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The 'Coolie Trade' via Southeast Asia: Exporting Chinese Indentured Labourers to Cuba through the Spanish Philippines

1 Introduction

This chapter explores various Spanish state-promoted and private commercial strategies regarding the use of the Philippines as an alternative route for the export of Chinese indentured labourers to Cuba in the midst and decline of the 'coolie trade'.[1] With this study, I aim at setting a starting point from which to develop future research on the interconnections between the transoceanic coolie trade and human trafficking to Southeast Asia. In a previous article, titled 'Exploiting Chinese Labour Emigration in Treaty Ports', I suggested that the exportation of Chinese indentured labourers to Cuba was one of the Spanish government's main objectives in China to satisfy Cuban demand for cheap labour, and also driven by the private and individual interests which Spanish consular officers in China had in this business. Following this previous postulate, in this chapter I argue that the strategy of exporting Chinese immigrants via Manila was a shared operation between private agents – mainly coolie traffickers – and the Spanish state. This further implies that the coolie trade to Cuba and Chinese emigration to the Philippines were interconnected, state-promoted enterprises, and a priority of Spain's international relations in China.

1 'Coolie' is a pejorative and sensitive term referring to servile Chinese labour immigrants, usually employed using indenture contracts. In this chapter I will use this term in reference to the trafficking of Chinese labourers, often known as the 'coolie trade', and when referring to sources which label certain Chinese immigrants as 'coolies'. For recent contributions to the problematization of the 'coolie question', see Diane Kirkby and Sophie Loy-Wilson, eds., *Labour History and the Coolie Question*, special issue, *Labour History* 113 (2017): iii–v; Mae M. Ngai and Sophie Loy-Wilson, "Thinking Labor Rights through the Coolie Question," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 91 (2017): 5–7. Key works in the field of indentured labour are Arnold J. Meagher, *The Coolie Trade: The Traffic in Chinese Laborers to Latin America 1847–1874* (Philadelphia: Xlibris Corporation, 2008); David Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Walton Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838–1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

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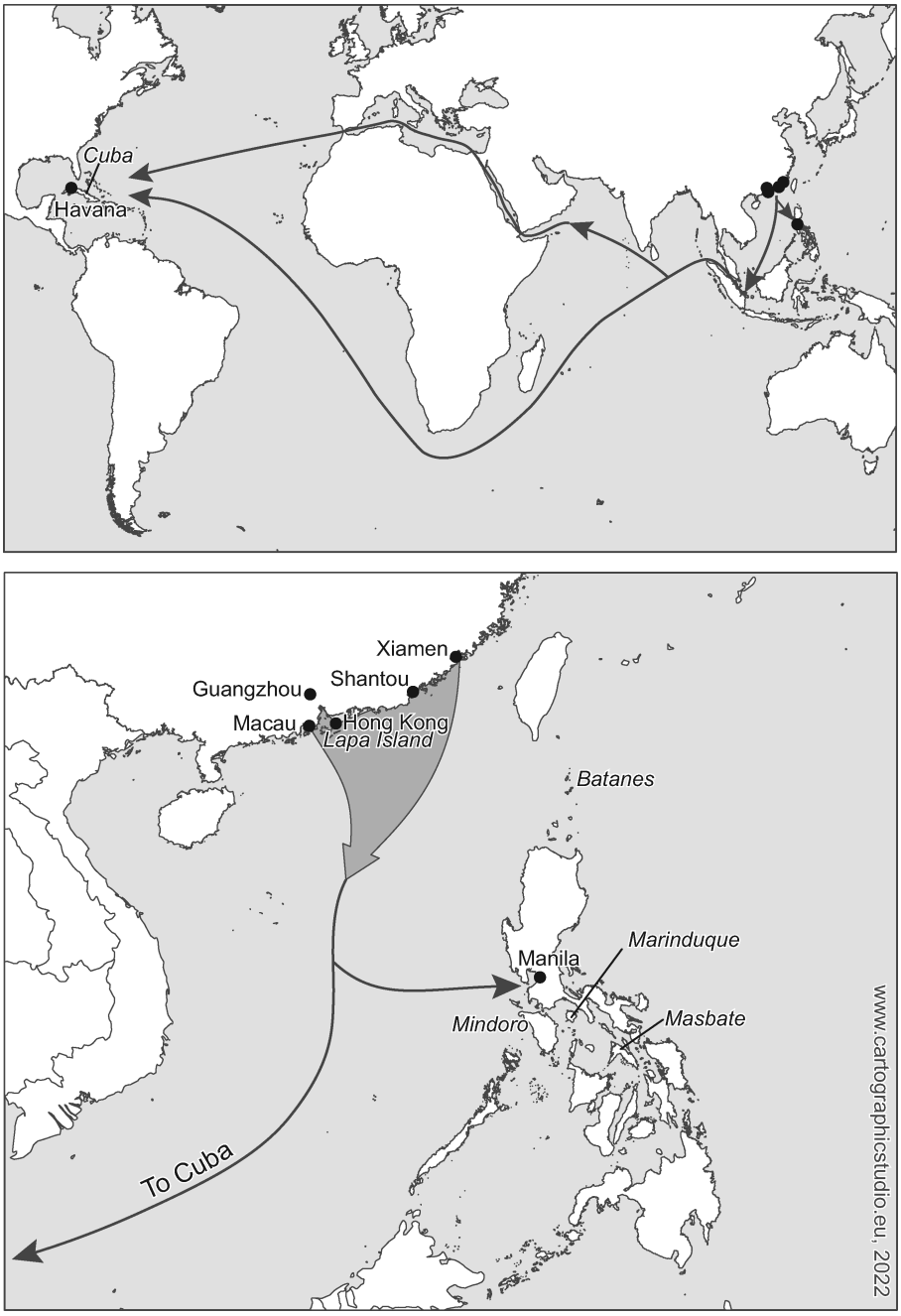
At a local level, this research tackles a long-unanswered question regarding whether there was a prearranged attempt to organize a trade in Chinese immigrants to the Philippines or, conversely, whether the influx of immigrants from the 1850s onwards just responded to a natural process of Chinese international mobility.[2] In particular, instead of focusing on whether there was a trade in indentured labour to the Philippines, as Elliott C. Arensmeyer, Charles J. McCarthy and I have done in previous publications, in this chapter I explore exclusively the strategic use of this colony in the transoceanic coolie trade.[3] In addition, in the context of the global coolie trade, this chapter portrays the deliberate use of colonial possessions to divert maritime migratory flows and transform them into sources of forced labour, drawing attention to the significant role of go-betweens. Through their actions, Western consuls and coolie agents, as well as Chinese brokers, were crucial in the transformation of 'free' emigrants into indentured coolies, revealing the processes which took place through the relationship between private agents and the state. The Spanish government's disregard for human exploitation to satisfy the commercial interests of its colonies overseas is due to the late entry of this country into the slavery business, coinciding with the pressure from the abolitionist movement.[4] From a global-historical perspective, Spain's late incorporation in the international slavery business – at the moment of its decline – pushed the Spanish government and entrepreneurs to seek alternatives to African slaves who might supplement them in slave-like conditions.

Certainly the fact that the silent and silenced agencies involved in the trade in humans – traders and migrants – were inconspicuous is a hindrance to researching the international and transoceanic migration of Chinese labourers. Moreover, the smuggling of emigrants to Southeast Asia, an unregistered trade, was common, and therefore the number, conditions, origin, and destination of these migrants are often difficult to assess. There is also a lack of reliable sources, since not only conflicts of interest often intervened in clearing up corruption around this trade, but official sources on this type of migration to the Philippines and Latin America are often erratic or incomplete. In particular, sources regarding the Spanish colonial government in the Philippines are either fragmentary or currently inaccessible. To elude these obstacles,

2 Elliott C. Arensmeyer, "British Merchant Enterprise and the Chinese Coolie Labour Trade, 1850–1874" (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 1979): 274–75.

3 Elliott C. Arensmeyer, "The Chinese Coolie Labor Trade and the Philippines: An Inquiry," *Philippine Studies* 28, no. 2 (1980): 187–98; Charles J. McCarthy, "Chinese Coolie Labor Minimal in the Philippines," *The Annals of the Philippine Chinese Historical Association* 5 (1975): 8–29; Mònica Ginés-Blasi, "A Philippine 'Coolie Trade': Trade and Exploitation of Chinese Labour in Spanish Colonial Philippines, 1850–98," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 51, no. 3 (2020): 1–27.

4 Josep Maria Fradera and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, "Introduction: Colonial Pioneer and Plantation Latecomer," in *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain's Atlantic Empire*, ed. Josep Maria Fradera and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013): 1–12.



Map 4: Chinese indentured labour migration flows to the Philippines and Cuba.

I have used a variety of multinational primary sources – some of which remain unpublished – scattered in archives in Spain, the Philippines, the UK, and Portugal.[5]

Beyond reaching for a wide range of archival material, I also challenge these research obstacles by looking into the various state-promoted policies and private commercial strategies that confronted the international condemnation of indentured trade to Cuba. I will first elaborate on how bondage and coercion manifested in the Chinese emigration systems to Cuba and the Philippines. Secondly, I will portray the earliest commercial endeavours to import Chinese indentured labour into the Philippines. I will afterwards focus on how the first Spanish representative in China and the Spanish metropolitan government planned on using Manila as a route for the export of Chinese labourers in the 1860s, and assess the success of their strategies. Finally, I will show how coolie traffickers still explored the Manila route in the 1870s to reinitiate the halted trade, and how they received the help and support of the Minister of Overseas Affairs through his extended network.

2 Chinese Emigration to Spanish Colonies

The migratory flow from the south China coast to Manila was long-standing and there were established maritime routes which British and Spanish naval commerce used for Chinese passenger conveyance.[6] The Spanish central government planned to use Manila for the supply of indentured labourers in order to avoid international condemnation of the trade when it became stagnant in the late 1860s. In the 1850s there were failed initiatives to introduce Chinese agricultural labourers to the Philippines. Spanish agents associated to Cuban planters, with the support of the Spanish Minister of Overseas Affairs (Ministro de Ultramar), also explored this possibility when planning to reinitiate the trade when it was officially restricted in 1874. This case highlights interconnections between the 'coolie trade' and the 'credit-ticket' or 'assisted migration' systems, stressing the permeability between these forms of labour mobility used for

5 These sources consist of correspondence between the Spanish legation and consulates in China with the Ministry of State and the Office, the Ministry of Colonial Affairs, ship captains and owners, and immigration agents, preserved at the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN) in Madrid and at the Library Balaguer (LB) in Vilanova i la Geltrú, Barcelona; the British Foreign Office (FO) and Colonial Office (CO) preserved at the National Archives (BNA). To a lesser extent, I am also citing sources consulted at the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU), in Lisbon, and records of the Spanish colonial government in the Philippines kept at the National Archives of the Philippines (NAP). Access restrictions to the NAP's Spanish Section have compromised the availability of primary sources. Further research has been postponed in the hope of future accessibility to this Section.

6 I have recently researched the introduction of Chinese labourers to the Philippines in Ginés-Blasi, "A Philippine 'Coolie Trade'".

Cuba and the Philippines respectively.[7] Both originated in the same recruiting settings in treaty-port China's gathering stations – such as Xiamen – and developed bondage mechanisms. This chapter considers the role of intermediaries – the Spanish state and human traffickers – in the creation of an interconnected system of forced labour migration between China, Cuba, and the Philippines (Map 4). This transoceanic connection through the Spanish Empire serves as a case study of the transformation of bondage, from African slavery in Cuba, through Chinese indentured labour, and to 'free' emigration to the Philippines.[8]

Indentured labourers from China were the main workforce sought by Cuban planters to supplement African slaves in the second half of the nineteenth century. The abolitionist movement and the subsequent increase in the cost of slaves drove Cuban planters to look for an addition to African slave labour, which they found in the form of Chinese indentured contract labourers, who became indispensable to the Cuban economy.[9] Between 1847 and 1874 about 125,000 Chinese men were transported to Havana through a transnational mass-migration business venture, to work mostly on sugar cane plantations, providing reinforcements to African labour while slavery was being 'gradually abolished'.[10] Between 1850 and 1898, there was also an unparalleled inflow of Chinese immigrant labourers to the Philippines, which raised the number of Chinese residents to 100,000. As in the trade to Cuba, Chinese brokers and foremen, Spanish institutions and authorities in Manila, consuls in China, and Spanish and British ship captains obtained abundant profits from this migratory movement by overcharging extra fees and taxes to the labourers for their own personal economic benefit. The import to and abuse of Chinese immigrant labourers in the Philippines was constant throughout the second half of the

7 Philip A. Kuhn, *Chinese among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008); Ei Murakami, "Two Bonded Labour Emigration Patterns in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Southern China: The Coolie Trade and Emigration to Southeast Asia," in *Bonded Labour and Debt in the Indian Ocean World*, ed. Alessandro Stanziani and Gwyn Campbell (London: Routledge, 2015): 153–64.

8 Oliver Tappe and Ulrike Lindner, "Introduction: Global Variants of Bonded Labour," in *Bonded Labour: Global and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Sabine Damir-Geilsdorf, Ulrike Lindner, Gesine Müller, Oliver Tappe, and Michael Zeuske (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016): 9–34; Richard B. Allen, "Asian Indentured Labor in the 19th and Early 20th Century Colonial Plantation World," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, ed. David Ludden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Ulbe Bosma, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, and Aditya Sarkar, "Mediating Labour: An Introduction," *International Review of Social History* 57, no. S20 (2012): 1–15.

9 Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "Chinese Coolie Labor in Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: Free Labor of Neo-slavery," *Contributions in Black Studies: A Journal of African and Afro-American Studies* 12 (1994): 38–54; Juan Pérez de la Riva, *El barracón: Esclavitud y capitalismo en Cuba* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1978); Juan Pérez de la riva, *La república neocolonial* (Havana: Ciencias Sociales, 1975); Juan Jiménez Pastrana, *Los Chinos en la historia de Cuba: 1847–1930* (Havana: Ciencias Sociales, 1983).

10 The official abolition of slavery in Cuba took place in 1886. See Arthur F. Corwin, *Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1817–1886* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014).

nineteenth century.[11] The export of labourers to Cuba via Manila was somewhat successful, as some Chinese labourers in Cuba declared coming from the Philippines.[12] The interconnection between these two migratory flows has remained unexplored despite its potential to contribute to current discussions on the global coolie trade, as well as transitions between various forms of bondage. Yet while this chapter focuses on the interconnections between these two systems of mobility, further research needs to be done to ascertain the extent of emigration to Cuba via the Philippines, as well as where and how the workers were engaged – either before their departure from China or in the Philippines.

The recruitment and departure sites of Chinese indentured labourers on the south China coast underwent transformations throughout the period of the 'coolie trade' to Latin America to evade restrictions. For instance, Xiamen (also known as Amoy) changed from a port of departure to a gathering station in the 1860s, and Macau authorities suggested using the nearby island of Lapa to continue dispatching emigrants after the official halt of the traffic in 1876.[13] Authors Lisa Yun and Ricardo René Laremont have pointed to the use of the Philippines to smuggle coolies when their procurement became increasingly difficult due to British opposition in Xiamen.[14]

The Spanish government and immigration agents in China explored the use of the Philippines as a secondary route to avoid the international condemnation of the trade to Cuba and to ensure its continuity. This took place in two particular moments: after the trade's decline in 1868, and before its official halt in 1874, when agents and *hacendados* in Cuba foresaw the incoming restrictions to the trade.[15] Previously, Spanish entrepreneurs, with the support of authorities in the Philippines and representatives in China, considered the recruitment of Chinese indentured labourers to develop Philippine agricultural production. The Spanish government and human traffickers took advantage of the strategical maritime dominion of the Philippines to provide a substitute for the increasingly declining supply of slave labour in a subversive manner. This strategy had been used before, for instance to move the bulk of the trade from Xiamen to Macau, yet introduced unprecedented colonial connections in the coolie trade.

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11 Ginés-Blasi, "A Philippine 'Coolie Trade'."

12 *Chinese Emigration: Report of the Commission Sent by China to Ascertain the Condition of Chinese Coolies in Cuba* (Shanghai: Imperial Maritime Customs Press, 1876): 8.

13 Mònica Ginés-Blasi, "Exploiting Chinese Labour Emigration in Treaty Ports: The Role of Spanish Consulates in the 'Coolie Trade'," *International Review of Social History* 66, no. 1 (2021):1–24. Secretaria de Estado da Marinha e Ultramar, Direcção geral do Ultramar, Correspondencia de Macau e Timor, 1876, AHU-ACL-SEMU-DGU-005, Cx. 45.

14 Lisa Yun and Ricardo René Laremont, "Chinese Coolies and African Slaves in Cuba, 1847–74," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 4, no. 2 (2017): 112–13; Lisa Yun, *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008): 21.

15 José Luis Luzón, "Chineros, diplomáticos y hacendados en La Habana colonial. Don Francisco Abellá y Raldiris y su proyecto de inmigración libre a Cuba (1874)," *Boletín Americanista* 39 (1989): 147.

3 Bondage, Coercion and Chinese Emigration

The mechanism operating the emigration of Chinese labourers to Cuba and the Philippines was similarly abusive in many respects, particularly regarding their recruitment, transport, and in the entrance into conditions of involuntary debt bondage.[16] Bondage in Chinese indentured labour in Cuba has been portrayed in the historiography for more than five decades, from the work of established Cuban historians Juan Pérez de la Riva and Jiménez Pastrana in the 1970s and 1980s,[17] to more recent authors such as Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Lisa Yun, Kathleen López, Michael Zeuske, and Benjamin Nicolas Narváez.[18] Parallelisms with the previous and ongoing system of African slavery which indentured labourers experienced in Cuba have also been widely discussed by these authors. In contrast, the exploitation of Chinese emigrant labourers to and in the Philippines has only been recovered recently in Jely Agameo Galang's dissertation and in my article 'A Philippine "Coolie Trade": Trade and Exploitation of Chinese Labour in Spanish Colonial Philippines, 1850–1898', and also previously tackled by McCarthy and Arensmeyer in two articles published in 1975 and 1980 respectively.[19]

Coercion and bondage in the Cuban case are clear as they were inflicted in the three 'moments' which Marcel van der Linden has identified as characteristic of coerced labour: recruitment, the period of work, and the end of the labour relationship.[20] Chinese prospective immigrants were victims of many abuses inflicted in the

16 Marcel van der Linden, "Dissecting Coerced Labor," in *On Coerced Labor: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery*, ed. Marcel van der Linden and Magaly Rodríguez García (Leiden: Brill, 2016): 300–301.

17 Jiménez Pastrana, *Los Chinos en la historia de Cuba: 1847–1930*; Juan Pérez de la Riva, "La situación legal del culí en Cuba: 1849–1868," *Cahiers Du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien* 16 (1971): 7–32.

18 Lisa Yun, "Chinese Freedom Fighters in Cuba: From Bondage to Liberation, 1847–1898," in *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections Between African Americans and Asian Americans*, ed. Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008): 33; Kathleen López, *Chinese Cubans: A Transnational History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Michael Zeuske, "Coolies – Asiáticos and Chinos: Global Dimensions of Second Slavery," in *Bonded Labour: Global and Comparative Perspectives (18th–21st Century)*, ed. Sabine Damir-Geilsdorf et al. (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2016): 35–57; Benjamin Nicolas Narváez, "Chinese Coolies in Cuba and Peru: Race, Labor, and Immigration, 1839–1886" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 2010); Benjamin Nicolas Narváez, "Abolition, Chinese Indentured Labor, and the State: Cuba, Peru, and the United States during the Mid Nineteenth Century," *The Americas* 76, no. 1 (2019): 5–40.

19 Jely Agamao Galang, "Vagrants and Outcasts: Chinese Labouring Classes, Criminality, and the State in the Philippines, 1831–1898" (PhD diss., Murdoch University, 2019); Ginés-Blasi, "A Philippine 'Coolie Trade'"; McCarthy, "Chinese Coolie Labor Minimal in the Philippines"; Arensmeyer, "The Chinese Coolie Labor Trade and the Philippines".

20 Van der Linden, "Dissecting Coerced Labor": 298.

process of recruitment and embarkation: mostly coming from the provinces of Guangdong and Fujian, they were frequently enticed deceitfully with false promises of good wages and forced to sign up for emigration – and even tortured until they agreed to do so.[21] Sometimes, they were plainly kidnapped. Once taken to the port of departure – mainly Xiamen, Shantou (also known as Swatow), Macau, and Guangzhou – they were held in guarded receiving stations, known as 'barracoons' (a term derived from the barracks used to keep slaves in the African slave trade), where they were locked and banned from withdrawing their 'consent'.[22] The signing of contracts and embarkation had to be certified by Western authorities and consuls. In this process, when contracts had to be read to prospective emigrants, they were often misinformed as to the translation, or the Chinese translation was just not read to them. Sometimes, emigrants were misled into thinking that they were migrating to other sites in Southeast Asia, such as Annam or Singapore, and were not aware that they were being taken as far away as Latin America.[23] The abuses committed during recruitment and embarkation stirred up mutinies on board of ships as well as riots and conflicts against Westerners in treaty ports, such as the Amoy riot in 1852.[24]

Transoceanic voyages of Chinese migrant vessels stand out for the high average death rates on board – sixteen per cent in the Cuban case. They later suffered abuse in their working and living conditions, where they lived with a constant threat of physical harm or imprisonment if they decided to flee. They were confined in the same way as slaves – even shackled together –, with the same methods of physical control, such as shackles, traps, whippings, and lockups – tools of repression also employed on the vessels in these transoceanic voyages. The costs of transport, food, taxes, clothes, agency, passport, and legalizations had been advanced to the emigrant in China, so at the end of the eight-year contracts they had accumulated a debt with the *patrón* or *patrono* (the employer in Cuba) – who had bought their contracts from the contracting agency – which they could seldom pay back, and thus were obliged to enter a new contract.[25]

21 Oriol Regué-Sendrós is currently conducting in-depth research about the origin of Chinese immigrants in Cuba. He presented some of his preliminary findings in the talk 'Spanish Colonial Rule and the forced Chinese migration to Cuba (1850s–1860s)' at the 11th International Convention of Asian Scholars (ICAS11) in Leiden, 15 July 2019.

22 *Chinese Emigration: Report of the Commission Sent by China to Ascertain the Condition of Chinese Coolies in Cuba*, 6–8; Meagher, *The Coolie Trade*, 66–82.

23 *Chinese Emigration: Report of the Commission Sent by China to Ascertain the Condition of Chinese Coolies in Cuba*, 11.

24 Elliott Young, *Alien Nation: Chinese Migration in the Americas from the Coolie Era through World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014): 34–46.

25 Hu-DeHart, "Chinese Coolie Labor in Cuba in the Nineteenth Century"; *Chinese Emigration: Report of the Commission Sent by China to Ascertain the Condition of Chinese Coolies in Cuba*. Regarding the racialization of the Chinese in Cuba and the deprivation of their rights as 'free white settlers', see Oriol Regué-Sendrós, "Chinese Migration to Cuba: Racial Legislation and Colonial

As in the Cuban case, Chinese immigrants in the Philippines became tied to their creditors through debt, and this abuse persisted because it was financially fruitful for many actors. Despite the parallelisms between the Cuban and Philippine migratory movements, few authors have explored whether there was trade in indentured labourers to the Philippines. McCarthy and Arensmeyer looked into this possibility more than three decades ago, and focused on the lack of a contract labour system to disprove that there was coolie trade.[26] In contrast, I highlight the similarities in the arrangement of the two migratory fluxes in treaty ports and the use of debt bondage in the Philippines to argue that they were interconnected. The abusive emigration mechanism to Manila was also prearranged and tied these emigrants to bondage by debt from which it was difficult to break free.[27] Chinese brokers and foremen, Spanish institutions and authorities in Manila, consuls in China, companies operating in the Philippines, as well as Spanish and British ship captains and owners, all took advantage of these immigrants in China and in the colony, leading to an unprecedented inflow of immigrants. Thus, the flow of Chinese immigrants to both colonies was steady because a wide range of actors obtained pecuniary profits from it. These agents' actions, however, often remained in the shadows to protect their obscure business interests.[28]

Chinese immigrant labourers in the Philippines were also victims of bondage and coercion under a system of 'assisted migration'. Migrants entered debt bondage with their *cabecillas* ('gang leaders'), and would remain 'unfree' until they paid back all these advances from their wages – which the *cabecillas* retained.[29] The abusive taxes which they had to pay during the issuing of passports and legalizations in China significantly increased the debt with their creditors. Transportation to Manila was also a source of abuse. Chinese emigrants travelled in such overcrowded vessels – particularly the Spanish ones – that acting British consul Herbert A. Giles felt obliged to intervene. In 1881, Giles denounced how Spanish consuls in Xiamen obtained significant revenue from every Chinese citizen shipped to Manila through the issuing of passports. It was therefore in their personal interest to em-

Rule in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Spanish Empire," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 24, no. 2 (2018): 279–92.

26 McCarthy, "Chinese Coolie Labor Minimal in the Philippines"; Arensmeyer, "The Chinese Coolie Labor Trade and the Philippines."

27 Ginés-Blasi, "A Philippine 'Coolie Trade'."

28 McCarthy, "Chinese Coolie Labor Minimal in the Philippines"; Arensmeyer, *British Merchant Enterprise and the Chinese Coolie Labour Trade, 1850–1874*; Ginés-Blasi, "A Philippine 'Coolie Trade'."

29 For the use of monetary taxes to enter bondage see van der Linden, "Dissecting Coerced Labor": 303.

bark as many immigrants as possible, which led to overcrowding these steamers, a situation which led to 'much dissatisfaction' among the general public.[30]

The issue which remains the most unclear is the process by which a prospective emigrant went from a journey to the Philippines to ending up in Cuba. Those Chinese emigrants in Cuba who declared coming from the Philippines could have either been recruited in China and travelled via the Philippines; or they could have been recruited in the Philippines after emigrating there, or they could have been misled into believing that they were travelling to the Philippines, but were taken to Cuba instead.

The most significant difference between emigration to Cuba and to the Philippines is the use of contracts of indenture in Cuba, and the lack thereof – with some exceptions – in the Philippines. McCarthy and Arensmeyer thought that the assisted migration and credit-ticket systems that applied in the Philippines – which some contemporary witnesses confused with indenture contract labour – were less open to abuse. As in Cuba, in other situations where indenture was also practiced, such as Assam for instance, contracts gave planters the sought-after protection and rights over the workers, whom they perceived as an investment, as they had paid for their recruitment and journey to the plantations.[31] However, migrating to the Philippines without signing a contract of labour in China did not assure these emigrants' freedom in their place of destination. Chinese labour migration to the Philippines consisted in a kinship-based Chinese broker and foreman system. Richard T. Chu has indicated how the reliance on hometown networks, while sometimes helping newly arrived immigrants to settle quickly, was also a frequent source of exploitation, as the debt generated through the credit-ticket system left immigrants at their recruiters' mercy.[32] The lack of regulations was, therefore, the source of exploitation. In 1883, the British consul in Xiamen still complained how, although many Chinese departed from there without indentures, they would later become 'involved in the meshes of some kind of contract of which they have no information here'; thus, becoming recruited elsewhere for Latin America was possible.[33] At least some of the labourers migrating to the Philippines with contracts of indenture – such as for mining jobs – are reported to have been recruited in Macau through the

30 Herbert A. Giles to Thomas F. Wade, Xiamen, 12 Mar. 1881, in *To and from Amoy*, 1883, BNA, FO 228/721. Regarding the economic profits extracted from emigration and the overcrowding of vessels, see Ginés-Blasi, "A Philippine 'Coolie Trade'": 15–26.

31 Nitin Varma, *Coolies of Capitalism* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017): 1.

32 Richard T. Chu, *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos of Manila: Family, Identity, and Culture, 1860s–1930s* (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 110–11. Marcel van der Linden has identified kinship and community pressure as a form of entry into bondage, see van der Linden, "Dissecting Coerced Labor": 302.

33 *To and from Amoy*, 1883, BNA, FO 228/721. I am grateful to Douglas Fix for providing this reference to me.

same system as migrants engaged for Cuba and Peru. They shared the same vessels as their Cuban counterparts, and stopped over in the Philippines.[34]

4 Early Projects to Introduce Indentured Labourers into the Philippines

In the mid-nineteenth century, just when the coolie trade to Cuba and Peru began gaining momentum, some entrepreneurs in the Philippines also started to consider the mass introduction of Chinese indentured labourers for plantation development and mining. Primary sources indicate that leading human traffickers in the Latin American trade also provided the emigrating arrangements to the Philippines from Xiamen. This highlights the interconnection between the two systems, although in comparison with Cuba, efforts were made to provide fairer working conditions. Nevertheless, climate and geographical conditions – with the frequent threat of typhoons and shipwrecks – seemed an inexorable impediment to these plantations, and so these projects seemed to be generally unsuccessful in the long term.[35]

One particular merchant, Juan Bautista Marcaida – an energetic entrepreneur of Basque origin who held several official public positions in the Philippine administration – stands out for trying to develop the importation of Chinese labour as a means for speculation in the 1850s. During those same years, the Philippine Governor Urbiztondo had precisely facilitated the import of groups of Chinese agricultural workers.[36] In his book *Empresas agricolas, con chinos, en Filipinas, tomando por tipo lo que podrian producir en la isla de Mindoro*, Marcaida devised a plan for the introduction of more than 65,000 Chinese within ten years in Mindoro. The company would advance half of the emigration costs to the emigrant, who would work as a tenant farmer for 300 days a year and be paid 1.5 reales, the same as the locals' salary, as well as obtaining half the profits from their crops.[37] Marcaida was finally able to found and manage four farms based on Chinese labour on the islands of Batanes, Mindoro, Masbate, and Marinduque, although the first two had to be abandoned due to bankruptcy.[38] McCarthy

34 Galang, "Vagrants and Outcasts": 105–6.

35 See, for instance, the delays in the introduction of Chinese migrants to Batanes and Babuyanes due to severe weather conditions and a shipwreck. *Introducción de colonos chinos en Batanes y Babuyanes*, AHN, ULTRAMAR, 5162, Exp.48.

36 John Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands* (London: Smith, Elder & Company, 1859): 315.

37 Juan Bautista Marcaida, *Empresas agricolas, con chinos, en Filipinas, tomando por tipo lo que podrian producir en la isla de Mindoro* (Manila: Amigos del Pais, 1850): 3–15.

38 *Ensayo de la aplicación de filamentos del plátano por Juan Bautista Marcaida*, AHN, ULTRAMAR, 435, Exp. 3*; Erección de pueblo de Bohol, 1837. Exp. 4, S13–24. Oficio de Don Juan Bautista Marcaida, director de la Hacienda de Naro, de la Isla de Masbate al Excelentísimo Sr. Gobernador y Capitán General de Filipinas suplicándole vuestra Excelencia se ordene al Gob. Político Militar de*

suggests that the wealthy entrepreneur Mariano Rojas also imported unskilled Chinese labourers to work his estates in 1848.[39]

James 'Santiago' Tait, a British merchant who moved from Manila to Xiamen in 1846, provided the workers for Marcaida's project from Xiamen. Tait & Company was the main firm dedicated to the trafficking of Chinese emigrants to Latin America. Tait created this business in Xiamen after working for the Spanish company Eugenio de Otadui y C[a] in Manila. When Tait moved to Xiamen in 1846, he also became acting vice-consul for Spain in Xiamen, a position which he used to obtain the monopoly of the trade in labourers and to commit abuses. Being the main supplier of workers to Latin America, Tait's business and the involvement in Marcaida's project strengthens the idea of Manila as a point of departure of Chinese emigrants to Cuba. Aside from being Marcaida's agent on that occasion, Tait also appears in some documents which connect him and Philippine companies to Chinese emigration to the Philippines and to Cuba. For instance, Tait hired a number of Chinese recruited for Cuba together with the Manila company Matia Menchacatorre, and he also appears in a document regarding the emigration of a hundred Chinese men on board of the ship *Juno* to Batanes, contracted for five years by a Manila company.[40]

In 1855 Tait was at the centre of a scandal involving the Spanish Consul General, Nicasio Cañete y Moral, who – like Tait – used his position to obtain personal profit from ship duties, legalizations and certifications in the embarkation and departure of coolie ships to Cuba. This episode shows how ferociously Spanish authorities in China fought to defend their private business profits while holding official responsibilities, and even using their position of authority to obtain the most benefit out of international human trafficking.[41] After a long quarrel between the consul and vice-consul, Tait was finally dismissed, and another Spanish merchant with business in Chinese emigration took over his position.[42] There is still one last piece of news that connects Tait and Chinese immigration to Manila, as it places him on the shipwrecked British steamship *Luzon* in December 1864. This vessel was sailing from Xiamen to Manila, and on board there were only Tait, a Spaniard named Rentería, and seventy Chinese

Bohol no se ponga obstáculo y se facilite la traslacion de los naturales de aquella provincia a la Hacienda de Naru de su propiedad, NAP, SDS 13936, Exp. 4, S13–24. Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850–1898* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965): 57.

39 McCarthy, "Chinese Coolie Labor Minimal in the Philippines": 15–16.

40 Ginés-Blasi, "A Philippine 'Coolie Trade'." See Juan Pérez de la Riva, *Documentos para la historia de las gentes sin historia: El tráfico de culíes chinos* (Havana: Biblioteca Nacional, 1965): 82. *Embajadas y legaciones, China, 1836–1865*, AHN, Mº_EXTERIORES_H,1445. Ander Permanyer-Ugartemendia, "La Participación española en la economía del opio en Asia Oriental tras el fin del Galeón" (PhD diss., Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2013): 394.

41 Ginés-Blasi, "Exploiting Chinese Labour Emigration in Treaty Ports."

42 *Tait, Santiago*, AHN, Mº_Exteriores_PP1013.

people. The conditions in which these Chinese were travelling, and their relationship with Tait, however, is still unknown.[43] All passengers survived the shipwreck.

Aside from these projects, female and male infant smuggling into the Philippines was systematic from every Chinese port and particularly common from Ningbo and via Macau – the main centre of the coolie trade – in the 1850s. The export of Chinese male infants to Cuba was also common, an aspect of the history of China's human trafficking which has not yet been researched in connection to the coolie trade.[44] One representative case of the connection of female infant smuggling with both the Philippines and Cuba is the case of the British vessel *Inglewood*, discovered in Xiamen to be harbouring forty-four little Chinese girls thought to be under eight years of age. The girls' final destination was an unsolved mystery, and it was never clear if they were bound for Manila or for Cuba, to join male coolies in Cuban plantations.[45]

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Chinese women were in high demand in both Spanish colonies, as these were significant destinations for the export of male Chinese labourers. This is because the objective of some Spanish authorities was providing these colonies with labourers who would settle and work on plantations long term. Spanish authorities in Asia and the Spanish metropolitan government were interested in the emigration of women and, better yet, of whole families. The intense demand for women from a country which presented sociocultural obstacles to their emigration stimulated the international smuggling of female infants.[46]

The export of females to Cuba, and the conveyance of female children to the Philippines were also state-supported initiatives. To promote the emigration of women to Cuba, the Spanish Royal Decree of 22 March 1854 established that one fifth of emigrants embarking for that destination had to be women; however, this had little success.[47] Furthermore, the demand for women in the Philippines sparked plans for using an orphanage, the Santa Infancia sisterhood in Fujian, to provide the Philippines with female Christian children, an idea which the Spanish Minister

43 *La Correspondencia de España. Diario Universal de Noticias*, Madrid, 19 March 1865. I am grateful to John Shufelt for providing me with this reference.

44 The recruitment into indenture of male children under the age of ten could have been a common practice also for the Atlantic coolie trade, see BNA, CO 885/1/19.

45 Meagher, *The Coolie Trade*: 82–91; Arensmeyer, "The Chinese Coolie Labor Trade and the Philippines": 192.

46 *Expediente general sobre colonización asiática en Cuba*, AHN, ULTRAMAR, 85, Exp. 3; Nicasio Cañete y Moral to the First Secretary of State and the Office, Macau, 9 April 1855, *Consulado de Macao*, AHN, Mº_EXTERIORES_H1949. Júlia Martínez has already shown how the reliance of European colonialism upon Asian male migrant labour encouraged the trafficking of Asian women to Southeast Asia for prostitution, see Julia Martínez, "Mapping the Trafficking of Women across Colonial Southeast Asia, 1600s–1930s," *Journal of Global Slavery* 1, no. 2–3 (2016): 224–47.

47 *Expediente general sobre colonización asiática en Cuba*, AHN, ULTRAMAR, 85, Exp. 3.

Plenipotentiary in China, Sinibald de Mas, supported.[48] Mas believed that by 1858 2,500 children would arrive annually. He was in favour of developing a system of Chinese labour emigration to the Philippines, and supported Marcaida's project. According to John Bowring, however, this orphanage system was unsuccessful, and by 1859 not a single child had been supplied through the sisterhood's institution.[49] Nevertheless, the purchase of Chinese female children by *criollo* families in the Philippines – that is, Philippine-born families of Spanish origin – where they would be educated and work as servants, was common, as it was also common for girls to be bought by other women who would introduce them into prostitution.[50]

5 A Spanish State-Sponsored Strategy

The export of Chinese indentured labourers to Cuba via Manila became official by Spanish Royal Order on 12 December 1867, which approved the regulations for hiring Chinese immigrants in the Philippines to work on Cuban plantations.[51] This policy was a reaction to the latest British, French, and Chinese governments' agreement of 1866, which introduced new items regarding the payment of the return voyage and the number of years stipulated in the contracts – the latter were to run for five years instead of eight, as they had until then. These were important hindrances to Spanish business on the south China coast, as coolie traffickers would have to provide return tickets back to China and engage workers for shorter periods. Spanish representatives in China were concerned that if the business stopped being profitable to emigration agents and companies on the south China coast, the entire emigration enterprise would collapse and no more workers from China would be exported, thus endangering the Cuban economy.[52] Furthermore, the Sino-Western agreement was very untimely for Cuban planters: the African slave trade was diminishing, with the last shipment arriving in 1866. It was precisely in 1866 and 1867 that the coolie trade saw one of the most spectacular intensifications since its beginnings in 1847: 12,391 in 1866 and 14,263 in 1867.[53] Cutting

48 On Sinibald de Mas see David Martínez-Robles, *Entre dos imperios: Sinibaldo de Mas y la empresa colonial en China (1844–1868)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2018).

49 Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands*: 311.

50 Sinibald de Mas, *La Chine et les puissances chrétiennes* (Paris: Hachette, 1861): 135. I am grateful to David Martínez-Robles for pointing this reference to me.

51 Miguel Rodríguez Bérriz, *Diccionario de la administración de Filipinas* (Manila: Establecimiento tipo-litográfico de M. Perez (hijo), 1887): 186; Joaquín Rodríguez San Pedro, *Legislación Ultramarina, concordada y anotada por J. Rodríguez San Pedro*, vol. 10 (Madrid: Imprenta de Manuel Minuesa, 1868). Sinibald de Mas to the Minister of State (confidential copy), Paris, 20 June 1868, in *Expediente general sobre la colonización asiática en Cuba*, AHN, ULTRAMAR, 86, Exp. 3.

52 Sinibald de Mas, Macau, 13 September 1866, BNA, FO 697/2.

53 Hu-DeHart, "Chinese Coolie Labor in Cuba in the Nineteenth Century": 40–41.

down the supply of Chinese labourers was an important business obstruction to Cuban planters just when there was no other supply of labour. From 1867, the trade from the south China coast to Cuba began a critical decline.[54]

The use of Manila as a port of departure to Cuba was not new, and it had served this purpose before 1867. However, the number of indentured labourers sailing from the Philippines, and the question whether the flow increased from there after the application of this policy is, as of yet, difficult to assess. For instance, some of the Chinese labourers interviewed for the Chen Lanbin Cuban Commission in 1874 reported having sailed from Manila, and this city is also on the list of ports of departure for labourers who arrived in Cuba between 1847 and 1874.[55] However, the Cuban Commission Report does not provide comprehensive information on the dates of departure or the number of emigrants arriving from the Philippines.

At least one ship, the French vessel *Orixa*, is recorded to have conveyed 96 coolies from Manuelita, at Manila, to Cuba in 1851.[56] Also, according to Gely Galang, Chinese indentured labourers recruited for mine work were engaged in Macau using the same system as the ones for Cuba. He even alludes to one particular case in which the latter were transported together in the same vessel as indentured labourers recruited for Cuba, stopping in Manila on their way to Havana.[57] Arensmeyer also makes reference to some tentative efforts to connect Chinese ports, Manila, and Cuba.[58] Other historians have also pointed to the smuggling of Chinese immigrants into Cuba from tertiary sites, such as the US. For instance, Juan Pérez de la Riva claims that, between 1865 and 1875, thousands of Chinese from California entered Cuba via Mexico and New Orleans.[59]

One of the authorities supporting the 1867 Royal Order was Sinibald de Mas, whose main goal in China had been the signing of the Sino-Spanish Treaty, a mission which he achieved after long negotiations in 1864. While Spanish consuls in south China were fully involved in the coolie trade to the Caribbean, in 1865 Mas still knew nothing about this issue, and informed the Secretary of State in Madrid that he was going to study the question of Chinese immigration to Cuba for the first time.[60] By 1868, however, he had become rapidly implicated, as he declared that he had done much to bring about emigration to Cuba via the Philippines. He had pushed through

54 Hu-DeHart, "Chinese Coolie Labor in Cuba in the Nineteenth Century": 41.

55 *Chinese Emigration: Report of the Commission Sent by China to Ascertain the Condition of Chinese Coolies in Cuba*, 8.

56 Meagher, *The Coolie Trade*: 372.

57 Galang, "Vagrants and Outcasts": 105–6.

58 Arensmeyer, *British Merchant Enterprise and the Chinese Coolie Labour Trade, 1850–1874*: 274–75.

59 Meagher, *The Coolie Trade*: 206; Juan Pérez de la Riva, *Demografía de los culíes chinos en Cuba* (Havana: Biblioteca Nacional "José Martí," 1967).

60 Mas to Primer Secretario de Estado y del Despacho, Tianjin, October 1865, in *Embajadas y legaciones, China, 1836*–1865, AHN, M°_Exteriores_H1445.

the emigration of more than 15,000 Chinese workers to Cuba between 1866 and 1867. This trade, however, had to be undertaken very carefully to avoid compromising the lucrative commerce between the Philippines and China. According to Mas, previously only Chinese persons engaged without contracts, by other Chinese, and transported in small numbers, had been going to the Philippines.[61]

Mas had a special interest in the development of commercial relations between the archipelago and China, which he had expressed in his book *Informe sobre el estado de las islas Filipinas en 1842*, and also in his correspondence with Marcaida. In the 1850s, he had agreed to promote Chinese emigration to the Philippines to foster the islands' agricultural development. He believed that '[a] Chinese peasant was as valuable as four Indian ones' (referring to indigenous Philippine inhabitants), that plantation owners in the Philippines would obtain as many thousands of them as they wished for a monthly salary of two pesos, and that 'a man who had 200 or 300 black men, or Chinese', at his disposal – paying them the arranged salary – could surely make a fortune.[62]

6 Francisco Abellá's Project to Reinitiate the Coolie Trade via the Philippines

Sinibald de Mas had given his support to these plans from China: a decade later, the Spanish Minister of Overseas Affairs, Víctor Balaguer i Cirera, still supported this scheme to solve the lack of labour in Cuba, and encouraged a coolie trafficker's project to reinitiate the trade via Manila. Spanish immigration agent Francisco Abellá y Raldiris, representative of the Cuban society of *hacendados*, or plantation owners, in China, also explored the use of the Xiamen-Manila route to reinitiate the traffic of Chinese immigrants to Cuba after 1874. However, his project was not successful, as Spanish consular officials in Xiamen – who had pecuniary interests from the fees charged to Chinese emigrants to the Philippines – never allowed this plan to take place.[63] They were cautious that their business might be uncovered and –

61 Sinibald de Mas to the Minister of State (confidential copy), Paris, 20 June 1868, in *Expediente general sobre la colonización asiática en Cuba*, AHN, ULTRAMAR, 86, Exp. 3. I am grateful to David Martínez-Robles for providing this reference to me.

62 Marcaida, *Empresas agricolas, con chinos, en Filipinas, tomando por tipo lo que podrian producir en la isla de Mindoro*, 14–15; Sinibald de Mas, *Informe sobre el estado de las Islas Filipinas en 1842* (Madrid: Imprenta de I. Sancha, 1843).

63 I have recently explored the role of consul-merchants in "Exploiting Chinese Labour Emigration in Treaty Ports."

like the coolie trade to Cuba – condemned by the international community and terminated by Chinese authorities.

Abellá had been experiencing difficulties in carrying out his business in China since 1872, when together with another agent of the planter Francisco F. Ibáñez, he had requested a permit to open an immigration house in Xiamen. However, they were unsuccessful and had to delay until the year after.[64] Moreover, in 1873, his coolie ship *Fatchoy* was directly targeted by British authorities and retained in Hong Kong using the new shipping ordinance, which prohibited ships equipped with restraining and imprisonment material, such as shackles, poles, iron nets, and prisons, from stopping in Hong Kong. British authorities were aware of the extreme abuses committed on this ship in the transport of Chinese indentured labourers to Havana, where the latter experienced 'the most unimaginable sufferings' and were treated 'with the greatest brutality'.[65] Upon its arrival in Hong Kong, as it was equipped with such items, it was retained and obliged to dispose of them, with the consequent great complaints by Abellá to the Spanish authorities about the immense economic losses he had suffered.[66]

That same year, when the multinational commission led by Chen Lanbin travelled to Cuba to assess the treatment given there to Chinese immigrants, *hacendados* in Cuba, expecting a negative review, looked for strategies to reach a new immigration agreement with the Chinese government. With this interest in mind, they created a society for the import of 'free workers', named *Sociedad de Importación de Trabajadores Libres*, which named Abellá their agent in China. Abellá designed a new system of emigration to Cuba, with suggestions on how to increase the benefits of the *hacendados*, and how to establish a new agreement between Spain and the Chinese government.[67]

Abellá's project consisted of a new system by which immigrants would be considered 'free workers', but continue to be indebted to the Society of *Importación*. Abellá investigated the possibility of emigration to Cuba from Hong Kong, Macau, or Manila, in order to avoid the control of the Chinese government. Abellá was given attention and encouragement by the powerful politician Víctor Balaguer, who held the position of Minister of Overseas Territories in Madrid discontinuously during the 1870s and 1880s. Abellá approached him in 1874 to present his free emigration project. In 1878,

64 Letter from Juan Ortiz to the Minister of State, Xiamen, 18 February 1872, in *Consulado de Emuy*, AHN, M°_EXTERIORES_H1885.

65 *Correspondence Respecting the Macao Coolie Trade, and the Steamer 'Fatchoy'* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1873): 4.

66 *Consulado de Hong Kong*, AHN, M°_EXTERIORES_H1925.

67 Francisco Abellá, *Proyecto de inmigracion y colonizacion libre para fomentar la Isla de Cuba presentado al Excmo. Sr. Ministro de Ultramar* (Barcelona: Imprenta y Litografía C. Verdaguer y C^{a}, 1875). *Colección de documentos sobre emigración china ofrecidos por Francisco Abellá á la Biblioteca Museo Balaguer*, 1888, LB, Manuscript. 9.

he also presented a plan to the Governor of the Philippines which suggested a connection between the archipelago and the coolie trade to Havana. The Governor, however, turned a blind eye, probably protective of the human trade already going on between Xiamen and Manila.[68] Precisely for this reason, Abellá encountered formidable obstacles which blocked this project: the Spanish consulate in Xiamen – the main port of departure for Chinese emigrants to the Philippines – generated significant revenue from issuing Chinese passports for travel there.[69] Consular duties produced between 30,000 and 40,000 pesos for the public treasury annually from emigration to Manila. Not only the consulate, but also – and particularly – the consulate's staff obtained abundant emoluments from every Chinese citizen shipped to Manila. Furthermore, concerned that these abuses could be disclosed by the international community and discovered by the Chinese government if it was ever connected to the infamous coolie trade, the Spanish consul in Xiamen, Emilio de Pereda, refused to grant permission for Abellá's last emigrant shipments to Cuba via Manila.

By the 1880s, the Spanish consulate was still obtaining significant revenues, which led to overcrowded Spanish steamers, as Giles denounced to Wade. When Giles confronted the Spanish Consul Lozano in Xiamen about a case of overcrowding on board the *Emuy* carrying emigrants to Manila, the Spanish consul answered that 'if he chose to clear vessels 'with forty or fifty over the authorised number', the responsibility was his', and not that of the British consul. In his letter to Wade, Giles acknowledged what lay at the root of the matter:

> For every Chinese emigrant shipped to Manila, the Spanish Government charges a fee of three dollars which goes into the Consulate chest. In addition to that, there is an unauthorised fee of, formerly sixty cents but now, one dollar per passenger, which is divided between the Consul-General, the Vice-Consul (when there is one), and the Chinese Linguist. Consequently, it is to the advantage of the members of the Spanish Consulate that all vessels for Manila should have as many on board as possible.[70]

Still, Abellá carried on with his project, and between 1879 and 1880 tried to embark more than 800 Chinese passengers in the German steamer *Hesperia* from Xiamen. However, his project was unsuccessful, even after counting with the help of Spanish Vice-Consul, Eduard Toda i Güell, of offering Chinese emigrants free passage to Cuba, and of paying a $25,000 commission to Xiamen's maritime customs to guarantee the vessel's return to China.[71] The end of the coolie trade to Cuba, and especially

68 Luzón, "Chineros, diplomáticos y hacendados en La Habana colonial": 155. LB, Ms. 9.

69 Chal Alabaster to Hugh Fraser, Quarterly intelligence report, Beijing, 26 Feb. 1878, in *To and from Amoy*, 1878, BNA, FO 228/606; Emilio de Pereda to the Spanish Ministry of State, Xiamen, 29 May 1879, *Consulado de Emuy*, AHN, Mº_EXTERIORES_H,1885.

70 Herbert A. Giles to Thomas F. Wade, Xiamen, 12 Mar. 1881, in *To and from Amoy*, 1883, BNA, FO 228/721.

71 Mònica Ginés-Blasi, "Eduard Toda i Güell: From Vice-Consul of Spain in China to the Renaixença in Barcelona (1871–84)," *Entremóns: UPF Journal of World History* 5 (2013): 8.

the last failed investment in the *Hesperia*, represented an enormous economic toll on Abellá, who ended up losing his business and going into bankruptcy.[72]

7 Conclusion

Chinese emigration to the Philippines and the global coolie trade were undeniably interconnected. The Philippines, a colony not usually connected with Chinese emigration to Cuba by historians of indentured labour migration, was the alternative sought by Spanish authorities and merchants to adjust the trade's route and shield it from international condemnation. The strategic location of the Philippines, close to China, with a long-standing and continuous flow of human transportation from Xiamen – marked also by the smuggling of Chinese migrants – was the ideal solution to avoid international regulations and maintain the flow of cheap labour to the Cuban archipelago.

The Spanish government and Spanish representatives in China clearly supported the coolie trade and encouraged its reestablishment in the two periods of decline of the trade, after 1867 and 1874, when international regulations and policies hindered the trafficking of labourers to Cuba. The use of the Philippines as an alternative route was, thus, a joint business strategy between human traffickers, Spanish representatives, consuls, and politicians in Spain, China, and the colonies. These, in vain, strived to keep Cuba's sugar economy afloat in the last throes of Spanish capitalist imperialism. This chapter highlighted the significance of intermediaries in the development of different forms of bondage, to the point of shaping institutional regulations and even defying them when these opposed their personal interest.

The powerful role of Xiamen's consular staff in keeping the smuggling of Chinese into the Philippines undetected to avoid international admonishment, as well as the obstruction of Chinese and international regulations, represented important deterrents to rerouting the trade to Latin America via the Philippines. While the latter attempt led by Francisco Abellá in the 1870s was unsuccessful, some sources indicate that some shipments via Manila to Latin America had been successful in previous decades. Further research is needed to ascertain the extent of these voyages and whether they were the result of Spanish policies, or conversely, if Spanish policies tried to normalize or intensify an existing maritime route.

The system used by these intermediaries to organize bonded labour to the Philippines and to Cuba always operated by means of debt and transport abroad. Coercion was applied interchangeably using indenture in the Cuban case or through the ties of

72 Abellá to Joan Oliva, Yokohama, 8 June 1896, LB, Ms. Oliva/1857; Oliva to Víctor Balaguer, Vilanova i la Geltrú, 13 August 1896, LB, Ms. Oliva/1921; Abellá to Oliva, Yokohama, 4 December 1896, LB, Ms. Oliva/2483.

Chinese kinship-assisted migration in the Philippines.[73] The difference between the two was the social context and the level of alienability in the two colonies. In Cuba, the workers were tied to a plantation through a contract from which it was difficult to break free by the imposition of unavoidable accumulative debts. In the Philippines, the kinship mechanism allowed them to eventually break free from the debts accumulated through assisted migration, but at the same time left them vulnerable to their creditors' mercy.

8 Reflection

This case study adds to the new theoretical tendencies which highlight the porosity between coexisting local and global systems of bondage – recently delineated by Matthias van Rossum – and in so doing joins other studies featured in this volume, such as those by Samantha Sint Nicolaas, Kate Ekama, and Hans Hägerdal.[74] To be sure, this chapter differs from the rest in this book in its chronological and geographical frameworks, as well as in the forms of coerced labour discussed. Most of the contributions have at least one of these aspects in common: they either focus on slavery; they are set in the Indian Ocean world, or in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet there are significant points of encounter which suggest the need to consider the global and local interdependence found in these coercive labour regimes in a broader frame of reference in space and time. The relationship between Chinese immigration to the Philippines and Chinese indentured labour to Latin America shows how East Asian post-abolition coerced labour circulated not only within the western Pacific, but also to the Atlantic, and across the Indian Ocean. Lisa Hellman's chapter reminds us that interregional forced mobility also took place across overland routes.

With the exception of Hellman's contribution, other regimes portrayed in this volume are set in colonial contexts where Western powers coordinated coercive labour structures. The British Empire in India and the Dutch colonial regime present parallelisms in the coordination of coerced labour, both in its local and imported forms, as both were heavily institutionalized. Thus, their capitalist objective was – generally – aligned throughout the entire structure. For instance, in Amal Shahid's contribution, the East India Company investments and British policies were managed to achieve the

73 Christian G. de Vito, Juliane Schiel, and Matthias van Rossum, "From Bondage to Precariousness? New Perspectives on Labor and Social History," *Journal of Social History* 54, no. 2 (2019): 1–19.

74 Matthias van Rossum, "Global Slavery, Local Bondage? Rethinking Slaveries as (Im)Mobilizing Regimes from the Case of the Dutch Indian Ocean and Indonesian Archipelago Worlds," *Journal of World History* 31, no. 4 (2020): 693–727.

common goal of colonial control and justification of power. Similarly, in the case studies portrayed by Sint Nicolaas and Ekama's chapters in Batavia and Ceylon, the coordination of enslaving practices was subject to a common agenda. As Ekama shows, this was enclosed within a distinct and complex legal framework which also affected the circulation of enslaved people within the Dutch East India Company (VOC) Empire. For instance, regulating against the enslaving of locals spurred the importation of enslaved people.

In comparison with the British and Dutch regimes, the organization of coerced labour mobility to Spanish colonies was more fragmentary. The Spanish state, instead of functioning as an institutionalized coercive regime, supported a network of private businesses – from the agents in China to the *hacendados* in Cuba – providing the necessary legal frameworks to achieve a common capitalist enterprise.[75] Institutional support was expressed in multiple ways, from the work of representatives in China facilitating this emigration, through the political support of Spanish politicians, and, officially, with the 1867 Royal Order. The trafficking of indentured labourers acted more as a transnational network linked by intermediaries with disperse geographical interconnections, who were decisive in determining the circulation of labour.[76] In the long term, this led to a lack of control of the colonial territory.

This horizontal fragmentation is also visible in other contexts with multiple legalities, such as in the Euro-Japanese slave trade covered in Rômulo da Silva Ehalt's chapter. The Western colonial presence in Asia generated a complex setting for the development of territorialities which fomented the juxtaposition of various legal settings, for instance, in the extraterritorial legal order in treaty-port China. Together with Ehalt and Ekama's works, this research points to the importance of juridical frames – or the lack thereof – to create conditions of bondage and human trafficking. Human trafficking presents parallelisms with the trade of illicit commodities across the borders of colonial states, such as the importation and smuggling of opium on the south China coast and in Southeast Asia.[77]

75 Zeuske, "Coolies – Asiáticos and Chinos: Global Dimensions of Second Slavery."

76 Although from a sociological point of view, Mark Granovetter's mapping of network structures can be useful to define these commercial interactions, see "The Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19, no. 1 (2005): 33–50.

77 On extraterritoriality in China and its juridical consequences see Pär Cassel, "Extraterritoriality in China: What We Know and What We Don't Know," in *Treaty Ports in Modern China: Law, Land and Power*, ed. Robert Bickers and Isabella Jackson (London: Routledge, 2016): 23–42. Regarding the smuggling of goods and people in Southeast Asia, see Eric Tagliacozzo and Wen-Chin Chang, *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities and Networks in Southeast Asia* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011).