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Abstract

This paper presents major findings of a project focused on the experiences of Rohingya women in Malaysia, categorised as 'irregular migrants'. Malaysia has become a key destination and country of transit for many Rohingya fleeing Myanmar. The paper presents and analyses the influences on decision-making; the role of family; information sources used and their trustworthiness and gendered violence. The fieldwork was conducted in late 2015, including 350 surveys and 35 in-depth interviews. The research findings reveal a range of factors that affect the lives of Rohingya women and their families before and during journeys, as well as in Malaysia. These factors affect planning for the future and decision for onward migration. The paper discusses the details of decision-making and information sharing during migration journeys and provides analysis of women's choices and the factors that condition decision-making. Given that onward journeys are often difficult or impossible, the conditions irregular migrants face during periods of transit are also a key focus of the paper.

Keywords

1. Study objectives[*]

This research project was carried out by a team of researchers from Monash University (Monash and Monash Malaysia) and the University of New South Wales (UNSW)[1]. The study was concerned with generating a deeper understanding of the links between decision-making and information sharing among women irregular migrants and of the risks associated with their migration journey such as gendered violence, as well as the triggers for onward migration.

Malaysia is an important transit country for irregular migrants in the Asia-Pacific and a hub for temporary migrant workers from the region, including from Indonesia (Farbenblum et al. 2013). Australia has long had important bilateral relationships with Malaysia on trade, security, migration and regional governance (Tazreiter & Tham 2013) and, importantly, these issues regularly intersect at both the policy level and at the micro level of human life and everyday experience. This paper's purpose is to make an important contribution to our understanding of the circumstances of forced, stateless migrants in Malaysia and the impacts of their irregular migration on sending country, country of transit and potential countries of onward migration, including Australia. With a focus on Rohingya migrant women, this paper also contributes to understandings of gender as a key factor in migration and migrant decision-making and how decisions made by these women impact their migration journey. The research findings reveal the range of factors affecting the lives of women and their families before and during their journeys, in Malaysia, and in planning their future, which may involve plans for onward migration.

The study objectives were to map women's decision-making and information sharing (choices and reflections) during migration journeys to seek a better understanding of women's choices and the various factors conditioning their decision-making. In addition, the role of reflection in shaping the decision-making processes at various points of a migration journey was included in the project design. This design aimed at reaching a better understanding of the networks women draw on for information. The study will provide a unique and original evidence base for future policy development to enhance the effectiveness of immigration policy and the protection of vulnerable populations (see also Pickering et al. 2016).

Acknowledging the key role of women in decision-making in families, communities and through diaspora networks, the study focused on providing new evidence to assist future policy development. More carefully targeted policies based on such an evidence base can play a critical role in assisting

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[1]   The research team included Chief Investigators Associate Professor Claudia Tazreiter (UNSW) and Professor Sharon Pickering (Monash). Project Investigator, Associate Professor Sharon Bong from Monash Malaysia, assisted with the coordination of fieldwork in Malaysia. The fieldwork was largely conducted by Monash Malaysia research assistants Helen Sneha Jambunathan, Di-Anne Hong and Esther Ho. Rebecca Powell from Monash was the Project Manager.

future migrants to make informed decisions in their country of origin on the hazards of irregular migration, as well as during a journey and post arrival when interacting with members of a diaspora community.

In addition, it was anticipated that a better understanding of the conditions irregular migrants face during periods of transit migration would impact on further decision-making regarding onward migration.

The study focused on Malaysia as a transit country, and was driven by three inter-related hypotheses:

i)   Women are key agents in the decision-making of their families, communities and wider diaspora in relation to undertaking irregular migration journeys.

ii) Women's role as decision-makers is increased during periods of transit when gender-related pressures are exacerbated.

iii) The transit period is central to understanding changes in the nature and form of information sharing between women irregular migrants and other intending migrants and families back home in the country of origin.

The overall aims of the study were to identify:

i)   what factors shape women's irregular migration decisions for themselves and/or their children and spouses

ii) the knowledge, sources and channels of communication on which women base their aspirations and understandings concerning all stages of the irregular migration process

iii) any limitations affecting women's decision-making—that is, identify any constraints within which women make decisions as well as the range of choices within their control

iv) the factors that can assist in supporting women to engage in regular rather than irregular migration

v)   the information sharing needs for promoting alternative migration pathways for women

vi) what is particular to the experiences of women migrants and to strengthen the understanding of the role of women in information sharing with their immediate and extended families and networks.

The aims of the study are intended to provide a rich evidence base to:

i)   better understand decisions to undertake irregular migration from the perspective of women

ii) better understand the nature, practices and impact of women's information sharing and

iii) gain insights into the pathways and closures between irregular and regular migration.

2. Methodology

Women irregular migrants are one such group who face the twin hurdles of their irregular migration status and the specific gendered forms of discrimination and violence faced by women and girls. The project design approached this context carefully both in terms of design and the research team. Mixed methods were utilised to maximise data quality when working with a vulnerable group with low levels of literacy.

This study collected data from Rohingya migrant women in transit in Malaysia through a quantitative survey (n=350) and in-depth interviews (n=35), with fieldwork beginning in June 2015 and ending in October 2015. Not all survey respondents answered all survey questions. These interviews and surveys were conducted during fieldwork trips to Malaysia by the project team, in cooperation with the Monash Malaysia partners, which also involved initial testing of the research instruments, and training of the Malaysia-based research team. The limitations of the fieldwork are discussed in detail below (see section 2.1).

Two primary project sites were involved, each including multiple locations (see Figure 4, p.27):

1. Kuala Lumpur (such as Ampang, Sentul Timur, Jalan Ipoh, Taman Maluri)
2. Selangor (such as Meru in Klang, Gombak).

These sites were selected because of the identified large Rohingya migrant communities established there that are supported by the project's NGO partners who helped facilitate access to the communities for the research team to conduct fieldwork. The UNHCR Malaysia office was reluctant to introduce the research team to refugees registered with it in the interest of protecting their privacy.
Maximum variation sampling was used within the limitations of working with irregular migrant women to ensure diversity of age and travel configurations to include women travelling alone, with family and/or children or in other groups.

The quantitative survey was conducted using iPads as well as the contingency of paper surveys depending on the participants' access to an internet connection. Data collection was facilitated by the availability of onsite internet access provided through the purchase of a 4G Huddle, enabling the research assistants (RAs) to use Key Survey through their iPads, with information gathered by translators who interviewed and surveyed the respondents directly.
Key Survey was the survey platform utilised with analysis through statistical software, SPSS. The smaller sample of in-depth interviews was conducted with the use of interpreters and were recorded and transcribed. NVivo software was utilised for thematic coding and analysis of the interview transcripts. Importantly, the researchers who were involved in data collection wrote detailed field notes after each day's data collection. This process involved formulating insights into the data collection process such as in relation to constraints, limitations and descriptions of the collection sites, and the interactions with respondents and families present during some of the surveys/interviews. The field notes were an important additional resource for the Australian-based research team to gain more precise insights into the opportunities and limitations of the data collected.

The project received ethics approval from the Monash University Ethics Committee (MUHREC project no. CF15/1623-2015000818).

2.1 Challenges and limitations of data collection

The translators were vital to the success of the project as the researchers were twice removed from direct access to the respondents; first, physical access and, second, the language barrier. Trustworthiness and access to the Rohingya women were established mainly through the Rohingya translator's personal contacts. Given that the project involved working with Rohingya translators, their safety and security was of uppermost importance to the research team. The translators had registration cards issued by the UNHCR, but were not comfortable moving across state boundaries within Malaysia. Furthermore, their schedules as full-time workers and their familial commitments did not permit them to further avail themselves to accompany the RAs to conducting fieldwork in other locations which would have entailed border crossings, overnight stays and overall logistical difficulties (such as identifying other translators at other sites).

The survey questionnaires, interview questions and all other documentation such as project information and consent forms were translated into Rohingya language in Australia prior to the beginning of the data collection process as it could not be determined whether interviews and surveys would be conducted in Rohingya language, Malay or English. Ultimately very few translated documents were utilised as respondents were mostly illiterate or semi-literate. As the translators became familiar with the research instrument and also spoke fluent Malay, they were able to converse back and forth between the respondents (in Rohingya language) and the researchers, in Malay and at times in English.

Another major limitation was the difficulty of getting a large group of Rohingya women to gather in one location at a given time, especially since the respondents were for the most part not very mobile

outside the home. Some had to take taxis or motorbikes (which are relatively expensive) to reach the field sites that translators had identified; some had to bring their children because they could not leave them behind. Often the researchers would travel to a location and only speak to five or 10 women because others were busy elsewhere. If researchers had made trips beyond Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, such as to Penang or Johor (as originally outlined), this unpredictability would have had significant resource impacts on the team, particularly in relation to time and efficiency of data collection.

Based on the fieldwork notes, the researchers noted that many respondents had lived in other states (such as Penang and Johor) and cities (such as Ipoh) but now live in Kuala Lumpur: some had relocated here permanently while others were just down to visit at the time the researchers were surveying. This movement is tracked by the survey questions which probe respondents on one, two, three or four destinations traversed and if they have lived anywhere else in Malaysia than where they are currently. In that regard, the project team did reach women with experiences of living outside of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor in the course of migration.

2.2 Regression analysis: Logistic regression model

Aside from assuring that a sufficiently large proportion of the migrant Rohingya population in Malaysia was surveyed, the collection of a large data set (n=350) enabled us not only to make summarising statements about the Rohingya who had already migrated, but also to use the experiences of these women to make preliminary predictions about future Rohingya irregular migration. In particular, we used regression analysis to forecast the likelihood of future irregular migration, and what would influence decision-making for future Rohingya women leaving Myanmar.

Through the use of regression modelling (see Keller 2012), we have been able to forecast the way in which particular variables such as 'reasons for leaving Myanmar', 'use of smugglers' and 'gendered violence' will impact on future Rohingya irregular migration. It is worth noting that a regression cannot predict: it can only predict likelihood's based on designated variables.

Perhaps the most common regression method is the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model. This model, which provides easily interpreted results, is most useful for interval data (data that takes on a wide range of values). It predicts a line of best fit, based on the sample data, to forecast variables (Keller 2012, p.639). However, in the case of our data set—predominantly made up of ordinal data—the OLS model was not the most appropriate. Many of the variables we tested were binary, mostly taking the values 1 or 0, such as 'use of smuggler', where 1 denoted a 'yes' response, and 0 denoted a 'no' response. Since OLS regression, using the line of best fit, makes predictions that can produce negative estimates (which would have not made sense if we were testing a 1/0 binary dependent variable), we opted instead to use the logistic regression model.

All of the dependent variables used in our regressions were binary in nature, such as 'were you involved in the decision to leave Myanmar' which was a yes/no (1/0) variable, as well as many of the independent variables such as 'use of smuggler' as explained above. Further, some independent variables were also used as dependent variables for some regressions such as regression 11, where 'use of smuggler' was regressed against several variables such as 'experience of gendered violence' and 'did you travel directly to Malaysia from Myanmar?'. The prevalence of so many binary variables, often describing the presence or absence of a factor influencing decision-making, made the logistic model ideal for our regression analysis. As Kleinbaum and Klein (2010, pp.5–6) state, 'logistic regression is a modelling approach used to describe the relationship of several X-variables to a dichotomous [binary] dependent variable … it is set up to ensure that whatever estimate [is calculated] will always be a number between 1 and 0'.
The logistic regression model is:

1. $P(y_i = 1 \mid X_i) = \Lambda\beta_i X_i$

Where yi is the binary dependent variable we are making predictions about; Xi is the series of independent variables we are regressing against yi; Λ is the logistic function; and βi is the regression parameter to be estimated by the model. In simple terms, the above equation shows that the regression will predict the probability that the dependent variable is equal to 1 when regressed against a series of independent variables [P (yi = 1 │ Xi)].

When reporting the findings of our regression analysis[2], as seen in the results below, we use the odds ratio statistic. It is important for readers to note that the odds ratio is not the same as a probability and shouldn't be interpreted as a probability. Further, whilst the odds ratio direction is the same as a probability, the magnitude of the effects can be inflated by odds ratios, compared to probability.

Whilst it is possible to approximate a risk ratio (which is a probability) from the odds ratio, we believe that the odds ratio is the most accurate representation of the logistic modelling we have conducted, and thus we have reported the odds ratios. For a succinct and comprehensive breakdown of odds ratios, and how to interpret them, please refer to Osborne (2006).

2.3 Transforming the data

As well as accounting for the decision to use logistic regression, it is also important to explain how the data was edited and rearranged. Many of the variables used in the regressions presented below feature new variables created from questions in the survey. Eighteen new variables were created, not only to 'clean' the data, but also to identify more statistically significant results.

3. Background

3.1 General background

The circumstances of Rohingya women and their families in transit locations such as Malaysia must be understood in the broader context of the conditions they face in their country of origin. For Rohingya, as a religious and ethnic minority in Myanmar, these conditions relate to their official status and everyday experience as stateless persons after the passage of the country's 1982 citizenship law (Dolan-Evans 2016). As a stateless minority, the Rohingya have been subjected to long-term cycles of targeted persecution due to their ethnicity and religion and have experienced violence in the form of both official government-based oppression and sectarian clashes. In decades of recurrent oppression and violence, the Rohingya have been forced into several cycles of expulsion and irregular migration, primarily to Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia (Equal Rights Trust 2014; International Crisis Group 2014; Green et al 2015).

The political oppression of the Rohingya manifests itself through 'policies [that] uniquely impact Muslim *women and children*' which include restrictions on marriage and family planning (Abdelkader 2014, Equal Rights Trust 2010)—this is particularly significant as such policies can, and do, act as drivers of irregular migration. al. 2015, Parnini 2013, Human Rights Watch 2013, O'Connor 2014, Ullah 2011). Thus, for Rohingya women in particular, for whom marriage and child-bearing remain important roles, the oppressive legal environment to which they are subject has a pronounced influence on decisions to migrate. Other significant migration factors causing Rohingya to flee in search of safety include rape, detention, disappearances and killings of Rohingya women (and men), all of which have been widely reported, particularly during times of inter-communal violence and conflict in Rakhine state between the Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya (Abdelkader 2014; UNHCR

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[2]   The series of reported regressions for this project can be found at Appendix B.

2014; Human Rights Watch 2013; Kipgen 2014; Harvey 2014, Southwick 2014, p.269; Schissler et al 2015). Noting the most recent flares of violence against Rohingya in 2016-2017, at the time of writing, the most recent of such inter-communal conflict occurred in 2012–13.

Although statelessness and oppression have historically been a key driver for Rohingya movements, the well-publicised outbreak of violence in Rakhine state in 2012–13, which led to the declaration of a state of emergency, is the most recent context within which we can understand the current outflow of Rohingya from Myanmar (Kipgen 2013, Schissler et al 2015, Southwick 2015).

The 2012-13 violence represented a flashpoint between the Rohingya (Muslims) and the Rakhine (Buddhists)—an ethnic minority who make up the majority of the Rakhine state's population (and are officially recognised as Tai Yin Tha[3]). The two groups have a history of tension—'differences in religion, traditional practices, culture and social norms meant that the respective groups did not easily accept each other'—which has led to periodic outbreaks of violence instigated by both sides at different times (Republic of the Union of Myanmar 2013, p.4). This period of violence led to the internal displacement and irregular migration of thousands of Rohingya from Myanmar; with tens of thousands of Rohingya left trapped in squalid camps within Rakhine state (Equal Rights Trust 2014, p.4; Green et al. 2015, p.15, Holliday 2012, p.97, Kipgen 2013).

In its 2015 country profile, the UNHCR estimated that there are 810,000 stateless persons residing in Myanmar, with a further 374,000 Internally Displaced Persons. There are an additional 479,706 recognised refugees originating from Myanmar and 48,053 asylum seekers (UNHCR 2015a). In August 2015 UNHCR estimated that there are 32,000 registered Rohingya in two government-run camps, near Cox's Bazar, in Kutupalong and Nayapara, while it is estimated that an additional 200,000 unregistered Rohingya refugees live nearby in unofficial camps (UNHCR 2015a).

Importantly, while earlier Rohingya migrants have predominantly been male, in recent years (following the 2012 violence) increasing numbers of female Rohingya have begun settling in Malaysia (Equal Rights Trust 2014). This is especially important considering the ways in which female Rohingya are specifically the target of oppression in Myanmar, as noted above. Data provided by UNHCR Malaysia shows that, as of the end of July 2015, there were some 152,700 refugees and asylum seekers registered with the UNHCR in Malaysia[4]: around 142,000 are from Myanmar, comprising some 48,500 Chins, 47,500 Rohingya (up from approximately 25,800 in 2013), 12,300 Myanmar Muslims, approximately 7200 Rakhines and Arakanese, and other ethnicities from Myanmar. Rohingya females comprise around 12,400, of which approximately 6,900 are adult women. The number of unregistered Rohingya is unknown though it is estimated that the number of unregistered is equal to or possibly more than the number registered (as 2015; Reynolds and Hollingsworth 2014).

Pull factors for the increased number of Rohingya women migrants travelling to Malaysia include fleeing from violence to a place of safety, reunification with husbands who had left Myanmar before them and entering into marriages arranged by their parents or future husbands who will usually pay for their migration journey to Malaysia (Equal Rights Trust 2014). There are also other pull factors that make Malaysia an attractive destination for Rohingya migrants. Malaysia is a Muslim country with long-established Rohingya communities in a number of urban centres, and there are opportunities for

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[3]   There are 135 indigenous groups recognised by the Myanmar government as Tai-Yin-Tha (official citizens).

[4]   When we say registered, we mean registered by the UNHCR. As stated by Equal Rights Trust (2014: footnote 39) 'UNHCR conducts refugee status determination in many countries— particularly those which have not ratified the1951 Convention.' They are usually registered by UNHCR once they have reached Malaysia and contact the office in Kuala Lumpur— Equal Rights Trust (2014: 34) also notes however, that there is some difficulty faced by Rohingya living in rural areas in accessing the UNHCR centre in the nation's capital. The lack of access to transport, combined with the precarious nature of an undocumented existence in Malaysia, acts as a barrier to UNHCR registration for some.

work in the informal economy (Equal Rights Trust 2014; Cheung 2011; Azis 2014; Tan 2014; Dominguez 2015).

In 2014, the UNHCR reported a sharp increase in the number of boat departures from the Bay of Bengal, carrying a large number of stateless Rohinya refugees to Malaysia via Thailand. The UNHCR estimated that 10% of these boat passengers were reported to be women (UNHCR 2014), while the Equal Rights Trust has reported that, in 2012, up to 15% of Rohingya migrants in Malaysia were women and children (Equal Rights Trust 2014).

3.1.1 Life in Malaysia for Rohingya migrants

The circumstances of Rohingya women and their families in transit locations such as Malaysia must be understood in the broader context of the conditions they face in their country of origin. For Rohingya, as a religious and ethnic minority in Myanmar, these conditions relate to their official status and everyday experience as stateless persons after the passage of the country's 1982 citizenship law (Dolan-Evans 2016). As a stateless minority, the Rohingya have been subjected to long-term cycles of targeted persecution due to their ethnicity and religion and have experienced violence in the form of both official government-based oppression and sectarian clashes. In decades of recurrent oppression and violence, the Rohingya have been forced into several cycles of expulsion and irregular migration, primarily to Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia (Equal Rights Trust 2014; International Crisis Group 2014; Green et al 2015).

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Although statelessness and oppression have historically been a key driver for Rohingya movements, the well-publicised outbreak of violence in Rakhine state in 2012–13, which led to the declaration of a state of emergency, is the most recent context within which we can understand the current outflow of Rohingya from Myanmar (Kipgen 2013, Schissler et al 2015, Southwick 2015).

The 2012-13 violence represented a flashpoint between the Rohingya (Muslims) and the Rakhine (Buddhists)—an ethnic minority who make up the majority of the Rakhine state's population (and are officially recognised as Tai Yin Tha[5]). The two groups have a history of tension—'differences in religion, traditional practices, culture and social norms meant that the respective groups did not easily accept each other'—which has led to periodic outbreaks of violence instigated by both sides at different times (Republic of the Union of Myanmar 2013, p.4). This period of violence led to the internal displacement and irregular migration of thousands of Rohingya from Myanmar; with tens of thousands of Rohingya left trapped in squalid camps within Rakhine state (Equal Rights Trust 2014, p.4; Green et al. 2015, p.15, Holliday 2012, p.97, Kipgen 2013).

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Pull factors for the increased number of Rohingya women migrants travelling to Malaysia include fleeing from violence to a place of safety, reunification with husbands who had left Myanmar before them and entering into marriages arranged by their parents or future husbands who will usually pay for their migration journey to Malaysia (Equal Rights Trust 2014). There are also other pull factors that make Malaysia an attractive destination for Rohingya migrants. Malaysia is a Muslim country with long-established Rohingya communities in a number of urban centres, and there are opportunities for work in the informal economy (Equal Rights Trust 2014; Cheung 2011; Azis 2014; Tan 2014; Dominguez 2015).

In 2014, the UNHCR reported a sharp increase in the number of boat departures from the Bay of Bengal, carrying a large number of stateless Rohinya refugees to Malaysia via Thailand. The UNHCR estimated that 10% of these boat passengers were reported to be women (UNHCR 2014), while the Equal Rights Trust has reported that, in 2012, up to 15% of Rohingya migrants in Malaysia were women and children (Equal Rights Trust 2014).

Malaysian legal framework

Malaysia is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol, and therefore has no international legal obligation to recognise, accept or protect refugees. This shapes the Rohingya experience in Malaysia (Equal Rights Trust 2010, 2014; Lego 2012). Further, Malaysia itself has not enacted any domestic refugee-specific legislation to govern the status or protection of refugee populations within its borders. As the Equal Rights Trust (2014) explains, 'in the absence of a domestic refugee law framework, the Immigration Act 1959/1963 serves as the cornerstone of the Malaysia immigration system and emphasises a system of border control and deterrence'.

The Malaysian Government has made targeted efforts to remove the illegal immigrant population, amending the Immigration Act in 1998 to introduce caning as a punishment for 'illegal immigrants',

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[6] When we say registered, we mean registered by the UNHCR. As stated by Equal Rights Trust (2014: footnote 39) 'UNHCR conducts refugee status determination in many countries— particularly those which have not ratified the 1951 Convention.' They are usually registered by UNHCR once they have reached Malaysia and contact the office in Kuala Lumpur— Equal Rights Trust (2014: 34) also notes however, that there is some difficulty faced by Rohingya living in rural areas in accessing the UNHCR centre in the nation's capital. The lack of access to transport, combined with the precarious nature of an undocumented existence in Malaysia, acts as a barrier to UNHCR registration for some.

while passing another amendment in 2002 to introduce sanctions against the housing or employment of 'illegal immigrants' by Malaysian citizens (Equal Rights Trust 2014; Kassim 2014). While these legal frameworks exist, the Malaysian Government does, for the most part, apply leniency to most asylum seekers and refugees (if they are registered as refugees or are undergoing processing by the UNHCR). Despite the unofficial approach of toleration many Rohingya have experienced arrest, detention and deportation (Equal Rights Trust 2014, pp. 47-54; Kassim 2014; Southwick 2014, p. 269)

The conditions in detention camps for illegal immigrants are reported to be worse than the conditions in prisons for Malaysian citizens; 'Immigration depots [detention centres] consist of large concrete floored halls with no fans or heating facilities, which hold up to 400 inmates. Detainees usually sleep on cement slabs or wooden platforms' (Equal Rights Trust 2010). For most, if not all Rohingya who are subject to detention, the chances of release depend on the efforts of the UNHCR office in Kuala Lumpur.

Fifty-two (15%) Rohingya women respondents to our survey indicated that they had spent time in detention in Malaysia. As graph 1 (below) shows, women spent varying degrees of time in detention with only two respondents detained for over a year.

Graph 1: Detention of Rohingya women in Malaysia
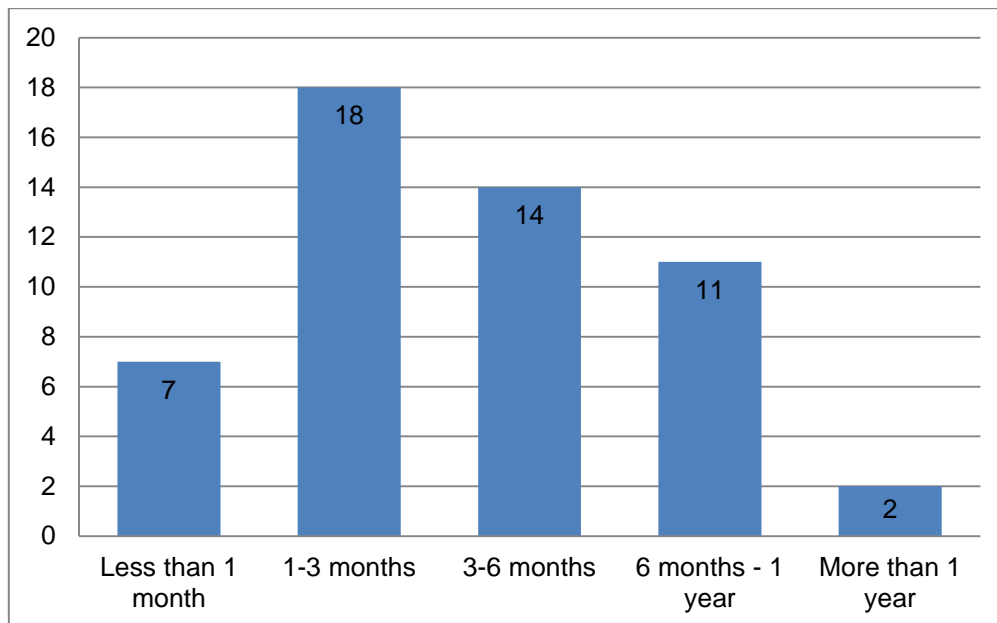
3.1.2 Onward migration

Such circumstances resulting from statelessness and life in Malaysia also provide a push factor for onward migration, including to Australia. The Australian Government reported a significant increase in the number of stateless migrants arriving in Australia, particularly in 2012–13 before the Government removed access to the domestic asylum application process for boat arrivals. From media reports it appears that many Rohingya stateless migrants were travelling from Malaysia and transiting in Indonesia, where they were looking to board boats to travel irregularly to Australia:

> In 2012, the total number of Myanmarese asylum seekers who reached Australia by boat was eight. Already this year, that figure is 244. … Because Rohingya are banned from citizenship in Myanmar, many are registered as stateless when they reach Australian shores. The number of stateless arrivals has jumped from about 25 five years ago to 379 in 2011 and 1241 last year. Already this year, there have been 1827 stateless people arrive in Australian waters by boat

> seeking asylum. Other migrants, such as Palestinians and Kurds, are often counted as stateless but sources tell Fairfax a large proportion of the current count is Rohingya. (Doherty 2013)

Further, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) reported an increase in the number of stateless persons applying for asylum between the 2008–09 reporting year and the 2012–13 reporting year.[7] In the 2008–09 reporting period, the department recorded 24 refugee status determination requests received from stateless persons (DIBP 2009). In 2012–13, this number significantly increased to 1608 requests (DIBP 2013). The UNHCR reported an increased number of stateless migrants from Myanmar travelling by boat from the Bay of Bengal to Malaysia via Thailand in 2014, with a number of these passengers now residing in Indonesia attempting or waiting to board boats to Australia:

> Rohingya refugees in Indonesia who had attempted to reach Australia travelled first to Jakarta by bus and then flew further east to Makassar or Kendari, from where they were meant to board boats to Australia. Many did board such boats, some repeatedly, but all returned to Indonesia due to weather, engine failure, or interception by Australian authorities. Hundreds who originally departed by sea from the Bay of Bengal now reside in community housing units in Indonesia and, in the absence of any other durable solutions, await resettlement to third countries. (UNHCR 2014)

3.1.3 Women's decision-making and information sharing in the course of irregular migration

In the Asia-Pacific region as well as internationally, the key role of women in families and communities as decision-makers has been documented and the focus of concerted efforts in poverty alleviation, building livelihoods, access to education, alleviating gender-based violence and ensuring human security (Pickering 2011; Pickering & Barry 2013). However, relatively little is known about the specifics of women's role in decision-making in seeking protection, undertaking hazardous journeys and influencing diaspora communities both in the destination country as well as the country of origin. Yet we know that women play a key role in shaping the nature and form of transnational family relationships and the sharing of information that informs familial and individual migration decisions. This is an area of critical importance to inform policy making that better understands the form and fluidity of decision-making and information sharing during the transit phase of irregular migration and can thereby better support people to migrate regularly rather than irregularly (Koser & McAuliffe 2013, p. 2; McAuliffe 2013a, 2013b; Glick Schiller & Salazar 2013). A richer evidence base in the area of irregular migration focused on women is required to inform our understanding of how to reduce harm and alleviate risks.

Research on the nexus between everyday security, gender-based violence and irregular migration has shown that policy drivers have insufficiently taken into account the lived realities of women irregular migrants (Gerard and Pickering 2013; Pickering 2011). Moreover, policy drivers have too often offered insufficiently calibrated accounts of women's role in decision-making and information consumption in transit. Recent research focused on Europe, for example, indicates that gender-related violence and harm are often exacerbated through the structural contradictions produced by policy (Gerard & Pickering 2013; Pickering 2011). Refugee protection policy competes against policies aimed at the securitisation of migration and deterring people from making the journey to the European Union to seek asylum. Other research has shown that women have been key actors in decision-making and information sharing about impending irregular migration journeys in countries of origin (Pickering & Barry 2013). In the Australian and Asia-Pacific context, more evidence is required of how women make decisions and share information about irregular migration while they are still on the journey and then how they continue to do so post arrival.

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[7] Figures on refugee status determination requests received from stateless persons for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 reporting years are not publicly available.

4. Major findings

4.1 Demographics of the sample group

Most respondents had been in Malaysia for 2–5 years (128 or 37%), with the median also falling within this range. Of the total, 94 respondents (27%) reported having lived somewhere else in Malaysia (prior to living in the Kuala Lumpur area where the surveys were collected), meaning that 255 or 73% of respondents had only lived in the Kuala Lumpur region.

The median age of the survey sample was between 25 and 34, although most respondents (168 or 48%) were between the ages of 18 and 24. Of the total, 335 respondents (96%) were married and 279 (80%) had children (see Table 1 below). Among the respondents, 190 (54%) had no form of education, and only 40 (11%) had completed a level of education higher than primary school.

Table 1: Cross-tabulation—age vs children

		Do you have children?		Total
		No	Yes	
	18-24	56	110	168
	25-34	9	92	101
How old are you?	35-44	1	41	42
	45-54	0	27	27
	55+	0	9	9
Total		66	281	347

4.2 Access to 'survival rights' in Malaysia

As the following three graphs show, a large number of respondents are in precarious position in Malaysia because of their limited access to 'survival rights' which includes the right to work and the right to access healthcare and education for themselves and their children. These limitations acted as a key driver for onward migration prior to departure, en route to and in transit in Malaysia. Graph 4 shows that 203 respondents (58%) had UNHCR registration whilst 146 respondents (42%) had no kind of formal registration to legally remain in Malaysia. However, for those registered with UNHCR, this registration does not allow for the right to work or access to Malaysian medical services. Our survey results in regards to access to health care in Malaysia show that 271 respondents (78%) did not have access to medical care in Malaysia. It is worth noting that some NGOs in Malaysia offer free medical services to the Rohingya migrant community which may impact on the results for those who identified that they did have access to health care in Malaysia (75 respondents or 21%).

For many Rohingya women in Malaysia, generating income from work is largely the responsibility of husbands and other male family members. Rohingya women's traditional roles as mothers, homemakers and nurturers of families means that many women identified a lack of access to income. Only 33 respondents (9%) said they had a form of income.

Graph 2: Visa status
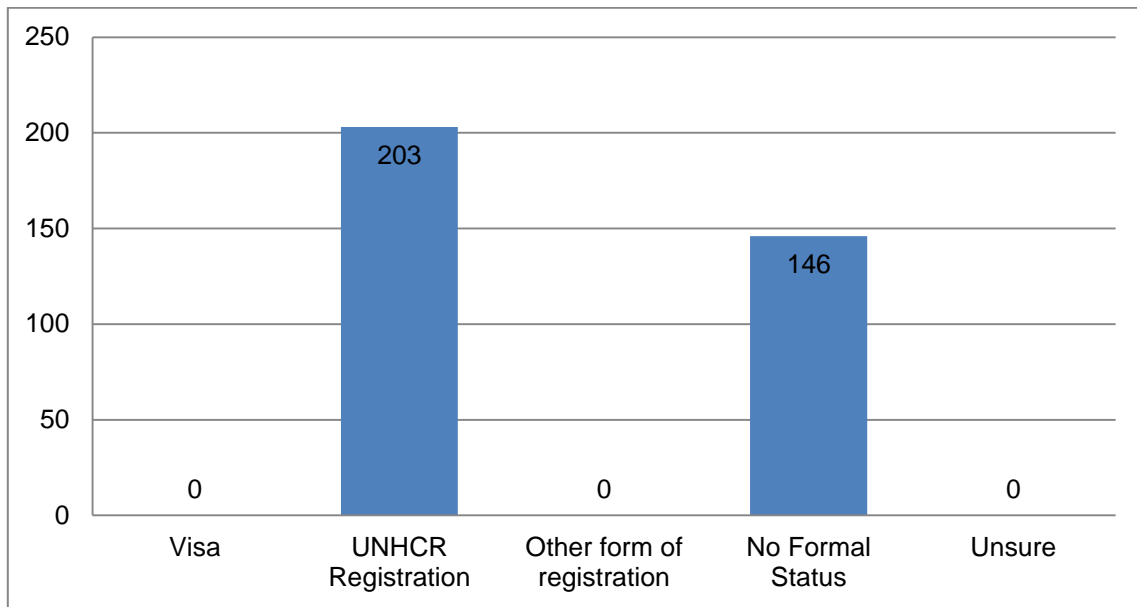
4.3 *Traveling from Myanmar to Malaysia*

This section analyses the findings in view of our first hypothesis: that women are key agents in the decision-making of their families, communities and wider diaspora in relation to undertaking irregular migration journeys.

The information collected by the survey enabled the project to create mappings of the general routes taken to complete the journey from Myanmar to Malaysia (see Figure 1 below). In summary, 61 women journeyed from Myanmar directly to Malaysia, with 44 travelling by boat, five by plane and 12 by car or bus. The majority of respondents (285 women or 81%), however, stopped at one point of transit before reaching Malaysia. The most common destination was Thailand (238 by boat, 38 by car/bus and one by plane). To reach Malaysia, 261 travelled by car, 19 by boat and one by plane. The most popular route taken was to journey from Myanmar to Thailand by boat and then to cross from Thailand into Malaysia by car or bus—225 women (64% of all respondents) took this journey.

Very few women who made one stop transited a country aside from Thailand. Four women stopped in Bangladesh (two by boat, two by car/bus) before journeying to Malaysia by plane (two women) and by boat (two women). One woman travelled to India by boat and then onto Malaysia by boat. This exceptional case is expanded on in the interviews and field notes: '[this woman] had boarded a boat sailing directly for Malaysia, but sailed to India instead … "strong winds" blew the boat onto Indian shores, and she was forced to stay there for 6 months in the detention camps before the government forced her onto a boat to leave for Malaysia' (included in field notes Taman Maluri and Ampang October 17).

FIGURE 1: TRAVEL PATTERNS FROM MYANMAR TO MALAYSIA
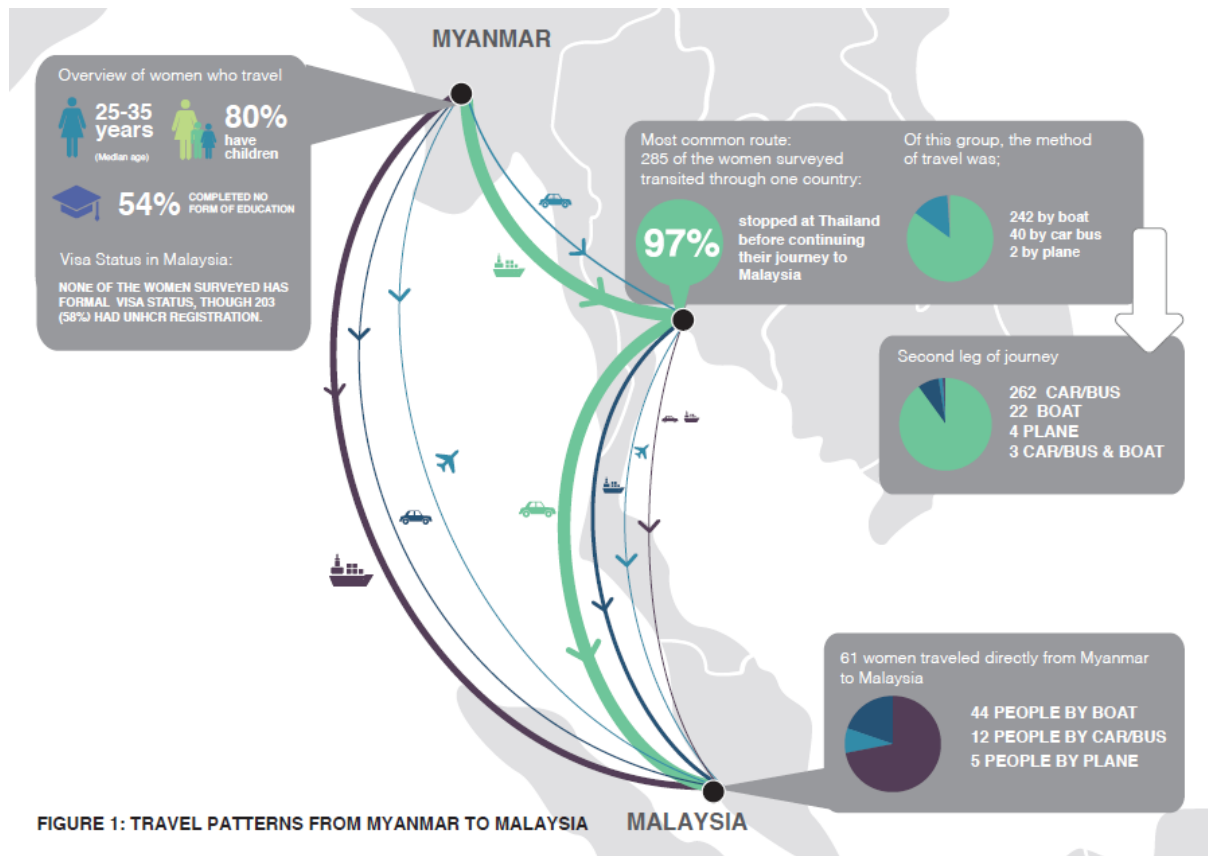
Notably, only four women stopped at two destinations before reaching Malaysia. Three went to Bangladesh first by boat, before travelling to Thailand by boat. One woman travelled to India by car/bus before travelling by boat to Thailand. From Thailand, three women reached Malaysia by car/bus, while one travelled to Malaysia by boat. As shown in graphs 7 and 8, who the women travelled with varied significantly also; the majority of women we surveyed had travelled with someone—only 86 (25%) travelled alone. Most women travelled with family, either with children (160 or 45%), with partners/husbands (17 or 5%) or other unspecified family members (102 or 29%). Importantly, graph 8 shows that male accompaniment was a significant component of the women's travel, only 31 (9%) of women travelled without the presence of a male.

Graph 3: Travel configurations (respondents could choose more than one category)
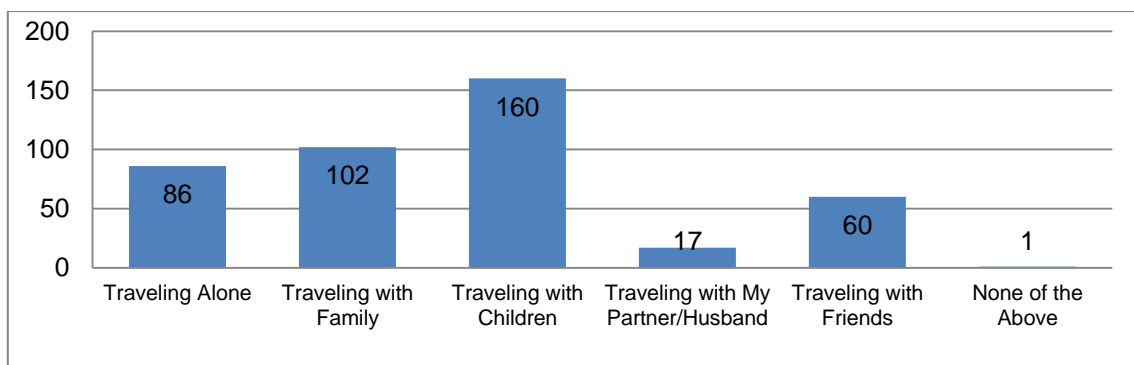
Graph 4: Male accompaniment (respondents could choose more than one category)
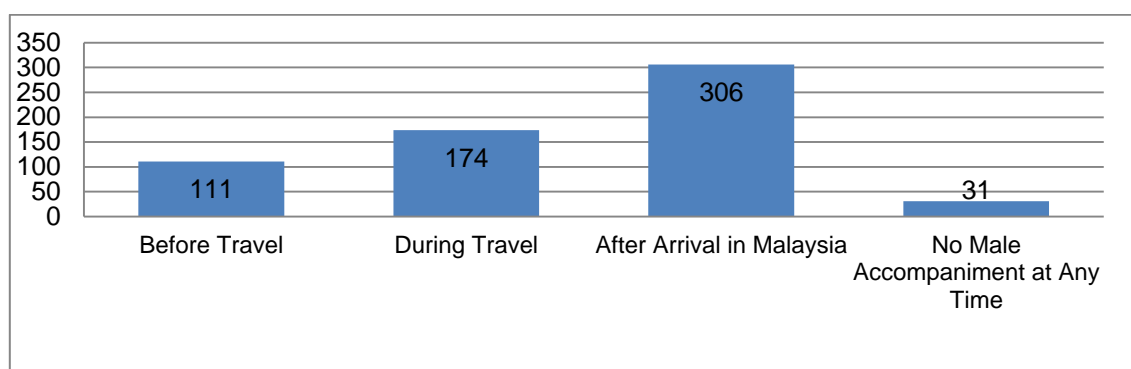
4.4 Influences on decision making

This section analyses the findings in view of our second hypothesis: that women's role as decision-makers is increased during periods of transit when gender-related pressures are exacerbated.

As shown in Figure 2 below, 90 per cent of respondents (315) indicated that they were involved in the decision to leave Myanmar, reinforcing the research findings of Pickering and Barry (2013), who established that women are important actors in decision-making during irregular migration. Whilst the majority of women surveyed stated that they were involved in the decision making process, men were the most visible decision makers, particularly for women who were married or part of a family group. This is an important distinction to bear in mind, which means that more subtle forms of action, decision-making and influence are likely to have a gendered quality.

Contextual factors around ethnicity and gender roles are key to understanding co-decision making. This is outlined in the background section with regard to not only the status of Rohingya within Myanmar society, but also the specific factors related to Rohingya as an ethnic group. As an ethnic minority, the Rohingya have experienced generational discrimination and exclusion, resulting in, among other things, low levels of formal education and literacy. Added with the traditional role of women in the home and relatively early age of marriage, the autonomy and agency of women is affected.

4.4.1 Safety concerns

To gain an understanding of women's irregular migration decisions, we asked respondents to indicate their reasons for embarking on such journeys. As expected, given the violence experienced by the Rohingya minority in Myanmar, ethnic persecution (167 or 48% of respondents) and general persecution (136 or 39% of respondents) were regularly listed by the respondents as reasons for migrating. Issues with Myanmar's authorities (78 or 22% of respondents) and general insecurity and conflict (75 or 21% of respondents) were also listed regularly as factors that informed the respondents' decisions to leave (see Graph 9 below). The term general persecution is used when respondents' spoke of having their houses and/or businesses burnt down and/or being unsafe—experiencing a threat to their lives or those of their family members.

These responses show that the women surveyed made decisions to migrate from Myanmar primarily to access safety—to escape persecution understood by the respondents as related to their ethnicity and religion and pernicious and general experiences of insecurity. This is supported by regression models conducted using this sample, which predict that those who leave Myanmar due to safety concerns (such as insecurity/conflict, threat to life or issues with authorities) have 2.9 higher odds of being involved in the decision to migrate (see Regression 1 in Appendix B).

This was also reflected in the semi-structured interviews, with one woman describing how she 'faced killing, brutal killing, burning houses and prostitution—that's why [I] came [to Malaysia]' (AMPANG_DE_31_7_03).

Another woman spoke of witnessing deadly violence in her village at the hands of the authorities:

> The police officer came to the village and they arrested Rohingya women and brought to the police station and they killed all of them in there. And I saw things in Myanmar … I saw with my eyes, the Burmese authorities are in the Rohingya village. The Burmese authorities came to the village, and they arrest Rohingya women and brought to the police station, and they killed all the Rohingya women. (AMPANG_DEE_08)

A third woman talked of her experience of violence and fear as a push factor to leave:

> There was fighting in Myanmar, and the country had many problems. I was scared and left the country. (AMPANG_HS_July13)

MYANMAR

90% OF WOMEN WERE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION TO LEAVE

Reasons for leaving

- 48% Ethnic persecution
- 39% General persecution
- 33% Reunite with family
- 22% Issues with Myanmars authorities

Our modeling predicts that:

THOSE WHO LEAVE MYANMAR FOR FAMILY REASONS HAVE **3.5 HIGHER ODDS** TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION TO LEAVE

THOSE WHO LEAVE DUE TO SAFETY CONCERNS HAVE **2.9 HIGHER ODDS** TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION TO LEAVE

Use of existing networks

84% knew someone who had left Myanmar prior to them

61% indicated that they were influenced to leave by the initial departure a person they knew

60% INDICATED THAT MALAYSIA WAS THEIR FINAL INTENDED DESTINATION UPON LEAVING
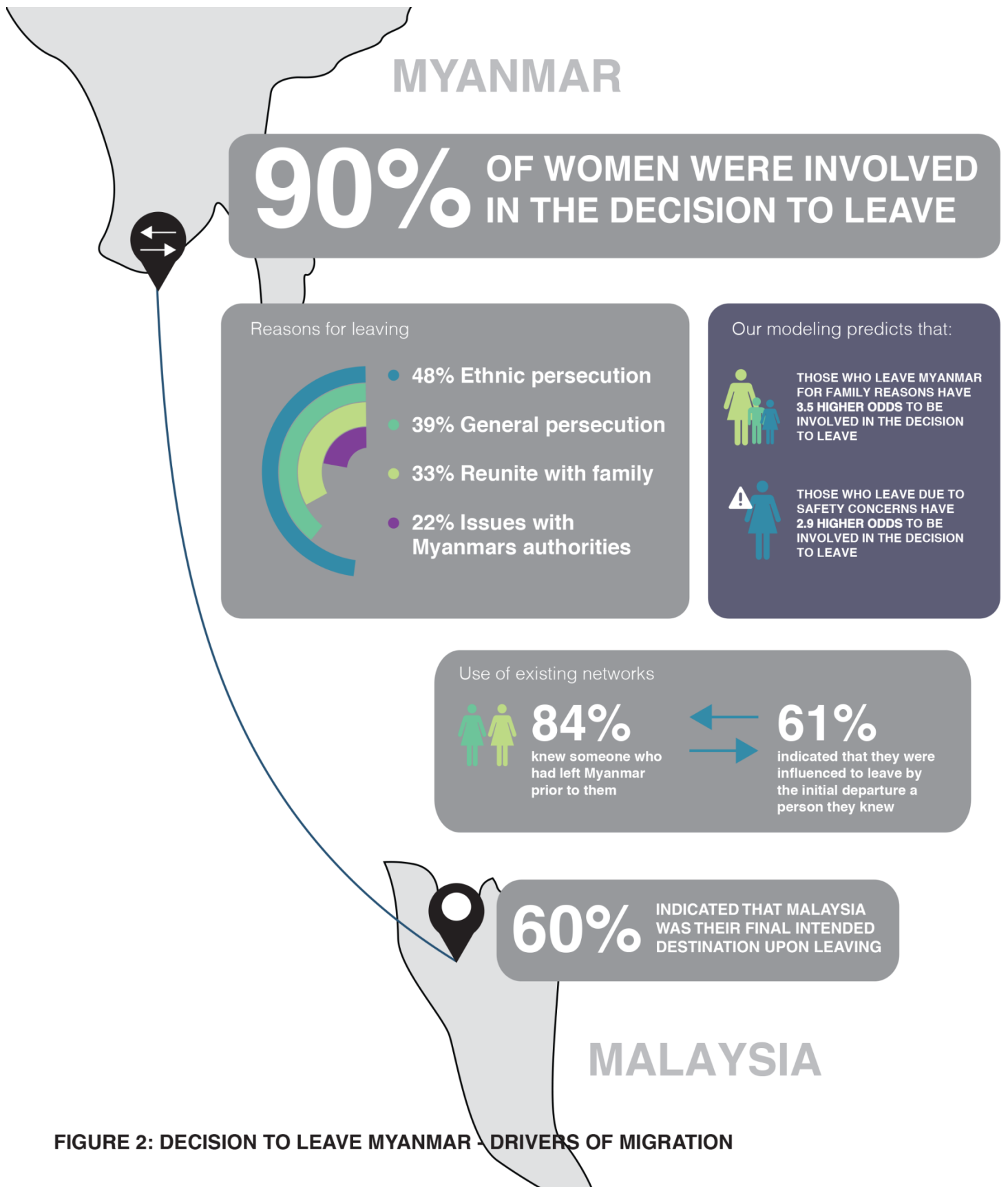
MALAYSIA

FIGURE 2: DECISION TO LEAVE MYANMAR - DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

Employment opportunities and lifestyle such as education (six respondents), work opportunities (four respondents) and housing (one respondent) were listed only by a very few respondents as reasons to flee Myanmar. Furthermore, our modelling reveals a strong disassociation between safety and persecution drivers, on the one hand, and on the other, opportunity drivers—those who indicate that persecution has no influence on their decision to leave have 3.1 higher odds to cite opportunity as a motivation for leaving Myanmar (See Regression 2 in Appendix B).

4.4.2 Family connections

Notably, many respondents (116 or 33%) also indicated that they left Myanmar to 'reunite with family overseas' from whom they had become separated during the conflict. Further, when respondents were asked to indicate why they chose to migrate to Malaysia specifically, the majority (217 or 62%) listed 'to be with my family'. This aligns with the literature on Rohingya migration, which shows that much of the Rohingya outflow from Myanmar is directed towards countries (primarily Malaysia, as demonstrated by this study) with established Rohingya communities (Equal Rights Trust 2014, pp.15–16). Our regression modelling also reinforces the importance of family connections for decision-making—we predict that women who leave due to family reasons (to reunite, marry or have more children) have 3.5 higher odds to be involved in the decision to leave Myanmar (see Figure 2 above).

It is noteworthy that, despite the fact that 'family reasons' may not neatly fit refugee determination frameworks, in the case of Rohingya, marriage and child-bearing are two of the core sources of persecution by Myanmar authorities. These reasons for flight that are quite particular to the persecution Rohingya face in Myanmar were borne out by this research. For example, marriage, specifically, was listed by several respondents (53 or 15%) as a reason to leave Myanmar and 41 respondents (12%) said that they chose Malaysia as their destination to marry. This is also evident in the interviews, with several women commenting on this phenomenon. One woman, for example, 'came here [Malaysia] to marry … because her parents had not a lot of money to pay to marry other people in Myanmar'. Another woman had a similar reason for travelling to Malaysia:

> My friends and family from Malaysia gave me the same advice about it. I decided myself ... my parents did not have a lot of money. If I needed to marry to another person, I needed to pay a lot of money. If I could come here [Malaysia], there would be no need to pay the money. (AMPANG_HS_08).

Aside from reflecting the severe conditions and restrictions around marriage and birth control facing the Rohingya in Myanmar, marrying in Malaysia also reflects evidence in the literature, which identifies the importance of this issue for Rohingya communities in facilitating migration. Rohingya often have few, if any, options regarding their migration from Myanmar; thus, women often partake in arranged marriages to escape Myanmar and link with established Rohingya communities who have already migrated (Equal Rights Trust 2014, p.43). Indeed, this is an area that would benefit for further, focused research as there appears to be slippage in how the experience of Rohingya is characterised, or able to be characterised, between forced migration emanating from persecution due to membership and voluntary migration for reasons of marriage and family.

One interviewee commented on her experience of persecution in Myanmar and the impact that had on her ability to work and find a husband, acting as a push factor for migration:

> There we are not feeling good because most of the persecutions happened there, and my parents can't go out and work there. So that's why they are not able to marry there. That's why I come… My relatives know my husband. So they told me to come here. (AMPANG_HS_July10)

Further results add weight to the idea that family and community ties are big influences on irregular migration decisions. Of the total, 296 (85%) respondents indicated that they knew people who fled Myanmar before they did, and 234 (67%) indicated that they were influenced to leave by seeing the departure of people they knew. Among the respondents, 181 (52%) indicated that *they would not have left* if it were not for the departure of people they knew (Graphs 7 and 8). Our models also reveal a

strong association between community, family and the decision to migrate—we predict that those who know someone who left Myanmar before them have 7.3 higher odds to migrate due to family reasons (Regression 3 in Appendix B). This reaffirms the importance of pre-established Rohingya communities in Malaysia in facilitating migration.

Graph 5: Did you know people from home who left the country before you did?
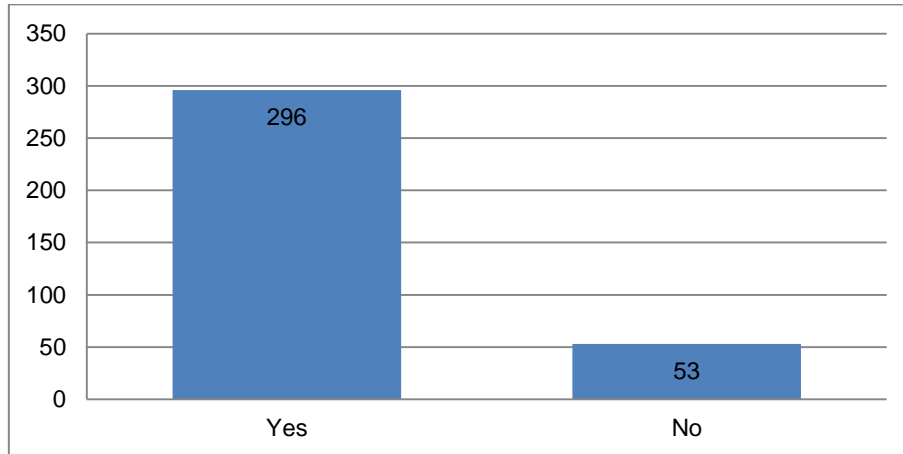
Graph 6: If yes, did their departure influence your decision to leave?
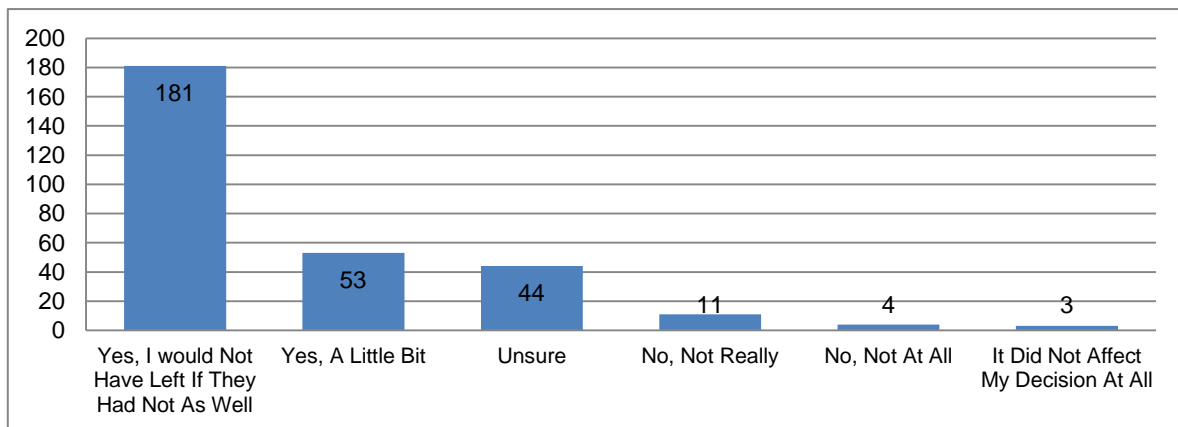
Respondents were also asked to list their intended final destination upon leaving Myanmar: 210 (60%) listed Malaysia, with only two people listing Thailand and one person listing Australia. When asked to indicate what made them choose this country as their final destination, 166 respondents (47%) cited family as the reason. Other than family ties, the ease of travel to Malaysia (26 respondents) and safety (17 respondents) were the most common responses.

Table 2: Intended final destination

Australia	1
Malaysia	210
Thailand	2
Total	213

From these primary results, a pattern emerges regarding travel decisions. Namely, our results show that initial motivations for irregular migration (to leave Myanmar) primarily revolve around seeking protection and safety. It is well documented that the Rohingya have faced violence and persecution, particularly in recent years (see for example, Equal Rights Trust 2014, Green et al 2015, Human Rights Watch 2013a, Abdelkader 2014, Kipgen 2013, 2014), and this is reflected in our survey results, with many respondents noting that they fled Myanmar primarily to escape such violence and persecution. Thus, initial movements are influenced by the immediate need for protection and safety. This is an important finding to highlight, particularly given the earlier discussion of the prevalence of marriage as another reason given for mobility. That is, it must be reiterated that the primary motivator and influence on the decision to leave emerges from the systematic persecution of Rohingya as a minority ethnic group in Myanmar and the lack of rights available to them as a result.

While the survey findings show that safety is a major influence on the decision *to move*, women's decisions on *where to move to* are motivated by different factors. Again, mirroring the literature on Rohingya irregular migration, the survey results reveal that the women tended to migrate to places where they have Rohingya connections—primarily family ties. The majority of women chose to migrate to Malaysia 'to be with family' within the country who had already moved prior to them and established a life there. This is reflected in the interviews, with one woman stating that she came to Malaysia because '[her parents] were already living in Malaysia' (AMPANG_HDA_13_&_05) while another noted that '[her] husband [had] gone [to Malaysia before her] and then arranged her travel to Malaysia' (AMPANG_DE_31_7_03). A third interviewee spoke of coming to Malaysia to join her husband:

> A: Because my husband is here [Malaysia] and he called me...
>
> Q: *So your husband was already in Malaysia?*
>
> A: Yeah. Already in Malaysia before. (AMPANG_HDA_13July)

4.4.3 Information sources and trustworthiness: Family or smugglers

The survey also focused on how information influences decision-making. Specifically, women were asked where they accessed information about travelling from, and how trustworthy they considered the information. The results from these questions reinforce the important influence of family on women's decisions, but also shed light on the influence of private agents (or smugglers) during irregular migration (see Graphs 7-12 below). The terms 'agent' and 'smuggler' are not necessarily interchangeable, but the irregular migrants who are the focus of this research project use these terms in an interchangeable way. There is a clear disconnect between policy and legal language and terminology and the way that people who are subject to border and migration policies perceive and experience these terms and use language. For this research project, we found that our survey and interview population of irregular migrants appeared to more commonly refer to those who they engage to facilitate their travel as agents. The illegal aspect of smuggler activity and the potential for criminalisation is not uppermost in the decision making of the irregular migrants in this study.

Private agents are used extensively by Rohingya to escape Myanmar (Equal Rights Trust 2014; International State Crime Initiative 2015; UNHCR 2014), and this is evident in the findings of the 350 women surveyed: only 65 women (19%) had never used a smuggler; 270 women (77%) had paid a smuggler; and 140 women (40%) had been smuggled across borders. Interestingly, however, the survey and regression analysis results also suggest that the use of smugglers varies depending on the number of destinations at which respondents stopped before reaching Malaysia.

Of the 61 women who made the journey from Myanmar directly to Malaysia, only six women indicated that they had consulted a private agent as a source of information to make their journey. Primarily, these women had consulted family (32 had consulted male family and 11 had consulted female family) and the community (17 respondents). With regards to trustworthiness, all respondents indicated that their family were completely trustworthy (an average rating of 5 out of 5), while the

community was seen as slightly less trustworthy (an average rating of 4.8 out of 5). Private agents were judged to be even less trustworthy, with an average rating of 4.3 out of 5.

Graph 7: Women who travelled directly to Malaysia information sources (61 women)
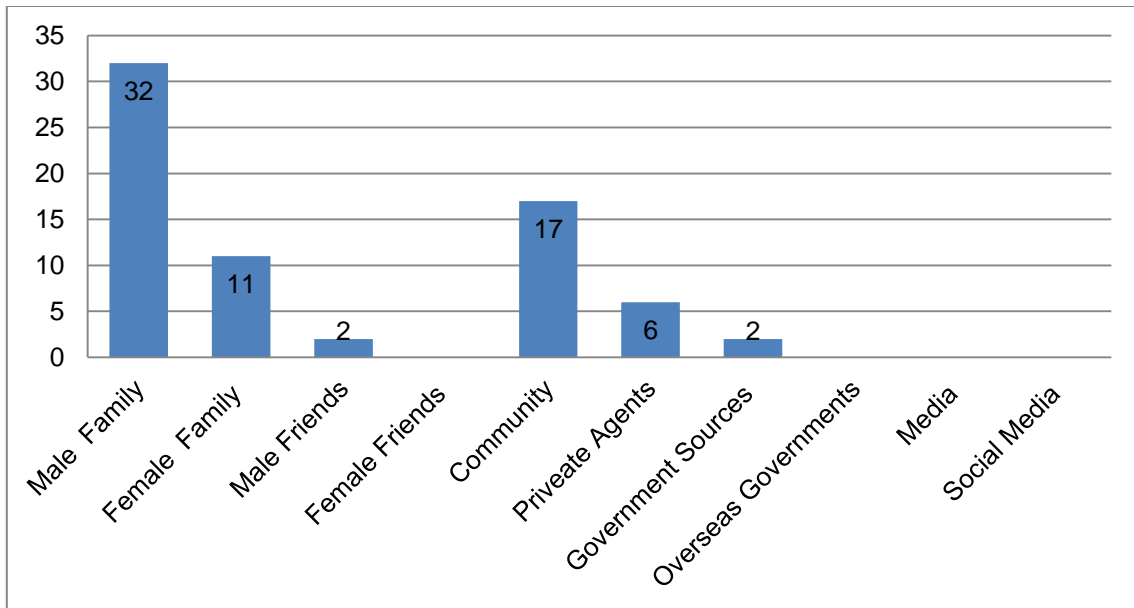
Graph 8: Women who travelled directly to Malaysia (trustworthiness rating of sources)
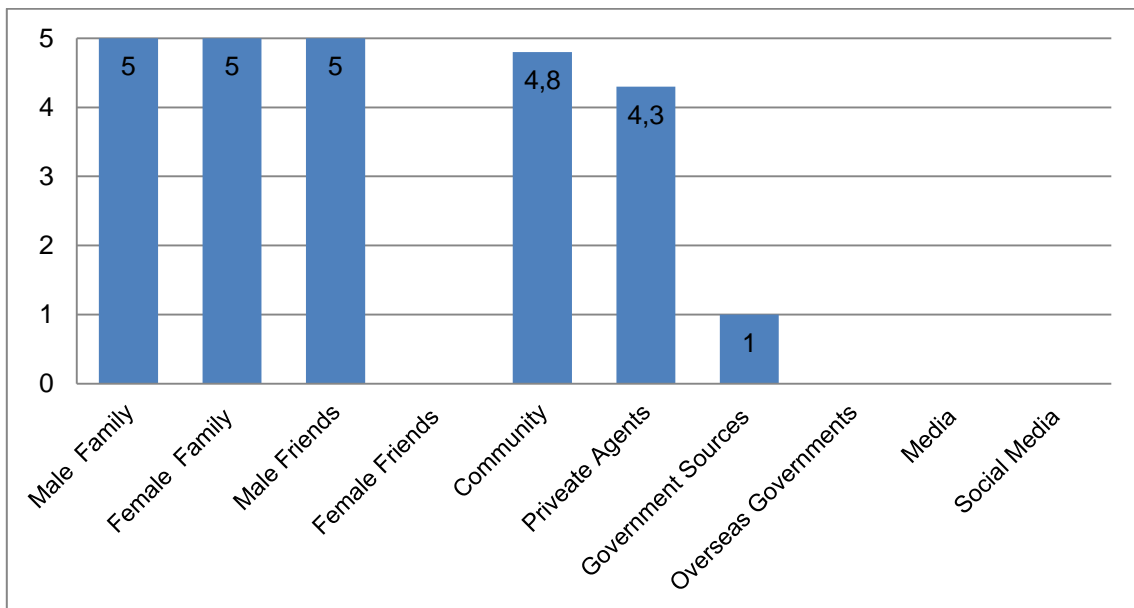
Graph 9: Women who travelled through one transit country—information sources to reach first transit country (285 women)
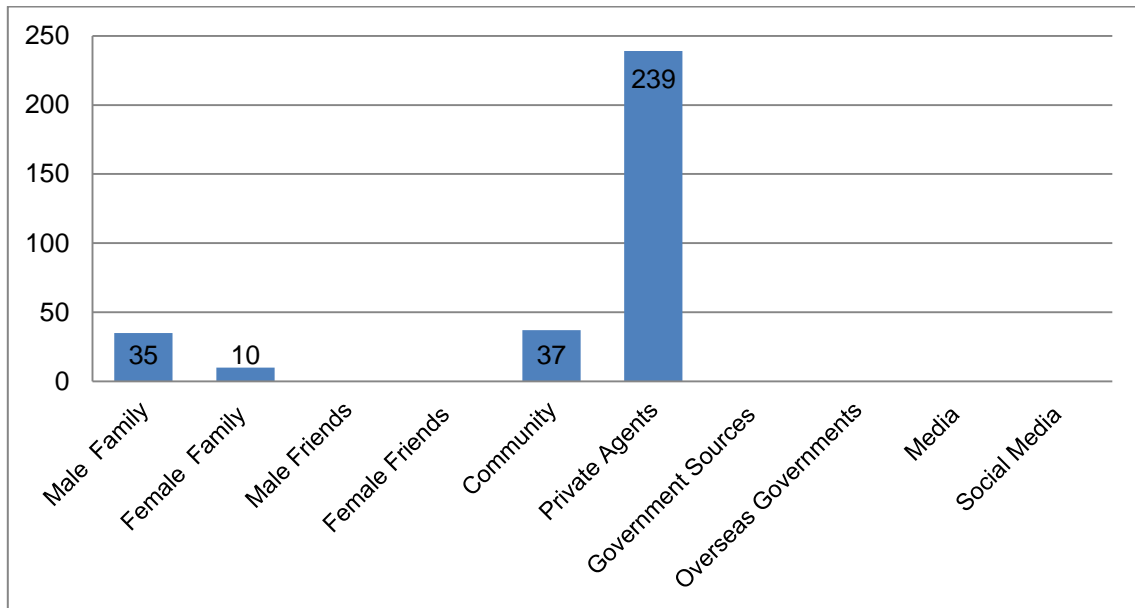
Graph 10: Women who travelled through one transit country—information sources to reach first transit country (trustworthiness rating of source)
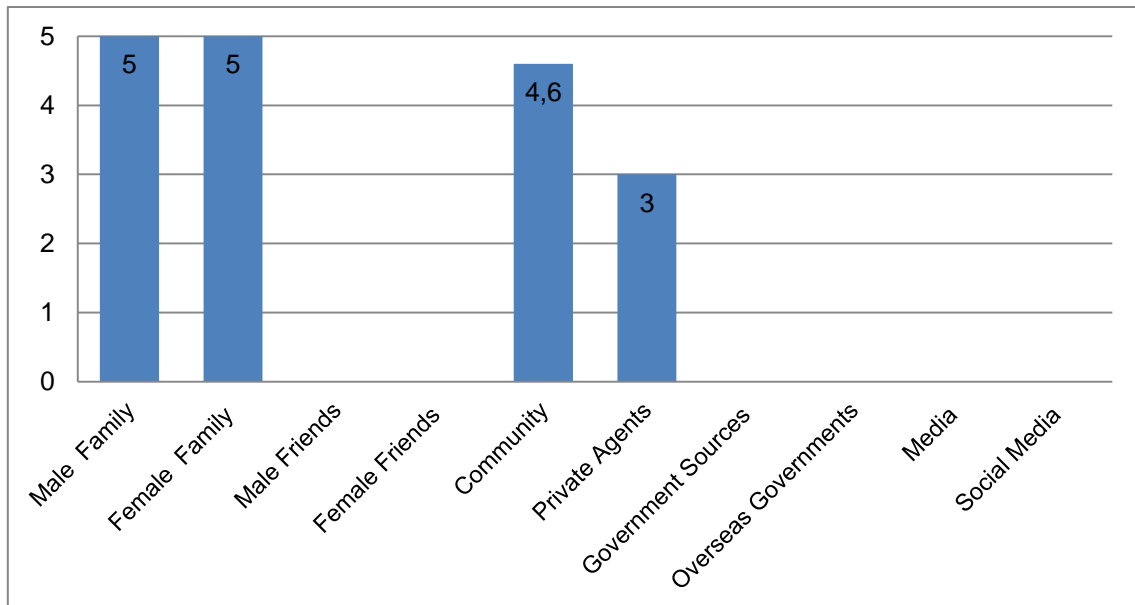
Graph 11: Women who travelled through one transit country—information sources to reach Malaysia from first transit country
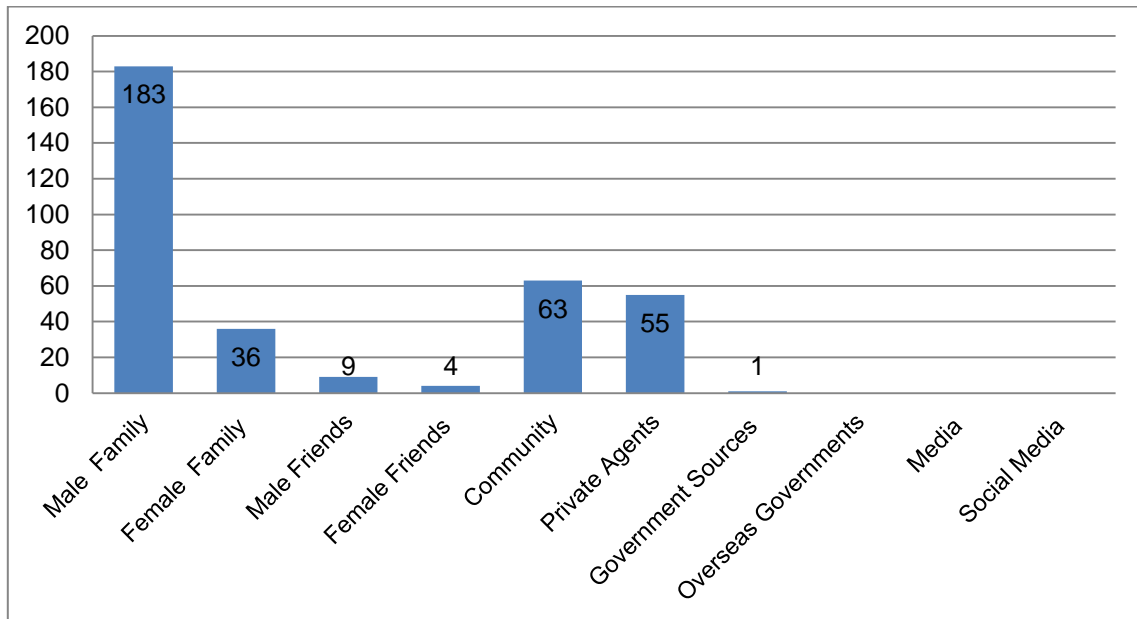
Graph 12: Women who travelled through one transit country—information sources to reach Malaysia from first transit country (trustworthiness rating of sources)
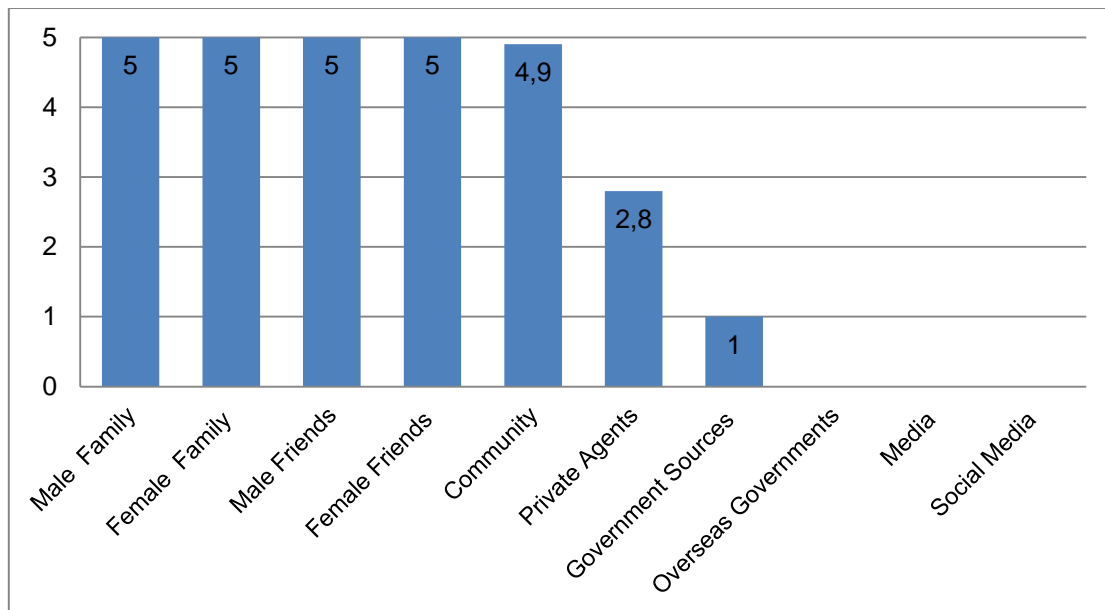
As shown in Graphs 7-12 above, for the 285 women who travelled to Malaysia via one transit country, the sources of information they used varied considerably, with a majority (239 or 84% of this group) using private agents to inform their journey to their first transit country. The measures of trustworthiness follow similar patterns, with family members reported as extremely trustworthy (an average rating of 5 out of 5); however, private agents used to travel to the first stop were reported to be much less trustworthy than those used to travel directly to Malaysia (an average of 3 out of 5 compared to 4.3 out of 5). These findings are also supported by our analysis—we predict that women who do not travel directly to Malaysia have 6.1 higher odds of using a smuggler (Regression 4 in Appendix B). The journey directly from Myanmar to Malaysia was definitely more desirable to the

respondents, and also more expensive, so we imagine this mode of travel does require more money and/or social capital to enter Malaysia. Some of those direct journeys may also have been facilitated by smugglers, especially among those who reported coming over on an aeroplane. Transit stops (which the respondents were not always even aware had to be made) were arranged by the agents/smugglers most of the time.

Interestingly, however, to reach Malaysia from their first stop, which in the overwhelming majority of cases was Thailand, only 55 women used agents (rated an average of 2.8 out of 5 for trustworthiness), with family sources (male and female) used by 219 women, again with an average rating of 5 out of 5 for trustworthiness. This finding can perhaps be related to the literature, which details the experience of Rohingya migrants who use the smuggling service to escape Myanmar—in many cases Rohingya are held by smugglers until payments are made for their release (Equal Rights Trust 2014, p. 20; International State Crime Initiative 2015, p. 21; UNHCR 2014, pp. 1–4). Thus, Rohingya must keep in contact with their family (either in Malaysia or Myanmar) on whom they rely to gather and transfer funds to smugglers for their eventual movement from Thailand to Malaysia. This is reflected in the interviews we conducted. One woman, for example, explained that 'her husband paid 6500 Malaysian ringgit to the agent … she stayed with the agent for four days [before coming] to Malaysia', while another recounted how '[her] agent kept her … until he got the payment. When her father paid the payment and the agent release her to come [to Malaysia].' (AMPANG_DE_31_7_02) The collaboration between agent and family sources was also discussed by a woman who '[received information to leave Myanmar] from her husband … who knew an agent [and] used that agent to bring [her safely] to him.' (AMPANG_HDA_13_7_05)

4.5 Travel experiences: Gender violence and smuggling

To gauge not only how Rohingya women travelled and how they accessed information, but also how they experienced their journeys, respondents were asked to indicate how they perceived their travel experience. Of the total number of women, 293 (84%) indicated that their travel experience was more difficult than they had anticipated. The interviews also detailed the difficulties faced during the journey; one woman 'faced a lack of food and water' (AMPANG_DE_31_7_03) during her travels, while two others witnessed 'agents beating the men on the boats with belts'. (AMPANG_DE_31_7_08) 'I saw the agents. I saw beatings—saw beatings—beatings to the men, but they didn't beat to the women' (AMPANG_HS_July13).

Our models suggest that human decision-making ability has a strong relationship with experience of travel—those who are not involved in the decision to leave Myanmar have 6.9 higher odds of having a negative travel experience (shown in Regression 5 in Appendix B).

Women were also asked about their experiences of gendered violence, not only during their journey, but also during their time in Myanmar and after their arrival in Malaysia. According to the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women the definition of the term 'gender-based violence' is 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life' (United Nations 1993). The women spoke about gendered violence in relation to the threat or actual harm directed at them sexually (sexual assault, rape or similar), or at their perceived lesser status or lack of physical or other protections. Among the respondents, 159 women (45%) had experienced gendered violence at some stage, with 112 (32%) experiencing gendered violence during their journey. Importantly, in the interviews some women explained that they felt safer travelling with men. Two interviewees spoke of this in relation to travelling with their husbands or other men:

> Yeah because I with my husband, I came here with my husband; I didn't fear. When we were separated from each other, at the time I fear. (AMPANG_HS_July10)

> She heard somewhere there is to risk about other people, but yeah, she had her family with her and some of the men, that's why she didn't face any difficulties. (AMPANG_Dee_31July)

Only 31 women (9%) travelled or lived without any male accompaniment. Yet almost half of the women surveyed had experienced gendered violence, despite the fact that 92 per cent were accompanied by men during their travels (percentages are rounded). This finding is reflected in the regression analysis—those who travel with an accompanying male are predicted to have 2.5 higher odds to experience gendered violence (shown in Regression 6.1 in Appendix B).

The causality with this relationship is not clear, however, it could conceivably be the case that many women expect to experience gendered violence and hence only choose to travel with men because of this anticipation. Another explanation emanated from the interviews. Although many women travelled with men, they were not always necessarily together at all points of the journey. As a third woman travelling with her husband explained: 'I came here [to Malaysia] with my husband, I didn't fear [sic]. When we were separated from each other, at [that] time, I [experienced] fear' (AMPANG_HS_10_7_05). Another woman shared this experience, stating that 'when I came [to Malaysia] … the men [were] separate, the women [were] separate … in the boat and in the car' (AMPANG_HDA_13_7_01), highlighting the fact that male accompaniment was not necessarily available at all times during travel.

Interestingly, aside from male protection being an important factor in women's decisions about migration, the interview results show that travelling with children may also reduce women's experiences of gendered violence. As one woman explained, '[I travelled] alone with my children … women without children were sometimes disturbed. I had small children, so I was okay' (AMPANG_HS_DE_13_7_05). Many women also mentioned banding together during the journey to look after each other's children, especially at times when food and water were scarce. One woman even recounted how 'on her journey there was a woman who could not feed her [child] her breast milk' so she 'fed the child her own breast milk' (AMPANG_HDA_13_7_03).

It is important to note here also that smuggling, and the experience of using smugglers, did not necessarily translate into a negative travel experience for women. Our regression models predict, for example, that those who travel without an agent/smuggler have 1.8 higher odds of experiencing gendered violence (See Figure 3 below). This is also reflected in some of the interviews, with one woman recounting that 'our agent was very good, he looked after [me] as a daughter' (AMPANG_HS_10_7_01).

These narratives of care could be attributed, however, to the strong existing migration ties present between Rohingya in Malaysia and Myanmar. For example, those who have successfully made the journey already (such as husbands or other family members) may have also established relationships with particular agents they know from their journeys—as above, many women explained how either their family or husbands had arranged agents for them, or 'managed' their journey via agents in order to ensure their safety. This is also reflected in our regression models, which predict that those who do not cite family reasons (either to reunite with family or to meet future husbands) as motivating their decisions to move have 3.5 higher odds of experiencing gendered violence (Regression 6.2 in Appendix B). Thus, it is possible that those women who have pre-existing family ties in Malaysia, and whose family members have built irregular migration networks with agents whom they believe they can rely on, will travel with 'agents' who are simply providing a service, as opposed to 'smugglers' who are more dangerous.

In contrast, some women interviewed talked of facing aggression and extortion at the hands of their agents, which then had an impact on their feelings of safety during the migration journey. Some women witnessed beatings on the boats during their journey to Thailand. Others experienced or witnessed situations of extortion before leaving Myanmar or in the smuggler camps before their onward journeys continued.

> The agent kept me in my home until he got the payment when my father paid the payment, and the agent release me to come here [Malaysia]. (AMPANG_Dee_31)

> Some of the things that were happening I was travelling maybe, some of the travel agents I saw, I just saw hitting—I just saw in the boat, one of the agents had beaten the men. The agent had so hit, very hit to the men, and then gave them the money. They paid. (AMPANG_Dee_08)

The overall pattern reveals that travelling with a smuggler is negatively associated with experiences of gender related violence. Yet at the same time the findings confirm the great variability of those engaged in the facilitation of irregular migration journeys. There are those who extort and abuse migrants while others are highly trusted and provide information and a 'service' that is highly valued.

As is explained later in the conclusion, one of the major findings of the study indicates that the traditional family structure of Rohingya households and communities with male leadership and authority is a strong cultural norm. This means first, that men appear as the most visible decision makers (although women may well influence decisions behind the scene) and second, that gender based violence is likely to be under-reported.

FIGURE 3: THE JOURNEY, USE OF SMUGGLLERS AND EXPERIENCES OF GENDERED VIOLENCE

MYANMAR

THAILAND

MALAYSIA

OF 285 PEOPLE WHO STOPPED AT ONE DESTINATION 239 USED PRIVATE AGENTS /SMUGGLERS AS A KEY INFORMATION SOURCE TO GUIDE THEIR FIRST JOURNEY

OF 62 PEOPLE USING THIS ROUTE, 6 USED AN AGENT/SMUGGLER

WOMEN WHO DO NOT TRAVEL DIRECTLY TO MALAYSIA HAVE 6.1 HIGHER ODDS OF USING A SMUGGLER.

55 WOMEN USED AGENTS TO GET FROM THEIR FIRST STOP (PREDOMINANTLY THAILAND) TO MALAYSIA

SMUGGLING

77% HAD PAID A SMUGGLER

40% HAD BEEN SMUGGLED ACROSS BORDERS

Key factors in decision making:

Our modelling predicts that: THOSE WHO TRAVEL WITHOUT AN AGENT/ SMUGGLER HAVE **3.4 HIGHER ODDS** TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION TO LEAVE THEIR FIRST TRANSITCOUNTRY.

THOSE WHO ARE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION TO LEAVE MYANMAR HAVE **7.5 HIGHER ODDS** TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION TO LEAVE THEIR FIRST TRANSIT COUNTRY

VIOLENCE

45% HAD EXPERIENCED GENDERED VIOLENCE AT SOME STAGE

Our modeling showed that:

THOSE WHO TRAVEL WITH AN ACCOMPANYING MALE ARE PREDICTED TO HAVE **2.5 HIGHER ODDS** TO EXPERIENCE GENDERED VIOLENCE

WOMEN WHO TRAVEL WITHOUT AN AGENT/ SMUGGLER HAVE **1.8 HIGHER ODDS** OF EXPERIENCING GENDERED VIOLENCE.

4.6 Life in Malaysia

FIGURE 4: EXPERIENCE OF LIFE IN MALAYSIA

MALAYSIA

60% INDICATED THAT LIFE IN MALAYSIA WAS MORE DIFFICULT THAN THEY ANTICIPATED.

33% FOUND IT EASIER THAN EXPECTED

90% HAD NO ACCESS TO INCOME

77% HAD NO ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

50% INDICATED THAT THEIR TIME IN MALAYSIA HAD CHANGED THEIR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

Prospects for resettlement

62% INDICATED THAT THEY WANTED TO RESETTLE IN AUSTRALIA

3% WANTED TO STAY IN MALAYSIA

FIELDWORK LOCATIONS (SITES SURVEYED)

Kuala Lumpur
- Taman Lembah Maju
- Kampung Pandan
- Kampung Tasik Tambahan
- Sentul Timur
- Jalan Tasik Permai
- Jalan Ipoh

Klang
- Jalan Pasar Baru

Moving on with

79% FAMILY - CHILDREN

86% SPOUSE

42% OTHER FAMILY

Despite the fact that the majority of respondents had intended Malaysia to be their final destination when they left, the literature has established that life is difficult for Rohingya in Malaysia and in many instances much harder and less welcoming than incoming Rohingya expect (Azis 2014, p. 840; Equal Rights Trust 2014, p. 47) (as outlined in Section 3.1.1). This is reflected in the survey findings, with 210 women (60% of respondents) stating that living in Malaysia is more difficult than they had expected. Of the total, 315 women (90%) reported having no form of income in Malaysia and 77 per cent reported that they had no access to healthcare. While 58 per cent of respondents reported holding UNHCR identification cards, such documentation does not allow holders to work legally or to access Malaysian medical care. These numbers are also reflected in the women's descriptions of the difficulties of their life in Malaysia. For example, one woman observed, '[I have] nobody here. [I] had to pay the rent and [I] had no money. [I] can't work as a woman' (AMPANG_DE_31_7_03). Another respondent commented how '[it is] not good living in Malaysia, because [her children] can't go to school. If she goes to the hospital, the doctors ask too much. That's why [she's] not happy living here' (AMPANG_DE_31_7_02). The precarious nature of their status in Malaysia (as illegal immigrants according to the state) also impacts on their quality of life; one woman said that 'she has no UN card,
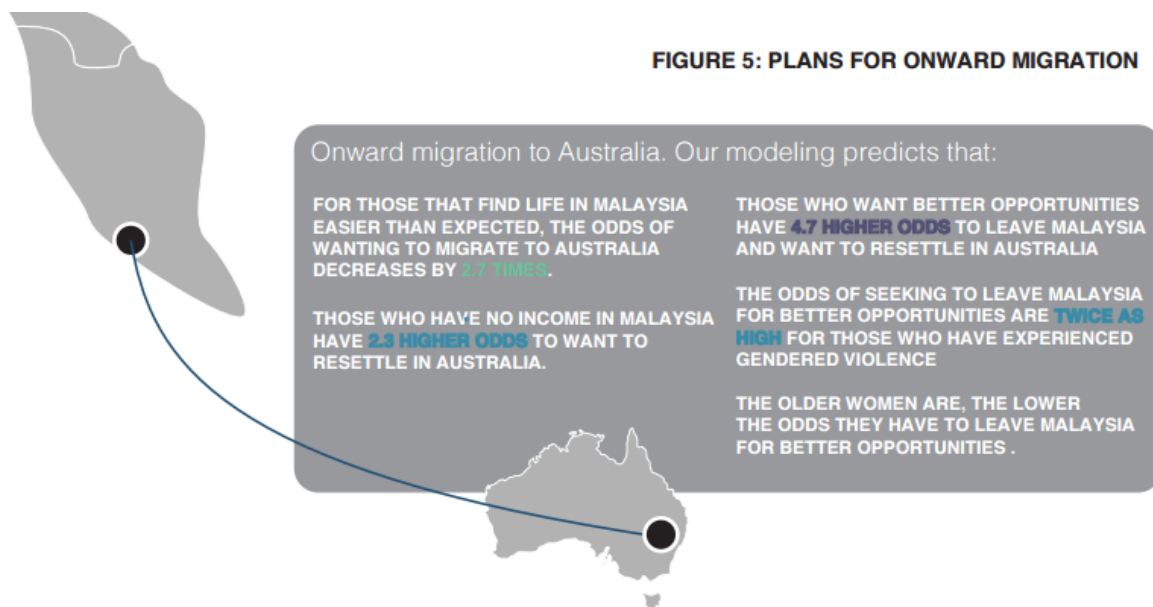
she cannot go to another place easily, she is scared of the police' (AMPANG_DE_08). Another spoke of the impact of the financial hardship she experienced in Malaysia:

> The difficulties I face in Malaysia, we can't able with the small money of my husband's salary because I have—we have to keep our house land and the children's education. (AMPANG_HS_July10)

Many women did remark that life in Malaysia is 'definitely a better life' (AMPANG_DE_07) than that in Myanmar in the sense that they are in a peaceful, Muslim country and away from direct persecution and conflict. Yet, overwhelmingly, the insecure nature of their existence as irregular migrants; and their lack of income, access to adequate healthcare and education opportunities for their children act as strong drivers of onward migration from Malaysia. Indeed, only nine respondents (3%) indicated that they would like to stay in Malaysia. This is important to compare to the statistic reported above that showed that 60 per cent of respondents had initially stated that Malaysia was their *final* intended destination. Further, 176 respondents (50%) indicated that their time in Malaysia had changed their plans for the future, suggesting that while many may have intended to settle in Malaysia, the extremely poor and difficult life they face in Malaysia has led them to rearrange their lives to prioritise onward migration. This finding is also supported by our regression modelling, which predicts that those who indicate that life in Malaysia is easier than they expect will have 7.8 times higher odds to want to stay in Malaysia, suggesting that the key driver of onward migration from Malaysia is the lack of opportunities presented to Rohingya in Malaysia (particularly given that many have long-term irregular status), as opposed to pull factors from other countries (see Regression 7 in Appendix B).

4.7 Malaysia as a transit country and onward migration

This section analyses the data in view of our third hypothesis: that the transit period is central to understanding changes in the nature and form of information sharing between women irregular migrants and other intending migrants and families back home in the country of origin.

FIGURE 5: PLANS FOR ONWARD MIGRATION

Onward migration to Australia. Our modeling predicts that:

FOR THOSE THAT FIND LIFE IN MALAYSIA EASIER THAN EXPECTED, THE ODDS OF WANTING TO MIGRATE TO AUSTRALIA DECREASES BY 2.7 TIMES.

THOSE WHO HAVE NO INCOME IN MALAYSIA HAVE 2.3 HIGHER ODDS TO WANT TO RESETTLE IN AUSTRALIA.

THOSE WHO WANT BETTER OPPORTUNITIES HAVE 4.7 HIGHER ODDS TO LEAVE MALAYSIA AND WANT TO RESETTLE IN AUSTRALIA

THE ODDS OF SEEKING TO LEAVE MALAYSIA FOR BETTER OPPORTUNITIES ARE TWICE AS HIGH FOR THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED GENDERED VIOLENCE

THE OLDER WOMEN ARE, THE LOWER THE ODDS THEY HAVE TO LEAVE MALAYSIA FOR BETTER OPPORTUNITIES .

4.8 Onwards from Malaysia

The major motivation for onward migration from Malaysia is to escape the long-term insecurity the Rohingya face in their everyday life in Malaysia. As for possible onward migration destinations, the

respondents primarily chose Australia (216 or 62% of all respondents) and the United States (60 or 17% of all respondents); only 29 women (8%) had considered returning to Myanmar during their travels, and only one woman indicated that she wanted to re-settle in Myanmar. The primary concern for the women in planning onward migration was the anticipated opportunities available in the next intended destination, listed by 215 women (61%) as the main influence on their choice of final onward migration country. This finding again reinforces the notion that, after attaining safety from persecution and violence, access to a secure, sustainable life that offers reasonable opportunities for employment and education is an important factor that conditions decisions around onward migration (especially for a population with children—80% of respondents in this sample).

Specifically with regards to onward migration to Australia, our regression analysis strongly supports the findings detailed above: for those that find life in Malaysia easier than expected, the odds of wanting to migrate to Australia decrease by 2.7 times, while those who have no income in Malaysia have 2.3 higher odds of wanting to resettle in Australia. Further, those who want to leave Malaysia to seek better opportunities have 4.7 higher odds of wanting to resettle in Australia (see Regression 8 in Appendix B). This reiterates the notion that those who have access to stable lifestyles with reasonable opportunities are willing to remain where they are, while only those who face situations with little income or poor future prospects for their children have a strong desire to move on. As explained by one respondent, '[life is] better than [in Myanmar] but if possible we want to resettle to a third country … our income is less … we can't pay [for] our children's education' (AMPANG_HDA_13July_05).

5. Conclusion

The study has found that Rohingya women migrants do play an active role in the decision-making on irregular migration journeys for themselves and their families. Despite the low levels of formal education of the Rohingya, resulting from their decades long exclusion from full citizenship rights in Myanmar, the Rohingya women migrants surveyed and interviewed for this project demonstrated a high level of awareness of the complexity of the decisions around irregular migration journeys, prior, during and post travel.

The conditions that Rohingya women and their families face in Malaysia were unanticipated by the majority of women surveyed and interviewed and affect their planning for future, onward migration journeys. Interestingly, the future opportunities (or lack thereof) for children in terms of education and work prospects was most prominent as a driver for possible onward migration.
It is also noteworthy that the welfare oriented work of non-governmental organisations and voluntary citizen initiatives, such as a free monthly health clinic, were experienced as key 'unofficial' services in meeting everyday survival needs.

The research has shown that, although the three interrelated hypotheses with which we began the project were supported by the data as detailed in the findings section, significant additional detail and nuance were revealed by the project's findings. These are summarised below:

i) While the majority of women were involved in decision-making, family structure and cultural norms within Rohingya communities mean that the most visible decision-makers are male family members.

ii) Smugglers are customarily used by women to assist in facilitating journeys, though they are referred to as 'agents' and are usually known to women through their ethnic and community networks.

iii) Negative experiences in a country of destination (Malaysia) are key drivers for Rohingya women in making plans for onward migration. This has the effect that the intended country of destination becomes a country of transit.

iv) Related to iii) above, Rohingya women's (traditional) role as mothers, homemakers and nurturers of families means that many women identified a lack of access to 'survival rights' such as the right to work and the right to access healthcare and education for their children as a key driver for onward migration prior to departure, en route to and in transit in Malaysia.

v) For cultural reasons, gender-based violence appears to be under-reported.

There is significant scope for further research and empirical work in other locations within Peninsular (West) Malaysia. UNHCR has a presence across 126 learning centres located in Kuala Lumpur (federal territory) and the following states: Selangor, Perak, Pahang, Terengganu, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor, Pulau Pinang and Kelantan. These centres—which cater to 826 refugee children aged 3–5 years enrolled in school education, 4113 children aged 6–13 years enrolled in primary education and 816 children aged 14–17 enrolled in secondary education—provide an indirect indicator of potential cohorts of adult Rohingya, including women. Further fieldwork in such locations would strengthen the evidence base currently available for understanding gender and irregular migration journeys.

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Appendix A: Semi structured interview schedule

Migration to Malaysia—Rohingya Women

1. When did you arrive in Malaysia?

2. Can you tell me about your reasons for leaving Myanmar?

3. How did you go about gathering information to plan your journey?
    - Who were your main sources of information?
    - Did you speak to family and friends, or to your local community?
    - Did you speak to anyone official about your journey?
    - Did you use the internet and social media to gather information? How do you feel about using these sources of information?
    - Were there any other ways that you found out information that helped you make decisions about your journey?

4. Did different sources of information tell you different things about the journey?
    - Did particular messages or information about the journey come from particular sources? Can you tell me more about this?
    - Were different sources of information telling you similar things?
    - Were you worried about how reliable the information was?

5. How did you decide whether you could trust the information?
    - Did it matter to you where the information came from? Can you tell me more about this?

6. Can you tell me the three most important sources of information you used for making decisions about your journey? What made you rely on those sources?

7. Did any of the information you received tell you about the risks of the journey? If so, what was the source of the information? And, what kind of risks were mentioned?

8. Do you think your journey has been different because you are a woman?

9. Can you tell me about your journey to Malaysia? Did you plan to travel to Malaysia or did you have another destination in mind?

    - Did the information you gathered in Myanmar influence where you wanted to travel to? Or how you got there?

10. Were there any particular issues you faced in travelling as a woman? If so, could you tell me about these?

Life (in transit?) in Malaysia

11. How long have you been in Malaysia?

12. What is life like for you in Malaysia? Is it very different to what you expected? Can you tell me about what is different to your expectations or the stories you were told before you arrived?

13. Can you tell me about how you came to live in (insert place)?

14. Have IOM or UNHCR assisted you since you arrived? If so, what has been your experience with them?

15. Are you a part of the Rohingya migrant community here in (insert name)? If so, can you tell me if this community gives you information in regards to your current status or situation? How about with regards to onward travel?

16. What other assistance/support do you get from the Rohingya community in (insert place) for day-to-day life?

17. Have you lived anywhere else in Malaysia?

18. How long do you plan to stay in Malaysia?

19. What is your current visa status?

20. At the moment do you work? Legally or not?

21. Are there any particular challenges you face in Malaysia as a woman?

Onward travel

22. Are you planning an onward journey [to Australia]? Can you tell me a little about your plans and why you prefer this destination?

23. How do you plan to travel onwards [to Australia]?

24. Can you tell me about how you have gathered information about your planned onward journey [to Australia]?
    - From where/from whom have you gathered the information?
    - What kind of information have you been given?
    - Do you think it is accurate?

25. Have you found it hard to find information on how to migrate/travel onwards from Indonesia [to Australia]?
    - Has the information you've gathered changed your decision to travel on? Can you explain this more?

26. What sort of stories have you heard about people making the journey to Australia? Do you think those stories are true?
    - Have you heard stories about people dying at sea/boats being turned around/off shore detention? If so, have they changed your thinking?

27. (If travelling as part of a family) How have you told these stories to other members of your family?

28. Do you think the way you gather information is similar to other Rohingya? How is the way you gather information different to others you have observed?

29. Would you make the journey again?

30. What would you do differently if you were making this journey again?

Alternative Journeys

31. Have you considered returning home? Why/why not?

32. Do you think it is possible to return home?

33. Have you considered going somewhere else? Why/why not?

34. What would make you change your mind and travel elsewhere?

Gender Questions

35. Since beginning your journey, have you experienced violence directed towards you because you were female? If yes, what form did this violence take?

36. Have you been travelling with males you know for any part of this journey?
    - If yes, for which parts?
    - Has travelling with males made you safer?

37. Were you caring for children either before you left on your journey, or at any stage throughout your journey, including now in Malaysia?
    - If yes, for which parts?
    - How did caring for children affect the decisions you made?

Appendix B: Regression analysis

Regression 1 – The decision to leave

Dependant Variable - Were you involved in the decision to leave Myanmar

Independent Variables	Beta	S.E.	Exp (Beta Coefficient)
Experienced Violence Before Arrival	.395	.572	1.484
Left Myanmar Due to Safety Concerns*	1.081*	.454	2.949*
Left Myanmar Due to Persecution	.724	.500	2.062
Left Myanmar for Opportunity	-.315	.557	.730
Left Myanmar for Family Reasons*	1.244*	.525	3.471*
Experience of Gendered Violence Yes / No	-.331	.492	.718
Male Accompaniment Yes / No	-.442	.796	.643
Used Smuggler Yes / No*	.895*	.457	2.448*
Any Form of Education	.539	.410	1.715
Travelled Direct To Malaysia	-.126	.494	.882
Travel Experience Was Better Than Expected	1.714	1.058	5.551
Life in Malaysia Was Harder Than Expected	-.138	.407	.871
Constant	.290	1.013	1.336

Percentage correctly predicted : 91.1%
n= 349
*p<0.05

Regression 2 – Leaving Myanmar for better opportunities

Dependent Variable - Left Myanmar for better opportunity

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient	S.E.	Exp (Beta Coefficient)
Left Myanmar Due to Persecution*	-1.120*	.490	.326*
Left Myanmar Due to Safety Concerns	-.882	.456	.414
Left Myanmar for Family Reasons*	-1.969*	.551	.140*
Male Accompaniment Yes / No	.614	.824	1.848
Used smuggler Yes / No	-.351	.490	.704
Any Form Of Education	.185	.390	1.204
Travelled Direct To Malaysia	.357	.477	1.430
Travel Experience Was Better Than Expected	-.005	.580	.995
Life in Malaysia Was Harder Than Expected	.215	.401	1.240
Experience of Gendered Violence Yes / No	-.581	.433	.559
Time Spent In Malaysia	.185	.203	1.203
Age	-.130	.195	.878
Knew People Who Left Myanmar Before	-.337	.506	.714
Constant	-.950	1.522	.387

Percentage Correctly Predicted: 90.5%
n= 347
*p<0.05

Regression 3 – Leaving Myanmar for family reasons

Dependent Variable – Leaving Myanmar for family reasons

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient	S.E.	Exp (Beta Coefficient)
Left Myanmar for Opportunity*	-1.825*	.504	.161*
Left Myanmar Due to Safety Concerns*	-2.059*	.319	.128*
Left Myanmar Due to Persecution*	-1.098*	.347	.333*
Male Accompaniment Yes / No	.606	.517	1.833
Used Smuggler Yes / No	.601	.410	1.824
Any Form of Education	-.043	.296	.958
Travelled Direct To Malaysia	.264	.403	1.303
Travel Experience Was Better Than Expected	-.001	.451	.999
Life in Malaysia Was Harder Than Expected	.302	.304	1.353
Experience of Gendered Violence Yes / No*	-1.093*	.305	.335*
Time Spent In Malaysia	-.042	.149	.959
Age	-.213	.142	.808
Knew People Who Left Myanmar Before*	1.996*	.517	7.359*
Constant	.098	1.050	1.103

Percentage Correctly Predicted: 78.1%
n= 347
*p<0.05

Regression 4 – Use of smugglers

Dependent Variable – Used smugglers Yes / No

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient	S.E.	Exp (Beta Coefficient)
Left Myanmar Due to Safety Concerns	-.775	.405	.461
Left Myanmar Due to Persecution	-.137	.447	.872
Left Myanmar for Opportunity	-.719	.493	.487
Left Myanmar for Family Reasons	.282	.433	1.326
Experience of Gendered Violence Yes / No	.230	.381	1.259
Male Accompaniment Yes / No	-.514	.798	.598
Travel Experience Was Worse Than Expected	.273	.462	1.313
Travelled Direct To Malaysia*	-1.815*	.368	.163*
Age	-.182	.144	.834
Knew People Who In Malaysia*	.898*	.377	2.456*
Involved in the Decision to Leave Myanmar	.802	.529	2.230
Travel Plans Changed During The Journey*	1.179*	.424	3.251*
Constant	1.201	1.180	3.324

Percentage Correctly Predicted: 86.4
n= 345
*p<0.05

Regression 5 – Travel experiences

Dependent Variable – Travel experience was worse than expected

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient	S.E.	Exp (Beta Coefficient)
Left Myanmar Due to Safety Concerns	.208	.389	1.232
Left Myanmar Due to Persecution**	.640**	.378	1.897**
Left Myanmar for Opportunity	.088	.542	1.091
Left Myanmar for Family Reasons	-.062	.424	.940
Experience of Gendered Violence Yes / No*	.946*	.413	2.575*
Male Accompaniment Yes / No	.334	.495	1.397
Used Smuggler Yes / No	.243	.461	1.275
Travelled Direct to Malaysia	-.164	.405	.849
Age	-.020	.155	.980
Knew People Who Left Myanmar Before	-.099	.478	.905
Involved in the Decision to Leave Myanmar**	-1.935**	1.047	.144**
Travel Plans Changed During Journey	-.060	.404	.942
Constant	2.400	1.320	11.020

Percentage Correctly Predicted: 84.3
n= 345
*p<0.05, **p<0.1

Regression 6.1 – Experience of gendered violence

Dependent Variable – Experience of gendered violence Yes / No			
Independent Variables	**Beta Coefficient**	**S.E.**	**Exp (Beta Coefficient)**
Male Accompaniment Yes / No*	.899*	.429	2.457*
Travelled Direct to Malaysia	-.385	.307	.680
Time Spent In Malaysia	-.044	.108	.956
Used Smuggler Yes / No*	-.584*	.296	.558*
Constant	-.290	.703	.748

Percentage Correctly Predicted: 57.9
n= 349
*p<0.05

Regression 6.2 – Experience of gendered violence

Dependent Variable – Experience of gendered violence Yes / No			
Independent Variables	**Beta Coefficient**	**S.E.**	**Exp (Beta Coefficient)**
Used Smuggler Yes / No	.170	.372	1.186
Left Myanmar Due to Safety Concerns	-.377	.345	.686
Left Myanmar Due to Persecution	.438	.364	1.550
Left Myanmar for Opportunity	-.678	.468	.508
Left Myanmar for Family Reasons*	-1.252*	.333	.286*
Male Accompaniment Yes / No	-.011	.515	.989
Any Form of Education	.088	.280	1.092
Travel Experience Was Worse Than Expected*	.934*	.426	2.544*
Travelled Direct to Malaysia	.006	.377	1.006
Want to Stay in Malaysia	-.312	.878	.732
Age	.083	.136	1.087
Time Spent in Malaysia	-.048	.145	.954
Involved in the Decision to Leave Myanmar	-.489	.472	.613
Travel Plans Changed During Journey*	-2.318*	.311	.098*
Constant	.941	1.189	2.563

Percentage Correctly Predicted: 75.4
n= 345
*p<0.05

Regression 7 – Staying in Malaysia

Dependent Variable – Stay in Malaysia			
Independent variables	**Beta Coefficient**	**S.E.**	**Exp (Beta Coefficient)**
Experience of Gendered Violence Yes / No	.659	.779	1.932
Have UNHCR Registration	-1.617	.828	.198
Held in Detention	-.165	1.350	.848
Leave Malaysia for Family Reasons	-1.253	.965	.286
Leave Malaysia for Safety	-1.841	1.080	.159
Leave Malaysia for Opportunity*	-4.006*	1.291	.018*
Life in Malaysia Is Easier Than Expected*	2.052*	.855	7.783*
Constant	-2.229	1.114	.108

Percentage Correctly Predicted: 97.7%
n= 349
*p<0.05

Regression 8 – Settlement in Australia

Dependent Variable – Settle in Australia Yes / No

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient	S.E.	Exp (Beta Coefficient)
Left Myanmar Due to Safety Concerns	-.481	.306	.618
Left Myanmar Due to Persecution	.437	.331	1.548
Left Myanmar for Opportunity	-.581	.428	.560
Left Myanmar for Family Reasons	-.130	.306	.878
Experience of Gendered Violence Yes / No	-.246	.303	.782
Male Accompaniment Yes / No	.133	.459	1.142
Used Smuggler Yes / No	.340	.352	1.406
Any Form of Education	.075	.257	1.078
Travel Experience was Worse Than Expected	-.346	.768	.708
Travel Experience Was Better Than Expected	-.662	.846	.516
Travelled Direct To Malaysia	.112	.351	1.119
Have UNHCR Registration	.277	.292	1.319
Life in Malaysia is Easier Than Expected*	-1.011*	.285	.364*
Leave Malaysia for Family Reasons	2.132*	.671	8.428*
Leave Malaysia for Safety	.875	.658	2.398
Leave Malaysia for Opportunity*	1.541*	.605	4.667*
Income in Malaysia*	-.815*	.360	.443*
Time Spent in Malaysia	.168	.143	1.183
Time in Malaysia Changed Travel Plans*	1.197*	.332	3.311*
Involved in the Decision to Leave Myanmar	-.209	.453	.812
Constant	-1.657	1.446	.191

Percentage Correctly Predicted: 69.7
n= 347
*p<0.05

Regression 9 – Leaving Malaysia for better opportunity

Dependent Variable – Leave Malaysia for better opportunity

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient	S.E.	Exp (Beta Coefficient)
Left Myanmar Due to Safety Concerns	-.398	.293	.672
Left Myanmar Due to Persecution	.007	.308	1.007
Left Myanmar Opportunity*	1.367*	.522	3.924*
Left Myanmar Family Reasons	-.128	.294	.880
Experience of Gendered Violence Yes / No*	.706*	.262	2.027*
Male Accompaniment Yes / No	.199	.408	1.220
Used Smuggler Yes / No	-.370	.337	.691
Travel Experience Was Worse Than Expected	.050	.333	1.051
Travelled Direct to Malaysia	-.127	.326	.881
Age*	-.257*	.111	.774*
Income in Malaysia	-.597	.348	.551
Life in Malaysia is Harder Than Expected	.229	.250	1.257
Constant	.901	.683	2.462

Percentage Correctly Predicted: 66.7
n= 345
*p<0.05

Regression 10 – Involved in the decision to leave first transit destination

Dependent Variable – Involved in the decision to leave first transit destination

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient	S.E.	Exp (Beta Coefficient)
Involved in the Decision to Leave Myanmar*	2.017	.542	7.514
Left Myanmar Due to Saftey Concerns	-.581	.366	.559
Left Myanmar Due to Persecution*	1.589	.364	4.900
Left Myanmar for Opportunity	.903	.574	2.468
Left Myanmar for Family Reasons	.233	.359	1.262
Experience of Gendered Violence Yes / No **	.623	.316	1.865
Male Accompaniment Yes / No**	1.166	.469	3.210
Used Smuggler Yes / No**	-1.218	.523	.296
Any Form of Education	.339	.294	1.404
Travel Experience Was Worse Than Expected	-.146	.398	.864
Constant	-2.352	.904	.095

Percentage Correctly Predicted:
n= 283
*p<0.01
**p<0.05

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