

CHAPTER 5

NEGOTIATING CLASS AND MIGRATION STATUS

This chapter elaborates upon how the Burmese Muslim female migrant domestic workers have negotiated their class and migration status in Chang Klan Muslim migrant community. Living in a host society, these women have had to employ many negotiation tactics in order to make a living and earn during their everyday lives. These women may be seen as “weak” due to the inter-sectionality of their vulnerable and marginalized identities in terms of class (domestic worker) and migration status (migrant), but the several case studies outlined in this chapter show the ways in which these women have been able to negotiate around their class and migration status; in the resettlement area, in their work, in the community and at the state level.

5.1 The ‘Weak’ and their Negotiation Tactics

I follow the concepts of Michel de Certeau (1984), of “tactics of negotiation”, to see how the study women negotiate as part of their everyday lives. In his work, *The Practice of Everyday Lives*, de Certeau differentiates between strategies and tactics. On the one hand, a strategy is the calculus of a force-relationship which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, enterprise, city or scientific institution) can be isolated from an environment. A strategy to him assumes that a place can be circumscribed as proper and serve as the basis for generating relations with a distinct exterior (such as competitors, targets or objects of research). Political, economic and scientific rationality is then constructed based upon this strategic model (de Certeau, 1984).

In contrast, tactics can be seen as a calculus which cannot count on a “proper” existing (such as a spatial or institutional localization), nor; thus, on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of an individual tactic belongs to the other - insinuating itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it

over in its entirety and without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base upon which to capitalize on its advantages, prepare its explanations and secure independence in respective circumstances.

While strategy can be seen a weapon of the ‘strong’, tactics can be seen as weapons of the ‘weak’. However, de Certeau (1984) claims that power can be shifted, and that it does not always lay with the strong. According to him, the “proper” is a victory of space over time; whereas, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time and is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized “on the wing”. Whatever it wins, it does not keep, so it must constantly manipulate events in order to turn victories into “opportunities”. The weak must continually turn to their own ends – to forces alien to them, and this can only be achieved during propitious moments when they are able to combine heterogeneous elements. Thus, in the supermarket a housewife confronts heterogeneous and mobile data; what she has in the refrigerator, the tastes, appetites and moods of her guests, the best buys and their possible combinations, and what she already has on hand at home. The intellectual synthesis of these given elements takes the form; however, not of discourse, but of the decision itself, the act and manner in which an opportunity is “seized”.

De Certeau (1984) states that many everyday practices like talking, reading, moving about, shopping and cooking are tactical in character and are the “ways of operating” which can be seen as victories of the “weak” over the “strong”, whether the strength be that of powerful people or the violence of things or of an imposed order. The clever tricks, such as knowing how to get away with things, the “hunters’ cunning”, maneuvers, polymorphic simulations and joyful discoveries, can also be considered as tactics.

Domestic workers, as part of the ‘weak’ sector, more often develop tactics when subverting the authority of their employers. Strategies; for example, collective bargaining, have long been elusive forms of resistance for domestic workers. However, tactics, such as ‘chicanery’ and ‘cajolery’ represent “victories of the ‘weak’ over the ‘strong’” and are incorporated within the boundaries of the rules and order of domestic work through the clever tricks and more outlined above. Through these tactics, domestic workers are able to take advantage of opportune moments within the

daily ritual of domestic work to creatively interject subversive acts into their everyday routines, so as to resist the tedium and disciplinary measures that normalize inequality between the employers and employees. James Scott also describes the ability of the ‘weak’ to develop a consciousness of collective struggle. His “hidden transcript” refers to the “discourse that takes place ‘offstage’, beyond direct observation by [the] power holders” (Parreñas 2001).

Living in a foreign host society, Burmese domestic workers employ many tactics to negotiate their living and earnings throughout their everyday lives. The Burmese Muslim female migrant domestic workers can; therefore, only be seen as ‘weak’ if we look in isolation at their status as migrant workers from Burma. Instead of seeing these women as ‘weak’ or ‘victims’ in this way, I see them as ‘agents’ – those who have been able to turn their vulnerable identities into tactics of negotiation.

5.2 Class in Domestic Work

Class differences in Chang Klan Muslim community reflect the higher status of employers and the lower status of migrant domestic workers, as many households there are able to hire non-family, ethnic minority or migrant people to work as domestic workers in their homes, and where domestic work is done by paid workers. In such circumstances, immediately the status of the female employers is upgraded to become the boss, the manager and the mistress in the private sphere and in society as a whole. When these female employers can pay someone to do their household duties, it frees them from these devalued tasks and allows them to participate in professional careers or enjoy their leisure time. The paid domestic workers represent the class differences that exist between the employers and workers. The women who do the domestic work usually come from poor villages, are ethnic minorities or migrants; their class is seemed to be “lower” than they employers. The reason female employers hire paid domestic workers to work in their households is their privileged status, because the female employers in Chang Klan community usually have more money and a higher level of education, and so have more opportunity and social capital, and this allows them to find paid work outside the home or spend their time on preferred activities rather than doing domestic work. The migrant female domestic workers from Burma on the other hand, lack economic and social capital (in this sense, they do

not have much money, with little or no education background, and do not have many contacts who can help them seek upwardly mobile opportunities). Differences at the macro level in terms of economic and political aspects in both countries have resulted in a subordinated class position for the Burmese Muslim female domestic workers when compared to their Thai Muslim employers.

5.2.1 Negotiating Class

Domestic work marks the difference between the higher and superior status of the employers, and the lower status and lower class of the domestic workers. The result of this is that employers in Thailand can employ migrant domestic workers from Burma, based on the unequal development stages of each country. There is a difference in terms of the political framework on the one hand; Thailand is a democratic country which welcomes international investment and supports economic growth, while Burma is ruled by a quasi-military government and has internal conflicts among ethnic minority groups and a depressed economy.

Employers in Chang Klan community are middle-class families who have a better education and better job opportunities than the migrants, while domestic work seems to be work for uneducated people – it is low-skilled work that needs to be performed by ethnic minority women or migrants. However, because these poor women from Burma carry out domestic work for the Thai families, it means the Thai middle-classes can participate in higher status jobs, or obtain a higher education. In this sense, the middle-class families in Thailand not only exploit these women at the individual level, but also at the structural level, as the Thai economy as a whole also exploits cheap labor from Burma.

However, even though Thai women do not want to do domestic work, for the Burmese women this type of work gives them the opportunity to become upwardly mobility and gain a better position in Chang Klan community. There are three types of domestic work in Chang Klan community: live-in domestic work, live-out domestic work and domestic work for a Thai company. Each type of domestic work has good and bad points for the domestic workers, in different ways. Being a live-in domestic worker means the women are isolated from their outside contacts, but they

get free accommodation and meals, while being a live-out domestic worker means the women have more freedom, but have to work in many houses a day to make a living. Being employed by a Thai company means domestic workers receive a better wage, but they feel their work is superior to being a housemaid. Each work type requires different social capital and is suited to the personal traits of a given woman, as shown below.



Figure 5.1: Burmese Muslim Female Migrant Domestic Workers in Chiang Mai

5.2.1.1 Live-In Domestic Worker

Live-in domestic work requires a docile laborer who is obedient towards the employers, so this work is suitable for young girls, newcomers and single women. Many live-in domestic workers are newcomers who cannot speak Thai well or at all. Live-in domestic workers tend to be single women, because they have to live in the same house as their employers. Many women work as live-in domestic workers at a young age and when they have just arrived in the host society, but after living in the community for longer, they tend to accumulate money and skills, have boyfriends, get married or reunite with their families, after which they move out of their employer's houses and work as 'live-out' domestic workers, for a Thai business, or even change jobs entirely or move out of Chang Klan community to another town in Thailand, such as Bangkok. Most women who work as live-in domestic workers earn around 4,000 baht a month.

Since I had no chance to interview current live-in domestic workers, due to the fact that most employers will not admit to hiring Burmese migrants, I will outline the story of one who used to be a live-in domestic worker - Yamira. Yamira was a live-in

housemaid at one house in Chang Klan for five years, but then decided to quit her job and move to Bangkok, to meet with her husband. Before her husband then came to Chiang Mai to live with her, she stayed at her employer's house, meaning she did not have to pay rent, whereas now she has to as she has her own space. Yamira respected and very much liked her employers, calling them *mae leng*, (meaning 'rich mother who takes care'). Yamira earned a monthly income of around 6,000 baht, and with this money she was able to send 2,000 baht in remittances home to her mother and her youngest daughter, who live in Myawaddy. She sent the money home using the Bangkok Bank, and sometimes her employer helped her to transfer the money at this bank.

5.2.1.2 Live-Out Domestic Worker

Live-out domestic work is suitable for women who have many connections in the community, as they tend to work in a number of houses over the course of a day, in order to make enough money. These women work at between two and five houses a day, seven days a week, and have to work to a tight schedule in order to make enough money to live. Shown below are sample schedules for two domestic workers; one works in two houses a day while the other works in five. Being a live-out domestic worker, each woman has to work at several houses a day, mostly in the same area, and each works from early in the morning until late at night. Some of them have one day-off a week, while others work seven days. They get paid around 500 to 1,000 baht a month per house, so earn around 5,000 to 6,000 baht a month in total.

Sa is one of the live-out domestic workers who live in the Chang Klan area. When she first arrived in Chang Klan she started working as a housemaid at Kumon (a study center), and now she still works as a housemaid, but not in one location but five.

Muni now carries a foreign card (a pink card) which represents her status as a foreigner working in Thailand permanently. The card is provided by her employer and it needs to be renewed every year. She now earns about 6,000 baht a month and is able to send 3,400 baht a month home to her mother and her son in Burma. Every day, she finishes work very late at night, at around 9 p.m. and each day has to work at four or five houses, and this leaves her exhausted, so when she goes home she rests. The

work places are not far from her home, as they are in the Chang Klan area, so when she finishes work at one house she can walk to the next. Her work times are not fixed, but she normally spends around two hours at a time at each house, but this may be more or less depending on the amount of work required. She told me she is very happy in Thailand; with her job, for even though she has to work hard she said her employers are very kind to her. At the beginning of the day she works at a house in front of the Farut Hotel - belonging to a Muslim whose ancestors were from Pakistan. She starts work at this house at 9 a.m. and finishes at 11 a.m., after which she walks to another house in an area called Chiang Mai Land.

5.2.1.3 Domestic Worker for a Thai Business

There are several Thai cleaning companies who accept Burmese migrants and who have legal documentation. These companies send the workers to work as cleaners in hospitals, businesses, schools, universities and in private homes. Customers pay the company and the company pays a salary to the domestic workers. Some Burmese Muslim migrants also work for these Thai companies, but to do so have to have capital such as being able to speak Thai, have their own motorcycles (because the workplaces may not be close to Chang Klan) and have to change work location according to the companies' wishes. The Burmese Muslim migrant women I spoke to in this category told me they get paid around 180 to 250 baht a day by their employers, but that if they work at the weekend, they get the same rate. Many male and female migrants work as domestic workers for Thai cleaning companies; many are Shan (as they speak a similar language to Thai), but some come from other ethnic groups inside Burma.

The ideological separation made between the household and the workplace, with the capitalist organization of industrial production, has meant that much productive work has moved outside the home and into new workplaces. Most reproductive activity remains in the household; however, and is primarily performed by women. Work has thus become something done for a wage in a workplace; the home is no longer seen as the site of work, so domestic workers are regarded by their employers as having a low status – stigmatized as not doing “real” work at all (Colen and Sanjek, 1990: 4) .

There are several cleaning companies in Chiang Mai which hire *mae-baan* or house cleaners aged between 21 and 35 to work for them. These companies employ cleaners then send them to work at several locations around the area, such as private homes, hospitals, businesses and universities. Their services include monthly domestic work and temporary domestic work. These Thai companies not only hire Thai domestic workers but they also hire migrants, and each company provides a uniform for their staff to wear.

Now in Chang Klan area, many women work as housecleaners for Thai companies, for they receive better pay when compared to household work. Each employee receives a wage of 250 baht per day. As well as the pay, the other reason why these women like to work for a company is that they think working for a company is more modern, and that because they have a uniform they are no longer treated as slaves, but as formal workers. However, not all the women can work for a Thai company, for they need to have the proper documentation, need to be able to speak Thai well and have to have their own motorcycle, because they need to travel to different work places in accordance with their work contracts.

Even if household work may seem to be 'dead-end', there is evidence to suggest that for those who take it on as a long-term occupation, there is some inward and upward mobility involved. For example, a worker may shift jobs in order to improve her pay, the level of respect shown, her autonomy, the location and the tasks performed, or may have family concerns that make one workplace better than another. After undertaking domestic work for a long period of time, some of the women are able to accumulate money and skills, improve their social network, plus improve their Thai language skills, all of which help them to achieve upward mobility – maybe moving from carrying out domestic workers to other kinds of work they prefer to do.

To achieve social mobility through domestic work is not easy for the Burmese Muslim migrant female domestic workers, but this kind of work is still important for those with little social and economic capital and who have just migrated to the urban area. Long-term domestic workers may have more goals than mere survival - where the job market and their educational backgrounds offer few alternatives; they want upward mobility for their children, whose education depends upon their parents'

labors. This scenario is probably true for the Burmese female migrants in Chang Klan, where the opportunity to move from household work into better paid, higher status occupations is limited.

I prefer to work as a domestic worker for a company instead of working for a household because I feel like I am a worker, not a servant.

Keeta, who works for a cleaning company
(in-depth interview: March 2012)

“...I am a worker, not a servant”; the quote here reflects the attitude among migrant domestic workers regarding how they feel when treated as slaves by a family. However, working for a cleaning company, even though it is the same kind of work - feels different for them.

I like to wear a uniform; I feel like I am not unskilled labor but have been trained to do the job.

Keeta, who works for a cleaning company
(personal interview: March 2012)

As domestic work is seen as women's work in the private sphere, so it is not seen as creating value in the economic sphere - many people believe that doing this kind of work requires no skill.



Figure 5.2: A Grocery Store Run by a Burmese Muslim Owner

5.2.1.4 Negotiating to Improve Status

This section will reveal several cases of migrant women who began as domestic workers in Chang Klan community, but having accumulated some capital, including financial and social capital, were able to get out of domestic work and become self-employed, business owners or entrepreneurs in the community.

Manoya is a 30 year-old Burmese Muslim from Mae Sam Laep, is married and has one daughter, plus has lived in Chang Klan for more than twenty years. She originally traveled to Chang Klan community with a broker, and then worked as a maid for many years until she managed to save enough money to open her own grocery store. Her income is now around 200 to 400 baht per day from the shop. She told me her business is not going so well because migrants do not have much money with which to buy goods. Sometimes she said she allows the migrants she knows well to buy on credit, and then pay back when they receive their salaries at the end of the month. She buys her goods from Muang Mai market, while some items imported from Burma she buys from Baan Haw market - well-known as the Friday market. Baan Haw market is a market at which many Burmese people sell their goods, and to which many Burmese migrants go to shop every Friday morning. Those female migrant workers who have stayed a long time and accumulated not only money but also skills and contacts, have been able to escape domestic work and become self-employed within Chang Klan migrant community.



Figure 5.3: Arbi and her Junk Shop

Arbi also started as a domestic worker in Chang Klan community, but is now the owner of her own junk shop in Chang Klan community. Arbi came from Burma around twenty years ago and has four children - three of whom are already married, so now she has five grand-children also. She originally moved from Myawaddy to Mae Sot and then on to Chiang Mai, using a broker. Her family has a small junk shop in Chang Klan community; however, she is now not so healthy, as she has heart disease. She has a pink card and so can get free medical treatment from a public hospital in Chiang Mai. She rents a room and stays with her family, paying 2,400 Baht per month in rent, excluding electricity and water supply costs.

Her first son works as a meat deliverer, while her second daughter lives in Bangkok with her husband. Her third son works as a fabric seller at a shop in Warorot Market near Chang Klan, while her youngest son is studying at Sridonchai School. She told me that twenty years ago the police regularly visited Chang Klan and arrested Burmese migrants because they had no documentation; however, now the police do not come to check very often because so many of them have obtained the correct documents. The children of these Burmese migrants have their births registered in Thailand, so can go to Thai schools, and when they turn fifteen, can apply for a Thai ID card. These Burmese migrants normally marry other migrants who they meet at work or in the community, and normally Burmese Muslims will marry other Burmese Muslims, though some Burmese Muslim men are married to Shan Buddhists, though in these cases the Shan women converted to Islam after getting married. Arbi is very happy with her life right now, since she owns her own shop. Even if she does not make a huge income from her junk shop, she is happy that she no longer has to work as a housemaid, and that her family can live together in the community.



Figure 5.4: Chang Klan Islamic School

Referring to the case of Panu Husdi again, I have already described his identity related to religion and the ways in which he has made use of his identity as a Burmese Imam to negotiate in the Chang Klan area. He is a Burmese Imam in the Mosque in Chan Klan, and his case is interesting in the way that his situation seems to be contradictory. On the one hand, his position as a Burmese would seem to make him 'lower' in status than the local Thais, but on the other his status as a local Imam is very high, especially in Chang Klan Mosque and in Chang Klan community as a whole. According to the local people I spoke to in Chang Klan, nowadays not many Thai people study and have a good religious education (in Islam), so in some mosques they lack the educated religious people needed to become Imams.

The attitude of local people towards the Burmese migrants is contradictory, for on the one hand the Burmese are not welcomed by the local people, because they think the migrants move in to steal their jobs, but on the other they feel pity towards the migrants and think that the migrants work hard and provide cheap labor. Their attitudes towards the Burmese Imam are much more complex, for although local people do not like having a Burmese Imam, they do not have much choice because they cannot find a well educated religious Thai who is willing and available to act as one. Because the Burmese Imam knows Arabic, he has been able to use his power in terms of the religious language - the holy language, as a tactic to negotiate a higher class position in the Chang Klan area, as well as being an Islamic teacher in an Islamic school and a wise person in the host society.

5.3 Migration Status and Domestic Work

Since domestic work has shifted from being carried out by Thai women to being undertaken by migrant workers from minority groups across the border in Burma, so these workers have been able to expel their image as “others”, as they are in great need of employers and the Thai state and its citizens desire servants and cheap labor, but they are still often prevented from receiving worker status from their employers and under Thai law.

5.3.1 Negotiating Migration Status

In Chang Klan Muslim migrant community, the Burmese Muslim female migrants employ many tactics to negotiate their migrant status in the resettlement area, as the following cases show, and in particular the ways in which the migrant domestic workers have used their free labor as a tactic of negotiation.

Keeta is a Burmese Muslim who originally worked as a domestic worker in Chang Klan for more than eight years. Now she works as a live-out domestic worker in a number of houses each day. Since she works as a live-out domestic worker, she does not have an employer to arrange a work permit for her. In order to have documented migrant worker status in Thailand, she needs to obtain a work permit, so the tactic she uses is to offer her work for free to a family in the community, who in return accept her as their employee. She then pays all the costs required to arrange for the legal documents to be prepared. Migrant women use many tactics in order to negotiate their migrant status in the host society, and as Keeta’s case shows, these poor women from Burma will even offer their services for free - as a ‘weapon of the weak’, to work within state policies and attain legal working status in Thailand.

Another tactic used by the migrants in the community is to use money as a negotiation tactic, as in the case of Yamira. Yamira has worked and lived in Chang Klan community for more than ten years, and told me that all the official documents required are important for workers like her who wish to live in Thailand and find a job. She told me that every two years she has to renew her passport and that every time she does this it costs her around 5,500 baht. Also, every year she has to renew her *bat thang dao* (literally means ‘alien card’) or pink card, which costs 1,900 baht.

To renew her card, Yamira has to go to Chiang Mai City Hall and has to pay all her employer's costs also, including the 1,000 baht fee for the card itself and another 1,000 baht for the use of her employer's time. The total cost comes to around 4,000 baht. Given that Yamira earns only 4,500 baht a month, the costs required to obtain these legal papers are significant, but all migrant workers have to do this if they wish to have legal work status in Thailand. Therefore, money is also used as a negotiation tactic by the Burmese Muslim female migrant domestic workers, in order to obtain legal working status - as these women pay money to their employer as well as to the state, and expect in return to obtain legal migrant worker status in the host community.



Figure 5.5: Motorcycle Parked in Front of Migrants' Rented Rooms

Apart from working, migrant workers have to live their daily in this resettlement area. This means having to negotiate to obtain their own rights, for even if they are not allowed to do something by the state, such as buy a motorcycle, somehow they still manage to do so using certain negotiation tactics, as I will describe in this section.

A motorcycle has symbolic meaning for the migrants, as it reflects a higher level of financial capital and gives them the power to travel. However, it is not easy for migrant workers to own a motorcycle (or car) in Thailand, as they are not allowed to do so without a driving license. Therefore, if migrants do not have a driving license they cannot drive motorcycles or cars legally. Due to the fact that many migrants do not have proper cards or passports, so they cannot buy a motorcycle in Thailand;

however, some of them still manage to do this by using their employers' names instead of their own, though they sometimes have to pay a fee to their employers in order to do so. If they do own a motorcycle legally, they still cannot ride it because they do not have a driving license, so some migrants simply ride their motorcycles illegally. In Chiang Mai city, the police do not regularly check driving licenses, but do so on occasion in some areas. However, the migrants know how to avoid the police, simply by not driving into areas in which the risk of being caught is high, though there are times when they are arrested by the police, at which point they have to bribe them in order to be able to continue to use their motorcycles.

Motorcycles have a symbolic meaning for the migrants, because migrants who have motorcycles would seem to have more money than others. In this sense, a motorcycle not only allows them to travel easily (though illegally), but is also something the migrants can be proud of. Even if the state tries very hard to control the lives of the migrants in Thailand (for example, by controlling their right to own property), somehow the migrants find a way to negotiate their rights, using a number of tactics. In the case of motorcycles, the migrants use their financial and social capital to pay their Thai employers or Thai friends, and this helps them achieve what they desire.



Figure 5.6: Chang Klan Market in the South of the Community

Living in a host society like Chang Klan, the Burmese Muslim migrant manage to negotiate to have their own space, both private and in public. One important public space that reveals the negotiation tactics used by the Burmese Muslim migrants is Chang Klan local fresh market, where they manage to create a

space to buy and sell Burmese goods. Chang Klan local market is located in the south of Chang Klan community, and opens only two days a week; on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This is a local market to which local people come to sell fresh food, cooked food, vegetables and fruit, and also household items like shampoo and soap, plus leisure items such as copied DVDs and VCDs. Every Tuesday and Thursday evening, many local people who live in the community and nearby come to buy items at the market. The market attracts not only Thai people but also a diverse range of others; sometimes one can see tourists walking around the market also. Like the Thai *mae-baan* (housewives), the Burmese Muslim women also like to go to this market, and so on market days in the evening, you can find them sometimes walking alone or with friends or relatives at the market. They normally visit the market to buy cooking ingredients, plus children like to go to the market for fun, as they can *bpaithiaw* and enjoy eating *kanom* (snacks or sweets). As this is a Muslim community, so it is easy for the Burmese women to find *halal* food at the market, plus any other items they want from Burma. For example, I came across one stall in the middle of the market selling cosmetics, medicines and food from Burma, next to other stalls selling northern Thai food. This stall is quite when big compared to others in the market - around two square meters, and is full of items from Burma. On the one hand, this shop exists to serve the needs of Burmese migrants working and living in Chang Klan community, while on the other hand it acts as a space of negotiation among the migrant workers

5.3.1.1 Education Factor

The Burmese Muslim migrant workers in Chang Klan community not only negotiate to have their own space in the community in support of their daily lives, but also negotiate for their future in the community - for their own and their children's generation. One example of this is the way they negotiate to access education services in Chang Klan community, for education plays a crucial part in the lives of the migrants in many ways. For those Muslim Burmese female migrant workers who reside in a 'lower' class in terms of their work, economic and migrant status, education is an important instrument for them to use to attain upward mobility, both

for themselves and their children. When talking about education in this study, I pay attention to both the modern and religious forms.

In Chang Klan community there are three schools: Montfort College, Wichai Vittaya School and the Children's Garden School. There is also one Islamic school which teaches religion, and this school opens every day in the evening, starting from 5.30 p.m., but is closed on Fridays. In summer, the Islamic school opens on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., but then again closes on Friday. Both education systems play a key role in the lives of the Burmese Muslim families, and education can be seen as one factor pulling the migrants from Burma into Chang Klan and keeping them there. Many migrant women told me that they want their children to study in both the Thai and Islamic schools, and hope that they can get a better life if they have a good education.

This case shows that education is important for the migrant children. Manoya comes from Mae Sam Laep in Mae Hong Son Province and holds a pink card, which she obtained in Mae Sam Laep and so has to return to every six months to have it renewed. She came to live in Chang Klan one year ago because her husband was already living in the community. They have one son and she now runs a grocery store in Chang Klan. She told me wants to continue living there because she would like her son to go to the Thai and Islamic schools in the community. As can be seen, in addition to economic reasons, migrants move from their hometown to Chang Klan because they want their children to receive, both a good, modern education and an Islamic one.

Some migrants have to negotiate their access to education, as they represent the main hope for the future of their home village, as in the case of Ploypailin who moved to Chang Klan around five years ago following her relatives, who had already moved to the area. The reason she moved to Chang Klan was because she wanted to attend a secondary school in the city, and now studies at Chiang Mai Commercial College where she is doing the first year of a Bachelor's degree course. She said she is the first from her village to have studied a bachelor's degree. Her mother wanted her to be a nurse after she finished school, but she wanted to be a teacher, because she realized that she would then be the best educated person in her village and; therefore,

could return there and teach. She also wants to be a community leader or *kamnan*, because she wants to develop her village as a tourist destination. She told me her village is very beautiful, is surrounded by mountains and is also on the border with Burma, so she thinks that if she can develop her village, the quality of life of the villagers there will improve.

Education is a pull factor because it draws migrant families into Chang Klan, and it also helps sustain the migrant community in Chang Klan. It is also a push factor; however, one that drives migrant women to leave their home villages, because they want to move to Thailand to work and send money home to support their children's education inside Burma.

5.3.1.2 Healthcare Factors

Apart from education, which is a very important issue for migrant workers and migrant children, there is another area of concern among those migrants, especially those who suffer from bad health or are elderly, and that is gaining access to health care services in Thailand. Health care can be seen as both a push and a pull factor. As a pull factor, because health care services in Thailand are so much better than in Burma, migrants choose to travel to Thailand to get treatment, with some then staying a long time, while in turn the cost of health care services in Burma is high, so many women are pushed into leaving their home towns to seek work in Thailand, and then send remittances home to pay for their parents' health care costs:

My mother is sick - she has heart disease. I wanted to come to work in Thailand so I could send money to her; so she could go to hospital.

Sa, (in-depth interview, June 2010)

Once migrant women have been working and living in Chang Klan community for a period of time, they can also provide support for the other Burmese people in the area:

Sometimes, friends or relatives come to stay with the migrants here in Chang Klan, because they need to go to hospital here - the health services in Chiang Mai are better than in Burma.

Sora, (in-depth interview interview: March 2011)

Health care can be seen as a sustained reason why migrant workers choose to stay in Thailand and maintain their migrant cards, as in the cases of Armeen, who has asthma and Mabi, who has heart disease. Armeen, a man in his late fifties, has been living in Chang Klan for more than twenty years, but now suffers from asthma. Because he works as a beggar, he suffers a lot from ill health. Every day, he goes around the community and collects junk items such as glass, paper and plastic, anything he thinks he can sell. Working with such items is not good for his health, but he has a limited choice in terms of work, so does this to make a living and earn for his family. However, he told me he is very happy with the healthcare services he receives from the hospital in Chiang Mai - a benefit he receives for possessing a pink card. He told me:

Thailand is good, no matter whether you have money or not; doctors will treat you if you are sick, whereas in Burma you will not get any treatment if you don't have money.

Armeen, (in-depth interview: March 2012)

Arbi, Armeen's wife, has heart disease, and told me the following:

I have heart disease, but I can obtain medicine if I go to Nakhon Ping Hospital. If I did not receive a health care services using my pink card, I could not afford to pay for all the medicine I require.

Arbi, (in-depth interview: March 2012)

The Burmese Muslim migrant workers in Chang Klan community use many negotiation tactics in order to attain a legal labor status in Thailand, and as I have shown in the above sections, some of them use their own labor to do so, and some use

their own money, as they are fully aware that their legal labor status in Thailand is very important in terms of their security, and; moreover, will give them access to healthcare services. It is; therefore, important to highlight the fact that the migrant workers in this community not only negotiate for the present in terms of their day to day lives, but also for a brighter future - for themselves, their children and their home community in Burma.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed the ways in which the Burmese Muslim female domestic workers use tactics to negotiate their migration status. The undocumented migrant workers in Thailand are vulnerable to being exploited by employers and the Thai authorities; however, they use their bodies and money as tactics to negotiate with state powers, in order to obtain the appropriate documentation and legal working status they need in Thailand. Migrants thus use many tactics, such as using the names of their Thai friends or employers to buy motorcycles, all of which can be seen as symbolic modes of resistance against the Thai state.

Moreover, a space like Chang Klan Muslim enclave migrant community has allowed the migrants to create their own space on Thai soil - such as the Burmese stalls at the local fresh market, or their own grocery stores selling Burmese items in the heart of the community. The ways in which these migrants negotiate across time and space means they not only negotiate for the present while working and living in the community, but also for the future. Some women have accumulated money in order to have a better life in the future, while others have accumulated an education, hoping to improve their own lives and/or the quality of life of people in their home village at the border. Other women have sent their children to the modern Thai schools in the area, and to Islamic schools, also hoping that their children will have a better life in the future.