

# ORIGINAL RESEARCH: *Social Activist, Patron, and Broker:* INDONESIAN MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS IN TAIWAN

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## Abstract

Indonesian migrant entrepreneurship in Taiwan involves entrepreneurs who apply local values or customs in the host society and then (re)produce them in their business activities, expecting profit from customers without losing the social cohesion of their business operations. In practice, they first accommodate the basic social and economic needs of migrant workers and develop social cohesion among them. Second, entrepreneurs engage in mutual relationships in their developing social networks in Taiwan. Indonesian migrant entrepreneurs are not independent economic business operations; rather, they are strongly linked to the social and cultural conditions of migrants. Entrepreneurs often play the role of “friends” in need, acting as a third-party resource to migrants so they can find help and self-actualization, as well as acting as patrons and brokers to migrants in trouble. This paper is based on the observations of participants’ daily business activities and in-depth interviews with Indonesian migrant entrepreneurs from June to December 2014. The ethnographic research method, which is used particularly to research personal preferences, is applied herein to social activities as a means of exploring the effect that migrant–entrepreneur patronage and broker relations have on the practice of entrepreneurial activity.

**Keyword:** Indonesia-Taiwan, Patron–broker, Social activist.

## Introduction

Migrant entrepreneurship in Taiwan is no longer considered a “sideline,” “transitional,” or “traditional” economic activity; it has come to be seen as a key long-term economic activity, a source of income, and a response to labor market conditions. Besides contributing to the interactive development of the modern urban landscape, immigrant entrepreneurship in Taiwan is a significant element in combating unemployment and welfare drain through proactive job creation (for detailed studies on migrant entrepreneurship in Taiwan, see Huang 2009; Huang *et al.* 2012; Huang and Douglas 2008; Hung-Chen 2014; Hung-Ing 2008; Lan 2011; Tzeng 2012; Chi and Jackson 2012; Ho Thi 2010). However, in the case of established migrant entrepreneurs and their co-ethnic relations, based on the research findings herein on Indonesian migrant entrepreneurship, not only stand in the basic economic relations, such as trader and buyer. These entrepreneurial acts also appear to be based on migrant condition realities. As demonstrated by their business orientation, rather than merely providing migrants with local products, entrepreneurs provide “social services” for co-ethnic migrants, such as spaces for religious practices; educational, entertainment, and administrative help; dedicated spaces for counseling; and other facilitations, including helping migrants in trouble (for details, see Yuniarto 2014). These practices are referred to as the social activism, patronage, and broker patterns of Indonesian migrant entrepreneurs in Taiwan. Their businesses go far beyond economic development in using and practicing migrant custom knowledge, adjusting to labor conditions, and establishing social relationships among migrants. Therefore, the question on which this paper will elaborate is as follows: “How does the interaction between Indonesian migrants and

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entrepreneurs shape the roles that Indonesian entrepreneurs in Taiwan play as social activists, patrons, and brokers?”

### **Defining the concept: Social activist entrepreneur**

A social activist entrepreneur is defined as an individual with an attitude driven by the desire to create positive social change using an entrepreneurial framework. Theoretically, social activist entrepreneurs are people who allocate their monetary contributions and efforts to mobilize resources for use in communities (Couto 1997); who have a value commitment to benefiting a community (Dhesi 2010); and who, by making a contribution to the social good, express their identity as caring, moral persons (Wuthnow 1991). In the context of Indonesians in Taiwan, migrants hold the status of newcomers, and they carry the image of being poor and minority sojourners, so entrepreneurs serve to generate participation in social activities. Dhesi (2010: 708) mentioned that the “bounded solidarity” of the lower castes might impel members to help each other rather than reach out to the wider community. In addition, social entrepreneurial activities are quite demanding in terms of having a general awareness of social issues (Abu-Saifan 2012: 25). In the practices of migrant entrepreneurs, social activities are also usually linked with a cultural element (such as migrant weekend activities, migrant needs, and migrant problems), and they consist of pursuing innovative solutions to social problems and serve to build solidarity within communities (Brandellero 2009: 32). Therefore, entrepreneurs become social agents who organize cultural, financial, social, and human capital to generate revenue from migrant activities (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993).

To understand social relationships between migrants and entrepreneurs, the concept of migrant social capital is helpful. Social capital is often inherent in the social relations among co-ethnic members; it could be embedded in the formal organizations and institutions within a definable ethnic community and it structures and guides these social relations (Zhou 2014: 8; Salaff *et al.* 2003a, 2005b). It was found that “patronage” and “broker/agent” are practical concepts used to analyze the migrants and entrepreneurs who operate within these patterns. Patron and broker entrepreneurship among Indonesians in Taiwan are based on relations between entrepreneurs as owners or patrons and with migrants as helpers or clients who work with them as dependents, creating a dyadic relation in the business operation. The patron–broker relationship is generally characterized by an unequal relationship between a superior (a patron or broker) and a number of inferiors (clients, retainers, or followers) (Pelras 2000: 16; Wong 1988: 10). The patron/broker becomes a leading figure for all clients through the assistance he or she provides when necessary, including monetary loans and protection (Pelras 2000: 16).

The roles of patron and broker in migrant societies have been discussed in various studies on the Portuguese in Canada (Brettell 2003), the Irish in the USA (Corrigan 2006), the Chinese in New York (Wong 1988), and the Black and Korean communities in the USA (Silverman 2000). All scholars have concluded that actors can achieve values or goals through the manipulation of the goals, resources, and restrictions of both groups. Practically, the concepts of patrons and brokers in migrant entrepreneurship can be used to describe mutual relationships among Indonesian migrants, in which the persons benefit each other. The patron/broker concept is particularly apt in discussing the adjustments migrants make when living in a host country. Through this concept, entrepreneurs further their own goals through their ability to dispense favors to their clients (Brettell 2003: 128).

### **Conceptual framework**

Schiller and Caglar (2006, 2012) suggest an analysis that extends beyond the individual entrepreneur, as well as beyond the enclave ethnic economy, paying attention to the symbolic and behavioral dimensions of entrepreneurial activities as an important aspect. Entrepreneurship may be associated with migrant economic mobility, but the conditions of the migrants themselves—the migrant situation, labor, and the larger society—

also influence entrepreneurial activities (Schiller *et al.* 2006; Waldinger *et al.* 1990). Conceptually, migrant workers, conditions, and entrepreneurs' interconnectedness can bridge both the macro (economic structure) and the micro (individual relations) multidimensional aspects (Vertovec 2000; Brettell 2002). In this regard, according to Zhou (2013), rather than seeing migrant entrepreneurs merely as participating in economic activities or difficulties, it is important to see entrepreneurs as people operating a business and to reveal the social background that will enable the recognition of their entrepreneurship pattern or model. Figure 1 elaborates these relationships. This paper begins with the context of the problems of Indonesian migrants in Taiwan, which can be divided into two dominant issues: socio-cultural and migrant conditions. Entrepreneurs respond to the migrants' everyday needs by applying a non-administrative entrepreneurship style (left box). Other stakeholders, conversely, are in charge of dispute resolution regarding labor or working problems (right box). Regarding migrant activities and problems, both sets of actors carry out cooperation as a form of institutional coordination. However, this paper aims to discover the social function of the Indonesian entrepreneur in accommodating the social needs/problems of migrants in Taiwan, as shown in the entrepreneurs' box.

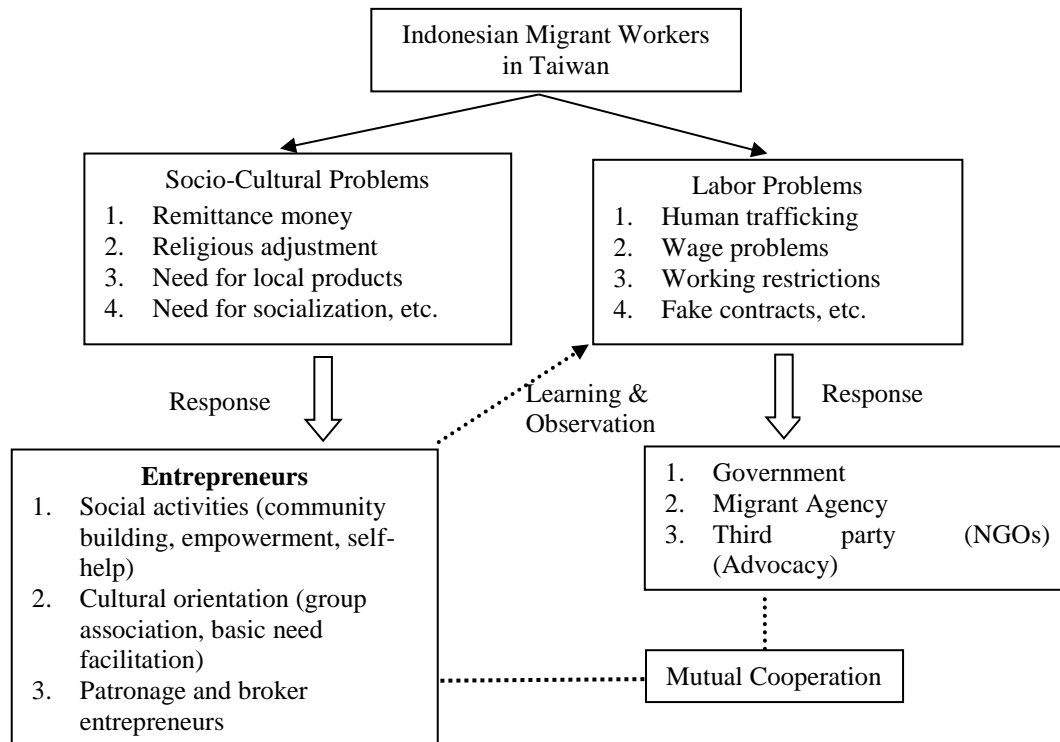


Figure 1. The Indonesian Migrant Worker and Entrepreneurs Relation in Taiwan.

### Data collection

In this paper, Indonesian migrant entrepreneurs are the subjects of analyses. According to Mr. Deyantono, head of the Indonesian Entrepreneurs Association in Taiwan, the estimated number of active Indonesian entrepreneurs in Taiwan reached more than 300 by 2014, consisting of owners of neighborhood stores and restaurants, outlets, shipping and remittance services. Indonesian entrepreneurs in Taiwan employ approximately 1,500–2,000 local helpers (Yuniarto 2014: 98). Compared to other Southeast Asian migrant communities in Taiwan, Indonesian

migrant entrepreneurship enjoys an advantage over a number of potential competitors, benefitting from co-ethnicity to carve out economic niches; thus, this particular group is representative and it was chosen as the study example. Based on the qualitative approach taken, the primary data were gathered mostly through in-depth interviews concerning the entrepreneurial stories of entrepreneurs and participant observations of daily activities. Fieldwork was conducted from June through December of 2014.

Distinguished entrepreneurs were chosen as examples of the most active and pioneering individuals in Indonesian entrepreneurship and due to their participation in various social migrant activities. The fieldwork started with a multilayered consultation with Indonesian government officials in Taiwan, as well as with the head of the Indonesian Business Association and with entrepreneurs residing in Taipei. This starting point was chosen in an attempt to assess the Indonesian enclave economy and to locate prospective entrepreneur informants. The particular research locations were Taipei City and Taoyuan County, but some observations were made in other cities. As a result, stories were collected using the resources in this paper from nine entrepreneurs (see Figure 2), academicians, and legal/illegal workers. Participants were contacted by either email or phone before the interview to arrange venues and times, to state the research aim, and, in some cases, to send the interview questions in advance. All the interview sessions lasted between one and one and a half hours, and they were recorded for later analysis with the consent of the research participants. Most questions were open-ended, and impromptu and follow-up questions were asked to encourage research participants to clarify and further explain their opinions. Further, the gathered data were analyzed descriptively, as the study was expected to yield comprehensive results of the entrepreneurs' daily activities.

Figure 2. Profile of entrepreneurs interviewed.

No	Name	Age/ gender	Education	Period of Stay	Company (List of Businesses)	Activities
1	Joy Simpson	40/ Male	Bachelor's Degree	20 years	Indosuara (Tabloid, radio, clothing, electronics, event organizer)	Training and workshop, education, group activities
2	Deyantono	39/ Male	Master's Degree	15 years	Xian Kuo (money remittance and INTAI magazine)	Training and workshop, education, group activities
3	Tony Thamsir	39/ Male	Bachelor's Degree	20 years	Indonesian Taiwan Magazine	Training and workshop, education, group activities
4	MM and NN	32/ Male and 40/ female	Elementary education and Mandarin Diploma	12 and 20 years	Toko AB (Indonesian neighborhood shop)	Patron entrepreneur
5	Hasanah and Yasin	34/ Female and 61/ Male	Junior high school	13 years	Toko Warto Hasan (catering, restaurant, mail order, shipping, direct selling)	Patron entrepreneur
6	Lily	52/ Female	Senior high	25 years	Kampung Jawa	Broker

		Female	school		(restaurant and agency)	entrepreneur
7	Emmy	50/ Female	Elementary school	27 years	Toko Maya (catering and broker/agent)	Broker entrepreneur
8	Komala	40–50/ Female	Senior high school	18 years	Indonesian Muslim restaurant	Patron entrepreneur
9	Akui	45–50/ Male	Senior high school	20 years	Toko Akui (catering, restaurant, mail order, shipping, direct selling)	Patron entrepreneur

### The migrant condition and the entrepreneur position

The migrant consumers' habits and working conditions, such as when they have holidays, what their habits are, and where they usually gather, are observed to clarify the roles of social migrant entrepreneurs. It is important for entrepreneurs to know these things in advance because they are related to business services. Generally, on the weekend, factory workers can leave for holiday around 8:00 a.m., and by 22:00 p.m., they are expected to be back to their dormitories. For domestic workers, before dinner around 19:00–20:00 p.m. is their time to be back to their home. Because of the short time available, free time must be spent efficiently on Saturday and Sunday, despite the multitude of tasks and responsibilities (i.e., going to church or mosque, getting a haircut, shopping, dining, and socializing) (Huang and Douglas 2008: 55). Migrants usually gather at the corners of the train stations, eating and dancing behind the prime public areas of the Taipei, Taoyuan, Chungli, and Taichung stations, and they tend to shop underground, rather than in skyscraper department stores (Lan 2006; Lovebland 2006). They prefer Indonesian shops, night markets, and communication/cell phone stores, as well as patronizing stores that sell their homeland commodities (Hung Cheng 2013: 22; Lan 2003: 119). In response, the entrepreneurs attempt to provide everything the workers need, such as gathering places, local food, wage-appropriate goods, or karaoke music cafés. Regarding migrant social interests, they are accommodated by communication media through magazines or communal activities.

In general, Indonesians in Taiwan are poor, uneducated, and they take unskilled jobs, while often living with struggles, including illegality, inferiority, and controversy (Lan 2006; Lovebland: 2002; Yuniarto 2014). According to Ms. Mira Luxita, an Indonesian journalist in Taiwan, in addition, television and newspapers also create a poor image of migrants. They publish topics about migrant worker with disparaging titles, such as, "Stranger of robbers" or "The foreign killer" to report on and describe situations related to the migrant condition. In reality, according to Mr. Suwarno, head of the Ponorogo Migrant Association, Indonesian workers are typically migrants with low education levels coming from poorer families, and most of them lack forward thinking and are only economically oriented to pay for their children's education, housing, and other basic needs. Most business owners open their locations for holding religious activities, meetings, and employment/vacancy information, as well as to share knowledge/experience about living, work counselling, and provide secretariat work for migrant associations. Therefore, entrepreneurs become social activists, providing their services and locations to develop migrant capacity building and to become centers of social activity.

Other aspects of the Indonesian migrant condition include having the status of illegal/undocumented migrants. According to data from the Department of Immigration in Taiwan, at the end of July 2014, there were 45,579 illegal/undocumented migrant workers in Taiwan, with a breakdown according to ethnicity as follows: 21,521 Indonesians, 20,615 Vietnamese, 2,460 Filipinos, and 983 Thais. Being undocumented is undoubtedly riskier than working legally. Undocumented migrants often work in the informal sector and, aware of their irregular status, they try not to leave their houses very often. If caught by the police, they would be detained, they would have to pay a penalty of NT\$10,000 (US\$300), and they would be repatriated to their home countries. These migrant issues, such as a lack of documentation and working illegally, have created profitable businesses

for agencies/brokers, which negotiate job offers and housing and which function as interpreters or mediators if a migrant requires language assistance to communicate with the state apparatus or for other purposes.

### Practicing social activities

In general, entrepreneurs' activities can be categorized into four types: social, religious, group, and national activities. Social activities are related to the everyday migrant condition, such as events in the workplace, including work accidents, abuse of power, or poor health conditions. Religious activities are related to support for ritual activities, which customarily includes Muslim organizations or associations for cooperation that hold religious events for the Indonesian Muslim community in Taiwan. Group activities are usually related to relationships between firms or within the community, and these relationships are usually long term and close. Group activity support is given in the form of money donations, room facilities, food or good supplies, and connections. Finally, national activities, which are usually celebrated in conjunction with migrant workers' events or to observe an Indonesian national holiday, are supported by both the Taiwanese and Indonesian governments in cooperation with some of the more skilled entrepreneurs, who function as event organizers to assemble information and mass support.

Mr. Joy Simpson, the CEO of Indosuaru Company Ltd., was interviewed and he discussed stories of entering social activities:

"I was often asked to serve as a translator by a migrant agency, employee, or immigration court or to help Indonesian domestic workers. Indonesian workers are so smooth and naive. One time, I got a call from an 'mba-mba TKI'<sup>2</sup> asking how to install a GPRS phone signal or another time, someone told me a story about her situation with a bad employer, or asked, 'Why didn't I get my full salary?' or they inquire about how to ask their employers to be allowed to go out or to have a holiday, etc....I felt sorry for their condition."

Through this touching experience with migrants, he realized the need for some type of communication to serve as encouragement for these immigrants. In 2006, he established the *Indosuaru* tabloid (Indonesia *Suara* [IS] = Indonesian Voice) to help migrant workers connect with each other and share information. The magazine is a monthly publication, and each edition informs migrants of anything related to the trends in migrant issues, such as migrant activities, news, conflicts, and stories. Since 2006, he has set up many branches of businesses related to migrants, such as IS Style, which promotes stylish clothes and cosmetics for migrant women. In 2008, he also founded IS Multimedia, an online shopping product for migrants so they can shop without leaving the house. He established IS Publishing in 2009 to promote book/magazine/novel publishing for migrants in Taiwan. His latest product was the IS Lounge, established in 2010, where all IS club members can participate in such social activities, such as entrepreneurship seminars, investment seminars, women's reproductive health workshops, language training, travel and tourism in Taiwan, holiday or group parties, and collecting donations for migrant workers in difficulty, all catering to the migrant worker.

Practically speaking, social entrepreneurs' activities are effective when entrepreneurs cooperate with other individuals or organizations. Migrant groups, with their limited knowledge of anything outside their workplace or their own networks, share their human and financial resources with the entrepreneur. For instance, Mr. Tony Thamsir, a business person and special radio anchor for Indonesians in Taiwan, has involved himself in the migrant condition for almost 10 years. He spoke of his experience in assembling groups of Indonesian workers to visit tourist attractions and thus relax with friends:

<sup>2</sup> The formal word is *embak*. In Javanese, *mbak* means older sister; in general, *mbak* means "miss." Indonesian people also use it in various fields—e.g., at a traditional market, restaurant, or bank—to speak to unknown women, such as a waitress or a female housekeeper.



“My companies invite the customers to take tours of Taiwan, for example, to visit the Taiwan National Museum, visit heritage sites, hike and enjoy natural scenery, take a bike tour, or participate in a music festival or short story writing competition. For me, this entire network with migrants and associations becomes a further effort to support migrants’ creativity and self-actualization. These events also help businesses to stay in continuous contact with their existing customers.”

Mr. Tony started a migrant magazine to encourage Indonesian workers to perform and actualize themselves confidently. For example, he used an Indonesian migrant worker as a model for the cover of his magazine. He also became the producer of an Indonesian migrant band in Taiwan, recording and distributing their albums in both Taiwan and Indonesia. As another opportunity, he joined with an Indonesian student to publish two books that tell the stories of Indonesians working in Taiwan and basic computer technology for migrant workers. He dedicated his work, titled *From Zero to Hero*, to the Indonesian community in Taiwan to encourage them to see their lives as being worthwhile.

Social activities are combined with business operations—such as the business location being combined with indoor social activities, such as *arisan*,<sup>3</sup> wedding parties, *pengajian*,<sup>4</sup> *silaturahmi*,<sup>5</sup> group meeting associations, and arrangements of outdoor activities, including music events, tourism and travel, etc. Other activities include such migrant group celebrations as *Eid al-Fitr*, the Indonesian Independence Day, and the Chinese New Year. In Kaoshiung City, the author met a famous Indonesian couple, Komala and Zainal Abidin, the owners of an Indonesian Muslim restaurant in Kaoshiung, who devote themselves to supporting these types of migrant activities. The Indonesians in Kaoshiung who know them call them the “father and mother” of TKI (Indonesian migrant workers). They provide a place for religious events, as the majority of Indonesian workers are Muslims who practice such religious duties as *sholat* (praying five times a day), fasting during Ramadan, eating *halal* food and beverages, and reciting the Quran. They also hold *Iftar* (the breaking of the fast together) and *taraweeh* (extra prayers that Muslims read at night in the month of Ramadan) at their place of business. Usually, a group of Muslim migrants collects money to give to the owner to cook *halal* food and provide special *Iftar* food, such as *takjil* (sweet food eaten upon breaking of the fast). Similar activities may occur at other times, not only during Ramadan—for instance, doing *tahlilan* (repeated recitations of the confession of the faith) if a member of a migrant family has died. They apply the Javanese phrase “*mangan ora mangan kumpul*,” which means that even if there is no food or one does not eat, togetherness is always important. This phrase refers to and demonstrates the spirit of mutual cooperation and social solidarity among individuals or groups. This spirit is valuable for someone who is far away from home and who needs a place and friends with whom to share the same feelings and to maintain the spirit of togetherness.

Another social activist entrepreneur is Mr. Akui from Taichung City, who also supports similar activities. Established in 2000, his business operation, of late, includes many services: international trade, the sale of products, the packing of goods, the selling of goods for other businesses, helping with medical examinations for foreign workers coming to Taiwan, buying plane tickets, arranging residence permits and insurance, sending money through the post office, shipping by sea and air, and job searching (i.e., being a job broker). He usually supports events on a national scale for migrants. Since its establishment in 2010, routinely sponsored events have included religious activities, migrant entertainment days, singing contests, career support and contests for a variety of migrant worker bands in Taiwan, and special seminars for workers in Taiwan. The social activity

<sup>3</sup> A regular social gathering where members contribute to and take turns winning an aggregate sum of money.

<sup>4</sup> *Pengajian* comes from the word *kaji*, and it means “review.” It can refer to prayer, individually or with a group of people, and it refers to gatherings for reviewing the surah in the Qur’an or hearing religious lectures or a public sermon.

<sup>5</sup> This means going to say hello to someone either inside or outside your family and having a conversation. This term is used for associations based on similarities in region, religion, or place of work.

entrepreneur Mr. Deyantono was also interviewed, who is the owner of a local magazine and money remittance agency, the producer of the film *Diaspora and Love in Taipei*, and the head of the Indonesian Entrepreneurs Association in Taiwan. Through the organization, he and the college community have forged a solidarity in donating to migrant workers who have had a work accident or serious health problems and in promoting migrant rights, such as advocating for holidays for domestic workers and introducing migrant shelters as a place to find information related to migrant problems. This activity has support from the Indonesian government office in Taipei, as well as from migrant non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as he further explained:

“...Because we are one of the nation’s homelands, we all need to help each other. If there are migrants affected or if they need health aid, if they have burned hands, fingers cut off, if they are injured by a torturing employer, we are a fellowship of entrepreneurs who felt inspired to help them or simply give some donations. We collect donation money from other entrepreneurs and continue to distribute it to the victims. This routine activity is now well established, as it was begun in 2010. More than a hundred donations, from NT\$3,000 (US\$100) to NT\$5,000 (US\$150) each, have been made to affected migrants, with more than NT\$200,000 (US\$6,300) in total donations from Indonesian entrepreneurs all over Taiwan.”

### Patron/broker entrepreneurs

Every Indonesian shop/company has its own *laoban* (boss, owner), someone who plays a major role in creating extensive patron–broker networks. In this sense, entrepreneurs employ the idiom of ethnicity to maintain a degree of ethnic isolation and to enhance identification with the migrant nation. Indonesian entrepreneurs can distinguish themselves as non-formal migration agencies that can usually resolve immigrant problems and thereby be assured of attracting Indonesian migrant clients; as a side benefit, the *laoban* can also ensure his or her own success by obtaining migrants’ business.

#### *Case one: Illegal/undocumented patrons*

The first example is the AB Toko (Toko means shop, a combination mini-market/retail shop, restaurant, and karaoke), a neighborhood shop well known as a place for Indonesian group worker gatherings, which is owned by Mrs. NN and Mr. MM. They also have a rental room outside the AB Toko, where illegal/undocumented migrants can stay for a low price. As observed, there are a number of illegal/undocumented migrants in this area, and they need a place to stay that is safe from immigration police monitoring. The shop owners offer the room secretly to those who need it. In this way, the AB Toko’s *laobans* have become patrons and brokers for illegal/undocumented migrants. In the year and a half that they have operated this rental room (taken from the date of fieldwork in 2014), they have had no problems running their business. Most illegal/undocumented migrants randomly stay together. They share job information, such as cleaning Taiwanese houses (as part timers/*dagong*), with each other. AB Toko’s *laobans* also share information about jobs. Sometimes, Taiwanese employers come to the store seeking a domestic helper to clean their houses or someone to take care of a sick grandfather/mother. They risk being caught by immigration police and returned to Indonesia. Indeed, the shop owners at AB Toko also take a risk when they provide illegal job information, but they are trying to help fellow migrants in the name of humanity. AB Toko’s *laobans* are also available to migrants to talk about problems or when facing difficulties in their workplaces. For instance, they give advice regarding migrants’ problems with their employers or mediate communications with migrant agencies and the Indonesian government in relation to work problems. They can also help migrants who are involved in accidents and need to contact an agency, employer, or the Indonesian government to obtain assistance. AB Toko also covers medical costs for migrants before health insurance money is paid, and the migrants can repay it later.



*Case two: Broker entrepreneurs*

Two other broker activities commonly performed in conjunction with being an entrepreneur as a way to get extra money are becoming an interpreter for migrants and managing a shelter house. Mrs. Lili and Mrs. Emmy are two broker agents who work with Indonesian labor or the local immigration court. Their side jobs as interpreters (litigation mediators) consist of providing translation assistance to the Taiwanese government and to Indonesian (illegal) migrants in resolving disputes. Both women began their careers as brokers by using their houses as migrant shelters, especially for troubled or illegal/undocumented migrants (*TKI kaburan*). Most of the “patients”—the word normally used to describe the troubled migrants they handle—come to the shelter with various problems: fake contracts, torture and rape allegations, and termination of work issues. The shelter normally handles 10–15 people at a time; in 2005, however, Mrs. Lili had to accommodate almost 100 people in her shelter for as long as two months because a factory where the migrants worked went bankrupt. The two women, in their experiences as both interpreters and managers of migrant shelter houses, are sympathetic to the frequently troubled migrant condition. Troubled migrants heavily depend on the skills of interpreters to solve their problems in immigration court and to forge the best deal with their employers. For instance, Mrs. Lili mediated for one migrant, KM (initial name), a woman who became pregnant by her employer, who took no responsibility. In short, both KM and the employer resorted to the law to find a resolution. In this case, KM claimed compensation from her ex-employer for the child who would be born, with the ex-employer claiming, on his part, that the intercourse was consensual, as evidenced by the absence of violence. At the time of this author’s research, the dispute resolution for this case was still in the judiciary process. In such cases, the entrepreneurs play the role of “friend in need” because they can understand what the victims are feeling and serve as a broker between the migrant workers and the government and employers.

Businesses related to migrants are promising, as they create interest in other entrepreneurs. Churches or Muslim groups also play a broker role in mediating migrant problems. The role of the church is represented by the priest, or by a group of individuals in a Muslim organization and they provide a shelter. Both churches and Muslim organizations derive advantages from brokering migrants, as they add new members to their congregations in addition to pursuing their main mission. The Indonesian Bethel Church (*Gereja Bethel Indonesia* [GBI]) in the Taiwan branch and the China Muslim Association-Special Branch Nahdatul Ulama in Taiwan (CMA-PCI NU) are two examples. The GBI mostly motivates, coaches, and trains the Indonesian community, which is dominated by Chinese-born Indonesians, while the CMA-PCI NU is dominated by volunteered student and migrant workers. Both groups actually have the same mission: to bridge communication with the government and society at large and to offer social services. In some case, Indonesian spouses or migrant workers often suffer from discrimination and violence in the form of sexual abuse, deprivation of religious freedom or of eating *halal* food, false working contracts, and violations of rights as workers and as spouses of Taiwanese. These organizations provide advocacy and mediate between the migrants and their employers or spouses either legally or through consultation. On the entrepreneurial practice, they promote social activities, such as religious retreats, visits to tourist sites, religious lecturer events, etc., and at the same time, they raise funds by selling religious merchandise/accessories, food, and clothing and by collecting donations from their members. The religious institutions enjoy a prosperous income from this job, as well.

*Case three: Patron–broker entrepreneur*

For this case, an example was taken from Toko ‘Warto Hasan,’ owned by Mrs. Hasanah, an Indonesian, and Mr. Chin Lai Huang, a Taiwanese. This couple invested money into building a mosque beside their house called the At-Taqwa Mosque. This mosque not only facilitates all Muslim prayer in Taoyuan County for Friday prayers, but it also serves as a Muslim organization. The mosque organization offers many sub-activities, such as a radio

show with a special program called “Hasanah on the Air.” Besides the radio program, this mosque oversees some Muslim organizations, such as *Majelis Taklim Yasin Taoyuan* (MTYT); the Indonesian Worker Muslim Family in Taoyuan; the Indonesian Workers Association, Taoyuan branch; and the Indonesian Worker Community in Taoyuan. Mrs. Hasanah is no longer a patron of these organizations, but her name has become well known in the Indonesian and Taiwanese societies and particularly among the Taiwan government in Taoyuan.

Her role as a patron is now illustrated in her mutual symbiosis with the At Taqwa Mosque organization, with ex-employees and friends, and with Taiwan Immigration. For the At Taqwa Mosque, Mrs. Hasanah became an investor and a financial resource for mosque organizational activities. Besides serving as a patron for the mosque organization, Mrs. Hasanah has become an advocate for ex-employees who want to develop their own businesses, and she works with the Taiwan Immigration Office by providing employment for illegal migrants under their supervision as part-time workers. The Taiwan Immigration Office recognizes her store as “bonafide” and has a good relation with this firm, so they can send illegal migrants safely to work there while their cases are still in progress at the immigration court. Because of her good reputation in Muslim society, Mrs. Hasanah is sometimes appointed by the Muslim organization at the At Taqwa Mosque for social meetings with the government or to represent the Indonesian Muslim Community in Taiwan. She becomes “the messenger” for other migrant organizations deals with problems relating to the provision of *halal* food at the factory, providing a room for prayer at the factory, send complaints to the Taiwan or Indonesian government when migrants have difficulties.

## Discussion

### *The social function of the middleperson*

Entrepreneurial activities and migrant workers in Taiwan have three fundamental interconnected characteristics, according to Portes and Zhou (1992): (1) bounded solidarity, (2) enforceable trust, and (3) brokerage as a social mechanism (Faist 2014). They interact to allow the community to survive economically and socially. According to the matrix analysis and the cases explored, entrepreneurs foster activities that facilitate migrant workers’ integration by providing an awareness of education and entertainment possibilities while working in Taiwan, giving them a place to exist, and organizing their social activities. They also take care of illegal/undocumented migrants, processing return home documents, driving them to the immigration office, and sometimes providing food and basic lodging along the way. They also educate migrants in a positive way: they spread labor information in tabloids, magazines, and websites; provide informal language courses; make their businesses into migrant group activity secretariats; and pour their financial resources into religious activity, donations, and even shelters where illegal migrants can stay. Their entrepreneurship activities, to some extent, attempt to create migrant capacity building and to empower quality Indonesian migrants as the government or NGOs do. Previous case studies have shown that entrepreneurship is regarded as a positive profession for an individual or community. Socially speaking, the entrepreneurs have a social function in serving migrant communities and connecting with other social environments. From their standpoint, they mediate the relationships between the Indonesian migrant workers and the Taiwanese government (i.e., the immigration office or police), as well as between employees and the Indonesian society. The role of Indonesian migrant entrepreneurship in Taiwan in its middleperson position may be summarized as “the bridge.”

According to Belshaw (1965), the role of the bridge cannot exist without the social acceptance of entrepreneurial innovations, assistance, or support, which should also be understood as investments in the future, in a friendship network, and in trust (in Kim 1995). Barth (1972) also finds the role of entrepreneurs is significant, because it is closely related to a leadership role, and it has social and economic implications for the

social structure (in Kim 1995). Heberer (2004: 19), based on his study on Chinese Yi ethnic attributes, believes that entrepreneurs are analogous to “headmen,” owing to their leadership function and commercial activities in society. All the informants in this study admitted that they were accepted as such leaders by migrant groups; the migrants listen to their opinions, invite them to participate in decision-making, ask for their advice, and depend on them to solve many problems. Only a few people have these qualities of leadership/headmen. The traditional abilities required (intelligence, courage, wisdom, and trust) are widely accepted (Heberer 2004: 19), and one who has a reputation for innovation, experience, and the wise use of resources automatically grows into this role and becomes a leading figure (Kim 1995: 145) in the partnerships in which they participate. Indonesian entrepreneurs also become spokespersons (referred to as *headmen*) to transmit information about migrant needs and problems to the government or to other stakeholders. For example, through magazines/tabloids, they may publish news or write opinions regarding migrant issues; they likewise help in handling cases of migrant workers in various situations.

#### *A moral obligation*

As indicated earlier, social entrepreneur activities, patronages, and broker jobs have been formed and manipulated to launch socio-economic activities in response to the migrant condition. In particular, social activities, patronage, and broker relations have become important instruments for establishing firms, obtaining financing and employment, and maintaining stability and relationships with customers. By means of a social perspective, this study offers a socio-cultural explanation for how migrant entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship can emerge, maintain, and transform the migrant enclave’s problems and activities in time and space migration. In this study, the author has followed Portes and his colleagues (Wilson and Portes 1980; Portes and Bach 1985; Portes and Zhou 1992) in identifying two important concepts in the enclave economy, that is, structural and cultural component. One of the structural components is co-ethnicity, which provides a framework for the relationships between owners and workers and, to a lesser extent, between patrons and clients. In terms of the cultural component, the economic activities are governed by the mechanisms of support and control, which are necessary for economic life in the community and for the reinforcement of norms and values. In the author’s opinion, both elements define how migrant entrepreneurs construct their socio-economic behaviors in a new country. This premise concerning entrepreneurial practices, as shown in this study of entrepreneurs and the plight of migrant workers, shows it to be both a kind of dialectic relation and a moral obligation to fellow sojourners. In this aspect, this work resembles James Scott’s (1976) hypothesis in his work *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, wherein he showed that people’s expectations of sharing their wealth with other members of the clan or community were essentially a moral obligation. For instance, the principle of mutual help come into exist as well as the practice of “*mangan ora mangan kumpul*” as mentioned above.

As observed, the migrant condition, in the forms of the practice of religion; migrant traditions, such as making associations and maintaining strong ethnic ties; and petty conditions in the workplace, actually affect business strategies, entry motives, and the development of the nature of the chosen business. The companies of entrepreneurs can become self-help institutions for migrants having trouble; such companies can distinguish themselves from formal migration agencies and can arrange solutions to immigrant problems, thereby being assured that they will attract Indonesian migrant clients. The entrepreneurs observed through this study assist the migrant and Indonesian societies in the following ways: they provide illness, working accident, and death donations; support costs for ritual festivities; hold workshops for migrant entrepreneurship or business training in their own companies; collect donations for village development in migrants’ places of origin, etc. Based on these social practices, the entrepreneurs’ dual role is clarified: on the one hand, such entrepreneurs are members

of a community network and on the other hand, they remain entrepreneurs who must consider the interests of their companies (Heberer 2004: 15). In this regard, Joy Simpson said:

“...In principle, my company is doing business not for profit only, but our profit will be used for our needy Indonesian friends in Taiwan; we earn money from them and give back to them. However, I don’t give it in the form of money; rather, I share my business knowledge or give facilitation support to their positive activities.”

The entrepreneurs’ stories shared herein seem to reflect what Geertz (1963: 90) pointed out in his study of Bali peddlers and princes: entrepreneurial success “will lead to a higher level of welfare for the organic community as a whole,” showing their contributions to the community. Therefore, in the author’s case, the art of Indonesian migrant entrepreneurs’ social practices in Taiwan is seen also as part of a societal moral obligation rather than solely economic. To this point, typically, migrant entrepreneurship activities and moral obligations are both part of a cognitive process and act to encourage individuals to feel strongly committed and determined to create a social venture to address a social need.

## Conclusion

This paper has explored the pattern of Indonesian migrant entrepreneurial activities in Taiwan. The entrepreneurs’ mobility is limited to the local community and rooted in the moral economy—they share wealth with other members of the community to support or assist them—and the relationship between entrepreneurs and migrant workers goes beyond the normal economic relationship between buyers and sellers. This is because the pattern of entrepreneurship seems to support broad capacity building in the Indonesian migrant society in Taiwan. The migrant worker condition forces entrepreneurs to enter into the migrant social life dimension or social/administrative migrant problem, in addition to looking for financial benefits. In other words, the market creates a new and separate moral and value system of entrepreneurship.

It can be concluded that entrepreneurs stand between two poles: one is planted among economic factors (i.e., gaining profit), whereas the other stands upon its moral obligations to the community (i.e., the migrant fellow), and there is a mutual exchange between these two positions. This stance is a result of the embeddedness of the economy in the wider social context because, as Marcel Mauss has said, “Exchange is not simply an economic transaction, but a total social phenomenon” (in Heberer 2004: 24). Both socio-cultural activities and patron–broker relations are the result of the intersection of these two poles.

This paper has attempted to offer a comprehensive explanation the role of migrant entrepreneurs and their social functions, and this includes the social context of entrepreneurship behaviors, especially the development of social relationships through which people obtain information, resources, and social support (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986; Light 2005; Salaff *et al.* 2003a, 2005b). In other words, though entrepreneurs function as brokers or middlepersons between migrants and other societies against a backdrop of profit making, their entrepreneurship is strongly manifested in socio-cultural and solidarity motives within the community (Bonacich 1973; Waldinger 1990). Thus, entrepreneurs, to some extent, become leaders and agents of change within their societies.

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