

Session 2 Ubiquitous Borders

Presentation 1

**The Everyday Borders of Children of Migrants:
Mapping Migration and Diversity in Sabah, Malaysia**

Catherine Allerton

Abstract

Conventional cartographic representations of migration, in which arrows represent flows of migrants across borders, have been criticised both for contributing to hysterical discourses on ‘floods’ of people, and for failing to represent the multi-directional reality of cross-border movements. In this paper, I utilise children’s own stories, images and photographs in order to introduce three alternative cartographies of migration and childhood that I found during research with children of Indonesian and Filipino migrants in Sabah, Malaysia. These alternative cartographies are, firstly, regular border-crossing; secondly, a single, profound movement; and thirdly, ‘migrants’ who never move. I discuss the importance of recognising the varieties of experience of children of migrants in Sabah, and the very different ways in which borders play a role in children’s everyday lives. Children’s images and stories show how even a life lived entirely in Sabah nevertheless presents children with various kinds of borders, and how even a single, almost-forgotten journey across an international border can continue to resonate in the present. Moreover, despite significant variations, the lives of children of migrants are defined as much by present immobility as by past migration.