking-up Singapore citizenship. Thus, he adopts a wait-and-see attitude towards the Malaysian government.

The *converted nationals*, Tim, Lisa and Joy, chose Singapore as their long-term "home". They do not consider "returning" to Malaysia, nor do they consider leaving Singapore. Singapore presents a convenient solution, as it offers physical proximity to family in Malaysia, and important things in their everyday lives Malaysia could not offer. The act of taking-up Singapore citizenship demonstrates their commitment and decision to grow their roots in Singapore, although this may not mean that their loyalties and belonging are with Singapore.

In this sense, they differ from Dan, the *citizen who never belonged*, who converted his citizenship as a natural progression of growing-up in Singapore and not Malaysia. Dan only uses his Malaysian identity when he meets fellow Malaysians overseas as he thinks "it's good to let them know [he's] from [Malaysia] too". Otherwise, he identifies himself with Singapore's progress and economic success. In exchange for his loyalty, he expects the Singapore government to continue to provide basic necessities for its citizens.

Staeheli and Nagel argue that "it is possible to claim identity as a citizen of a country without claiming an identity as 'belonging to' or 'being of' that country" (2004:3). This is certainly true for the respondents – belonging is with "family" first, "ethno-national/cultural" second. Citizenship and migration decisions are deeply embedded in the individual and family, although reciprocal feelings towards sending and receiving states play a part in the process.

6. Conclusion

Using Laguerre's (1997) and Siu's (2005) "diasporic citizenship" as starting points, I have proposed "skilled diasporic citizenship" as a conceptual lens and methodological tool to examine skilled diasporas' relationships to both sending and receiving states in the Malaysia-Singapore context. My research, based on 10 in-depth interviews with tertiary-educated Chinese-Malaysians who are/were Singapore PRs and/or citizens, demonstrates that distinct diversities exist in *meanings* and *practices* of their diasporic citizenships despite similarities in ethnicity, age group and tertiary education.

Possible differentiating factors are (1) marriage and children; (2) previous and current family migration patterns; (3) length of stay in Malaysia and the corresponding life stage; (4) reasons for leaving Malaysia and the corresponding life stage; and (5) personal lifestyle preferences. More importantly, the *degrees* and *nature* of belonging (legal-constitutional, socio-cultural, emotional) to Malaysia (sending state) vis-à-vis Singapore (receiving state) and the *perceived reciprocal relationships* strongly influence their citizenship and migration decisions.

In the midst of global competition for human capital and domestic socio-political sentiments, the Malaysian and Singaporean governments are shifting their stands towards their skilled diasporas and new citizens respectively. My research, grounded in micro-level narratives, bring forth "the human face of global mobility" (Favell et al., 2006) often ignored or unheard. I argue that these narratives warrant attention – theoretically, "skilled diasporic citizenship" is offered as a tool to examine experiences of skilled diasporas elsewhere; practically, "skilled diasporic citizenship" could inform policy-makers to pay attention to skilled diasporas' concerns and considerations in their citizenship and migration decisions. This adds a significant layer to existing macro and micro-economic explanations for migration decisions.

The cases of Chinese-Malaysians in Singapore challenge notions of "citizens", "diasporas" and "transnational migrants". As Malaysian citizens, they are not full citizens in the normative sense due to ethnic-based policies; as Malaysian's skilled diasporas, they are not acknowledged as part of the "Malaysian diaspora" the NEM is targeting to attract "home". As Singapore PRs and/or citizens, they enjoy benefits accompanying these legal-

political statuses, but may not subscribe to their cultural meanings and belongings. As citizens, diasporas and transnational migrants, they steer away from Malaysia's politics and development (in participation or contributions), yet continue to feel strongly about being Malaysian.

Finally, my research has raised further questions by linking two previously unlinked themes pertaining to migration decisions: (1) skilled diaspora; and (2) citizenship. Within limitations of this dissertation, I have yet to address the following:

Universality
- Malaysia and Singapore are multiethnic nation-states with intricately-linked histories and geographies, and where "citizenship" is ambiguous. To what extent can "skilled diasporic citizenship" be applied to other contexts?

Diversity and specificity
- I have identified 6 citizen-types from the 10 respondents. What are the specific differentiating factors influencing their respective "skilled diasporic citizenships"?

Time-scale
- This is a cross-sectional study within a specific time-scale. How does this compare to previous and future Chinese-Malaysian diasporic migration? Why has this changed (e.g. across generations, space)?

Theories
- How can "skilled diasporic citizenship" contribute further to migration determinants and citizenship theories?

Bibliography

Abdul Razak, M. N. (2010, March 30). Keynote address. Speech presented at the Invest Malaysia 2010, Kuala Lumpur. Retrieved 28 April, 2010, from http://www.investmalaysiaconference.com/website/bm/media_centre/Events/InvestMalaysia2010/downloads/IM_keynote_pm.pdf

Ahmad, Y. (2002, 16 June). Sleepless in Singapore. *Malaysian Business*. Retrieved 6 Aug 2010, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn6207/is_20020616/ai_n24905252/

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities : Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Revised ed.). London; New York: Verso.

Ang, R. S. (2007). Beyond "Asian diasporas". In R. S. Parreñas & L. C. D. Siu (Eds.), *Asian diasporas : New formations, new conceptions* (pp. 285-290). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bauböck, R. (1995). *Transnational citizenship : membership and rights in international migration*. Aldershot, Hants, England ; Brookfield, Vt: E. Elgar.

Bauböck, R. (1998). The blurring of boundaries: Challenges for social and political theory. In R. Bauböck & J. F. Rundell (Eds.), *Blurred boundaries : migration, ethnicity, citizenship* (pp. 17-52). Aldershot: Ashgate.

Braziel, J. E. (2008). Introducting diaspora: Key terms. In *Diaspora : An introduction* (pp. 11-36). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Braziel, J. E., & Mannur, A. (2003). Nation, migration, globalization: Points of contention in diaspora studies. In J. E. Braziel & A. Mannur (Eds.), *Theorizing diaspora: A reader*, Key works in cultural studies (pp. 1-22). Malden; Oxford; Victoria: Blackwell Publishing.

Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2006). Diasporas, skills transfer and remittances: Evolving perceptions and potential. In C. G. Wescott & J. M. Brinkerhoff (Eds.), Converting migration drains into gains : harnessing the resources of overseas professionals (pp. 1-32). Manila: Asian Development Bank.

Cartier, C. L. (2003). Diaspora and social restructuring in postcolonial Malaysia. In L. J. C. Ma & C. L. Cartier (Eds.), *The Chinese diaspora : space, place, mobility, and identity*, The Why of where (pp. 69-96). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Castles, S. (2001). International migration and the nation-state in Asia. In M. A. B. Siddique & R. T. Appleyard (Eds.), *International migration into the 21st century : essays in honour of Reginald Appleyard* (pp. 178-201). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Castles, S., & Davidson, A. (2000). *Citizenship and migration : globalization and the politics of belonging*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2003). *The age of migration* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). (2010a). The world factbook: Malaysia. Updated 3 Aug, 2010. Retrieved 15 Aug 2010, 2010, from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). (2010b). The world factbook: Singapore. Updated 3 Aug, 2010. Retrieved 15 Aug 2010, 2010, from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sn.html

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory : a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.

Cheah, B. K. (2002). *Malaysia : The making of a nation*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Chee, R. (2008). *"Migrants" not "locals"?: An examination of the lived experiences of Malaysian Chinese in Singapore and the functional importance of their diasporic spaces.* Unpublished Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Social Sciences, National University of Singapore, Singapore.

Christiansen, F., & Hedetoft, U. (2004). Introduction. In F. Christiansen & U. Hedetoft (Eds.), *The politics of multiple belonging : ethnicity and nationalism in Europe and East Asia* (pp. 1-19). Aldershot ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Clifford, J. (1994). Diasporas. *Cultural anthropology*, *9*(3), 302–338.

Cohen, A. P. (1985). *The symbolic construction of community*. London; New York: Routledge.

Cohen, R. (1996). Diasporas and the nation-state : From victims to challengers. *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), *72*(3), 507-520.

Cohen, R. (2008). *Global diasporas : An introduction* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Conradson, D., & Latham, A. (2005). Transnational urbanism: Attending to everyday practices and mobilities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *31*(2), 227-233.

Crowley. (1998). The politics of belonging: Some theoretical considerations. In A. Geddes & A. Favell (Eds.), *The politics of belonging : migrants and minorities in contemporary Europe* (pp. 15-41). Aldershot, Hants, England ; Brookfield, VT: Ashgate.

Daniels, T. P. (2005). *Building cultural nationalism in Malaysia : identity, representation, and citizenship*. New York, London: Routledge.

Delanty, G. (2000). *Citizenship in a global age : society, culture, politics*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Docquier, F., & Marfouk, A. (2004). Brain drain database. Retrieved 24 Jul 2010, from The World Bank dataset: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRES/Resources/Dataset_BD_DocquierMarfouk.xls

Esterberg, K. G. (2002). *Qualitative methods in social research*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Faist, T. (2000). Transnationalization in international migration: Implications for the study of citizenship and culture. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *23*(2), 189-222.

Favell, A., Feldblum, M., & Smith, M. P. (2006). The human face of global mobility : A research agenda. In M. P. Smith & A. Favell (Eds.), *The human face of global mobility : international highly skilled migration in Europe, North America and the Asia-Pacific* (pp. 1-25). New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.

Freedman, A. L. (2001). The effect of government policy and institutions on Chinese overseas acculturation : The case of Malaysia. *Modern Asian Studies*, 35(02), 411–440.

Gibson, W. J., & Brown, A. (2009). *Working with qualitative data*. London ; Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Gilroy, P. (1999). Diaspora. In S. Vertovec & R. Cohen (Eds.), *Migration, diasporas and transnationalism* (pp. 293-298). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory : strategies for qualitative research*. Hawthorne, N.Y: Aldine de Gruyter.

Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Szanton Blanc, C. (1995). From immigrant to transmigrant: Theorizing transnational migration. *Anthropological Quarterly*, *68*(1), 48-63.

Guarnizo, Luis Eduardo, & Smith, Michael Peter. (1998). The locations of transnationalism. In Guarnizo, Luis Eduardo & Smith, Michael Peter (Eds.), *Transnationalism from below*, Comparative Urban & Community Research (Vol. 6, pp. 3-34). New Brunswick; London: Transaction Publishers.

Hall, S. (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity, community, culture and difference* (pp. 222-237). London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd.

Hall, S. (1991a). The local and the global : Globalization and ethnicity. In International A. King (Ed.), *Culture, globalization, and the world-system: Contemporary conditions for the representation of identity* (pp. 19-39). Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.

Hall, S. (1991b). Old and new identities, old and new ethnicities. In A. King (Ed.), *Culture, globalization, and the world-system : Contemporary conditions for the representation of identity* (pp. 41-68). Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.

Hedetoft, U. (2004). Discourses and images of belonging: Migrants between new racism, liberal nationalism and globalization. In F. Christiansen & U. Hedetoft (Eds.), *The politics of multiple belonging : ethnicity and nationalism in Europe and East Asia* (pp. 23-43). Aldershot ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Hefner, R. W. (2001). Introduction: Multiculturalism and citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia In R. W. Hefner (Ed.), *The politics of multiculturalism : pluralism and citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia* (pp. 1-58). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Held, D. (1995). *Democracy and the global order : From the modern state to cosmopolitan governance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hill, M., & Lian, K. F. (1995). Introduction. In *The politics of nation building and citizenship in Singapore* (pp. 1-11). London: Routledge.

Hing, A. Y. (2000). Migration and the reconfiguration of Malaysia. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *30*(2), 221-245.

Ho, E. L.-E. (2008). Citizenship, migration and transnationalism: A review and critical interventions. *Geography Compass*, *2*(5), 1286-1300.

Ho, E. L.-E. (2009). Constituting citizenship through the emotions: Singaporean transmigrants in London. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 99*(4), 788-804.

Hong, C. (2010, August 13). Malaysian census chief's lament: 'Chinese not cooperating'. *The Straits Times*.

Iredale, R. R., Guo, F., & Rozario, S. (Eds.). (2003). *Return migration in the Asia Pacific*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Kapur, D., & McHale, J. (2005). *Give us your best and brightest : the global hunt for talent and its impact on the developing world*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development.

Khoo, S.-m. (1999). Envisioning the Malaysian nation: Ethnic nationalism or corporate capitalism? In K. J. Brehony & N. Rassool (Eds.), *Nationalisms old and new* (pp. 125-153). Houndmills (England); New York: Macmillan Press; St. Martin's Press.

Knight, W. A. (2002). Conceptualizing transnational community formation: Migrants, sojourners and diasporas in a globalized era. *Canadian Studies in Population*, *29*(1), 1–30.

Koslowski, R. (2001). Demographic boundary maintenance in world politics: Of international norms on dual nationality. In M. Albert, D. Jacobson & Y. Lapid (Eds.), *Identities, borders, orders : rethinking international relations theory* (pp. 203-223). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Kuznetsov, Y. (Ed.). (2006). *Diaspora networks and the international migration of skills : how countries can draw on their talent abroad*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship : a liberal theory of minority rights*. Oxford ; New York: Clarendon Press.

Laguerre, M. S. (1997). *Diasporic citizenship : Haitian Americans in transnational America*. Hampshire; New York: Macmillan Press; St. Martin's Press.

Lam, T., & Yeoh, B. S. (2004). Negotiating 'home' and 'national identity': Chinese-Malaysian transmigrants in Singapore. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, *45*(2), 141-164.

Leitner, H., & Ehrkamp, P. (2006). Transnationalism and migrants' imaginings of citizenship. *Environment and Planning A, 38*, 1615-1632.

Liu, L. (2009). *Mobility, community and identity: Chinese student/professional migration to the United States since 1978 and transnational citizenship.* Unpublished Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Minnesota, Minnesota.

Long, L., & Oxfeld, E. (2004). Introduction: An ethnography of return. In L. Long & E. Oxfeld (Eds.), *Coming home? : refugees, migrants, and those who stayed behind* (pp. 1-15). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Malaysians in Singapore 'last to be let go'. (2009, February 18). *The New Straits Times*. Retrieved 5 April, 2010, from http://www.asiaone.com/Business/News/Office/Story/A1Story20090218-122755.html

Mariappan, K. (2002). Ethnicity, Malay nationalism, and the question of bangsa Malaysia. In S. Fenton & S. May (Eds.), *Ethnonational identities* (pp. 198-226). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mohamad, M. (2009, June 18). *Welcome address*. Speech presented at the Tenth Malaysia Plan Brain Gain Malaysia (BGM) Workshop, Hall 1, PICC, Putrajaya, Malaysia. Retrieved 15 Jul, 2010, from http://www.mosti.gov.my/mosti/images/pdf/brain%20gain%20workshop%2018%20jun%202009.pdf

Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and social class and other essays*. Cambridge: University Press.

Mavroudi, E. (2008). Palestinians and pragmatic citizenship: Negotiating relationships between citizenship and national identity in diaspora. *Geoforum*, *39*(1), 307-318.

Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS). (2009, April 26). *National Integration Council to foster social integration* (Media release No. 15/2009). Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS). Retrieved April 29, 2010, from http://www.mcys.gov.sg/MCDSFiles/Press/Articles/15-2009.pdf

Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI). (2010). Brain Gain Malaysia. *Brain Gain Malaysia*. Retrieved April 29, 2010, from http://bgm.mosti.gov.my/?page=aboutbg/about_nbgp

New Economic Advisory Council (NEAC). (2010). *New Economic Model for Malaysia: Part 1*. Kuala Lumpur: New Economic Advisory Council (NEAC). Retrieved April 3, 2010, from http://www.pmo.gov.my/NEM_Report_I.pdf

Nonini, D. M. (1997). Shifting identities, positioned imagineries: Transnational traversals and reversals by Malaysian Chinese. In A. Ong & D. M. Nonini (Eds.), *Ungrounded empires : the cultural politics of modern Chinese transnationalism* (pp. 203-227). New York ; London: Routledge.

Nonini, D. M. (2008). Processes of state, class and ethno-racial formation in urban Malaysia: Geo-spatial transformations and regime shifts 1970-2000. *Anthropologica*, *50*(2), 255-268.

O'Leary, Z. (2005). *Researching real-world problems : a guide to methods of inquiry*. London: SAGE.

Ong, A. (1996). Cultural citizenship as subject-making: Immigrants negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States. *Current Anthropology*, *37*(5), 737-762.

Ong, A. (1999). *Flexible citizenship : the cultural logics of transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Palaniappan, Y. (2007, November 21). Renouncing citizenship: Chinese top the list. *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved 5 April, 2010, from http://charleshector.blogspot.com/2007/11/renouncing-citizenship-chinese-top-list.html

Parreñas, R. S., & Siu, L. C. D. (2007). Introduction: Asian diasporas - New conceptions, new frameworks. In R. S. Parreñas & L. C. D. Siu (Eds.), *Asian diasporas : New formations, new conceptions* (pp. 1-28). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Pillai, P. (1992). *People on the move : an overview of recent immigration and emigration in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia.

Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E., & Landolt, P. (1999). The study of transnationalism: Pitfalls and promises of an emergent social field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *22*(2), 217–237.

Safran, W. (1991). Diasporas in modern societies : Myths of homelands and return. *Diaspora*, *1*(1), 83-99.

Safran, W. (2004). Deconstructing and comparing disporas. In W. Kokot, K. Tölölyan, & C. Alfonso (Eds.), *Diaspora, identity, and religion : New directions in theory and research* (pp. 9-29). London: Routledge.

Sheffer, G. (1986). A new field of study: Modern diasporas in international politics. In *Modern diasporas in international politics* (pp. 1-15). London: Croom Helm.

Sheffer, G. (1995). The emergence of new ethno-national diasporas. *Migration*, *28*, 5-28.

Sheffer, G. (2002). Loyalty. In *Diaspora politics : at home abroad* (pp. 219-238). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Siu, L. C. D. (2005). *Memories of a future home : diasporic citizenship of Chinese in Panama*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Soysal, Y. (1994). *Limits of citizenship : migrants and postnational membership in Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Staeheli, L., & Nagel, C. (2004). Citizenship, identity and transnational migration: Arab immigrants to the United States. *Space and Polity*, *8*(1), 3-23.

Vertovec, S. (1997). Three meanings of "diaspora," exemplified among South Asian religions. *Diaspora*, *6*(3), 277–300.

Vertovec, S. (2009). *Transnationalism*. London; New York: Routledge.

Walsh, K. (2006). 'Dad says I'm tied to a shooting star!': Grounding (research on) British expatriate belonging. *Area*, *38*(3), 268–278.

Wang, G. (2002). Local and national: A dialogue between tradition and modernity. In L. Suryadinata (Ed.), *Ethnic Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia : a dialogue between tradition and modernity* (pp. 1-8). Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Wong, K. S. (2010, March 4). *Speech on population*. Speech presented at the Committee of Supply, Singapore. Retrieved 28 April, 2010, from http://www.nps.gov.sg/files/news/DPM%27s%20speech%20on%20population%20at%20COS%2020100304%20-%20final.pdf

Yahaya, R. (2010). Registration of Malaysian professionals under the Brain Gain Programme. Personal communication, e-mail, 10 Aug 2010

Yakcop, N. M. (2009, October 6). Launch of UNDP's 2009 Global Human Development Report. Speech, Renaissance Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. Retrieved 14 Jul, 2010, from http://www.epu.gov.my/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=10370&folderId=44603&name=DLFE-5413.pdf

Young, I. M. (1989). Polity and group difference: a critique of the ideal of universal citizenship. *Ethics*, *99*(2), 250–274.

Yow, C. H. (2007). Local, national, transnational Chinese as migrants and citizens in Malaysia. In P. K. Voon (Ed.), *Malaysian Chinese and nation-building* (pp. 553-574). Shah Alam, Selangor: Marshall Cavendish Editions.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Intersectionality, citizenship and contemporary politics of belonging. In B. Siim & J. Squires (Eds.), *Contesting citizenship* (pp. 159-172). London: Routledge.

Appendices

Appendix I – Research Process

My research process has not been linear. Often, I found that I had to revisit background reading and reconfigure my research question. More importantly, as I allowed the data to "speak" to me during the coding stage, I realised I gained a clearer picture of where the research was leading me to. The diagram below provides an indication of my research process.
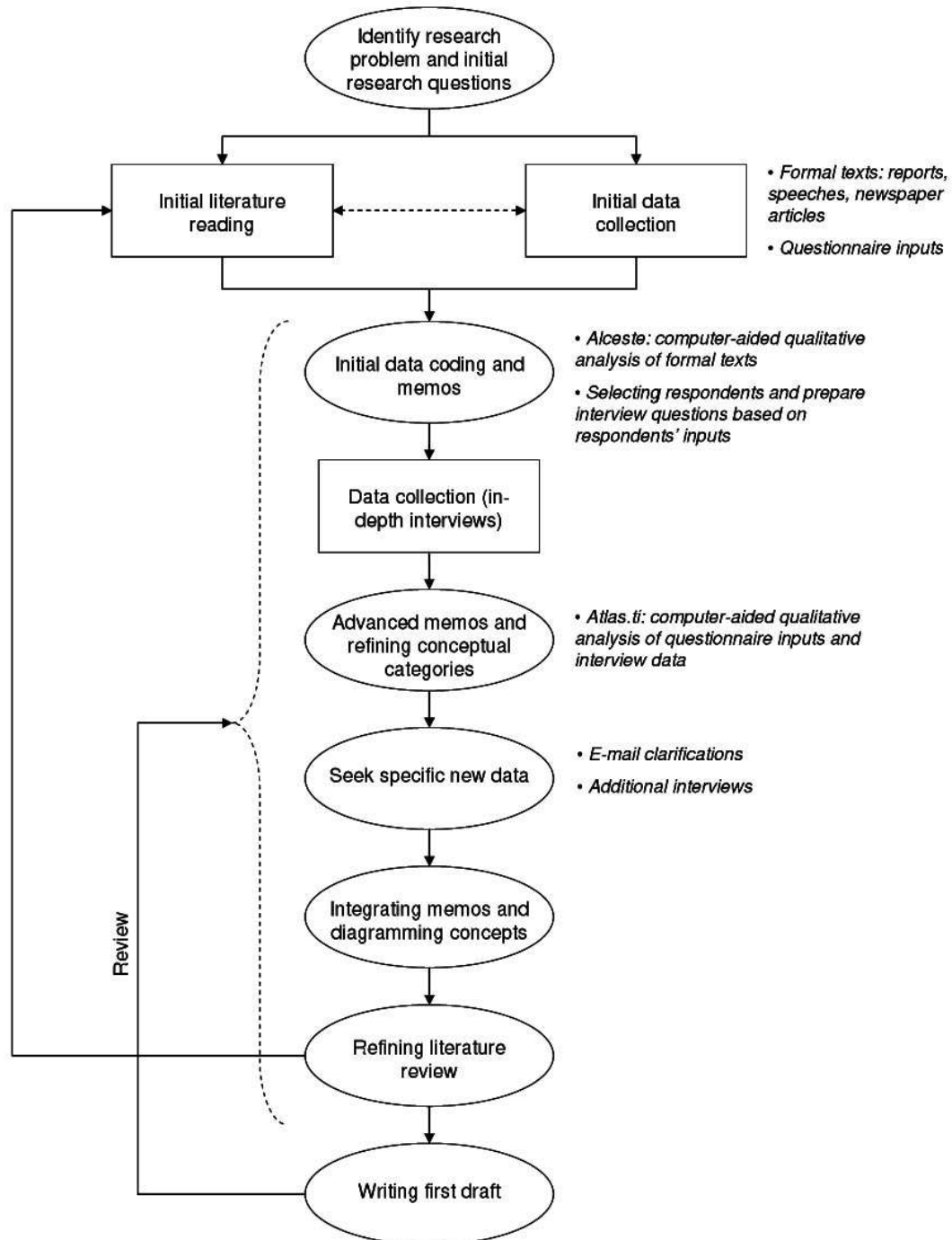
Source: Adapted from Charmaz (2006:Figure 1.1)

Appendix II – List of Interviewees

All names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

Respondent pseudonym	Interview date(s)	Interview mode (location)
May	21 May 2010	Face-to-face (Regent's Canal, London)
	Apr – May 2010	E-mail
John	8 Jul 2010	Msn messaging
	Apr – Jul 2010	E-mail
Lucy	29 Jul 2010	Skype messaging
	Jul 2010	E-mail
Paul	22 Jul 2010	Skype messaging
	Apr – Jul 2010	E-mail
Tim	13 & 15 Jul 2010	Facebook messaging
	Apr – Jul 2010	E-mail
Lisa	Apr – Jul 2010	E-mail
Joy	Apr – Jul 2010	E-mail
Michael	25 Jul 2010	Facebook messaging
	Jul 2010	E-mail
Andy	Jun – Jul 2010	E-mail
Dan	4 Jul 2010	Msn messaging
	Apr – Jul 2010	E-mail

Appendix III – Profile of Respondents

Generation	Citizen-type	Respondent	Age	Gender	Married (children)	Spouse's Citizenship	Citizenship		Reason for Leaving Malaysia	Left Malaysia at age	Reason for Coming to Singapore	Years in Singapore	Nature of belonging to Malaysia
							Current	Previous					
First	Remote citizen	May	35-40	F	N	-	M; UKPR	SPR	Education (secondary)	12	Education (secondary); scholarship	12	Family
	Potential returnee	John	35-40	M	N	-	M; SPR	-	Education (university)	18	Education (University)	> 15	Ethnicity
		Lucy	30-35	F	Y	M; SPR	M; SPR	-	Education (junior college)	16	Education (junior college); scholarship	10-15	Family; childhood memories
	Sceptical citizen	Paul	40-45	M	Y	S	M; SPR	-	Education (university)	18	Work	> 15	Family; Sarawak
	Converted national	Tim	30-35	M	Y (1)	S	S	M; SPR	Education (junior college)	16	Education (junior college); scholarship	> 15	Childhood memories
		Lisa	40-45	F	N	-	S	M; SPR	Education (university)	16	Personal relationship + work	> 15	Family
		Joy	30-35	F	Y (1)	M; SPR	S	M; SPR	Education (junior college)	16	Education (junior college); scholarship	10-15	Place of birth; childhood memories
	Mobile citizen	Michael	30-35	M	N	-	M; NZPR; SPR	-	Family migrated to New Zealand	15	Work	1-2	Place of birth; childhood memories; "starting point"
Second		Andy	30-35	M	Y (1)	M	M	-	*Family	Born in Singapore	*Family	> 15	#Place of upbringing
	Citizen who never belonged	Dan	25-30	M	N	-	S	M	Family migrated to Singapore	2	Family migrated to Singapore	> 15	Place of birth

<u>Legend</u>
M   : Malaysian
S   : Singaporean
SPR   : Singaporean PR
UKPR   : United Kingdom PR
NZPR   : New Zealand PR

<u>Notes</u>
* Andy's reason for leaving Singapore and coming to Malaysia.
# Andy's nature of belonging to Singapore

Appendix IV – Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction
Thank you for participating in my dissertation research.

The research is about Malaysian Chinese in Singapore, who are Singapore PRs or converted-Singaporeans. I am interested in understanding how you think about belonging and home, and what Malaysia and Singapore mean to you.

Please be assured that your personal information and responses will be kept completely anonymous and confidential.

Instructions
Please respond freely on the questions, as I will follow-up with online or face-to-face interviews if there is a need for further clarifications.

Section I: General information

Name   : _____ (first)   _____ (last)

Contact   : _____ (email)   _____ (phone)

Gender   : _____

Age group   : _____ years old

Occupation   : _____ please indicate industry   : _____

Nationality   : _____ Marital status   : _____

                                                     Children?   : _____

Section II: Coming to Singapore

1. How long have you been living in Singapore?
   - 1 year
   - 1-2 years
   - 3-5 years
   - 5-10 years
   - 10-15 years
   - More than 15 years

2. Why did you come to Singapore in the first instance?
   - Secondary school
   - Junior college
   - University
   - Job offer
   - Came to look for work
   - Marriage
   - Others

   Please elaborate _____

3. Did you leave Singapore in between?
    o   Yes
    o   No

    Why? Please elaborate _____

4. Why did you come back to Singapore again?
    o   My family is here
    o   I got a job offer
    o   Singapore is a better place to live
    o   I purchased property here
    o   I feel at home in Singapore
    o   I married a Singaporean
    o   Others

    Please elaborate _____

5. How often do you visit Malaysia?
    o   Once a week
    o   Once a fortnight
    o   Once a month
    o   Once in 3 months
    o   On holidays/ special occasions
    o   Others

    Please elaborate _____

6. Do you think there is a difference living in Singapore and Malaysia?
    o   Yes
    o   No

    Why? _____

Section III: Home

7. Do you think of Singapore as home?
    o   Yes
    o   No

    Why? _____

8. Do you think of Malaysia as home?
    o   Yes
    o   No

    Why? _____

9. Which do you consider as your home?
    o   Malaysia
    o   Singapore

    Why? _____

10. What does "home" mean to you?
   - o Where my family is
   - o A permanent place
   - o Where I feel comfortable
   - o Others

   Please elaborate _____

Section IV: Leaving Malaysia

11. Why did you leave Malaysia?
   - o Lack of opportunities in Malaysia
   - o Higher pay in Singapore
   - o I couldn't get into university in Malaysia
   - o My family wanted to move
   - o Others

   Please elaborate _____

12. Are you aware of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and/ or the New Economic Model (NEM)?
   - o Yes
   - o No

   Please explain what you understand about NEP & NEM
   _____

13. Do you think the NEP has caused Malaysian Chinese to leave Malaysia?
   - o Yes
   - o No
   - o Don't know

   Please elaborate _____

14. Do you intend to return to Malaysia in the future?
   - o Yes
   - o No

   Why? Please elaborate _____

Section V: Singapore PR & Citizenship

15. Did you become a Singapore PR?
   - o Yes
   - o No

   When did you become a Singapore PR?
   - o Less than 1 year after coming to Singapore
   - o 1-2 years after coming to Singapore
   - o 3-5 years after coming to Singapore
   - o 5-10 years after coming to Singapore
   - o 10-15 years after coming to Singapore

  ○ More than 15 years after coming to Singapore

Why did you become a Singapore PR?
Please elaborate _____

Does being a Singaporea PR mean anything to you?
  ○ Yes
  ○ No

Please elaborate _____

16. Did you become a Singapore citizen?
  ○ Yes
  ○ No

When did you become a Singapore citizen?
  ○ Less than 1 year after coming to Singapore
  ○ 1-2 years after coming to Singapore
  ○ 3-5 years after coming to Singapore
  ○ 5-10 years after coming to Singapore
  ○ 10-15 years after coming to Singapore
  ○ More than 15 years after coming to Singapore

How long did you become a Singapore PR before acquiring Singapore citizenship?
  ○ 1 year
  ○ 1-2 years
  ○ 3-5 years
  ○ 5-10 years
  ○ 10-15 years
  ○ More than 15 years

Why did you take up Singapore citizenship?
  ○ My husband/wife is Singaporean
  ○ For the benefits
  ○ For the convenience
  ○ I was offered the citizenship
  ○ Others

Please elaborate _____

Does being a Singapore citizen mean anything to you?
  ○ Yes
  ○ No

Please elaborate _____

17. What do you consider yourself in order of priority? (1= first, 5= last)
  ○ Chinese
  ○ Malaysian
  ○ Singapore PR
  ○ Singaporean
  ○ Asian

18. Will you consider converting your citizenship to Singaporean?
    o Yes
    o No

    Why? _____

19. Is/was it important for you to retain your Malaysian citizenship?
    o Yes
    o No

    Why? _____

Section VI: Family Migration History

20. Did your family (grandparents/ancestors) originally come from China?
    o Yes
    o No

21. Were your parents born in China?
    o Yes
    o No

22. Were your parents born in Malaysia?
    o Yes
    o No

23. Were you born in Malaysia?
    o Yes
    o No

24. Were you born in Singapore?
    o Yes
    o No

25. Has anyone in your extended family migrated?
    o Yes
    o No

    Please elaborate _____

26. Has anyone in your family or extended family converted their citizenship(s)?
    o Yes
    o No

    Please elaborate _____

27. Would you consider migrating elsewhere?
    o Yes
    o No

    Please elaborate _____

Section VII: Feelings of Belonging

28. Please select to what extent you agree/disagree with the statements.
    (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree; N/A= Not applicable)

    a. *I make sure I keep updated about news and development in Malaysia.*
       Please elaborate: How you do so? What is the frequency? _____

    b. *I feel that I am forced to leave Malaysia.*
       Please elaborate: Why do you feel so? _____

    c. *I feel that I no longer belong to Malaysia.*
       Please elaborate: Why do you feel so? _____

    d. *I feel that I belong more to Malaysia than Singapore.*
       Please elaborate: What is the difference in your feeling of belonging between Malaysia & Singapore?_____

    e. *I am proud to be Malaysian.*
       Please elaborate: What makes you proud/ not proud to be Malaysian? _____

    f. *I am proud to be Singaporean.*
       Please elaborate: What makes you proud/ not proud to be Singaporean? _____

    g. *Malaysia will always be my home.*
       Please elaborate: Why do you feel so? _____

    h. *I am disappointed in Malaysia as a country.*
       Please elaborate: What are you disappointed about? Do you have any expectations of Malaysia? _____

    i. *I don't care about politics in Malaysia, it doesn't concern me.*
       Please elaborate: Why does it concern/ not concern you? _____

    j. *There is no difference being a Malaysian or a Singaporean.*
       Please elaborate: What are the similarities/differences? _____

    k. *Belonging is not tied to citizenship.*
       Please elaborate: What do you think belonging is tied to? _____

       Please elaborate: What do you think citizenship means? _____

    l. *Singapore is just a temporary location for me.*
       Please elaborate: Why? What are your future plans? _____

    m. *I want to return to Malaysia someday.*
       Please elaborate: Why? Do you have any concrete plans? _____

    n. *I feel attached to Malaysia.*
       Please elaborate: Why? What is this sense of attachment? _____

o. *There is a difference being a Malaysian Chinese and a Singaporean Chinese.*
Please elaborate: Why? What are the similarities/differences? _____

p. *I will contribute to Malaysia if there is a need to.*
Please elaborate: Why? What kind of contributions are you thinking of? _____

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you!

Contact information: (Researcher's contact information)

Malaysia
1. Overall, there has been a significant increase in emigration from Malaysia (more than doubled between 2007 and 2008/09).
2. The largest Malaysian "diaspora" outflow to Singapore has increased significantly (3.5 times from 1990s to 2000s).
3. Chinese-Malaysians constitute a significantly large proportion of Malaysians who surrender their citizenship (87%).

Table A1: Emigration from Malaysia

Item	Recent statistics (2000s)	Less recent statistics (1990s)
Scale of overall emigration	785,000 overseas Malaysians (3.3% of population), of which about 40% were in Singapore, 30% in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 20% in other ASEAN countries, and 10% in other regions of the world (Mohamad 2009; Kok & Tee, 2010) 304,358 Malaysians emigrated between March 2008 to August 2009, compared to 139,696 in 2007 (Malaysia's Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister, quoted in Bedi & Azizan, 2010)	Between 1983-1990, at least 40,000 Malaysians emigrated to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States (Pillai, 1992:27; Pillai & Yusof, 1998:135)
Malaysians in Singapore	350,000 Malaysians working in Singapore, with 150,000 commuting from Johor Bahru (Malaysian city next to Singapore), and the remaining residing in Singapore ("Malaysians in Singapore 'last to be let go'", 2009)	Malaysia's largest emigration outflow is to Singapore (Pillai, 1992). An estimated 100,000 Malaysians, including professionals, work in Singapore (Malaysia's Ministry of Human Resources, quoted in Pillai 1992:25). About 24,000 cross the Malaysia-Singapore causeway daily (The Star, 1991, Feb 13, quoted in Pillai, 1992:25).
Surrender of Malaysian citizenship	16,474 Malaysians gave up their citizenships between 2000-2006, of which 87% were Chinese (Palaniappan, 2007)	

*Table A2*: Migrant stocks (Malaysia as country of birth) in selected countries

Resident in	1990	1991	2000	2001	Increase over 10-year period (%)
Australia	-	72,611	-	78,858	8.60
Canada	-	16,100	-	-	N/A
New Zealand	-	8,820	-	11,460	29.93
United Kingdom	-	43,511	-	49,886	14.65
United States	-	-	49,459	-	N/A
Singapore	194,929	-	303,828	-	55.87

Source: UN (2008)

Singapore
1. Non-resident population has been increasing steadily, at a rate higher than that of citizens (citizens at 1.1% versus overall population at 3.1%).
2. The number of PRs and new citizens have increased steadily from 2000 to 2008, but dipped in 2009.
3. Significant proportions of new PRs and citizens are of post secondary education.

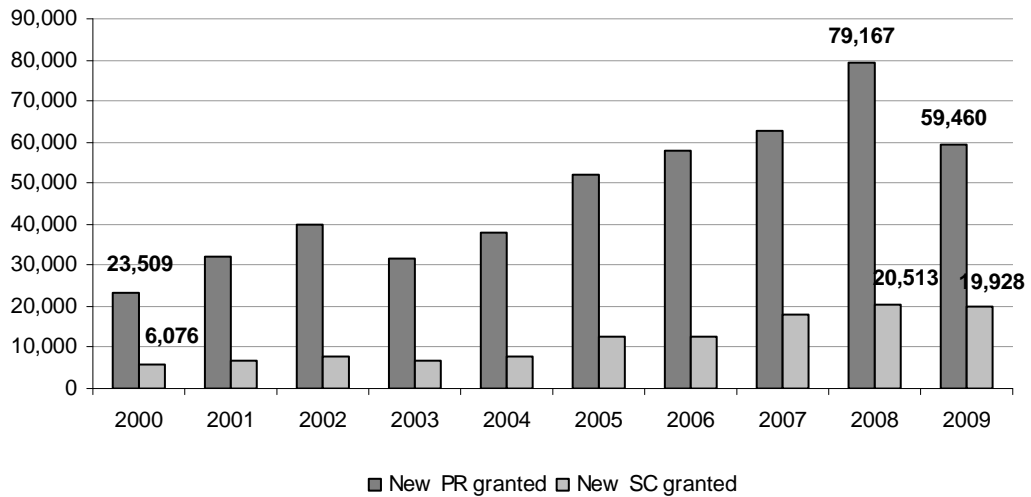*Figure A1*: Singapore's non-resident population, 2004-2009 (in millions)
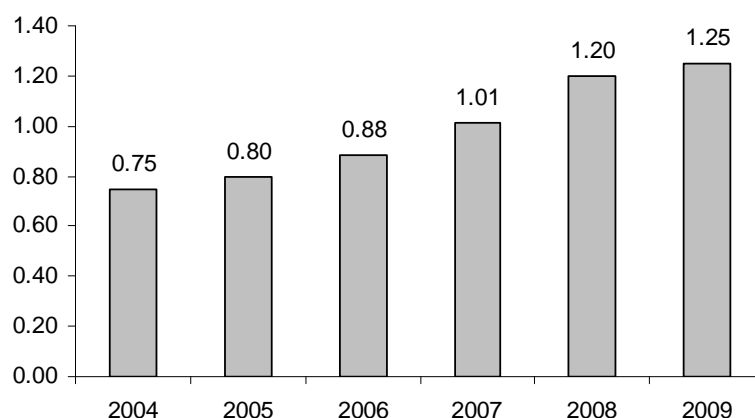
Source: Wong (2010:Chart 1)

Table A3: Singapore's population (2009)

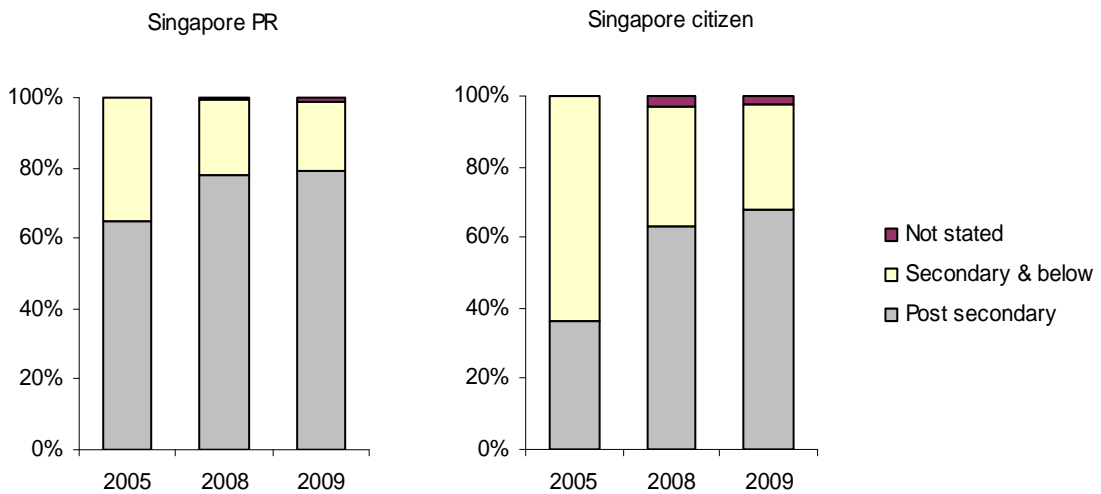|	Number (thousands)	Annual growth
Singapore citizens	3200.7	1.1%
Singapore PRs	533.2	11.5%
Total population	4987.6	3.1%

Source: DOS (2010)

49

Figure A2: Singapore's PR and citizenship trends (2000-2009)

Source: Wong (2010:Chart 2)

Figure A3: Singapore's new residents aged 20 and over by highest educational qualification attained (2005, 2008 and 2009) (%)

Source: NPS et al (2009, 2010)

References

Bedi, R. J. S., & Azizan, H. (2010, April 25). Drawing the experts home. *The Star*. Retrieved 6 Jul, 2010, from http://www.neac.gov.my/sites/default/files/25%20April%202010,%20Drawing%20the%20experts%20home.pdf

Kok, C., & Tee, L. S. (2010, February 6). Stemming the tide and keeping our talent. *The Star Online*. Retrieved 28 April, 2010, from http://biz.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/2/6/business/5614304&sec=business

Malaysians in Singapore 'last to be let go'. (2009, February 18). *The New Straits Times*. Retrieved 5 April, 2010, from http://www.asiaone.com/Business/News/Office/Story/A1Story20090218-122755.html

Mohamad, M. (2009, June 18). *Welcome address*. Speech presented at the Tenth Malaysia Plan Brain Gain Malaysia (BGM) Workshop, Hall 1, PICC, Putrajaya, Malaysia. Retrieved 15 Jul, 2010, from http://www.mosti.gov.my/mosti/images/pdf/brain%20gain%20workshop%2018%20jun%202009.pdf

National Population Secretariat (NPS), Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS), Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA), & Ministry of Manpower (MOM). (2009). *Population in brief: 2009*. Retrieved 5 April, 2010, from http://www.nps.gov.sg/files/news/Population%20in%20Brief%202009.pdf

National Population Secretariat (NPS), Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS), Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA), & Ministry of Manpower (MOM). (2010). *Population in brief: 2010*. Retrieved 13 Aug, 2010, from http://www.nps.gov.sg/files/news/Population%20in%20Brief%202009.pdf

Palaniappan, Y. (2007, November 21). Renouncing citizenship: Chinese top the list. *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved 5 April, 2010, from http://charleshector.blogspot.com/2007/11/renouncing-citizenship-chinese-top-list.html

Pillai, P. (1992). *People on the move : an overview of recent immigration and emigration in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia.

Pillai, P., & Yusof, Z. A. (1998). Malaysia: Trends and recent developments in international migration. In *Migration and regional economic integration in Asia* (pp. 133-143). Paris; Washington, D.C.: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS). (2010). Latest data – Population (mid-year estimates). Retrieved 13 Aug, 2010, from http://www.singstat.gov.sg/stats/latestdata.html#12

United Nations (UN), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division (2008). United Nations Global Migration Database (UNGMD). Retrieved 16 Jul, 2010, from http://esa.un.org/unmigration/index.aspx

Wong, K. S. (2010, March 4). *Speech on population*. Speech presented at the Committee of Supply, Singapore. Retrieved 28 April, 2010, from http://www.nps.gov.sg/files/news/DPM%27s%20speech%20on%20population%20at%20COS%2020100304%20-%20final.pdf