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**THE IMPACTS OF MIGRATION ON MYANMAR WOMEN'S IDENTITY
AND CONNECTEDNESS TO THE LAND AND FOOD**

by

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**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

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Abstract

In the 21st century, Myanmar has become the largest migration source country in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (Kusakabe & Pearson, 2010). To achieve its economic goals, the government has prioritized the confiscation and reallocation of communal lands, which has resulted in a growing class of landless and dispossessed citizens (Franco, Twomey, Ju, Vervest, & Kramer, 2015). This has resulted in the wide-scale process of Myanmar's rural women's disinheritance from the land and food, as they are expropriated from the home of their ancestors and forced to migrate to urban centers to earn a livelihood. The proposed study will examine and identify the impacts of rural to urban migration on Myanmar women's individual identity and connectedness towards the land and food. A cross-sectional study of rural women in Myanmar and Myanmar migrant women living in Bangkok, Thailand will be conducted. Participants will complete a survey/questionnaire containing measures of four constructs: 1) salience of the land to identity, 2) salience of food to identity, 3) connectedness to the land and 4) connectedness to food. It is hypothesized that the salience of the land and food to identity will be higher for rural women than for urban migrants. It is also hypothesized that women living in rural environments will have higher feelings of connection to food when compared to women living in urban environments. Finally, the influence of time away from origin and participants' age will also be analysed and discussed. The findings from this study may provide insight into the personal challenges and internal struggles Myanmar's women face when moving to a new environment. In addition, this study may broaden the relatively scarce literature regarding Myanmar women, serving as an important basis for beginning to understand the experiences of this under-represented population within the psychological literature

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The Impacts of Migration on Myanmar Women's Identity and Connectedness to the Land and Food

In the 21st century, the government of Myanmar has embarked upon an ambitious series of reforms aimed at liberalizing the country's political and economic systems (Thein, 2004). To achieve its goals, the government has prioritized the confiscation of communal lands, reallocating them to foreign agencies and private investors (Franco, Twomey, Ju, Vervest, & Kramer, 2015). The government's re-assignment of lands has resulted in the destruction of customary tenure systems and traditional land use practices, including the recognition of women in the management of natural resources and cultivation of land (Prasse-Freeman, 2016). Under the new laws, rural women are disproportionately impacted and more vulnerable to the processes of dispossession, often lacking the rights or resources to fight for the land of their ancestors.

This has resulted in the wide-scale process of women's disinheritance from the land and food, as they are expropriated from the home of their ancestors and forced to migrate to urban centers to earn a livelihood (Meyer, Robinson, Branchini, Abshir, Mar, & Decker, 2019). Myanmar has become the largest migration source country in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (Kusakabe & Pearson, 2014). According to the Myanmar government's most recent 2014 Census, roughly 4.25 million Myanmar nationals are living abroad, with over 65% of migrants being women from rural areas (International Organization for Migration, 2019). In the process of migration, the traditional identities and customs of Myanmar's rural women are uprooted, altered and damaged. The women find themselves in dialogue with a newfound distance, in which they are increasingly disconnected from the physical, social and intellectual origins of their food and the land it is grown upon. This dialogue is multivocal, as urbanization and modernity do not automatically replace tradition. The proposed study will seek to examine and identify the impacts

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of rural to urban migration on Myanmar women's individual identity and connectedness towards the land and food.

Social Identity Theory and Identity Salience

Social identity is an individual's sense of who they are based on their group membership (Tajfel, 1981). Tajfel (1981) argued that individuals' self concepts, or beliefs about who they are, can consist of multiple components, such as gender, ethnic, and class identities. Stets and Burke (2000) asserted that identity is composed of a series of self-concepts that are related to a particular group or role through self-classification. Moreover, individuals often engage in an unconscious process of self-categorization, in which they compare themselves with others to assess their relative similarity or dissimilarity (Pahl & Eiser, 2005; Stapel & Koomen, 2000; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Depending on the situation, individuals may self-categorize on the basis of any of a number of social identities. Social identities are fluid and can only be understood in light of the specific contexts in which they occur (Reicher, 2004). Thus, they may be activated in some instances but inactivated in others (Brewer, 1991). For example, in the case of a within-participant study of Asian American women, when their Asian identity was activated it was found that they would do better in math, whereas when their female identity was activated, they would do worse (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999).

The degree to which a particular identity is important or prominent in relation to other identities within an individual is referred to as identity salience (Stryker, 1968). Identity salience occurs when an individual is prompted to categorize himself or herself along a particular identity-oriented criterion. Thus, the salience of a specific identity varies within an individual across time and space, and can shape individuals' choices and behaviours (Markus & Wurf,

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1987; Randel, 2002; Reed, 2004; Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999). Situational factors (e.g., stimulus cues, social context, individual differences) can influence which identities are salient and affect information processing and decision making (Markus & Wurf, 1987; Reed, 2004). The current research builds upon this theoretical background in order to examine the influence of rural to urban migration on the salience of land and food, as well as place, to the identity of Myanmar women.

Place Identity

Individuals' identity negotiations and identity salience are also informed by the physical environment. Thus, the concept of place identity is of particular relevance to this study when attempting to understand the impacts of rural to urban migration on individuals' identity construction.

The theory of Place Identity, proposed by Proshansky and his colleagues (Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983), called for the inclusion of the physical environment within the framework of an individual's identity. Proshansky argued that just as groups and social values inform one's identity, one's spatial environment also serves to define who a person is. Place-identity is defined as the aspects of self that are defined in relation to a specific physical environment (Proshansky, 1978). At the center of place identity is a sense that the "place" is part of "my identity", or more abstractly, part of "me" (Trenteman, 2009). Therefore, it is argued that an individual's identity involves an intrinsic awareness of place, an awareness that "there is no place without self; and no self without place" (Casey, 2001, p. 406).

Place identity has been further explored through empirical work on the nature of the rural identity (Ching & Creed, 1997), as well as in the study of farmers' identity (Klandermans,

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Sabucedo & Rodríguez, 2004). For example, in rural China, migrants form a provincial identity standard (e.g., 'I am a peasant') as they have deep ancestral ties to farming (Silverstein & Cong, 2013). Similar to many of the Myanmar women in this proposed study, their ancestors tilled the same soil for centuries, creating a deeply rooted sense of identification with their rural identity (Friedman & Lee, 2010; Qin, Zhang, & Ma, 2011). In addition, Cheshmehzangi (2015) expanded on this concept by writing on urbanization's impact on identity, covering the effects of urban growth on place identity theory. He took this concept towards a new direction in analysing how built environments affect identity at different levels, concluding that identity has become not only a term, but rather a comprehensive theme and concept, when making new places and built environments. The influence of urban infrastructure on place identity has been further examined through a study of data from residents of Charleston, South Carolina following hurricane Hugo (Hull, Lam & Vigo, 1994). The study found that participants sense of self and sense of connection was directly linked to community icons, homes, and structures within the community (Hull, Lam & Vigo, 1994). Thus, individuals' self-concepts can be deeply connected to and influenced by the urban environment around them. While place-identity theory asserts that spatial changes are connected to identity changes, Cheshmehzangi's work also made evident that particular settings can facilitate major influence on the perceptions of self.

Additionally, Proshansky (1978) and Cheshmehzangi (2015) asserted that place identity changes to some degree over one's life cycle, as a result of shifts in the physical and social environments. For the female Myanmar migrants in this study, their internal and external sense of place shifts, as they move from their rural homes to a foreign, urban setting. This movement is likely accompanied by shifts in migrants' self-identity, as they work to reconstruct connections with place in a new environment.

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The impacts of migration on place identity have been increasingly studied within the 21st century, particularly in the context of migration to urban environments. Qian, Zhu and Liu (2011) examined urban migrants' sense of place in relation to a community culture center and the city of Guangzhou, China. It was found that urban migrants' psychological connections with their place of destination had significant impacts on their well-being. Furthermore, the authors argued that the urban migrants are faced with predicaments in re-establishing psychological bonding with place. Other empirical research (Joseph 2013; Trąbka 2019) found that place identity is a dynamic process, which worked to significantly alter migrants' sense of self throughout the course of adaptation to a new urban setting. Similarly, Cable, Gino, and Staats (2015) argued that when entering urban environments, migrants underwent sensemaking, prompting them to form new 'situational identities' based on their urban work and lifestyle. However, Paik (2014) found that many migrants maintain their provincial identity, regarding village roles in farming, family and civic leadership, as central to their self-concept. Such rural association creates identity strain when their place identity lacks urban affirmation (Paik, 2014). It has also been found that when rural migrants struggle to adapt, they may dislike, disavow or avoid their urban surroundings (Stryker, 1987; Thoits & Virshup, 1997). In a study by Gui, Berry and Zheng (2012), it was concluded that migrants with weaker rural identities may feel less identity strain (or can better lessen it) because they sense a closer 'fit' with living and working in cities and thus readily adapt to their new urban environment. Although such literature highlights the impacts of migration on place identity, it fails to examine individuals' changing relationship to the particular land they are living upon, as well as, their differing interactions with food sources.

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Other empirical research highlights the experiences of rural female migrants' movement to urban centers. Resurreccion's (2005) study focused on migrant women's sense of 'in-betweenness' as they navigate through host societies and retain tight linkages with their places of origin in Southeast Asia. Jowell, Wulfovich, Kuyan and Heaney (2018) also explored the experience of rural-to-urban migration among female migrants from Masasai and how this experience affects ethnic identity, resilience, and well-being. It was found that migrants who repeatedly move between home and host areas hold closely to their traditional ethnic identity and remain isolated from city life, while permanent migrants modulate their ethnic identity and integrate into urban society. Finally, Gui, Berry, and Zheng's (2012) study examined the urban identity, self-worth and satisfaction of life of Chinese migrant women who move to large cities from rural areas to seek employment. The authors found that migrants employ different acculturation strategies favoured in social identity and place identity domains in order to increase their well-being. Thus, for many migrants, the urban environment can play an integral, dynamic role in the concept of self and well-being.

Disinheritance from the Land and Changing Food Systems

The current study highlights two changing dimensions of Myanmar migrant women's concepts of self, in relation to the land and in relation to food. In many ways, both concepts are tied to the theory of place identity, as one's relationship to the land is determined and influenced by one's physical environment. The decision to examine these aspects of self stems from the ethnographic work of Pongstaphone and Joseph (in preparation). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with rural women in Myanmar, as well as Myanmar migrant women in Mahachai (Samut Sakhon), Thailand. Their thematic analysis revealed the importance of land

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and food in Myanmar's women's daily lives, livelihoods and ultimately, notions of self. Analysis of the interviews revealed the significance of the land and food in rural women's experiences and sense of identity. By contrast, Mahachai's migrant women's narratives highlighted the concept of distancing, in which women's physical distancing from the land and food coincided with a distancing of the self. This work serves as the foundation for the current study's predictions that women's disinheritance from the land now comes with disinherited mental noise, altering the psyche and identity construction of migrant women in relationship to the natural world and food. "If we are what we eat," then food must be considered an active being; an agent of change. The act of producing and consuming food serves as a basis of identity, providing human beings with a sense of self and an intimate connection to the world around them. Thus, Pongstaphone and Joseph (in preparation) argued that when women experience disinheritance from the land, they are forced to dispossess, to cut off, and to distance themselves from central aspects of the self. The proposed study seeks to examine these assertions regarding identity from a quantitative, psychological perspective.

Overall, research is scarce for Myanmar's women in relation to the environment. What little research that exists with respect to Myanmar migrants' experiences of forced migration does not intentionally explore the meaning of land and food with respect to identity. However, the role of rural women as environmental caretakers and food producers has been discussed (Aye, 2018). Myanmar women typically play important roles in environmental management, in which their traditional role has been environmental caretakers (Aye, 2018; Mon, 2000). Myanmar rural women engage in the collection of water, firewood and medicinal plants, as well as in agricultural production and in the preparation of meals for the family. Similarly, in a study by Mon (2000) Myanmar women were found to play an essential role in agricultural production,

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decision-making, environmental education and natural resource management within their villages. Thus, Myanmar's rural women's social and economic roles intimately connect them to the land and food serving as important aspects of their social identities.

Beyond this work, current scholarship on identity in relation to the food and land exists within other cultural contexts. The process of migration and its influence on individuals' relationship to food has been examined within the context of the Western urban environment (Blay-Palmer, 2016). Blay-Palmer argued that in the process of migration to urban centers and the resulting incorporation into the Industrialized Food System (IFS), North American and European migrants experience an increasing distance from the physical, social, and intellectual origins of their food and the natural world. Another study by Scarpello, Poland, Lambert, & Wakeman (2009) provided evidence regarding the struggle of rural individuals in Norfolk, United Kingdom when attempting to adapt and find healthy food within the IFS (supermarkets). Results supported the idea that rural individuals' feelings of well-being and sense of place are threatened by the IFS, as they preferred food from their own land or from those in their community.

Furthermore, Quintero-Angel (2019) demonstrated the role of the cultural transmission of food habits in the identity formation and social cohesion of individuals in Cali, Colombia. This case study demonstrated the relationships between food, the environment, and cultural identity. It served to illustrate the way in which food practices and identity are influenced by the larger socio-cultural context, including the dynamics of globalization, industrialization and rural to urban migration. Similarly, a study by Naidu and Nzuzza (2017) argued that food is a vital and dynamic part of people's culture and identity, as people often identified and associated themselves with the foods they eat. They explored the importance of traditional or 'home food'

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in maintaining a sense of ‘self’, and an articulation of identity for Sierra Leoneans. Findings revealed that for migrants, ‘home food’ can emotionally transport migrants back to the sending country. It also showed that in an attempt to maintain their identity, migrants sometimes formed strategies that appeared to aid in preserving and further enacting their ‘cultures’.

Scholars have also explored the essential role of the land and rurality in individuals’ well-being and sense of self (Creed & Ching, 1997). Research on Native Americans and indigenous populations demonstrate the critical role a connection to the land and the natural world plays in individuals’ identity and health. Kanaïaupuni and Malone (2006) highlighted the significance of the land in Native Hawaiian identity and cultural survival. In particular, the authors discussed the physical, spiritual, genealogical, and socio-political/historical ties to the land and sea that nourish Hawaiian’s well-being. Barbic (1998) also stressed the importance of the rural environment in Slovenians’ identity and culture. He described the centrality of the natural environment as the basis for economic activities in rural communities (e.g. agriculture, forestry, rural tourism) and many traditional social events (e.g. spring festivals, carnivals). Such a framework of analysis can be useful when conceptualizing Myanmar rural women’s connection to the land, as the Buddhist tradition, traditional gender roles, cultural norms and agricultural work facilitate their intimate connection to the natural world (Gender Equality Network, 2015).

Finally, the importance of migrants’ maintaining a relationship to the natural world has been examined. Gerodetti and Foster (2016) argued that migrants’ ability to use gardens and allotments to “grow from home” alongside locally established agriculturalists, results in an increased sense of self and well-being. Similarly, in a study by Wiborg (2004), university migrants’ relationship to the land and rural home place were found to be essential aspects of the formation and management of their identity. Thus, individuals’ relationship with their physical

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environment, in particular the land and food, can significantly influence individuals' construction of self. Drawing from this body of literature, the connections people have to land and food are apparent, and therefore, they warrant empirical exploration in Myanmar's women.

Research on Myanmar's Women

The existing literature about Myanmar's women fails to address the impacts of rural-urban migration on the women's intimate relationship to the land and food. However, scholars have highlighted the changes in mental health and well-being experienced by Myanmar women as a result of migration. Meyer and colleagues (2016) asserted that adverse mental health outcomes are experienced by migrant workers from Myanmar in their transition to working in agriculture, factory, and sex industries in and around Mae Sot, Thailand. It was found that the migrants experienced increased workplace and security-related stressors, which resulted in higher levels of depression and anxiety symptoms. Similarly, Noom and Vergara (2014) examined the acculturative stressors, levels of acculturative stress and self-esteem, coping responses, and the relationship that acculturative stress may have with self-esteem and coping among Burmese female migrant workers in Thailand. The results showed that high acculturative stress was negatively correlated with self-esteem and positively correlated with avoidant coping responses such as acceptance and emotional discharge.

Schweitzer, Brough, Vromans, and Asic-Kobe (2011) further demonstrated the challenges Myanmar's migrants experience when moving to a destination country. The study discovered that Myanmar migrants' experienced internal changes in response to a new environment, exhibiting higher levels post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression. Pearson and Kusakabe (2012) discussed the serious difficulties Burmese migrant women factory

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workers experience in adapting to their new environment, providing for their families, and creating a sense of place. Finally, Rosbrook and Schweitzer (2010) examined the loss of home and its meaning to Karen and Chin refugees. It was found that a loss of home created serious disturbances in an individual's identity. The deep and pervasive effects associated with the loss of home manifested in both emotional and physical challenges for the migrants. In addition, an intense emotional connection to the landscape was revealed for the participants (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010).

Current Research

This study will build upon previous scholarship to better understand the impacts of migration on Myanmar women's sense of self. By building on the previous themes discovered in the ethnographic work (Pongstaphone & Joseph, in preparation), the current study highlights aspects of the self which may previously have been overlooked and rendered invisible. A cross-sectional study of rural women in Myanmar and Myanmar migrant women living in Bangkok, Thailand will be conducted. Participants will complete a survey/questionnaire containing measures of four constructs: 1) salience of the land to identity, 2) salience of food to identity, 3) connectedness to the land and 4) connectedness to food. The overall goal of this study is to assess the impact of migration on women's relationship to the land and food. The findings from this study can provide insight into the personal challenges and internal struggles Myanmar's women face when moving to a new environment. With this goal in mind, the following hypotheses are posed:

Hypothesis 1: Women living in rural environments will have higher feelings of connection to the land when compared to women living in urban environments.

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Hypothesis 2: Women living in rural environments will have higher feelings of connection to food when compared to women living in urban environments.

Hypothesis 3: For women living in rural environments, the salience of the land to identity will be higher than for women living in urban environments.

Hypothesis 4: For women living in rural environments, the salience of food to identity will be higher than for women living in urban environments.

Hypothesis 5: Amount of time away from home (defined as place of origin) will be significantly, negatively correlated with women migrants' connectedness to the land and food.

Hypothesis 6: Age of Myanmar rural women will be positively associated with connectedness to the land and food.

Hypothesis 7: Connection to food will be significantly, positively related to identity salience of food.

Hypothesis 8: The relationship between salience of food to identity and migration will be mediated by the amount of feelings of connection to food reported

Proposed Method

Participants

Based on previous research in the field (Chen et al., 2014), the estimated effect size will be large. Assuming desired power (beta) = 80%, $\alpha = .05$, and a large effect size when comparing between 2 groups, the sample size requires 93 participants in each sample group (total participants=186) (Cohen, 1992).

The target population of interest is Myanmar women. Participants will be required to be above the age of 18 years and it is expected that the age range will span across multiple

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generations (18 and 80 of age). They will be recruited from rural regions (townships) in Myanmar and the urban center of Bangkok, Thailand. Recruitment of participants will be facilitated with the help of previously established connections in both regions. NGOs, academics, and established relationships with local community members will assist in the distribution and collection of the oral survey. Individual monetary compensation will be given to all participants. Compensation will not be enough to be considered coercive to participants.

Materials

Salience of Land to Identity. The salience of land to the individual identity will be assessed through an 18 item questionnaire that was adapted from the Environmental Identity scale (EID; Clayton, 2003). Previous studies (Clayton, 2003) have proven the reliability of the scale, which typically has a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.9$. Instead of referring to the environment, the study was adapted to focus on the land. Example questions include: "I think of myself as a part of the land, not separate from it." and "In general, being part of the land is an important part of myself" (See Appendix A for the full scale). The participants will indicate the extent to which each of the statements describes them using a 5-point Likert scale ($1 = Strongly agree - 5 = Strongly disagree$). A composite score will be derived by summing all items in the scale. To further ensure the consistency of the adaptation, the reliability will be assessed for a sample after data collection.

Salience of Food to Identity. The salience of food to the individual identity will be assessed through an adaptation of the Role Identity Salience scale initially developed by Callero (RIS; 1985). Items were adapted to focus on food. Previous studies (Callero, 1985; Goldman, Burke, Mason, Hodapp, & Robert, 2017) demonstrated the reliability of the scale in which

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Cronbach's $\alpha=.75$. Example questions include: "Food is an important part of who I am." and "Food is something I rarely think about." (See Appendix B for the full scale). Participants will rate 5 items on how much they agree using a 5-point Likert scale ($1 = Strongly agree - 5 = Strongly disagree$) to assess the centrality of food to their sense of self. A composite score will be derived by summing all items in the scale. To further ensure the consistency of the adaptation, the reliability will be assessed for a sample after data collection.

Connectedness to Land. This scale consists of 14 items that are designed to measure the extent to which participants feel connected to the land. The items were adapted from Mayer & Frantz's (2004) Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS). Reliability of the scale has been proven, with Cronbach's $\alpha=0.84$. Items were changed to reflect the land and specific examples that were relevant to Myanmar's women. Example questions include: "I often feel a sense of oneness with the land around me." and "My personal welfare is independent of the welfare of the land." (See Appendix C for the full scale). Participants will rate the extent of their feelings using a 5-point Likert scale ($1 = Strongly agree - 5 = Strongly disagree$). A composite score will be derived by summing all items in the scale. To further ensure the consistency of the adaptation, the reliability will be assessed for a sample after data collection.

Connectedness to Traditional Foods. This scale consists of 11 items which are designed to measure the extent to which participants feel connected to food. The items were adapted from Mayer and Frantz's (2004) Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS). Reliability of the scale has been proven, with Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.84$. Items were altered to focus on food. Example questions include: "I feel as though the food I eat is important to me." and "I have a deep understanding of the food I eat." (See Appendix D for the full scale). Participants will rate the extent of their feelings using a 5-point Likert scale ($1 = Strongly agree - 5 = Strongly disagree$). A composite

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score will be derived by summing all items in the scale. To further ensure the consistency of the adaptation, the reliability will be assessed for a sample after data collection.

Demographics. Demographic information will be collected for all participants.

Participants will be asked their age, time away from origin and place of origin.

Procedure

The survey will be presented orally to the participants, due to lack of computer and technology access, as well as to the possibility that some individuals may not be literate. Participants will be asked to provide informed consent prior to beginning the study.

Participants will complete all components of the survey. The components will be in the following order to prevent contamination effects: 1) Salience of the Land to Identity, 2) Salience of Food to Identity, 3) Connectedness to Land, and 4) Connectedness to Food. Land and food will be counterbalanced within the constructs of salience and then connectedness. The questions within each section will be randomized. Demographic information for age, time away from origin and place of origin will be gathered upon completion of the previous components. Participants will then be debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Ethics

The current study presents minimal risk to the participants involved. No part of the study will exceed the level of risk that a participant might encounter in an everyday situation. No apparent risks appear to exist for the participants. In particular, the content and procedure of the study are not particularly sensitive or risky to the well-being of the participants. Therefore, the study should not elicit strong emotions of any kind.

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Additionally, no participants will be recruited from protected or vulnerable populations. Furthermore, the present study does not involve deception. Participation in the study is fully voluntary, and participants will be informed that they are free to withdraw participation at any time, or to skip any portion of the study with which they are uncomfortable without penalty. All participants will be individually compensated, with an amount that is not enough to be considered coercive.

In order to participate in the study, all participants will first read or have read to them a consent form that outlines the general topic of the study. Therefore, no participant should be surprised by the general content of the study, especially as the study contains no deception. The participant will be instructed to sign the consent form only if she has understood it in its entirety and feels comfortable with the study as it is described. Every participant will be fully debriefed following completion of the study. The debriefing will consist of a short description of the study's goals and contact information for the researcher. Participants will be encouraged to contact the researcher directly should they have further questions, so that a more thorough debriefing can take place. Therefore, to ensure that the study remains low in risk, the researchers of the present study are committed to respecting participants' desired level of participation. By providing participants with an explicit overview of the study, an informed consent form, and a comprehensive de-briefing document.

Following the collection of the data, participants' responses will be kept confidential. By alerting participants to the measures taken to ensure taking measures to ensure that all data collected remains confidential, the researchers will encourage participants to respond to the survey openly and honestly. Participants will be given numbers that replace their names during data collection and in the final report. The data collected by the researchers will only be

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accessible to the researchers. All research-related, physical files will be kept in a locked room, and all digital data will be kept on a private flash drive. Through these measures, the confidentiality of participants will be respected and ensured.

In addition to these data protections, the study presents almost no foreseen risk to the participants. However, benefits are far-reaching. The study may broaden the relatively scarce literature regarding Burmese rural women and Burmese women migrants. The study serves as an important basis for beginning to understand the experiences of this under-represented population within psychological literature. The study may also provide valuable information for migrant destination countries within Southeast Asia. In particular, Thailand may benefit from the study of Bangkok's Burmese migrants. Migrants from Myanmar constitute the vast majority of regular migrants to Thailand, accounting for 69 % of the total number of low-skilled migrant workers holding work permits in 2017 (United Nations Thematic Working Group on Migration in Thailand, 2019). Thus, the population of interest in this study is particularly relevant to Thailand's growth as a modern, globalized society, reconfiguring the nation's political, social, economic and cultural identity. Finally, little is known about identity construction in relation towards the land and incorporation into the urbanized industrial food system. This study may provide valuable information regarding migrants' experiences in an increasingly industrialized, urbanized and globalized world.

Predicted Results

Data Preparation

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Cronbach's α reliability tests of the different measures will be conducted. It is expected that all measures will have an adequate reliability with an $\alpha \geq .80$. Next, the research will calculate a composite score for each of the four scales.

Connectedness to the Land and Food

First, it was hypothesized that women living in rural environments will have higher feelings of connection to the land when compared to women living in urban environments. To test this hypothesis, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) will be conducted to test the main effect of the discrete, predictor variable (rural versus urban) on the continuous, dependent variable (feelings of connection to the land). Consistent with Hypothesis 1, upon controlling for time away from place of origin, age, and place of origin, it is predicted that the mean scores for connection to the land for rural women will be significantly higher than those in the urban condition. The results are supported by the findings that Myanmar's rural women are closer to the land due to their important roles as agricultural workers, environmental caretakers and natural resource managers (Aye, 2018; Mon, 2000). By contrast, in the process of rural to urban migration, migrant women have been found to be increasingly distant from the land, which results in lower feelings of connection (Blay-Palmer, 2016).

It was also hypothesized that women living in rural environments will have higher feelings of connection to food when compared to women living in urban environments. To test this hypothesis, an ANCOVA will be conducted to test the main effect of the discrete, predictor variable (rural versus urban) on the continuous, dependent variable (feelings of connection to food). Consistent with Hypothesis 2, upon controlling for time away from place of origin, age, and place of origin, it is predicted that the mean scores for connection to food for rural women

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will be significantly higher than those in the urban condition. Such results would be consistent with previous research that revealed Myanmar's rural women are intimately involved in food production. By contrast, migration to urban centers has resulted in the incorporation of women into the Industrial Food System (IFS), which significantly distances women from their food sources (Blay-Palmer, 2016).

Salience of Land and Food to Identity

It was also hypothesized that the land will be more salient to the identities of women living in rural environments than to women living in urban environments. An ANCOVA will be conducted to test the main effect of the discrete, predictor variable (rural versus urban) on the continuous, dependent variable (salience of land to the individual's identity). Consistent with Hypothesis 3, upon controlling for time away from place of origin, age, and place of origin, it is predicted that the mean scores for salience of land to the individual's identity will be significantly higher for rural women, than for those in the urban condition. Empirical work demonstrates the way in which the land is significantly correlated with rural individuals' cultural identity, sense of self, and well-being (Ching & Creed, 1997; Kana'iaupuni & Malone, 2006). When individuals migrate from rural to urban centers they are no longer in close proximity with the land and it is no longer involved in their daily life. Thus, their connection to the land has been found to weaken, as they must engage in the construction of an urban identity (Cheshmehzangi, 2015; Gui, Berry & Zheng, 2012; Joseph, 2013).

It is predicted that food will be more salient to the identities of women living in rural environment when compared to women living in urban environments. An ANCOVA will be conducted to test the main effect of the discrete, predictor variable (rural versus urban) on the

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continuous, dependent variable (salience of food to the individual's identity). This hypothesis is supported by previous research, that showed that rural women's cultural identity and sense of self are intimately linked to both food production and consumption (Naidu & Nzuzza, 2017; Quintero-Angel, 2019). By contrast, migrant women find their social, cultural and economic roles increasingly tied to the industrial environment (Joseph, 2013; Pearson & Kusakabe, 2012), Consistent with Hypothesis 4, upon controlling for time away from place of origin, age, and place of origin, it is predicted that the mean scores for salience of food to the individual's identity will be significantly higher for rural women, than for those in the urban condition.

Relationship of Time and Age with Study Variables

Hypotheses 5 and 6 will be examined using a multiple regression test exploring the relationship between the amount of time away from place of origin and age of participants (predictor variables) and connection to land and to food (criterion variables Consistent with Hypothesis 5, it is predicted that after controlling for place of origin, as the amount of time away from place of origin increases, migrants' disconnection from the land and food will also increase, demonstrating a positive linear relationship. Past research has found that migrants who have spent longer amounts of time in an urban setting demonstrate greater levels of integration into urban life and experience less feelings of connection to their home (Jowell, Wulfovich, Kuyan, & Heaney, 2018; Qian, Zhu, & Liu, 2011).

Consistent with Hypothesis 6, it is predicted that after controlling for place of origin, there will be a strong positive correlation there between participants' age and their feelings of connection to the land, as well as their age and feelings of connection to food. This is predicted because it has been found that the longer the amount of time an individual is situated in a place,

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the more salient it will be in individuals' self-concept and identity (Kraimer, Shaffer, Harrison, & Ren, 2012).

Mediational Hypothesis

Finally, it was hypothesized that the relationship between migration and salience of food to identity will be mediated by feelings of connection to food (see Figure 1 for mediational model). Baron and Kenny's (1986) model for mediation will be used to test this hypothesis. As predicted above, a relationship between migration and the salience of identity to food will be established. Similarly, as predicted above, a significant association between migration and feelings of connection to food will be established. Consistent with Hypothesis 7, it is predicted that the more connected the women are to food, the more salient food will be to their individual sense of identity. Next, following the model (1986), a Pearson's correlation coefficient will be computed to assess the relationship between women's feelings of connection to food and salience of food to the identity. Thus, the first two criteria of Baron and Kenny's (1986) model for mediation are predicted to be fulfilled. This prediction is based on previous identity work, in which individuals' self-concepts are closely tied to their food habits and involvement with food (Klandermans, Sabucedo & Rodríguez, 2004; Quintero-Angel, 2019).

In addition, a hierarchical linear regression will be conducted that consists of the predictor variables (migration and feelings of connection) and the criterion variable (salience of food to identity). Time away from origin, place of origin and age will be controlled for in the mediational analysis. Then the influence of migration will be entered into the model. Following this step, the mediation variable of feelings of connection to food will be entered into the regression. Consistent with Hypothesis 8, it is predicted that migration to an urban community

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leads individuals to feel less connected to food, which then leads food to be less salient to an individual's identity. Specifically, the strength of the relationship between migration and salience of food to identity will be reduced when feelings of connection is added to the regression, indicating a partial mediation. These predicted results are consistent with the findings the more connected individuals feel to their food, the more important it will be to their identity and sense of well-being (Naidu & Nzuzza, 2017; Quintero-Angel, 2019).

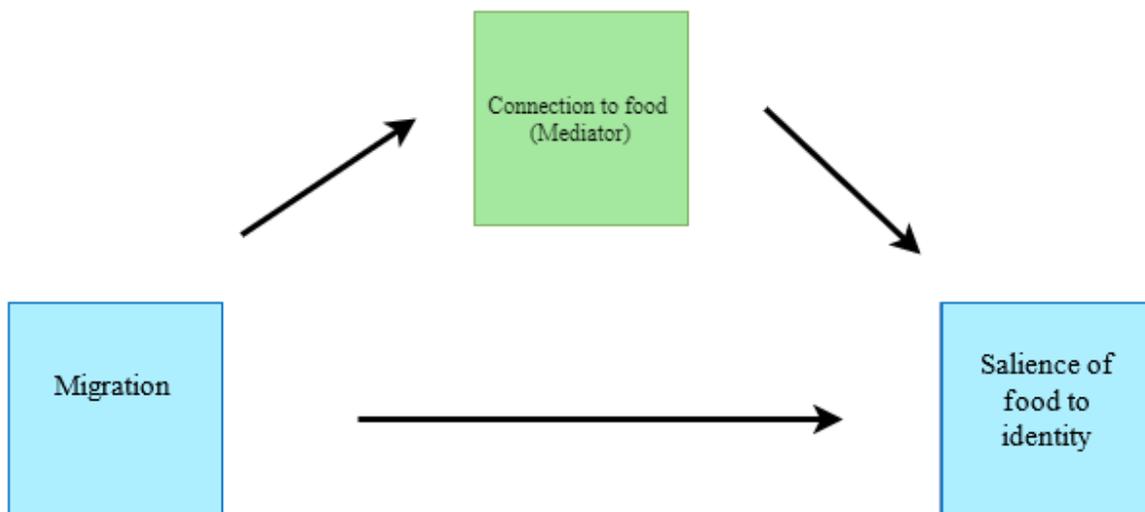


Figure 1. Figure depicts connection to food as mediating the relationship between migration and salience of food to the identity.

Discussion

Given that the land and food are extremely important to the lives of Myanmar's rural women (Aye, 2018), the present study seeks to consider the psychological implications that distancing from the land and food may have on Myanmar urban migrant females. The findings from this study can provide insight into the personal challenges and internal struggles

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Myanmar's women face when migrating to a new environment. In addition, this understanding can help psychologists to better conceptualize the possible psychological consequences of Myanmar rural women's disinheritance from the land of their origin. As the current Myanmar government continues to prioritize economic development and increased foreign involvement, disinheritance from the land will become an increasingly prominent feature of the country's landscape. Therefore, the influence of these processes on Myanmar's women cannot be ignored, as their continuation brings unknown and unprecedented changes to women's lives and psyches.

Although the proposed study may provide many benefits, it has several limitations. This include its cross-sectional design, the difficulty of obtaining a large sample size, and the oral nature of the survey. Future research can reduce the limitations mentioned above by using a longitudinal design, in which identity in relation to the land and food is assessed over time. Through connections with local NGOs and migration support organizations, rural women who are planning to migrate could be identified. Another option is to work with NGOs and migration support services in Bangkok that can assist in identifying women who have recently migrated. Participants could then answer a pre-migration test, followed by a series of post migration tests. In addition, a mixed methods approach could be utilized, in which quantitative data are gathered, accompanied by a phenomenological analysis of semi-structured interviews. Descriptive phenomenology, with its emphasis on understanding the meanings that people give to their lived experiences (Giorgi, 2009; Wertz, 2005), may be used to highlight the unique experiences of Myanmar's female migrants lived experiences within the larger process of migration. Finally, Myanmar's ethnic groups differ in terms of language, history, and cultural tradition, and thus, it is feasible that these differences may contribute to different relationships with the land and food

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(Rosbook & Schweitzer, 2010). A future study should focus on the experiences of a specific Myanmar ethnic group (i.e. Chin or Karen) to control for possible cultural differences.

Regardless, the present study serves as an important step in understanding the unique experiences of Myanmar's women, who are currently unrepresented within psychological and Southeast Asian literature. Finally, as migration and urbanization become increasingly prominent features of society, this study can serve as a preliminary basis for further understanding the psychological effects of migrants moving from rural to urban centers.

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Appendix A**Salience of Land to Identity (Adapted from Clayton, 2003)**

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements describes you by using the appropriate number from the scale below.

1= Completely true of me

2= Somewhat true of me

3= Neither untrue nor true of me

4= Somewhat untrue of me

5= Not at all true of me

- _____ 1. I spend a lot of time in natural settings.
- _____ 2. Engaging with the natural world is important to me.
- _____ 3. I think of myself as a part of the land, not separate from it.
- _____ 4. When I am upset or stressed, I can feel better by spending some time outdoors "communing with nature".
- _____ 5. Living near the land is important to me; I would not want to live in a city all the time.
- _____ 6. I like to garden or work with land.
- _____ 7. Being a part of the land is an important part of who I am.
- _____ 8. I feel that the land has had a significant impact on my development.
- _____ 9. Behaving responsibly toward the earth is part of my moral beliefs.
- _____ 10. In general, being part of the natural world is an important part of my self.
- _____ 11. I would rather live in a small room or house close to the land than a bigger room or

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house with a view of other buildings.

_____ 12. I really enjoy the outdoors.

_____ 13. I would feel that an important part of my life was missing if I was not able to get out and enjoy the land.

_____ 14. I feel that I receive spiritual sustenance from my experiences with the land.

_____ 15. I keep mementos from the land in my room or home.

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Appendix B**Salience of Food to Identity (Adapted from Callero, 1985)**

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements describes you by using the appropriate number from the scale below.

1=Strongly Agree, **2**= Agree, **3**= Neither agree nor disagree, **4**= Disagree, **5** = Strongly disagree

1. Food is something I rarely think about.*
2. I would feel a loss if I were forced to give up my food.
3. I really don't have any clear feelings about food.*
4. For me, food is more than just nourishment.
5. Food is an important part of who I am.

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Appendix C**Connectedness to Land (Adapted from Mayer & Frantz, 2004)**

Please answer each of these questions in terms of the way you generally feel. There are no right or wrong answers.

Using the following scale, please state as honestly and candidly as you can what you are presently experiencing.

1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 4= Disagree, 5 = Strongly disagree

- ___ 1. I often feel a sense of oneness with the land around me.
- ___ 2. I think of the land as a community to which I belong.
- ___ 3. I recognize and appreciate the intelligence of the natural world.
- ___ 4. I often feel disconnected from the land.*
- ___ 5. When I think of my life, I imagine myself to be part of the natural world.
- ___ 6. I often feel a kinship with animals and plants.
- ___ 7. I feel as though I belong to the Earth as equally as it belongs to me.
- ___ 8. I have a deep understanding of how my actions affect the natural world.
- ___ 9. I often feel part of the web of life.
- ___ 10. I feel that all inhabitants of Earth, human, and nonhuman, share a common 'life force'.
- ___ 11. Like a tree can be part of a forest, I feel embedded within the broader natural world.
- ___ 12. When I think of my place on Earth, I consider myself to be a top member of a hierarchy that exists in nature.
- ___ 13. I often feel like I am only a small part of the natural world around me, and that I am no more important than the grass on the ground or the birds in the trees.

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___ 14. My personal welfare is independent of the welfare of the land.*

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Appendix D**Connectedness to Food (Adapted from Mayer & Frantz, 2004)**

Please answer each of these questions in terms of the way you generally feel. There are no right or wrong answers.

Using the following scale, please state as honestly and candidly as you can what you are presently experiencing.

1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 4= Disagree, 5 = Strongly disagree

- ___ 1. I often feel a sense of oneness with the foods I eat.
- ___ 2. I recognize and appreciate the food from my home.
- ___ 4. I often feel disconnected from the food I eat.*
- ___ 5. When I think of my life, I imagine myself closely tied to the food I eat.
- ___ 6. I feel as though the food I eat is important to me.
- ___ 7. I have a deep understanding of the food I eat.
- ___ 8. I often feel connected to the food I eat.
- ___ 9. I feel closely embedded with the food I eat.
- ___ 10. My personal welfare is independent of the foods I eat.*