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# The logistics of neoliberal slavery: legal production of illegality

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## ABSTRACT

The rapidly rising global capitalism and the increasing competition of neoliberal markets have speeded up temporary migrant workers' flow and exacerbated labor extraction through a sophisticated logistics system that contributes to neoliberal slavery in the twenty-first century. This essay argues that the legal ideology of citizenship in contemporary societies has contributed to the legal production of illegality, and consequently, new forms of internal colonization. This essay also urges the conceptualization of "citizens" to de-link with the notion of nationality based on abstract ideas of blood, religion, language, etc. "Citizens"—"city-dwellers"—should refer to those who live and work here belong to the place and should enjoy equal access to the social space. To elaborate my argument, I take the image of the sardine can at sea on Tempo magazine as a metaphorical trope for the complex logistical network that supports the neoliberal slavery system in the twenty-first century. From this axis of the logistic chain, I shall analyze the engine that drives the regeneration and transformation of the slavery system of today. The geo-historical parameters and the local economic demands are constitutive figures that pave the path to recruiting temporary migrant laborers as surplus reproductive troops. The discourse of multiculturalism is convenient for recruitment as a disguise. The juridical stipulations based on the legal ideology of citizenship further aggravate civic space's physical and symbolic violence. I shall conclude with the logistics of neoliberal slavery locked up with the citizenship ideology and propose a new conceptualization of citizenship and civil rights.

## KEYWORDS

Neoliberal slavery; logistical chain; unequal citizens; internal colonialism; border politics; legal ideology; citizenship politics; civic exclusion; temporary migrant workers; topological analysis

## Introduction

The rapid rise of global capitalism and the increasing competition of neoliberal markets have speeded up temporary migrant workers' flow and exacerbated the extraction of labor through a sophisticated logistics system that contributes to neoliberal slavery in the twenty-first century. According to the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the total number of international migrants had amounted to 272 million in mid-2019, up from 173 million in 2000. Compared to 70 million international migrants in 1960, the figure has increased by 200 million. Among the total number of international migrants, about 100 million international migrants were from Asia, and 83 million migrating within Asia (UN, *World Migration Report 2020*).

The escalation of the global international communities of migrants and the impacts upon local societies have attracted critical scholarship both in the humanities and social sciences in recent decades. The ambiguity in the legal production of various forms of illegal practices to the extent that a

new form of slavery is emerging concerning the migrant workers takes center stage of the current debates (Isin 2007; Morales 2009; Griffiths and Bales 2010; Bales 2012; De Genova 2013; Mhurchú 2014; Fudge 2014; Dauvergne and Marsden 2014; Clarke, Coll, and Dagnino 2014; New 2015; Weissbrodt and Divine 2016; McNevin 2017; Friedman 2018; Nail 2019; Rioux et al. 2020). These studies challenge the exclusionary politics of citizenship within the nation-state that have made migrants, temporary migrant workers, and non-citizens an underclass and hence denied equal access to the social space (Mhurchú 33). The paradox of rapid globalization with the need for a foreign labor force and the increasing indigenization with the populist sovereign mentality against outsiders has put the migrants in a precarious condition (Friedman 135-136). De Genova calls it “the obscene of inclusion” that ensures the subordination of the migrant’s labor. The stigmatization of “illegals” reinforces the rationale for essentializing citizenship inequalities. This act of “obscene inclusion” categorizes differences in a racialized way (De Genova 1181). The criminalization of the unauthorized migrants, at the bottom, is a “racial project.” The policy of exclusion enhances both popular racialized anxieties and the legitimation of law enforcement and structural violence (Provine and Doty 262, 268). The status of non-citizenship is the core reason for these migrants to face pervasive official and non-official discrimination, subject to racism, xenophobia, with no political representation, and no protection in the judicial system (Weissbrodt and Divine 870). Studies have also pointed out that, due to the reproductive mobility regimes of “neoliberal migrants,” a socially constituted new “surplus reproductive labor army” is increasingly produced from the global South (Nail 2019, 55-56). These displaced migrant laborers in the surplus reproductive regime have demonstrated that the system of modern slavery exists in the age of “globalization and intensification of capitalism” (Rioux et al. 2020, 726) and is “an endemic feature of the socio-economic system” which is constituted by corporate firms themselves (New 2015, 697).

The urge to re-examine the divide between legality and illegality in the name of citizenship related to migrant workers started in the 1990s. One prominent example is the protest against the French government’s label of “illegal” on the migrant workers without proper documents, the *san-papiers*, during Saint Bernard Church’s prolonged occupation in 1996. In response to the criminality of the police’s violent act in Saint Bernard Church, sixty-six filmmakers called for a massive civil disobedience protest against the Debré laws. Shortly after, daily newspapers published lists of writers, artists, scientists, university teachers, journalists, doctors, and lawyers who offered to accommodate foreigners without asking for papers. One hundred thousand people demonstrated in Paris against the government in February 1997.<sup>1</sup> The *Political Organization* (Organisation Politique, OP), established in France by Alain Badiou, Sylvain Lazarus, and Natacha Michel, denounced the Saint Bernard roundup and pointed out the political claim of the occupation is to challenge “the laws in exception from the general idea of law”<sup>2</sup> (DP 17–18 (1), as quoted in Nail 2015).

For us, the great importance of the Saint-Bernard movement is that it rejects the designation “illegal” [*clandestine*]: the *san-papiers* are not illegal, this is what the movement makes intelligible. They are people who live here and who do not have papers. This is the fault of the government and the laws that prevent them from obtaining them. (DP 17–18 (3), as quoted in Nail 2015, 113)

This statement echoed the frequently repeated prescriptions made by the OP: “*quiconque vit ici est d’ici*” [whoever lives here, is from here] (DP 12 (1), as quoted in Nail 2015, 112).

Similar challenges against the legality-illegality division labeled on the migrants continued around the world. The global network of the “No One Is Illegal” initiated in Germany as “No Person is Illegal” in 1997 was influenced by the *san-papiers* movement in France and later spread to

other countries such as Switzerland and Canada until today (“No One Is Illegal: Toronto | STATUS FOR ALL!! ACCESS WITHOUT FEAR!!” n.d.). The Sri Lankan writer and activist Ambalavaner Sivanandan, who started to criticize the new forms of imperialism imposed by the conducive regimes since the 1970s, remarked that the technological revolution had created “a new global assembly line and a new hierarchy of production” (Sivanandan 2008, 211). He strongly opposed the problematic and misleading label of “illegal” that people put on the “rightless, rootless, peripatetic and temporary” workers in the service industries. These “new circuits of imperialism,” he said, have made the migrants and asylum seekers “the casualties, political and economic at once, of the new imperium.” To Sivanandan, “there is no such thing as *illegal* immigrants, only *illegal* governments” (Sivanandan 2008, 177). The Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel also stated: “you who are so-called illegal aliens must know that no human being is illegal. That is a contradiction in terms. Human beings can be beautiful or more beautiful; they can be fat or skinny; they can be right or wrong, but illegal? How can a human being be illegal?” (Haque 2009).

OP, NOII, Sivanandan, and Wiesel’s positions three decades ago have pointed out the same question that is even more urgent in the twenty-first century. According to the report of the Anti-Slavery International, the estimate of the number of contemporary slaves is around 40 million today (“What is modern slavery?” *Anti-Slavery International*, n.d.). The temporary low-waged migrant workers, with an increasing number in every city worldwide, are the primary support for constructing and maintaining the city’s infrastructure and service sectors. Still, they are often discriminated against, neglected, not entitled to social rights, and often suffer from daily exploitation. The questions that we face today are: Why are there still various forms of slavery in the twenty-first century even though slavery system had been abolished two hundred years ago? Who has the right to label the undocumented immigrants, temporary migrant workers, or aliens as “illegal”? What kind of ideology and through what juridical policies have set up the line of division, designating a particular group of city-dwellers as “illegal,” do not have equal access to the social space and cannot enjoy fundamental human rights? What kind of government would ignore the citizens’ behaviors of oppression and even violation of human rights against the non-citizens who work and live here?

In this essay, I argue that the complicated logistical chain of the neoliberal slavery system is constitutive of the surplus reproductive apparatus of the global supply-production-consumption line. Simultaneously, local governments’ legal implementations, or lack of implementations, concerning the temporary laborers, or the “guest worker program,” particularly in Northeast and Southeast Asian countries, further reinforce the contemporary neoliberal slavery system. Judy Fudge (2014) and Dauvergne and Marsden (2014)’s interventions from the legal perspective, and Thomas Nail’s theses on neoliberal migration and surplus reproduction (2019), could provide us some views into the question of the neoliberal slavery system of the twenty-first century. We also need to take geo-historical and local economic demands as co-figuring components in the logistical chain that mobilizes temporary migrant laborers’ mobility. In this sense, critical logistics scholars’ views (Cowen 2010; Vehrenkamp 2012; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013a, 2013b; Chua et al. 2018; Cuppini and Frapporti 2018) could help us to move along this line of thinking. I want to argue further that the citizenship ideology is an essential constitutive element in the logistical chain of neoliberal slavery.

I do not deny that there are friendships between migrant workers and local citizens, as we’ve witnessed numerous cases of this kind. We also know that migrant workers have formed their internal support system, the shadow economy’s underground network, and even assisting other migrant workers in running away and seeking other jobs. The above reality does not prevent us

from facing the existing paradox of citizenship politics that formed a particular mode of internal colonization in contemporary societies. Therefore, I want to urge the reconceptualization of “citizens” to de-link with the notion of nationality based on abstract ideas of blood, religion, language, etc. “Citizens”—“city-dwellers”—should refer to those who live and work here belong to the place and should enjoy equal access to the social space.

To elaborate my argument, I shall first take the image of the sardine can at sea on *Tempo* magazine as a metaphorical trope for the logistical network that supports the neoliberal slavery system in the twenty-first century. From this axis of the logistic chain, I shall analyze the engine that drives the regeneration and transformation of the slavery system in the twenty-first century. I take the geo-historical parameters and the local economic demands as the co-constitutive figures that contribute to the recruitment of temporary migrant laborers as the surplus reproductive troops. The discourse of multiculturalism is convenient for recruitment as a disguise. The citizenship ideology further legitimizes the juridical stipulations that tolerate and even aggravate the physical and symbolic violence against the non-citizens in the civic space. I call this collaborative practice the legal production of illegality. I shall conclude with the critique of the logistics of neoliberal slavery locked up with the citizenship ideology and propose a new conceptualization of citizenship and civil rights.

### **The sardine can at the sea: a trope for the neoliberal slavery system**

Let me start with an anecdote. On January 9, 2017, the Indonesian weekly news magazine *Tempo* featured two stunning images (*Tempo* 2017). On the left-hand side, we see one hand clutching on the barred hatch cover, indicating some unknown person’s imprisonment. On the right-hand side, a half-opened sardine can which is stuffed not with processed sardines but lined-up troops of grey and drooping human forms. The title of this issue is “Slavery at Sea.” It covers stories about the slavery practiced by the Taiwanese distant ocean fishing industry and how thousands of Indonesian fishers suffered similar conditions (Nakamura et al. 2018). The in-depth cases of reportage in this issue were conducted and collaborated by two research teams. One group is the *Tempo* magazine research team from Indonesia. The other group is the independent media team *Reporter (Bao-dao-zhe)* from Taiwan. The Taiwanese special issue on slavery at sea was published a month earlier, on December 19, 2016. Several follow-up stories were also released on January 10, 2017 and published as a book later in April 2017 (Lee 2017) (Figure 1).

From the stories published by *Tempo* and *Reporter*, we learned that most fishers do not have any legal documents or registered as migrant workers either in Indonesia or in Taiwan. They could not obtain juridical protection under the labor law or receive any social welfare, such as medical services or insurance benefits. Their average salary is 9,000 NT (298 USD) per month, much lower than the basic monthly salary 22,000 NT (730 USD) stipulated by the labor law in Taiwan. Many fishers even ended up receiving no salary after their work for several months, except for a return ticket back to their hometown (Parhusip 2019; *United News* 2019).

Shirley Lee, the editor-in-chief of *Reporter* and the author of the introduction to the special issue, pointed out that the Taiwan government’s official record claims that there are around 9,000 fishers from Indonesia. However, according to the research team from *Reporter* and *Tempo*, the number provided by the Port Statistics and various Indonesian government sources is about 40,000 (*Reporter* 2017). The considerable discrepancy of these figures by both governments shows a chain of loopholes from both ends. The selling of the counterfeiting and forged documents for the fishers is a big underground business involving local brokers all over the ports, large cities, and rural areas. These fishermen had to work on the fishing vessels for up to 20 hours a day, sometimes



**Figure 1.** *Tempo* magazine covers in Indonesian and English versions about the slavery of Indonesian crews at Taiwan ship.

tortured by the captain or other crew members from different countries, with crude racism, even starved for long hours, and sometimes could not leave the boats for over one month. It is, indeed, a form of slavery. Lee wrote, “The road of border-crossing and voluntary slavery” is a “system of exploitation,” collaborated and configured by the governments from Indonesia and Taiwan, the agencies, and the employers. “Each fishing boat at sea is *a little colony*, both globally implicated and locally confined, ruled by Taiwanese people” (*Reporter 6*, emphasis mine). *Reporter* continued their investigations and completed a trilogy: Part I “Falsification, Exploitation, Blood-Tear Fishery: Far Sea Fishing Trans-National Investigative Report,” done in 2017, Part II “The Storm of the Human Trafficking at Sea: How Taiwan Became an Accessory to Slavery on the High Seas,” in 2018, and Part III “Insufficient Governance of the Distant Water Fishery: The Illegal Shark Finning, Force Labor, and the Death of the Observer,” in 2021. From these investigations, we read more stories of the human trafficking at sea, the forced labor, the illegal shark fin fishing, and the death of the observers.<sup>3</sup>

The stories on the slavery at sea on Taiwanese fishing vessels released is not an exceptional case. The scandalous case of “slave labor” practices of migrants working in Thailand’s offshore fisheries covered in June 2014 by the *Guardian* (*Gaurdian 2014*) called researchers’ attention to this phenomenon. Scholars have pointed out that forced labor on fishing boats with convenient flags, unchecked by the labor law on land, are clear cases of modern slavery in countries worldwide, particularly Thailand, Indonesia, Bangladesh, South Korea, Philippines, Russia, Taiwan, and China (Marschke and Vandergeest 2016; Nakamura et al. 2018; Tickler et al. 2018).

Fishing conglomerates conducting extensive distant-water operations present new forms of brutal and primitive accumulation and extraction of natural resources and ocean life. Several statistical reports show a rapid acceleration in growth over the past three decades in the global fishing industry. Top fishing producing countries are the People’s Republic of China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan), Peru, Japan, the United States, Chile, Indonesia, Russia, India, Thailand, Norway, and Iceland (“Fishing Industry,” *Wikipedia 2020*). These countries account for more than half of the world’s production. Among them, China alone accounts for a third of the world’s output. Even

though counted separately from China, according to *Greenpeace East Asia*, Taiwan is the most substantial distant water fishing power in the Western and Central Pacific. 60 percent of the world's tuna comes from this region. Overfishing has caused three of the four tuna fishing species on the red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (“Greenpeace East Asia,” *Wikipedia* 2019).

The predators at sea cross territories and sea zones by switching their flags of different nationality, so-called convenient flag, getting natural resources from the ocean, and living labor force from the land.<sup>4</sup> The fishing industry, moreover, is embedded within the enormous global seafood supply chain that requires fishers to work in isolation at sea, cannot escape from the ship for several months, suffering physical tortures and labor rights abuses in the form of modern slavery (Marschke and Vandergeest 2016; Nakamura et al. 2018; Tickler et al. 2018). The International Labor Organization can help us explain the features of modern slavery and forced labor: threats or actual physical harm to the worker; restriction of movement and confinement; debt bondage, where the worker works to pay off a debt or loan and is not paid for his or her services; withholding of wages or excessive wage reduction that violate previously made agreements; retention of passports and identity documents so that the worker cannot leave or prove his/her identity and status; and the threat of denunciation to the authorities, where the worker is in irregular immigration status (ILO 2005). Stephen J. New points out that modern slavery, bearing the above-described features, often is associated within a supply chain because contract laborers in the supply chain are not subject to the corporate codes of practice and are beyond local legal standards. Illegality and criminality can be easily produced in such ambiguous and opaque conditions (New 2015, 698-699).

This ambiguous and opaque grey zone, an exceptional zone that law cannot fix the problems but could even aggravate the situation, deserves our attention. The story of slavery at sea, therefore, does not refer only to the practice of modern slavery on offshore fishing boats but serves as an index pointing to the symptomatic circumstances of contemporary neoliberal slavery at large. On-land temporary migrant workers also suffer from threats or actual physical harm, restriction of movement, debt bondage, withholding of wages or excessive wage reduction, retention of passports and identity documents, and the threat of denunciation to the authorities and deportation. Such forms of life of the neoliberal slavery system can be observed in the conditions of migrant laborers in Taiwan and elsewhere around the world, not only in port cities, construction sites, forest areas, but also in domestic space in our neighborhood of the same communities.

Though seemingly living in better household conditions, the domestic helpers are also exposed to unsafe conditions and different forms of exploitation and forced labor. Domestic household workers' employers are exempt from regular working hours stipulated in the labor law, such as the eight-hour workday regulation (“2019 Human Rights Report [Taiwan Part]” 2020). They could abuse the domestic helpers in verbal or physical forms, demanding long hours of work with no day off, forcing them to undertake labor beyond the contract, and even keeping them in starvation, imprisonment, and sometimes suffering from being beaten up or raped. According to one report, there are 458,800,000 modern slaves globally, and 53,000 are in Taiwan. (*New Talk* 2016).<sup>5</sup> The Control Yuan announced that there are more than 100 cases of rape from 2012 to 2018. The official record, again, is only those reported on the surface. Most victims do not dare to report to the police station either because they do not have adequate knowledge of the law, no appropriate interpreters who know their language, or because they are often under the brokers' control. The agents can easily block the channel for their appeal (*The News Lens* 2018).

The frequent sudden inspections in the streets, pubs, or the places where migrant workers gather to check for their ID cards further intensifies the discriminative suspicion against everyone from

Southeast Asian countries as if they all are suspects capable of criminal deeds (*The Storm Media* 2016; CNA 2019; CTS 2019). Besides the over-enforcement of law against the migrant workers as suspicious criminals, the blank spot in the legal procedure stipulated by law also produces illegal practices at different corners in the society. One problem in the legal process is the lack of arranging proper interpreters for foreign workers in cases of petition or lawsuits. The loopholes in brokers' or employment agencies' practices by requesting semi-commissions under various items. When the migrant workers intend to change jobs, it made the migrant workers unable to receive a fair number of salaries, even building more debts (Lan 2005, 2006; Son 2013; Ku 2013). Furthermore, the scandal of a local Taiwanese police officer killing a young, runaway Vietnamese migrant worker in 2017, with nine shots in a few seconds, exposed the total lack of human rights protections for the migrant workers. They are not regarded as a human being because they are not a citizen.

Therefore, the sardine can at sea can be perceived as a trope that spells out the conditions of the canned human lives, caught up in the logistical chain, as objects of supply-production-consumption at the same time. This logistical chain links up topologically the complex operation of capital in the neoliberal market network. The sub-human or even non-human conditions of the temporary migrant workers in the construction sites, manufacturing factories, agricultural fields, or the community neighborhood present themselves as cases of neoliberal slavery. These temporary migrant workers demonstrate the crude extraction of labor in the neoliberal market, having signed the contract with their own will to be sold as the commodity in the production chain.

### **Topological logistics of the neoliberal slavery in the twenty-first century**

The living conditions of the marginalized and exploited migrant workers in the contemporary neoliberal market are not very far from what Karl Marx discussed in *Capital* (Marx 2019 [1887]). According to Marx, the enslavement and exploitation of labor power are the primary method of primitive accumulation and an integral part of the existent economic model, i.e. capitalism. In *Capital*, Marx argued, the capitalistic form of slavery pre-supposes the "free wage-laborer" who signs his "voluntary contract" with his free will. As a free man, the urban laborer sells his labor-power and his time to capital, in the form of exchangeable commodities, and became the employers' property, available for consumption and exploitation. Marx noted in a tone of mockery that, after abolishing slavery, "a new life at once arose" from the death of slavery (1887 [1867], Vol. I, Ch. 10, 13, 15, 19, 23, 25). In his *Communist Manifesto*, Marx remarked again that "imperialism is, at the same time, the most prostitute and the ultimate form of the state power" which full-grown bourgeois society had finally "transformed into a means for the enslavement of labor by capital" (Marx 2010 [1848], 59).

The modern slavery in the factory analyzed by Marx in the nineteenth century found its highest manifestations in the age of global neoliberalism in the twenty-first century. The temporary migrant workers sign their contracts voluntarily, as the wage laborers did in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. But contemporary temporary migrant workers expose themselves to more convoluted regimes of management, various kinds of precarious forms of life, without citizenship, and therefore no legal protections, remain outside of the social stratum in the receiving societies. They do not know what is waiting for them when they decide to sign the contract, but still prefer to choose this path in a distant land, away from their hometown, so that they can earn enough money in a short time. They cannot even start a strike through the labor union because, in most cases, there is no law to ensure the establishment of a labor union by foreign migrant laborers. The non-citizenship status of these foreign migrant laborers forces them to



face the mode of life constructed by the exclusionary legal procedure, including the Labor Law, Immigration Law, Employment Service Act, and Citizenship Act.

Kevin Bales's work on modern slavery explained how and why the 5000-year human history of slavery has never ceased to exist. Though slavery was abolished 200 years ago, it re-emerged in different forms, with other names, and went underground. The migrant workers are the disposable people in the form of new slavery in the global economy (Bales 2012; Griffiths and Bales 2010). The practices of indentured laborers in the nineteenth century, also called contract laborers and coolies, have transformed into guest laborers or temporary migrant workers in the second half of the twentieth century (Brass 1994; Behal 2010). These international temporary workers sign their official contract or the unofficial documents of the agreement and are carried from place to place, following the flow of capital, packed, and utilized as the pure labor force in the chain of lean production. They must endure low wages and poor environmental conditions with a non-citizen status. This position is more inferior to the lowest class in the host societies, often suffering from the open violation of labor rights and human rights.

However, unlike the operation of slavery in the age of colonial and imperial expansion, the new extraction of labor and the laborers' maltreatment are not drafted by force. The current form of slavery is willed voluntarily by the laborers, like what Marx described in the nineteenth century, with their signed contracts. But, in the age of the increasingly competitive neoliberal markets, the migrant laborers cannot choose which factory or to what city they sell themselves. This system of neoliberal slavery involves a cross-border supply chain, the administration of the shipping of commodities, and human labor consumption. People from less developed countries and desperate living conditions voluntarily seek job opportunities abroad and sign contracts with local brokers. Either through legal or illegal channels, they are sent to international labor employment agencies, dispatched to various companies at different locations, such as ocean industries, construction sites, agricultural farms, healthcare services, domestic household services, and so on. Such a chain of free choice in the neoliberal labor market, connecting the participating and competing sectors, governmental foreign labor offices, juridical institutions, local employers, and citizens in different corners of the society, constitute a vast logistical web of neoliberal slavery system. In this chain of logistics, the local governments of Indonesia and Taiwan, for example, and local city councils, cannot assume their responsibilities to protect the labor rights and human rights of the migrant workers. The loopholes in the juridical stipulations concerning the distinction between employment within or outside of borders are one of the reasons that Taiwan's Labor Standards Act cannot protect the fishers at sea.<sup>6</sup> Also, there is no legal prohibition against reopening a business through a proxy that registers as a new company even though these brokers might be ordered to close because they have had convicted of illegal activities ("2019 Human Rights Report [Taiwan Part]" 2020). The lack of legal or institutional implementations to prevent such missing links contributes to the logistical chain's production of illegal practices.

We must ask the following questions: what is the engine that drives the continuous regeneration of the slavery system? What triggers the transformation process of the "new life" from classical slavery, the Atlantic slave trade, the indentured contract laborer, the coolie system, the prison labor, forced migrant labor, and so on?

The motor behind the momentum of this trajectory of the rebirth of the slavery system, to me, is the material demands of and technological development to recruit a pure labor force. The motor that triggers the process is also the thirst for speedy reproduction of surplus and the politico-economic administration of labor transportation to fulfill the requirement. We can call it the global logistic chain of the neoliberal slavery system.

These temporary international migrant workers are driven by the neoliberal market and the multinational supply-production-consumption chain. Though they sign their contracts or illegal documents of their own will, they are packed as commodities to be consumed and shipped to the destination without their choice. They are denied dual citizenship or resident status and thus blocked from the legal protection any citizen can enjoy. The legal practices of international transactions of temporary migrant workers, particularly the exclusionary politics of citizenship, have put these migrant workers in a grey zone that is most vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and abuse.

Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013a) had extensively discussed the concept of logistics in their works and explained why it is not just a domestic issue but involves a complex topological system on a worldwide stage. The techniques of logistics are no longer merely the transportation of goods or the mediation of social relations by “things,” but the “organization of global circuits of accumulation.” It is a complex network that includes legal, cultural, linguistic, social, and economic management and practices (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013b, 1, 10, 12). This network of administration and practices is directly related to the extraction of labor to accumulate surplus profits. Stefano Harney (Cuppini and Frapporti 2018) also pointed out that the Atlantic slave trade, the crudest extraction of human labor, can be considered the birth of modern logistics and racial capitalism. A sophisticated logistics system connects all sectors into one apparatus: the operations of management, the study of the movement of the assembly line, encounters and incorporates supply chains and customers. “This is the new collective working machine. Supply, production, and consumption become linked by capitalist sciences of management, and integrated, at least to some extent” (Cuppini and Frapporti 2018, 136).

I want to emphasize that the logistical chain does not only comprise the complex system of information flow, materials handling, production, packaging, inventory, transportation, warehousing, security control, as suggested by critical logistic scholars. The engine of the neoliberal slavery system is not only the automated logistical chain of capital, driving people from place to place, as commodities to be purchased and exchanged. The core of the problems also involves the juridical apparatus. This juridical apparatus supports each employer, law-executor, broker, and ordinary citizens to make the sovereign decision at each moment to discriminate or exclude these human beings from equal participation in the social space and shaped their precarious forms of life. The logistical chain of neoliberal slavery for the migrant workers’ case, therefore, deeply implicates juridical procedures, institutions, policies, law executors, brokers, and employers in their daily life. The state and society need these foreign production forces, but they want to recruit them as cheaply as possible. These institutional dimensions of the chain of logistics that hire low wage laborers from less developed countries and thus stigmatize these workers in the very beginning reveal the petty racism supported from top to the bottom of the society (Cowen 2010; Vehrenkamp 2012; Chua et al. 2018). The deprivation of fundamental labor rights and even human rights through these legal procedures, as Balibar (Balibar 2006) puts it, displays itself as “bio-political management of illegality” (2006, 5).

The smooth circuit of the global supply-production-consumption line requires much more than the fully developed containerization technology, automated warehouses, and remote-control transportation systems. The dynamism that undergirds the global logistics is “the infrastructure of the infrastructure,” that is, in Balibar’s term, “all forces which interact in the economic-political realm are also collective groupings, and consequently possess an (ambivalent) imaginary identity” (Balibar 2002, xiii).

To understand the collective imaginary identities that move the capitalist reproductive system, we need to move forward to look at the geopolitical and geoeconomics parameters, particularly in

East and Southeast Asia to understand the historical background of outsourcing in East and Southeast Asia and the need for a temporary foreign labor-force.

### **Geo-historical parameters and the local economic demands for the surplus reproductive troops**

The rise of unbridled corporative power and its outsourcing branches, particularly in East and Southeast Asia, has tremendously impacted this region. The establishment of the production cycle from leader countries to follower ones in East and Southeast Asia after the Second World War can illustrate the particular regional strategies of political-economic logistics. After WWII, through the US's policy to support the industrial and nuclear power plant projects in East and Southeast Asia, Japan's economy boomed first. This trend of economic development was followed by the so-called "four dragons" (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan), and later joined by the "little dragons/tigers" (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand) that provided outsourcing services and served as world factories. The communist converted capitalist countries, including China and Vietnam, also joined this path from the 1990s (Loomis 2015; Carroll and Jarvis 2015). Faced with the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis, the ASEAN leaders reinforced their governance policies for economic stability and economic security. However, with their rhetoric of inclusion, ASEAN countries further liberalize and deepen international capital and global markets, benefit only the political and economic elites, and further aggravate regional and local inequalities (Carroll and Jarvis 2015; Gerard 2017).

The flow of migration in East and Southeast Asia demonstrates the geo-economic map of the labor market distribution in this region. According to the migration statistics provided by the UN, the major destinations for the migrant workers from Cambodia is Thailand, those from Indonesia are Malaysia and Singapore, from Malaysia is Singapore, those from Myanmar is Thailand and Malaysia, from Lao PDR is Thailand. The immigrants in Malaysia are mostly from Indonesia and Myanmar, those in Vietnam are from Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Lao PDR, those in Thailand are from Myanmar, Lao, and Cambodia, and those in Cambodia are mostly from Vietnam and Thailand (United Nations 2020). This map of migration distribution reveals the colonial histories in the past, the religious and geographical affinity, the economic hierarchization in this region, and the primary reasons people seek opportunities in specific locations among the intra-ASEAN countries. Due to early industrial development, Taiwan and South Korea, through the aids from the US, are also the primary destinations for Southeast Asian migrant workers.

We notice the sophisticated techniques of logistic coordination through which raw materials, parts of the manufactured products, commercial goods, and human bodies are managed and moved from place to place, along with the flow of capital. Such transportations and circulations also involve multiple forms of border crossing and border erecting. Borders are no longer merely geographical and horizontal borders, but "geopolitical line of separation," splitting the geopolitical zones and urban space into racialized and segregated components, as vertical borders from within, or as live zones and death zones, according to labor markets (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013b, 2-3).

Along with the rapid increase of foreign workers, there emerged invisible borders in the host societies, in people's daily life and community neighborhood, that operates through the politics of civic exclusion based on the legal ideology of citizenship. Many Asian countries adopted the "guest workers program" (*Gastarbeiter*), borrowed from Germany, to recruit temporary low-wage foreign laborers since the 1990s, while Germany already ended its *Gastarbeiter* program in 1973 (Kung 2008; Chang 2019). The guest worker program is one factor that links the exclusionary

politics of citizenship and the neoliberal slavery system. Due to the high competition in the neoliberal global market in the post-Cold War era, the rise of local labor salaries, and rising domestic labor shortages, Taiwan also began to accept more temporary migrant workers from Southeast Asia since 1989. Taiwan officially launched the policy of the guest worker in 1992. This employment policy intends to drive down wages and reduce the necessary cost of production. The regulation of the guest worker policy stipulated that foreign worker would only stay for a short period. They cannot share the same salaries nor the protection of Standard Labor Law in Taiwan. From the beginning, this category has never been included in the laws relating to immigrants. Unlike Germany's case, where migrants eventually changed their status as permanent residents, the Taiwan government deliberately avoided this path and adopted a rigid control policy. It sets the limit of 12 years of stay so that the migrant workers cannot apply for permanent residency, which requires a continuous stay of 15 years.

The foreign workers in Taiwan are mostly from Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand. They work in various sites from the north to the south of Taiwan, such as agriculture, forestry, fishing and animal husbandry, manufacturing, construction, nursing, and housework. According to the Workforce Development Agency statistics, the total number of migrant workers in Taiwan had reached up to 718,531 by the end of March 2020 (MOL 2020). That means the population of foreign workers is a lot more than the indigenous people in Taiwan, which is 572,675 by the end of March 2020 (MOI 2020). We can see migrant workers almost everywhere in different corners of different cities, such as community parks, central stations, hospitals, or in the streets at 8 pm when the garbage trucks came to pick up garbage bags. Though visible in the statistic figures and various sites, what is not visible is the migrant workers' living conditions. The dormitories for construction migrant works are known to be crowded and unbearable. Numerous stories of maltreatment by employers are reported from time to time. Domestic helpers' situations could be much worse because they live under the same roof with their employers to care for the elders, the disabled people, or the young kids in the families. According to the Ministry of Labor statistics, 262,951 people are working in the category of social welfare. That is to say, more than 262,951 families or disabled people required such labor force either in their domestic space as household helpers or as caretakers in nursing homes.

Most domestic helpers have been denied of their holidays, deprived of their private space, delayed with their salaries, and forbidden to use cellphones to communicate with their friends, under surveillance with in-house monitors even sexually harassed or raped. The legal procedure for appeal is too tricky and complicated for these migrant workers because of the lack of translators and the intermediary agencies' blockage of the complaint. These problematic conditions caused a quick increase in the number of runaway migrant workers. According to the National Immigration Agency of the Ministry of Interior, there are 50,181 missing migrant workers in Taiwan. They might find a job in the mountains or the cities as illegal workers, fearing being arrested at any moment in their daily life. Whether legal or illegal, these temporary migrant workers are the disposable life of our time. As Jacques Rancière would call them, they are the *part des sans-part* [part-of-no-part], that is, the ones that live here, work here, but are not counted as a part of the community, and occupy no space in the society (Rancière 1998 [1995]; Rancière 2006).

The grey zone of the illegal practices by the agents produced by the legal regulation of the guest worker program is another factor that contributes to the operation of neoliberal slavery. The local labor law of Taiwan does not apply the temporary migrant workers. These migrant workers cannot ask for a family reunion during their stay in Taiwan, nor can they get permanent residency even if they have worked there for more than 14 years. The most infamous controversies of the guest worker

program are the often-reported maltreatment and violation of basic human rights while they cannot request to change their employers. It was not until 2016 that the Ministry of Labor modified the regulation and allowed the foreign workers to change their employers (MOL 2016). Nevertheless, this policy has missing links because it would not be easy for foreign workers to find another job or employer within due time. The brokers' commission to arrange works for the foreign workers turns out to be another form of exploitation by asking for a job-seeking commission fee, and Taiwan was criticized as a "slave state" (*PNN Public Television News Issues Center* [PNN], 3 October 2019).

Taiwan follows the *jus sanguinis* [right of blood] principle in the nationality and citizenship law that determines the right to citizenship based on a person's ancestry and not by place of birth. It would be impossible for the offspring of migrant workers to obtain citizenship in Taiwan. According to Mei-Yu Wang of the Control Yuan in 2017, there are 3003 non-citizen newborn babies from 2007 to 2011. The number had reached 6681 by the end of August 2016. However, the number of missing female foreign workers is unknown, and the exact number of stateless orphans is still a myth (*United News* 2019). In 2019, the National Immigration Agency of the Ministry of the Interior released the statistics that there are 9,381 international infants by May 2019. The mother of 754 infants' status cannot be identified because they ran away from their previous employers (Harmony Home Foundation Taiwan 2019, 29 July). The mothers of these stateless orphans cannot claim their children either because they are undocumented or because they do not want to be sent back to their home countries. In most cases, local churches or NGOs offer these stateless orphans' shelters, but these children have no social welfare, no medical services, nor educational support.

The civic space functions as the delineation of the arena defined by the legal status of "citizenship." Without the status of citizenship, the migrant workers cannot be protected by either the domestic Standard Labor Law, the International Labor Organization Conventions of 1949 and 1975, or the 1990 International Convention on the protection of the Migrant Workers. They often literally fall into the trap of forced labor. When they cannot endure their employers' torture and ran away from their jobs, they become "illegal" migrant workers and are exposed to more violations of their fundamental human rights. The label of "illegals," De Genova argues, provides the rationale for "essentializing the juridical inequalities of citizenship." It is the "categorical differences that then may be racialized" (De Genova 1181).

The logistics based on the apparatus of bio-politics brings foreign laborers to our neighborhood and our domestic space. It is particularly reinforced by the form of border politics and the legal ideology of our time. This form of legal and civic exclusion, a civilized way of racism in public and private space, is legitimized by citizenship politics and creates a space that sharply distinguishes citizens and non-citizens. Through such division, these migrant workers, as non-citizens, could be stripped of all legal protection, even their fundamental human rights.

The discourse of multiculturalism and the cultural festivals involving international migrant workers designed by city governments, ironically, demonstrated a typical politic of denial. To show the hospitality of the society toward foreign workers and highlight the harmonious communications among multi-ethnic groups, the Labor Bureau and the Department of Cultural Affairs of major cities regularly organized cultural festivals featuring exotic cultural practices. Taoyuan City, New Taipei City, Taichung City, and Kaohsiung City, four major cities to many industrial parks and tech company headquarters, with the most significant foreign worker population in Taiwan, have hosted a series of cultural events over the past decades. These cultural events include the Reunion Carnivals for Southeast Asian Migrant Workers and the Multi-ethnic Carnival Events, the competition of creative cousins and basketball games, and various cultural exhibitions highlighting different ethnic groups, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, and so on.

These cultural activities and the avowed objectives in building up multicultural societies do not bridge the understanding between the local communities and the migrant workers but paradoxically function to the extent that they erase these invisible communities' real conditions. On the surface, these cultural festivals feature multicultural experience and harmonious societies, in reality, they serve only as exotic and touristic events, limited in time and space, facilitating merely cultural exchanges on the surface. At the same time, it further fixates the stereotypical images of Southeast Asian cultures. The assumption of unifying cultural traits for people from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam is erroneous. It neglects the complex ethnic composition and the internal hierarchical power relations within each of the countries from where these people came. Moreover, making these cultural traits showcase exhibition is precisely the double-bind mentality of distinction as a civilized way of inclusive exclusion. The negative side of which is the apparent racist discrimination against those people.

The ceremonies and cheerful cultural festivals that I discussed above serve as a mask of disavowal. The act of disavowal denies that we do not see or hear these people, do not consider them as a part of our society, and thus do not acknowledge the equal rights they could share with us. The exotic cultural carnivals and food festivals, viewed from this perspective, feature Southeast Asian cultures as a showcase and fixate people's stereotypical images of people and erase the individual differences people would expect from the migrant workers.

### **Legal ideology of citizenship and legitimized violence**

As the flip side of the coin, parallel to the cultural festivals and the claim to be a space of hospitality, Taiwanese citizens formed a solidarity group, with a very nationalist manner, to protest the government's attempt to improve migrant workers' policies. On the social media or Facebook pages for the "Taiwan Foreign Workers Employer Self-help Federation," numerous racist, discriminative language and hate speech emerge through the forms of protests, manifesting an underlying resentment against a hybrid and heterogeneous society. Concerning the welfare for the stateless infants, people said: "Why does the government use the taxpayers' money to raise foreigners' children?" "Don't help those foreign workers in the name of human rights!" "All Taiwanese, stand up, and save ourselves." "Enforcing the physical test of pregnancy for all female migrant workers!" "We don't want too many newborn babies with Southeast Asian blood!" Concerning the holidays and change of employers the domestic helpers requested, these employers complained that the contracts they signed in the beginning already specified no holidays and no shift of employers and therefore they have no ground to complain. They even forbid domestic helpers from the use of mobile phones. If they do, employers should ask them to pay 100 NTD per hour for the charge of electricity (Taiwan Foreign Workers Employer Self-help Federation, FB).

There are, of course, continuous supporting systems organized by local NGOs, such as Taiwan International Workers' Association, Taiwan International Migrants Mission, Brilliant Time bookstore, Taiwan Judicial Interpreters Association, and New Immigrants Labor Rights Association. Besides, church-affiliated societies such as VMWBO, Catholic Hope Workers Center, and Migrant Workers' Concern Desk, also provide substantial help and shelters for the illegal migrant workers. Through these groups' efforts, the migrant workers' rights to have basic salaries, holidays, and other human rights have been slowly and gradually voiced in public and obtained through law modifications. Nevertheless, these NGO groups are often threatened by the enterprise unions and occupation unions of different kinds.

Here we are faced with the question of the ambiguity of self-righteousness and aggressiveness based on the citizen identity and legal ideology. As Althusser explained, citizen is nothing more than “a pact,” free-and-equal, realized in the form of the market, conferred to the dominant, “providing them their ownership of the means of production, the ability to dispose of those who dispose only of their labour-power or of insufficient means of production” (Althusser 2014, xxvii). With the legal ideology of citizen, Althusser points out, stuffed by the news and information apparatus the “daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism,” citizens turn out to be the subject of the state (Althusser 144). In other words, in the bio-politics and logistics chain, the civil society individuals can exercise authority to execute the power of domination and decide who are disposable, judged by whose interest, how to make the laws, and whether others can live in a sub-human form or die.

The collective imaginary of citizen identity is confirmed by the Citizenship Act and the Nationality Law and reinforced by the general social consensus. What comes with citizenship status is the protection of the fundamental human rights and the assurance of the social right, political rights, civil rights, property right, and equal access to the social space. However, such civic identity is often a disguise of the legitimation for their acts of discriminatory xeno-racism and exclusion against other humans. Populist sentiments could also trigger the automatic mechanism of exclusion to safeguard the community’s interest and the nation. These nationalistic emotions became so self-justifiable that they motivate people to judge and act spontaneously and unconsciously. To be more specific, it is the engine of nationalism side-by-side with the logic of capitalism that co-figured “the regime of the sensible,” in Rancière’s words (1998 [1995]), and supported the subject as his citizenship position and participated with the sense of community with spontaneity. Therefore, this site of the citizenship regime is not an external monitoring machine, but the consensus upheld from within, reinforced by unconscious individual inclination and judgment.

The bi-polar complex of foreign labor’s demands by the side with the xeno-racist discrimination is co-composed with the logistics of the neoliberal slavery system that pushes these migrating laborers into the precarious and even enslaving conditions in the receiving cities. As Balibar points out, each society produces its own kind of “indigenous” or “citizens” and its own kind of strangers or cultural strangers, with its “neo-imperialist ethnocentric practice,” which combined legacies of different types of “empires” (Balibar 2006, 5). The legal ideology of citizenship is bolstered by the *jus sanguinis* principle in the nationality and citizenship law and displayed by Taiwanese citizens’ general mentality. Underneath the practices of inclusive exclusions among Taiwanese citizens, through the legal ideology, as in other societies, is the ethnocentric practice in the European colonial past and new forms of internal coloniality in East and Southeast Asian countries.

The differential citizenship demonstrates the paradox of citizenship rights that most Southeast Asian countries have exposed but very little studied. Under this differential citizenship, fundamental human rights such as the right to life, liberty and property, freedom of expression, the pursuit of happiness, and equality before the law can be denied (Thung 2012; Anwar 2013; Pietsch and Clark 2014; Arboleya 2017; Berenscho et al. 2017). The discourse of citizenship privileges and prioritizes local indigenous ethnic groups while restraining “non-indigenous” communities from full and equal participation in society. These ethnic groups have inhabited the same place for several hundreds of years. The distinction between the indigenous or *pribumi* (first on the soil) and the non-indigenous people was further enforced through a range of politico-legal institutions established during the colonial era and continued into the postcolonial era, intersected through violent processes of independent movement and state-building<sup>7</sup> (Taylor 2008; Ehrentraut 2011; Thung 2012; McHale 2013). The paradox of citizenship reaches its extreme form in the cases of migrant

workers and refugees. In Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, or South Asian countries such as India, Bangladesh, the migrant workers, and refugees were the neighboring inhabitants in the same region. They changed their national citizenship only during the colonial rule or after the post-colonial independent nation-building. These people became strangers or enemies through the historical transitions and lost their belongings and legal statuses. Even though they live here and work here for many years as city-dwellers, having children born on this soil cannot obtain citizenship or residency or have legal protection against inhuman treatment.

The thin and arbitrary line of “legality” can justify the vices and brutality in human nature against the “guest workers” or outsiders. This new underclass is driven from peripheries to peripheries, at the bottom of the new hierarchy of production, and became the casualties of the new imperium. Their ejection from their countries, as the Sri Lankan writer Sivanandan once put it (Sivanandan 2008), is “both economic and political at once,” triggered by the “global assembly line.” They perform “arduous, unskilled, dirty jobs in the ever-expanding service sector,” as invisible workers, “the cheap and captive labor force” without which post-industrial society cannot run (Sivanandan, 210-211).

The question of the juridical and discriminating division among people who live and work in the same societies is a pressing question for us today, especially when we face the rapidly increasing international migrations that have drastically changed contemporary communities’ composition. “Citizenship,” even though a “Western” concept, is a convenient technique for the post-colonial states in Southeast Asia to stabilize their regimes through a reversed mode of divide and rule, a form of internal colonialism. The heavy traffic of migration through sea commerce across the Bay of Bengal, South China Sea, Indian Ocean, from the ancient time in history and down to the colonial period as coolies or transnational merchants or mediators, has contributed to a highly hybridized societies in Southeast Asia. Even though it was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, the “citizenship act” in these countries established in the post-WWII era turned out to be the foundation for prioritizing the indigenous people or particular religion and creating a model of differentiated citizenships. It is the cause to expel people who have resided in the region for hundreds of years. Rohingya and Khmer Krom are only two well-known cases, among many others. The status of Chinese Indonesians or Chinese Malaysians also offers clear examples. The precarious conditions of contemporary migration, either concerning migrant workers or refugees, are often intensified through such exclusionary citizenship practices.

### **Concluding remarks: re-conceptualizing citizenship and citizen rights**

What is urgent for us is to challenge the rigid and normalizing power of the concept of citizenship. “Citizen” initially indicates “burgher” or “city-dweller,” meaning all residents or ordinary people who inhabit the same place. “Citizen” in the modern state is associated with the status recognized as a member of a nation-state. A citizen has the legal rights and obligations bestowed by his country, often interchangeable with their nationality status. Citizens consequently often equate with nationals. Some states demand exclusive loyalty from their citizens and deny their citizens with dual or multiple citizenship or nationalities. The problem is that “citizenship” is often defined according to one particular ethnic group, while most contemporary states are multi-national. To prioritize ethnnonational citizenship and citizen rights is contradictory to the claim that everyone should acquire fundamental human rights and be equal before the law. The non-citizen or stateless persons often cannot enjoy protection by the law. How to re-envision the concept of



“citizenship” in this rapidly changing world with the inflow of migrants is an urgent issue for us to engage.

In this essay, I have questioned the logistics of neoliberal slavery supported by the people’s ideological division into “citizens” and “non-citizens.” The complex logistics network consists of the labor import countries’ demand for the cheap labor force, the export countries’ lack of job opportunities, their fraud and corrupt recruitment system, and their need for foreign remittances through their people working abroad. At both ends, the sending and the receiving countries, the legal procedures, or lack of proper implementations to protect the migrant laborers create multiple loopholes and grey zones of the juridical process. We can witness the production of illegal practices in every nodal point of the logistic chain. This essay’s central contention is that the legal ideology of citizenship aggravates the precarious conditions of the migrant workers in the host societies. This essay also argues that the logistical chain of the neoliberal slavery system, empowered by citizenship politics and the laborer owner’s property/commodity claim, constitutes a form of internal coloniality that produces the invisible and disposable communities in the neighborhood and highlights the paradox of citizenship. To be more precise, the politics of citizenship justifies and even speeds up the connection and transportation of cheap labor force to maximize profit and increase wealth at the price of the deprivation of the fundamental human rights of the migrant workers through legal procedure.

The internal borders in the society, be it the border of race, class, gender, and so on, are the effect operated through the distinction functioned by the dominant social consensus in the civic space. Moreover, the internal border’s operative apparatus is especially tricky to detect when it collaborates with the capitalist logic in the neoliberalist age. It functions with the excuse that society must be defended against its enemies and the need to thrive and prosper by demanding more goods and laborers circulated for our service. Every individual is a neoliberal agent in the chain of logistics. The juridical processes support this operation and reproduction of capital and demarcation lines seamlessly to the extent that capital’s operation becomes entirely justified in our societies. Recent scholars of citizenship studies have proposed to consider the concept of citizenship as a connective process based on its location (Clarke, Coll, and Dagnino 2014), a practice and a procedure, always “in the making” (Isin 2008, 17), and a concept as “a view from the margins” (Clarke, Coll, and Dagnino 2014, 49). We also can re-think citizenship in terms of a “droit de cite,” a right to reside with rights, and the right of belonging (Balibar 2014). It is a movement toward constant symbolic and institutional relocation, as Balibar suggested, and re-constitution for co-citizenship, a form of citizenship in the world, and a vision for cosmopolitanism (Balibar 2014, 276). It is also a movement of commoning the city, making the urban space a shared space for all (Holston 2009; Özkan and Büyüksarç 2020). In so doing, we can hope to establish a society that can resist the symbolic violence of the automatic operation of logistics, loosen the trap of ethnocentric nationalism, and confront the arbitrary exclusion through the legal stipulation of *jus sanguinis* citizenship.

## Notes

1. On 28 June 1996, 300 undocumented Africans occupied Saint Bernard church in Paris to protest against the Debré laws that threaten to separate the children from their undocumented parents (Emmons 1997). The occupation lasted for fifty days until riot police broke down the church doors with axes, using tear gas on women and babies, and dragged everyone out.
2. Alain Badiou was involved in the *sans-papiers* (without papers) movement since the first hunger strikes of the workers without papers in 1972. See Nail (2015).

3. See *Reporter* (19 December 2018) <https://www.twreporter.org/a/slave-fishermen-human-trafficking-gcs-english>; *Reporter* (1 February 2021) <https://www.twreporter.org/topics/unfinished-far-sea-fishing-governance>.
4. According to *Reporter* (2018), there are 276 Taiwan fishing vessels on official records with convenient flags of foreign nationalities. The actual figure is three times the record.
5. There are numerous reports in recent years from local news about the enslavement of migrant workers and forced laborers. In 2017, the press released the case of an Indonesian female migrant worker who has been imprisoned and forced to work in the Quansheng Laojia (荃聖老家) Food Factory for 14 years, together with other forced workers, without getting any salary nor being permitted to go home. It is only one of more than 50,000 cases of modern slavery in Taiwan (*China Times* 2017).
6. According to the Regulations on the Authorization and management of Overseas Employment of Foreign Crew Members, the Labor Standards Act in Taiwan cannot be applied to these foreign fishers employed overseas. These fishers are in a grey zone that no law can protect them (United News 聯合新聞網 20191003T112800Z; “Regulations on the Authorization and Management of Overseas Employment of Foreign Crew Members – Article Content - Laws & Regulations Database of The Republic of China” n.d.).
7. For example, the Dutch government categorized all foreigners, such as Chinese immigrants, as “Foreign Orientals.” The indigenous communities, on the other hand, are termed as “Inlander.” This arbitrary categorization bestowed these groups of people with different political statuses. It is the foundation for the racialized and ethnicized constitution of political identity in Indonesia (Thung 2012, 145-146).

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