

Race, Education, and Citizenship: Mobile Malaysians and A Culture of Migration

By Dr. Sin Yee Koh

Abstract

In this presentation, I suggest that Malaysia's brain drain (i.e. the migration of tertiary-educated Malaysians with transnational migration experience, whom I call 'mobile Malaysians') can be understood as an outcome and consequence of British colonial legacies – of race, education, and citizenship as state-citizen relationship – inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. While not discounting previous studies explaining such migration as 'exit' response to race-based affirmative action policies privileging *bumiputera* ('sons of soil') Malaysians, I adopt a postcolonial perspective to show how legacies of colonialism initiate, facilitate, and propagate migration in a multi-ethnic, post-colonial migrant-sending country beyond the end of colonial rule.

Bio

Koh Sin Yee is Assistant Professor in Geography at the IAS. She was previously Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Public Policy at City University of Hong Kong. Her research interests are in postcolonial geography and colonial legacies; migration, mobilities, ethnicity, and citizenship; and urbanisation and inequalities. She is Assistant Editor of the *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)* and Field Editor of *Diaspora and Migration Studies, Dissertation Reviews* (www.dissertationreviews.org).