

HEROES AT HOME?

DISPUTING POPULAR IMAGES OF
NONMIGRATING HUSBANDS OF
OVERSEAS FILIPINA WORKERS
BY PHILLIP GRESHAM

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Acronyms

CAQDAS	Computer aided qualitative data analysis software
CFO	Commission on Filipinos Overseas
GAD	Gender and development
GCIM	Global Commission on International Migration
ICT	Information and communications technologies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NELM	New economics of labor migration
NSO	National Statistics Office
OCW	Overseas contract worker
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFW	Overseas Filipino worker
ON	Oxfam Novib
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
SIM	Subscriber identification module
SMS	Short Message Service
TNT	<i>"Tago-ng-tago"</i> , migrant with irregular status
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNINSTRAW	United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

1. Introduction

Over 214 million people (3% of the world's population) could be called international migrants in 2009 (International Organization for Migration, 2010), and while that is indeed a huge number, it pales in comparison to the number of people who are not did not migrate, including household or family members who sometimes depend on the earnings of migrants to better their financial situation. Remittances remain an important part of the survival strategy for households and a development strategy of many countries in the South, and along with international migration, these behaviors are affected by the organization of migratory and remittance processes by gender. It has been assumed that gender affects aspects of international migration (in such ways as affirming “traditional” roles abroad and preventing migration altogether if the gender roles disallow it) whilst gendered differences in the sending, and receiving behavior of remittances have been observed in a number of studies—among them, the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM; 2005) report, UNDP-UNINSTRAW (2007), and Robert (2010). But, few have noted that gender, migration and remittances interact in multiple and convoluted ways rather than in a singular cause and effect (Carling, 2005), prompting this study in an attempt to further elucidate these interactions. Migrating women (Helmich, 2009) and nonmigrating women (De Haas & Van Rooij, 2010) alike can feel a sense of empowerment from the separation of their dichotomous sex roles, from an increase in their responsibilities and powers, or from gaining the role of breadwinner. Migration and remittances, then, contribute to changing gender roles and dynamics, but it is often difficult to isolate which effects are due to remittances or the act of migrating. These changes are overshadowed, however, by the economic focus on migration and remittances in the literature, and it is the goal of this research to draw attention to noneconomic modifications to the norm.

In the case of the Philippines—a highly (e)migratory state where migrant workers are accorded official honors as “heroes and heroines of the nation”—only a few studies have searched for changes in the male roles of the household post-migration, which the majority of the literature, in need of an answer to some of these questions, relies upon heavily. The conclusions of these few authors suggest that the social consequences of migration land hardest on the children of migrants, especially when the mother migrates. As the “nurturing parent”, mothers have a hard time “mothering” from abroad, particularly when communication between the migrant and her household is infrequent. The other side of this hypothesis is that nonmigrating fathers are seen as incapable of parenting in the same quality. Furthermore, it is postulated that her remittances are utilized by men in improvident ways, often presented as relieving the father's burden as a “good provider” and resulting, effectively, in a wasted opportunity to lift the household out of or away from poverty. The stigmatization in the community that nonmigrating men have received from this caricature weighs on their minds, begetting further stress and attenuating their sense of masculinity (as distinct from *machismo*, a lessening of which would empower women). It is an undue stereotypification: Nonmi-

grating men have had more opportunities to accept their additional “mothering” duties (if we accept the “traditional” household roles), have access to counseling and advice from the government (indeed, it is sometimes required), and communications technology has advanced with such fervor that fathers and their children can contact their mother daily and with cost-effective ease.

This thesis questions whether nonmigrating household members are not just as worthy as their migrating members of the title “Hero” or “Heroine of the Nation”. It aims to draw attention to the consequences of migration on the lives of Filipino fathers and recommends that further government-sponsored education for household members of potential changes post-departure and other inclusive policy shifts can improve gender equality by enabling the father to take on more childrearing responsibilities.

Below, I will introduce the relevance, design, and aims of the study, followed by an introduction to the topic of migration in the Philippines and to Metro Cebu, where this study was conducted, in order to “set the stage” for the basis of my argument. While I must also introduce the topics of international migration and remittances, globalization and transnationalism, and gender and masculinities/femininities, these will be discussed as separate “themes” within Chapter 2, while their various interactions will be discussed further on in that chapter.

1.1 Relevance

There is an intricate entanglement between political, academic, and societal interest in international migration in the Philippines, such that all parties use the data and conclusions of others in equal share. To illustrate a nonfictional example: A researcher (Parreñas, 2001b) may use public data supplied by the Philippine government (Philippine National Statistical Board), whose conclusions could be used by non-governmental organization researchers (Asis, Huang, & Yeoh, 2004), whose results form the basis for a policy recommendation (Philippine Commission on Population, 2007), which then becomes policy (e.g., ensuring that Filipinos migrate out of choice and not as a result of a “culture of migration”). In this way, the line between societal and academic interests becomes blurred, and so I will not discern between the realms of relevance in this section.

The earnings of migrants sent back to their country of origin form an important part of many developing countries’ economies and can subsidize household income, sometimes surpassing the level of Overseas Development Assistance as well as foreign direct investment (GCIM, 2005). The Philippines is an important location to study remittances as a top-10 emigrant state where an estimated one-tenth of the population works abroad, sending about US\$19 688 million to their households in 2009 (IOM, 2010). While the earners of remittances are often given the spotlight, the receivers of remittances are also of importance as the executors of remittance expenditure. This study will attempt to bring new insights into the changes in the “left-behind”¹ household. Add-

¹ “Left-behind” is a loaded phrase indicating a number of emotions, e.g., purposeful “leaving”, accidental, etc. Rather, the preferred phrase to be used throughout this thesis is “nonmigrating”.

ing to the literature on remittances in general, this study also focuses on the relations between gender and remittances, relatively scarce in migration literature.

It is important to remember that the flows of remittances include more than currency, a recurring fallacy in many studies. As Wong (2006, p. 376) notes, the emphasis in remittance literature on measuring financial flows fails to capture the dynamics of social remittances and remittances as a social act, suggesting that future research, including this study, “should look outside traditional models that emphasize remittances as economic transactions to examine remittances as a social practice, to deepen our understanding of the gender geographies of migration and transnationalism”. Remitting earnings can replace, in effect, the sending of other types of communication, as shown with McKay’s (2007) study of a Filipino migrant family wherein sending remittances moved beyond the simple request for money and transmitted an expression of the care a migrant felt for his/her extended family back in the Philippines. Knowing not only how remittance monies are spent but also the psychological value attached to such transferences in particular has been significantly understudied, which would greatly benefit development-oriented organizations in their directing of efforts to maximize remittance development potential.

There has been some empirical research showing a general difference in the sending and receiving of remittances depending on gender (see GCIM, 2005), but these studies have been limited in gathering qualitative and deep data regarding gender-specific remittance behavior. A few studies have linked gender roles within the household to the decision whether to and where to migrate (Taylor, 1987; Stark, 1991; De Jong, 2000) as well as differences between male- and female-headed households in how remittances are sent and spent (Guzmán, Morrison, & Sjöblom, 2008). De Haas and Van Rooij (2010, p. 3) argue that the impact of gender on migration and remittance decisions has remained under-researched, particularly at the scale of the household: “As gender inequalities shape decisions on access to migration and remittances, the same inequalities are also likely to have an impact on the intra-family allocation of social and financial remittances.” A conference on gender, migration and remittances held by ON and UN-INSTRAW found some global trends on the topic (Robert, 2010) but held a focus on how to involve more women. In many of these studies, generalizing conclusions and recommendations are made that would seemingly apply to every culture/country of origin and of receipt. However, a general approach to remittances in policy and praxis that misunderstands *inter alia* the dynamics of “traditional” gender roles of the culture in question can result in a misapplication of funds and resources by governments, NGOs and other actors.

In conclusion, the study of the effects of remittances on household gender roles has so far focused mainly on economic remittances, generally from the point of view of the migrant, and has been limited in its depth and exposure. More research is needed to assess the reciprocal processes of gender and migration/remittances.

1.2 Design

The research for this thesis was derived from an extensive literature review and primary research conducted in two locations by four master students, myself included, under the direction of Ton van Naerssen² acting as a representative for Oxfam Novib (ON)³, a Dutch international aid organization. The research sites of Ghana and the Philippines were chosen because they are countries with a high number of out-migrants and because migrants from these countries are more varied in their characteristics (e.g., age, sex, marital status, etc.) than the stereotype of a single, young male migrant, making them ideal locations to study the effects of gender on remittance behavior (and vice versa). Furthermore, the research took place within the second cities of these countries—Kumasi, Ghana, and Cebu City, Philippines—rather than the capitals or largest cities. The rationale for this decision hinged on already having contacts in these cities, the cities having characteristics encouraging migration, and to better compare this research with established studies (such as Helmich, 2009). Two teams of two students (one male, one female) each set off at around the same time period (April–July, 2011). The Ghana team consisted of Ms. Lieke van der Zee and Mr. Ingmar Deenan while the Philippines team consisted of Ms. Marieke Smit and this author. A student of each gender was sent to minimize the bias of social desirability, wherein a respondent might want to promote themselves in the eyes of another-gendered interviewer. Similarly, our local student partners, who aided us in our research, were matched with the gender of the researcher. The desired number of households to be researched was 40 from each team, ideally with 20 male and 20 female respondents, a number matched to the scope of the research. More about the specific design of the study will be discussed in the Methodology section below.

1.3 Aims

The research questions for this project were coordinated by an ON background paper. This project overall aimed to add to the gender and remittances literature using the following common research question:

How does gender influence remittance behavior and in what ways do gendered remittance behavior affect the household?

We also adopted a number of sub-questions as guidelines in order to develop the research methodology, gain new insights and guide our analysis along the way:

² See Appendix A for faculty and student assistant profiles.

³ Site: <http://www.oxfamnovib.nl/en-home.html>

1. **What are the characteristics of the migrant and his/her household?**
2. **What are characteristics of gender specific behavior in sending migrant remittances?**
3. **What are characteristics of gender specific behavior in the receiving and use of migrant remittances?**
4. **How does the sending and receiving of remittances affect gender and household roles?**
5. **How do remittances influence decision-making and power dynamics within the household?**

Because remittance behaviors are affected by (and can affect in turn) other elements such as gender and household roles, these questions were designed to try to isolate specific elements. For instance, the first sub-question, which provided us with basic background knowledge of the members of the household, allowed us to understand the context in which the migration and remittance sending take place. Socioeconomic status, level of education, and gender affect the migratory process and the amount and percentage of remittances (Global Commission on International Migration, 2005), which would be discovered in the second question. Moreover, the household composition (sub-question 1) can determine how remittances are received and spent, as discovered via sub-question 3; for example, households with children will probably spend remittances in a different way than households without. Answering sub-question 4 adequately also relies upon knowledge of the household composition and of the sending and receiving behaviors. It also requires a comparison of pre- and post-migration gender and household roles, on which sub-question 5 similarly relies. While increased decision-making power may lead to a change in household role, and vice versa, this is not always the case, which is why we developed these questions as separate.

1.4 Context—The “New Heroes” of Philippine migration

The importance of overseas Filipino workers to the Philippine⁴ economy (and culture) cannot be overstated, and the state has “come to view migrants as a vital source of the external finance necessary for servicing debt and importing oil” (Bach & Solomon, 2006, pp. 2–3). Poverty and indebtedness of the Philippine state has led to large-scale unemployment and an overabundant labor supply, forcing some to resort to working abroad to keep out of poverty, encouraged by government programs and a historical attachment to certain economic migratory options. The official definition of economic migrants, called overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), goes beyond what many other

⁴ Following Carling (2005, p. 8): “The adjective ‘Philippine’ relates to the country, while ‘Filipino’ and ‘Filipina’ relate to the men and women of the people” and can also be in adjectival form. The official language, “Filipino”, is composed mostly of Tagalog but politicized as an amalgam of the more than 100 languages of the Philippines; “the terms ‘Pilipino’, ‘Filipino’, or ‘Tagalog’ all refer to one and the same language, and all three are commonly used to refer to it” (Wolff, 2009, p. 1035).

states particularize and can be read in Box 1. The focus on OFWs is clearly reflected in the many government agencies and programs devoted to monitoring and regulating (out)migrants' movements and remittances (Asis, 2008), not to mention the naturalization of migration- and remittance-related phrasing in the common parlance. In this

section, we will peruse the historical development and current trends surrounding Philippine migration, including the propagandistic "national script" written by the government, in order to set the context of the thesis.

1.4.1 Historical development of a culture of migration

The Philippines has historical ties to many of the countries with significant numbers of Filipino migrants abroad, but the United States has been the major catalyst for the Philippine "culture of migration" (Asis, 2006). After its colonization of the Philippines, the US installed migration policies that accepted Filipino men in a steady growth as agricultural, skilled and professional workers in California, Hawaii, and US-controlled Pacific territories up until the 1960s. The numbers of Filipino migration in general—and the proportion of female migrants in specific—increased dramatically in the 1970s, when newly-wealthy Middle Eastern oil states began to hire Filipino construction labor and later female domestic helpers⁵. Between 1980 and 1994, the numbers of women rose to comprise 60% of first-time OFWs (Barber, 2000, p. 400) while today it is 49%: Figure 1 illustrates the rising numbers of first-time migrants corresponding to a sex ratio that has been approaching parity in recent years.

Overseas workers are the following:

- a) Filipino overseas contract workers who are presently and temporarily out of the country to fulfill an overseas work contract for a specific length of time or who are presently at home on vacation but still has an existing contract to work abroad. There are two types of overseas contract workers: landbased and seabased workers.
- b) Other Filipino workers abroad with a valid working visa or work permits. Included also are crew members of airplanes such as pilots, stewardesses, etc.
- c) Those who have no working visa or work permits (tourist, visitor, medical and other types of non-immigrant visas) but are presently employed and working full time. They are commonly known as TNTs ("tago-ng-tago").

Persons not considered as overseas workers are:

- a) Filipino whose place of employment is outside the Philippines but whose employer is the Philippine government.
- b) Filipinos who are sent abroad by the Philippine government abroad or by private institutions for training, scholarships or any other similar purpose, even if they are known to be working abroad. Note that students who are sent abroad by private individuals who are working abroad or has worked there are excluded in this category.
- c) Filipinos working in other countries who are hired as consultants/advisors of international organizations such as United Nations, International Monetary Fund, etc.
- d) Immigrants to other countries even though they are working abroad.

Box 1 **Official definition of OFW.**
Source: Philippine Institute for Development Studies (no date).

⁵ Referred to informally as DHs, many authors in the Philippinist literature equate domestic helpers with overseas contract workers (OCWs), who are simply defined as OFWs with a pre-departure contract.

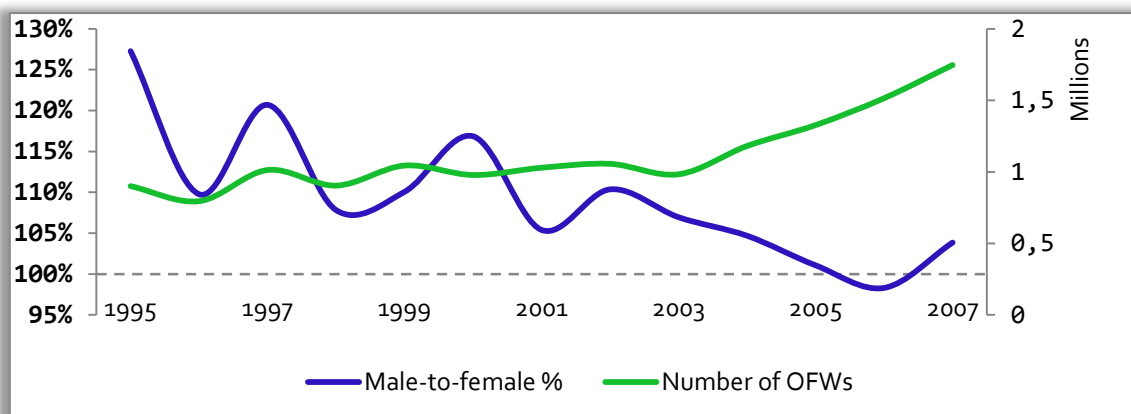


Figure 1 Number of first-time OFWs and ratio by sex between 1995 and 2007. *Source: National Statistics Office (n.d.).*

However, male and female OFWs are often employed in “typically” male or female positions that conform to cultural gender norms: Men work in seafaring and construction, for example, while women are employed as domestic help or nurses (Fajardo, 2008). Despite the most recent statistics from the National Statistics Office (NSO; 2009) reporting nearly equivalent numbers of male and female OFWs overall, Filipino workers are still taking up gendered positions overseas that are associated with traditional definitions of “manly” and “womanly” labor, as can be seen in Figure 2 below. In this chart,

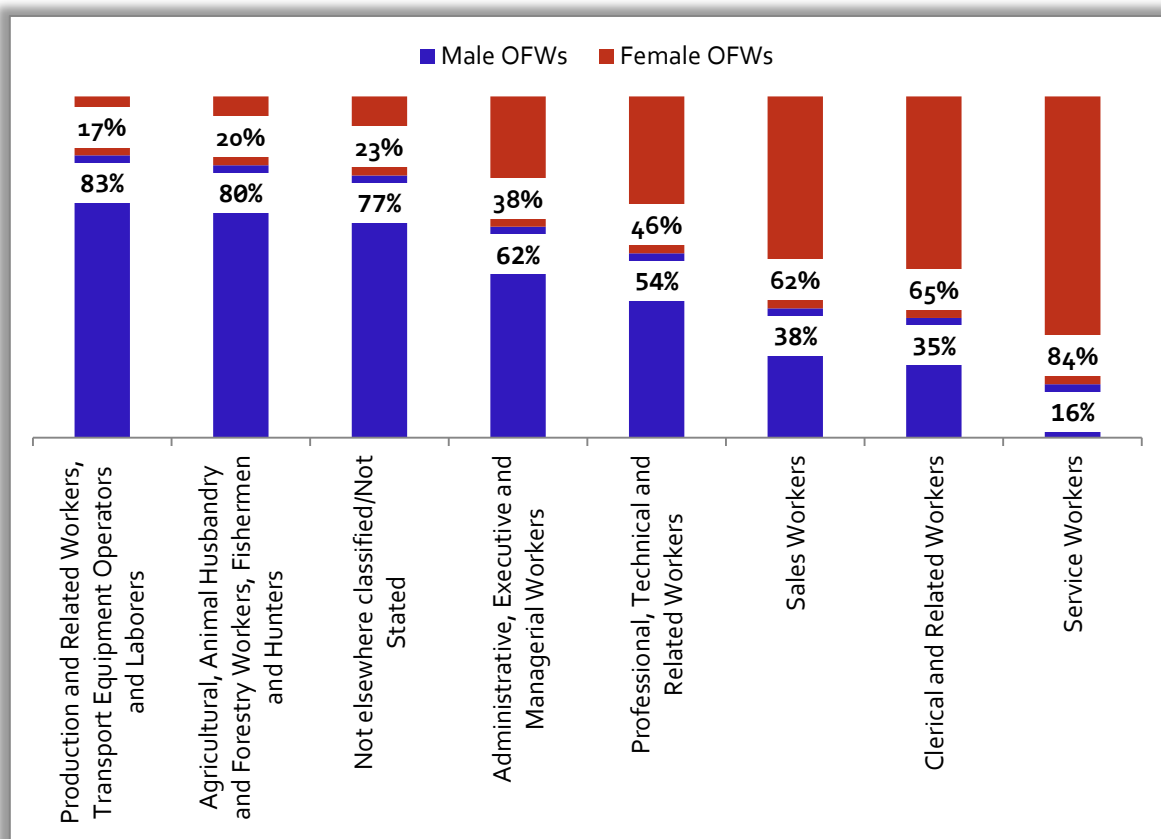


Figure 2 Newly hired land based OFWs by skills category and sex. *Source: Department of Labor and Employment—Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics (2010)*

positions such as drivers—traditionally the man’s job due to the masculine characteristic of control, to be discussed later—are overwhelmingly filled by men, while clerical and service workers are the inverse. The interconnectedness of history, gender and migration can be seen in the example of Filipina nurses. With the close ties between the Philippines and the US, Filipina nurses historically received an “Americanized model of education that included a significant English-language component, the use of American textbooks, and a sole focus on Western medical knowledge” (Ronquillo, Boschma, Wong, & Quiney, 2011, p. 266) which no doubt increased the female OFWs’ chances of being hired in the North. In summary, Filipino migration increased from the 1970s on and has achieved nearly equal levels of male and female migrants, though the positions they take are far from gender-equal and are often determined by traditional gender roles and historical relationships.

Recent estimates from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO; 2009) report that in 2009 over 8.5 million Filipinos—about 10% of the population—were working and/or residing abroad as OFWs. Table 1 below shows the extent of Filipino migration worldwide. As you can see, most OFWs are spread throughout Asia (South, East, and West Asia), with a secondary mode in the Americas. The sea-based population represents more than a third of seagoing labor worldwide. An interesting note can be made from the net migration rate of the Philippines of -1,29 per 1000 population (World Factbook, 2011), which when compared to the stock migrant population, indicates much return migration as opposed to permanent emigration.

Remittances, too, have been steadily rising: In 2010, remittances, called *padala* in Filipino, totaled almost US\$19 000M (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, 2011) and formed over 5% of the Philippines gross domestic product (World Factbook, 2011). Remittances have been steadily increasing at an average of 13% per year since 2003 as can be seen in Figure 3 below. These are measured as through official channels, though it is estimated that at least 50% of remittances are transmitted through informal channels in the Philippines (Porter, 2009). There has been concern that the flow of remittances

	Permanent	Temporary	Irregular	Total	% of Total
Africa	2 217	54 389	8 130	64 736	0,75%
South/East Asia					
Asia	262 780	552 524	259 192	1 074 496	12,52%
West Asia	5 594	2 294 602	115 700	2 415 896	28,16%
Europe	312 361	309 914	100 152	722 427	8,42%
Americas	3 162 843	253 700	166 336	3 582 879	41,76%
Oceania	311 145	68 515	8 860	388 520	4,53%
Sea-based	—	330 424	—	330 424	3,85%
Total	4 056 940	3 864 068	658 370	8 579 378	100,00%
% of Total	47,29%	45,04%	7,67%	100,00%	

Table 1 Stock estimate of Overseas Filipinos as of Dec. 2009. Source: CFO (2009)

might be negatively affected by the financial crisis beginning in 2008, but Ratha and Sirkeci (2010, p. 127) suggest that a diversification of migration destinations is positively correlated with resiliency, while lower labor mobility barriers correlate with a strong link between remittances and economic cycles. These factors are undoubtedly characteristic of Philippine migration and remittance flows, thus explaining why “countries in South Asia and East Asia . . . continued to register increases in remittance inflows despite the crisis” and why the Philippines experienced less return migration than did, say, EU states (p. 127).

Migration and remittances are important for the residents of Cebu City and the surrounding area, collectively known as Metro Cebu. This metropolitan area is the second most populous in the Philippines (behind the National Capital Region, also known as Metro Manila) with a population of 2 314 897 (National Economic and Development

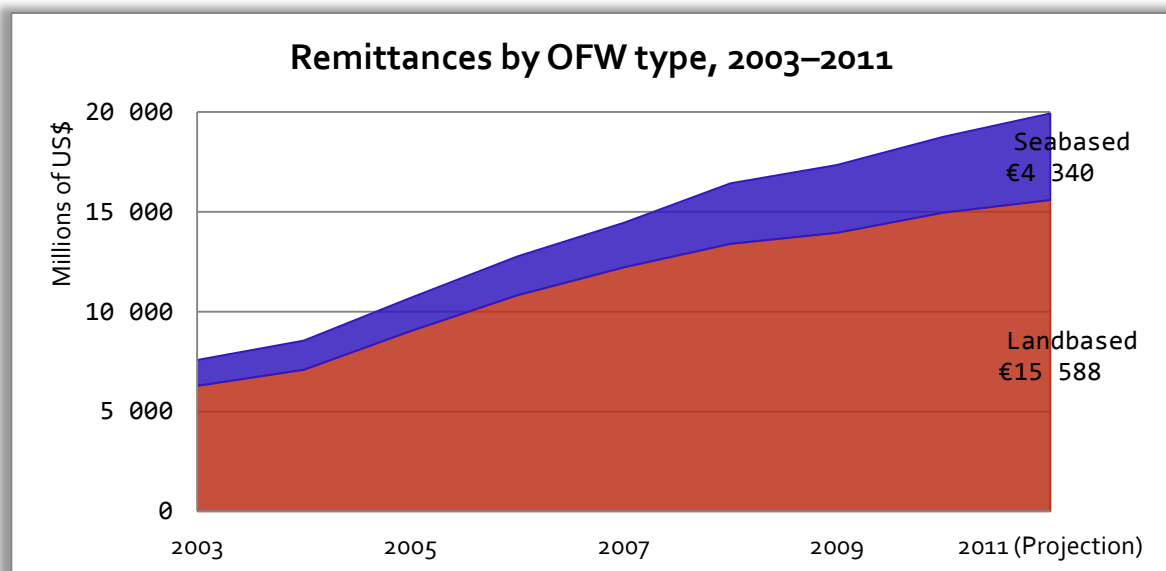


Figure 3 Remittances by OFW type. Source: *Bankgo Central ng Pilipinas (2011)*

Authority 2007). Located as the seat of Cebu Province, Metro Cebu is also the regional center of the (Central) Visayas group of islands, which has a lower population growth rate and a younger population, but a higher poverty rate than the country in general. A labor surplus plagues the Central Visayas with accompanying low levels of access to health, education services, utilities, and water, while inefficiency and corruption in the public sector abounds. The city of Cebu is split into 80 barangays (the smallest unit of administration in the Philippines) and about 75% of its land is protected due to steep slopes, conservation or watershed security (Cebu City Government, 2010), decreasing its agricultural production overall and pushing farmers outwards to “the provinces”⁶.

⁶ There is a strong urban/rural dichotomy in Filipino daily parlance, and “the provinces” indicate any rural area in general.

There are feelings that the government has not done enough for its OFW citizenry, of which 51% are seafarers (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2010), no doubt due to its highly developed seaport. These factors antagonize labor conditions and provide incentive for men and women to seek work abroad (Asis, 2011), in addition to encouragement by the state and local governments.

1.4.2 Institutional encouragement and the national script

The Philippine state originally considered migration to be a temporary measure to ease economic problems of the time and it is expected that when the Philippines is promoted from “developing” status that the numbers of migrants will fall; until then, migration will remain institutionalized in the Philippines (Asis, 2011). Given the facts and numbers of Philippine migration and remittances, there is clear rationale for the many administrative departments concerned with overseas workers—to name a few: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and CFO—, formed in order to “strengthen ties with Filipinos overseas and promote their interests in the Philippines and abroad” (CFO, 2011b). The Philippine government has taken steps somewhat differently from other emigration states trying not to impede the flows of migration and remittances while ensuring that its citizens are able to earn money abroad (Asis, 2008). The CFO requires all Filipinos planning to become OFWs or to live abroad to complete a number of steps pre-departure to receive an exit visa (enumerated in 2011a), including a US\$60 fee collected by the POEA and a US\$25 fee collected by the OWWA (IOM, 2010). For these slight inconveniences, these organizations provide a large number of benefits (e.g., partner counseling, Filipino- and English-language instruction, destination decision-process aid, post-arrival services) which the IOM (2010) lauds as a leader in regulating recruitment and protecting workers abroad. Additionally, the government bestows the Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas, and the Model OFW Family of the Year Award, which recognizes “a financially successful migrant family whose members maintain close family ties despite separation” (Madianou & Miller, 2011, p. 461). Coupled with push and pull factors such as the wage differential and family expectations, government functions serve to encourage the culture of (e)migration, such that in a 2002 survey, one in five Filipinos expressed a strong desire to migrate (Asis, 2006). The institutionalization of migration no doubt plays a critical role in developing this attitude and continuing the trend of outmigration.

Beyond the creation of administrative and statistic-collecting bodies, the Philippine Presidency has over the years actively encouraged economic migration. Under President Marcos (1965–1986), Filipino citizens living overseas were labeled as *balikbayans* “by joining the Tagalog words *balik*, to return, with *bayan*, meaning town and, at least from the late nineteenth century on, nation” (Marcos, 1980, pp. 1–5; Rafael, 1997, pp. 270–271). Later, President Aquino (1986–1992) called OCWs (contracted OFWs; exclusive of Filipinos merely residing abroad) *bagong bayani* or “heroes and heroines of the nation” (Aquino, 1986; Basch, Glick Schiller, & Blanc, 1994, pp. 256–260). An example of typical *bagong bayani* imagery can be seen in Figure 4. Under this propa-



Figure 4 Caricatures of OFW themes and occupations. Source: Lleno (2011)

ganda, the Philippines are formally established as the “home” of migrants, while the official definition is much less politicized:

The term “*balikbayan*” shall mean a Filipino citizen who has been continuously out of the Philippines for a period of at least one (1) year, a Filipino overseas worker, or former Filipino citizen and his or her family... who had been naturalized in a foreign country and comes or returns to the Philippines. (CFO, 2002)

After being deemed a *balikbayan*, migrants are granted a special extended visa, allowed to import goods contained within a small number of duty-free “*balikbayan boxes*”, and are sometimes given discounts by travel companies (Basch, et al., 1994; Rafael, 1997). With such incentives, many overseas citizens and permanent residents are enticed to vacation, visit their families in the Philippines, or conduct research (Fajardo, 2008).

A critical eye can detect nuances in the lines of the national script as attempts to

prevent a “brain drain”⁷ and a “care drain”⁸ and to obtain investment capital from its wealthy citizenry abroad (Basch, et al., 1994). The term *balikbayan* aims at overseas Filipinos’ sentimental attachments to their hometown and extended family rather than their loyalty to the state (Rafael, 1997), a subtle ploy to make *balikbayans* think of their poor relatives in order to send to or spend money in the Philippines. OFWs are “deployed” rather than sent, and nonmigrating members of the family are referred to as “left behind” or “staying behind”, invoking an image of a military-esque “duty” to return. These are the more discursively defined reasons for the national script, a strategy that attempts to instill “a sense of solidarity latent among countrymen and women abroad” in a tripartite effort:

1. The desire of Filipinos to make money abroad to support family back home;
2. The desire of Filipinos abroad to consider themselves part of their nation; and
3. An appeal to pride in order to raise the skill-level and market niches of the migrant workers.

(Bach & Solomon, 2006, p. 3)

Often the Filipino administrations in charge of bettering the lives of migrants and their families fall short of success, notable examples being the inability to stay the 1995 execution of an OFW accused of double-homicide in Singapore (Rafael, 1997; Castles & Miller, 2009), the kidnapping (and subsequent ransoming) of an OFW in Iraq in 2004 (Bach & Solomon, 2006), and ineffective working strikes in an aim to raise the minimum wage in 2007 (Castles & Miller, 2009). These failures⁹ have resulted in skepticism of the strategy both from without and within the citizenry. A post on the blog *AntiPinoy* entitled “OFW—Bagong Bayani or Bagong Biktima” (“new heroes or new victims”) called attention not only to the propaganda but also to the gendered nature of Filipino migration and of the strategy, saying:

OFWs are probably called heroes because they have been executed (Flor Contemplacion), kidnapped (Angelo de la Cruz), raped (Sarah Balabagan) and extorted from (all OFWs sending remittances to families and immediate relatives)... The President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo... has been roaming around the Filipino global communities with her entourage giving motivational speeches reiterating “inspiring” words and phrases: “bagong bayani”, “kayo ang mga bagong bayani” [“you are the new heroes”], “your remittances have helped your country”, and all the other blah blahs. What is surprising is

⁷ According to Tharan (2009, p. 28), *brain drain* is “the movement usually of the most productive and educated workers from the developing country to serve the needs of the developed countries”; the less politically-motivated IOM (2004b, p. 10) defines it as the “emigration of trained and talented individuals from the country of origin to a third country, due to causes such as conflict or lack of opportunities”.

⁸ Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild (2008, p. 81) define a *care drain* as when “money flows south” and “caring flows north”.

⁹ Bach and Soloman make the case for the kidnapping as a failure in comparison to the stoic response by several other governments involved that would not “negotiate with terrorists”. The truck driver was ultimately saved but the conflict was of such gravitas that it was prominently mentioned during President Macapagal-Arroyo’s 2004 State of the Nation Address.

that according to POEAs 2004 statistics seventy three percent (73%) who has gotten legal and documented contracts to work abroad and become new heroes...are women.

(Source: <http://antipinoy.com/ofw-bagong-bayani-or-bagong-biktima/>)

The author's "treatise" on Philippine migration goes on to criticize much more than the New Heroes slogans, but an important part to note is that this insider recognizes the intrinsic, forced-smile delivery of this propaganda. Evidence such as this suggests that some of the Philippine citizenry do not believe everything they are fed and are discontent with the treatment of OFWs as "temporary migrant populations as commodities that can be exported" (Bach & Solomon, 2006, p. 12). Such accusations are roundly denied by any and all governmental reports, for example Jurado (1999, pp. 5–6), who wrote, "Even the simple-minded would know that the government is no more responsible for temporary labor migration than it is for the country's underdevelopment. . . . When governments extend assistance to TLMs [temporary labor migrants] they deserve applause rather than condemnation."

In conclusion, international migration from the Philippines is heavily spurred by government programs and propaganda, since the remittances from migrants bring in a significant proportion of the country's gross domestic product as remittances. The importance of migration and remittances in daily life can be seen quite often as one walks down a street in the Philippines, as special deals and advertisements for *padala* transfers catch the eye from multiple angles; see Plate 1 for an example of such. In the theoretical chapter that follows, one can see in more detail the depth of institutional encouragement of this "culture of migration".

2. Theoretical Themes and Insights

As will be explained in more detail in the Methodology chapter that follows hereafter, this study utilized a grounded theory approach, meaning that we consulted the data as we collected it in order to form theories. This helped keep our eyes open for new theoretical insights rather than starting off with restrictive theories in hand. It is still helpful to adopt certain theoretical facets as points of departure, in effect to set the context of my argument. I hesitate to typify myself in any “-ism” due to the exploratory nature of the study; I draw from theorists without becoming an exclusive member of their camp. Hereby I list some theoretical points that will aid in my argument, beginning with an examination and definition of the important term *household*, followed by “thematic” discussions of international migration and remittances, globalization and transnationalism, and gender. The themes include brief introductions to the topics for those readers unfamiliar with the concepts. Finally, I discuss how these themes are interconnected as they relate to my argument in connection with the data produced.

2.1 *Household and Family are not Synonymous*

As a major feature within the main research question, the discussion and definition of the household in this study are some of the most important considerations. In many cases in the literature, *household* is never defined, is synonymous with *family*, and/or is dependent on other “structural” factors such as kinship and co-residency, ignorant of its cultural genesis. A discussion of the activities of the household, the difference between such and the family, and a definition of *household* is thus in order.

Without even taking into account cross-cultural concerns, the definition of the household can vary over time, as Kobrin (1976) showed using historical U.S. Census surveys. There, common definitions focused on co-residency, co-use of cooking equipment, level of privacy and kinship: “One-person households” or other non-nuclear-family-conformative formations were clearly at a disadvantage when it came to meaningfully counting the number of households every decade. When we consider the household from an outsider’s perspective (i.e., as non-Filipinos), we must take into account the reasons for definitions that may not align with our own. The concept of the household varies between cultures as well as over time, and the misconception of who is included within the household can dramatically affect the quality of data.

An important defining body to take into account is the Philippine government (despite what we see as their shortfalls), which to its credit unifies the definition of the household across its statistic-gathering entities. “Household”, “family”, and the like are then comparable concepts across the entire pool of statistics the government has gathered. According to the technical notes of one of these surveys, *family* and *household* are defined separately, but one can see similarities:

Family - a group of persons usually living together and composed of the head and other persons related to the head by blood, marriage or adoption. A single person living alone is considered as a separate family.

Household, on the other hand, refers to an aggregate of persons, generally but not necessarily bound by ties of kinship, who live together under the same roof and eat together or share in common the household food. Members comprise the head of the household, relatives living with him/her and other persons who share the community life for reasons of work or other consideration. A person who lives alone is also considered a separate household.

(National Statistical Coordination Board, 2003)

Co-residency is the primary focus of these definitions along with specific attention on communal sustenance within the household, perhaps in an attempt to bring to the fore the unification of the household economy. Interestingly, OCWs are explicitly excluded from counting when it comes to per capita family expenditures, but are included as household income. The self-reported “usual place of residence” determines the in/exclusion of an OFW/OCW.

The inclusion of the kinship phrase within the definition of household is peculiar: Surely, the definition could stand on its own without this parenthetical, and the phrase’s presence hints only at aiding the confused census enumerator and perpetuating a national (official) “sense of family” script, as former President Aquino put it (Asis, et al., 2004, p. 202). Furthermore, while the definition above allows for non-nuclear-family configurations, the technical notes go on to explain the different types of households garnered in the survey in relation to the nuclear family:

2.1. Single family - refers to the household composed of a single nuclear family. (A nuclear family is composed of a father and mother with unmarried children or a parent with children). For purposes of the survey, a single person household is considered as a single family. Also considered are unmarried sisters and brothers who are living together as one household. The presence of a boarder and domestic helper will not change the household type. ...

2.2 Extended family - refers to the household composed of a nuclear family as defined above together with relatives like son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandson, granddaughter, father, mother and other relatives.

(National Statistical Coordination Board, 2003)

As popular and steadfast as the nuclear-family model appears to be, and while such a sanctioned definition could easily form the foundation of a research, adopting it as such is unwise. The reproduction of nuclear-family-based simplifications is a pattern that was institutionalized during the Spanish colonial period according to McKay (2007, p. 176), and she remarks:

Taking the nuclear-family household as the natural object for development planning does not necessarily reflect the experiential realities of migrants’ family networks and remittance distribution practices. My migrant respondents distribute their remittances through extended family networks in order to sustain emotional intimacy and share opportunity and security across a wider field. The simplified accounts of migrants and

households that inform government and donor policy fail to acknowledge the important ways remittances express and construct intimacy and the diversity of extended family relations. Much recent research on migration and transnational household forms also reproduces these same nuclear-family-based and economic simplifications, applying a commodity-chain type analysis to the export of migrant labour from developing countries such as the Philippines.

It was important to take into account that the various forms of household would be reflected in who became our respondents and we allowed our respondents to use their own definition to some extent.¹⁰ According to Medina (2001), Filipinos have an extensive concept of family in comparison to other cultures; indeed, most Filipino families consider non-consanguineous godparents a genuine member of the family, at the very least on financial-obligatory terms (Kikuchi, 2003). A focus on the nuclear-family household only could exclude extended family living in coresidence, and at the same time, a focus on *family* (rather than *household*) could result in an inclusion of non-coresidential family members. Therefore, an operational definition is needed to maintain consistency among ourselves and for the reference of future studies.

In their own work, unrelated to our research topic, Berman, Kendall and Bhattacharyya (1994, p. 207) found difficulties assigning a universal definition of the household, noting similar problems (e.g., cross-cultural and temporal variation) and concluded that:

One approach to defining the household that may have practical value is the use of a “functional” classification; i.e. one based on such specific household patterns as production, consumption, reproduction, and social relations and their relevance to ...the research questions being asked or the design of intervention programs.

A “functional classification”, i.e., one specific to the study at hand, relieves the burden of drawing up a universal, culturally compatible definition of the household, nearly impossible within the scope of a master thesis. Using this concept and tenets of transnationalism, we have defined household thus:

The household refers to a number of individuals who contribute primarily to an interdependent pattern of productive and reproductive labor (monetarily compensated or otherwise), consumption practices, and social relations—including freely defined gender roles that are dynamic under the influence of cultural, economic or transnational practices—regardless of geographical coresidence.

¹⁰ Thus, we asked respondents, “Who is in your household?” rather than, “Who lives with you?” or “Who lives in this house?”, although their answer usually involved co-residency including, on some occasions, helpers or people renting a spare room. We hesitated to remove these people from analysis immediately since they may directly benefit from remittances (e.g., a helper being hired after the migrant leaves) and asked follow-up questions to determine their level of dependency.

We can identify some features that make this definition unique:

- This definition allows for a single-person household, which is accepted the Philippine government, although since this thesis is oriented toward households with transnational configurations, this feature
- It does not assume that a household member accomplishes productive or reproductive labor exclusively, though it would include a “helper” or nanny that is compensated in the case of taking over “caring” responsibilities in the absence of a migrant.
- In the words of Basch et al., (1994, p. 22), it avoids “bound[ing] social science concepts that conflate physical location, culture, and identity” by removing the requirement of co-residence.
- It attempts to instill, from the definition, the idea that roles are not permanent or prescribed.

2.2 Theme—International Migration

Migration generally refers to the movement of people across spaces, while international migration entails the crossing of borders (IOM, 2004b). Human history has been marked by periods of intensified migration, but the patterns mapped by migrants over the earth have changed over time. In the past, migration patterns were primarily characterized by a large group of people moving from a similar region to another common region (e.g., the Europe–North America mass migration from the mid-nineteenth century until World War I). Later migration patterns became more convoluted, with migrants moving to myriad destinations around the world. Additionally, countries of receipt take in more members of a higher number of countries than they have in the past, contributing to a “broad spectrum of economic, social and cultural backgrounds” (Castles & Miller, 2009, p. 10)¹¹. The attention given to migration, especially for economic purposes, has increased in recent decades, to the extent that it is recognized as a fundamental human right on several levels of governance, including intra-¹² and internationally (IOM, European Union, 2000; 2004b). New forms of mobility have emerged in this new “age of migration”. People are able to visit a location with a very short expected stay, be it for a business meeting, a tourism package, a search for employment, a reconnoiter for a location to retire, or many other motives that involve the intent to return shortly thereafter. More-permanent rationales for migrating are many, but despite a recent government policy focus on economic migration alone, some of the largest motivations worldwide are family reunification, seeking refuge or asylum, or for study (Castles & Miller, 2008, p. 221). Economic migration remains important as a large pro-

¹¹ Unless otherwise cited, much of this chapter draws from Castles and Miller’s *The Age of Migration*.

¹² Art. 13(1), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948: “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.”

portion of migrants seek higher earnings due to better opportunities abroad. Socioeconomic security is an especially major motivator for migrations from the South as a result of global inequality; that is, a high variance between the incomes of randomly selected individuals from around the world (Milanovi 2007).¹³

Migration is not a dichotomy of origin and destination and does not exist merely within the departures and arrivals of people, nor should a migration be viewed as a direct movement from one place to another: The trajectory model, for example, investigates the stepwise migrations of migrants towards a desired destination, focusing on the “routes” rather than the “roots” of migrants (Schapendonk, 2009; Velde & Naerssen, 2010). Although it can be difficult to ascertain whether a country of receipt is the final destination of a migrant (even for the migrant him/herself), the criteria of the migrant’s intentions and length of stay are useful indicators to separate between transit migration and multiple migration. Despite a large focus in the literature on South-North migration, South-South moves occur almost as frequently: a UNDESA (2006) report estimated 62 million people moved in a South-North pattern, with only 1 million fewer traveling in a South-South fashion worldwide, and the most recent International Organization for Migration “World Migration Report” (IOM; 2010) reiterated the significance of South-South migrations. In the case of Africa, more South-South migrations occur than do South-North (Schapendonk, 2010). Indeed, many South-South travelers may have their sights set on the North albeit later, with states playing roles as “stepping-stones” between the destinations of migrants, with motives for further migration changing along the way. An important—and painful—issue in global migration is the deskilling of migrants upon arrival due to such reasons as a lack of equivalent certification or scarce equal position availability, resulting in what OFWs call “*bobofication*”, where *bobo* means “dumb” in Tagalog (del Rosario, 2001, p. 8). Lacking equivalent credentials, many Filipina nurses, for example, choose to participate in stepwise migration, gaining valuable training in another Southern state before aiming for a position in the North (Alonso-Garbayo & Maben, 2009; Ronquillo, et al., 2011). Any analysis that does not take intermediary migrations into account can miss important and distinctive factors between groups of migrants.

2.2.1 Migration Decisions

There are many theories of the migratory process—“the complex sets of factors and interactions which lead to international migration and influence its course” (Castles & Miller, 2009, p. 21)—including the conclusion to migrate at all, a destination, and a

¹³ It is this inequality that forms the wide(ning) rift between the relatively wealthy (“advanced”) countries in the *North* and the poorer “rest of the world” *South*; note that the North-South divide “expresses not a geographical configuration, but a political and social” and, I argue, an economic one (Castles, 2008, p. 39). While this system is handy to generally mark a state’s economy in relation to others throughout the world, it has its drawbacks—such as how to place the “transitional economies” of borderline and former Soviet bloc states (Castles & Miller, 2009, p. 55)—but it avoids forming a hierarchy (beyond these two classifications) and so is useful for describing the general condition of a state.

discussion about who will migrate among family members. Adopting a single theory from the start, however, can ignore important aspects yielded from the interviews. Therefore, I chose to discuss and select certain key aspects that are relevant to the proceeding discussion.

Neo-classical theory and push/pull factors

Much of economic migration theory utilizes neo-classical theory, which “assumes that individuals maximize utility: individuals ‘search’ for the country of residence that maximizes their well-being” (Borjas, 1989, p. 460; cited in Castles & Miller, 2009, p. 22). This theory relies on the migrant’s (and their family’s) perception of impellent and attractive influences. The Philippines show signs of *push factors* in, for example, post-graduation employment lag and poorly-equipped work facilities in the country of origin; *pull factors* are displayed in wage differentials—perceived or bona fide—between the Philippines and others, and the prospect of better education for the children of migrants in the country of receipt (Alonso-Garbayo & Maben, 2009). While these factors may surely contribute heavily to the decision to migrate to one country over another, one of the key weaknesses of neo-classical theory is that it affords its subjects “full information on their options and freedom to make rational choices” and that it ignores the fact that “migrants’ behavior is strongly influenced by historical experiences as well as by family and community dynamics” (Castles & Miller, 2009). In fact, many migrants are given false information to lure them into a bad contract. Push and pull factors are thus insufficient to explain the motives behind migration decisions in a definitive, exclusive way, but are helpful in understanding as part of the overall motivation (for example, when a respondent lists reasons, these may be seen as push/pull factors) and for meshing this study with literature that does use push/pull factors exclusively.

New economics of labor migration

The new economics of labor migration (NELM) approach emerged out of disagreement with neo-classical theory by using the social group, rather than the individual, as the unit of analysis, the premise being that “migration decisions are not made by isolated individuals, but by families, households or even communities” (Castles & Miller, 2009, p. 24) for various reasons including income diversification and capital investment (see also Taylor, 1987; Stark, 1991). However, Wong (2006, p. 360) points out that decisions about who migrates are not unified household strategies but “entail complex negotiations whereby the decisions depend upon gender norms and expectations and the power of the household members.” While NELM focuses on economic factors more than other theories, it is useful as a tool for explaining the migration decision process, although as Willis and Yeoh (2000, p. 254) concluded, “Migration decisions are made by household members in the context of wider social and economic processes.” Taylor (1999, p. 64) suggested that “the factors influencing international migration decisions are also likely to shape the outcomes of international migration and remittances”. Rather, I propose that the same decision-making processes (economic and otherwise) involved in the conclusion to migrate and where to migrate are the same decision-

making processes that determine elements of remittance sending and spending behavior.

2.2.2 Remittances

Generally, remittances—defined as the earnings, ideas, behaviors, identities and/or social capital sent from a migrant to their country of origin (Levitt, 1998, p. 927; Castles & Miller, 2009)—are seen by those in migration studies as having a positive effect on the development of local and national economies (Smith, 2007, p. 204). Many states in the South rely heavily on the influx of currency from their migrants or nationals working abroad (United Nations Development Program & United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2007; Isaksen, et al., 2008; Ratha & Sirkeci, 2010; Aguila, 2011). Remittances can be divided into financial (or economic) remittances and social remittances, and by adopting a multifaceted definition of remittances we may understand migration as a social process in which migrants are agents of economic, social and political change (Nyberg-Sørensen, 2005).

Financial remittances are generally defined as portions of a migrant's earnings sent from the migration destination to the place of origin, transmitted in the form of currency (hard cash, via a transfer system or organization, among other ways) or transported saleable goods (such as trade-based remittance networks in the Middle East; see Lindley, 2005). Worldwide, 500 million people receive remittances, with much originating in the Global North flowing to the South but about half of all remittances flow in a parallel South-South pattern (Guzmán, et al., 2008; Castles & Miller, 2009, p. 59). The World Bank estimated that economic remittances through official channels in 2008 would reach US\$238 billion (Ratha, Mohapatra, & Xu, 2008). However, informal channels may add 50% or more to this number (Mohapatra, Ratha, Xu, & Vijayalakshmi, 2006; cited in Castles & Miller 2008, p. 59; Ratha & Sirkeci, 2010). Economic remittances have become a visible tie from migrants to their home countries (Nyberg-Sørensen, 2005), but the motives for sending money home, the amount sent, the frequency of transfers, and the spending decisions vary from household to household (Robert, 2010). Financial flows into developing countries seem to be more stable than private capital flows and seem to be less vulnerable to changing economic cycles (Mckay, D., 2007; Ratha & Sirkeci, 2010).

Unlike financial remittances that involve a transfer of tangible funds, social remittances include impalpable transferences (such as ideas and social capital) but differ from global cultural flows in that it is possible to identify the channels through which they are disseminated and the determinants of their impact (Levitt & Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004). They may be a form of cultural diffusion that links global economic and political changes to local level action and attitudes (Castles & Miller, 2009). While social transmittances may contribute to positive development, such as the transference of valuable skills or of migration network details, Levitt (1998, p. 944) warned that “there is nothing to guarantee that what is learned in the host society is constructive or that it will have a positive effect on communities of origin”. In fact, optimistic migration reports

may lead to a “culture of emigration” where migration can become a veritable “rite of passage” (Castles & Miller, p. 62).

2.3 Theme—Globalization and Migration

In this section, I will discuss the processes of globalization as they affect the migratory process; certainly, the reverse occurs also but is less relevant to this thesis. Globalization is a complex topic that can briefly be characterized by “a rapid increase of cross-border flows of all sorts” (Castles & Miller, 2009, p. 51) and “the world-spanning intensification of interconnectedness and compression of space-time” (Vertovec, 2004, p. 219). It has been made possible by improvements in technology that enable increasingly faster streams of data and increasingly efficient modes of transportation, resulting in greater interconnectedness and the switch from a “space of places”, oriented toward geographical relativity, to a “space of flows” of people (especially labor), data, goods and services, capital, and ideas (Castells, 2010). A popular paradigm of globalization is that of neoliberal capitalism, wherein restrictions in capital and labor mobility are reduced to encourage faster economic growth in poorer countries. Labor mobility, however, seems to be more restricted because enforcing border entries and exits is “one way of facilitating international specialization and higher returns on accumulated capital, including human capital” (Sassen, 1990, p. 36). Processes of globalization have allowed states to welcome commodity and capital flows—especially poorer states accepting foreign direct investment—but are suspicious of flows of ideas and especially people, leading to an inequality in accepted migrants, where only the (demonstrably) rich or highly skilled are able to easily cross borders. On the other hand, dropping these restrictions could result in dramatic consequences, including lower wages worldwide (Castles, 2008), since employers could accept the “cheapest hire” and not just the “cheapest locally-available hire”, as it were. Thus, labor is not as mobile as the other main flows of globalization: As Bach and Solomon (2006, p. 2) write, “the tension between the mobility of capital and the rootedness of labor is a fixture in the globalization discourse”. While labor is relatively restricted among the main measures of globalization, data flows, especially those of interpersonal communication, are relatively open, as elaborated below.

In the subsections that follow, I lay out the rise of global communications technologies and the phenomenon of transnationalism as they relate to globalization, and lastly how these intersect in the context of Philippine migration.

2.3.1 Global communication as a vital component of globalization

As mentioned above, globalization has allowed for and, arguably, has driven information and communication technologies (ICTs) advances that have exploded onto the scene of developing countries. The two main developments we will discuss here are mobile telephony and the internet¹⁴, both of which have experienced exponential user

¹⁴ While the worldwide interconnected network of computers and resources under a single protocol (the
(... continues on next page)

growth and complexity, to the point where it is possible to access the internet via mobile phone and where one can make phone calls via a headset-equipped internet application; more to the point of Castells' (2010) "network society", one can carry out these activities on the move while taking part in some other network, such as public transportation.

Cellular phone access rose that by 2009, over 60% of the world has access to wireless communication (Castells, 2010, pp. xxv–xxvi). In the past, contacts needed to position themselves at a particular time (and place, if one lacked their own phone) to communicate—a problem that plagued telephonic conversations for much of the lifespan of the technology—arranged by mailed letters or cassette tapes, and furthermore depended on expensive payphone calls (Mahler, 2001). By removing the need to coordinate specifics to talk, mobile phones opened up the possibility for spontaneous conversations, especially for rural, topographically challenging areas where landlines were few and far between (Mahler, 2001; Pertierra, 2002). Moreover, the introduction of prepaid credit (as opposed to post-paid invoices) meant that one need not worry about "talking too much" or too often (Horst, 2006; Panagakos & Horst, 2006), and SIM card technology means that one can carry multiple phone numbers with varying call/short-message-service (SMS, or *a text*) credit rates, which helps keep communication cheaper by letting users choose which service to use for each call/text (Ramey, 2008). The rise of mobile telephones has made calling/texting domestically and internationally easy and affordable.

Internet availability has similarly risen worldwide, such that "the ratio between internet access in OECD and developing countries fell from 80.6:1 in 1997 to 5.8:1 in 2007" (Castells, 2010, pp. xxv–xxvi). Concurrently, an online business paradigm became widespread that focuses on providing gratis products (e.g., email accounts, social networking profiles) while remaining profitable by offsetting the free access with sidebar or splash-screen advertising (Anderson, 2009), potentially making access the only cost in internet-based communication (e.g., patronage in an internet-café). These same products provide a decent amount of free "cloud-based" storage offsite, encouraging the upload of photos and videos to share with one's network (González & Castro, 2007). The use of webcams is also becoming a popular means of communicating face-to-face across the world (Panagakos & Horst, 2006), although streaming video is not as feasible in less-networked or bandwidth-restricted regions; this emerging ecology of communicative opportunities has been termed "polymedia" by Madianou and Miller (2011). All of this contributed to the blurring between co-present and distant communities, and significantly advanced the number of users, communication availability, and cost-efficacy of transnational communication.

(Footnote continues from last page)

internet) has been deemed unique enough to deserve proper noun status (IBM Redbooks, 2001), I follow the example of *WIRED*'s Tony Long (2004) who notes that the magazine's de-capitalization was reflective of their view of the internet as "another medium for delivering and receiving information" and "should not be interpreted as some kind of symbolic demotion".

Philippine ICTs

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) in the Philippines have become very important in the everyday lives of most Filipinos to the point where “cellphones have become a major icon of Philippine life” (Pertierra, 2002, p. 151). While voice calls have become easier and less expensive to make in the past decades (Castells, 2010), it is the increasing use of texting in the country that reveals its significance. The year 1998 seems to have been a boom in Philippine ICTs. The initial rise in mobile cellular subscriptions can be clearly seen in Figure 5 and is, according to Celdran (2002), directly due to the introduction of low-cost prepaid SIM cards (with, for a time, gratis

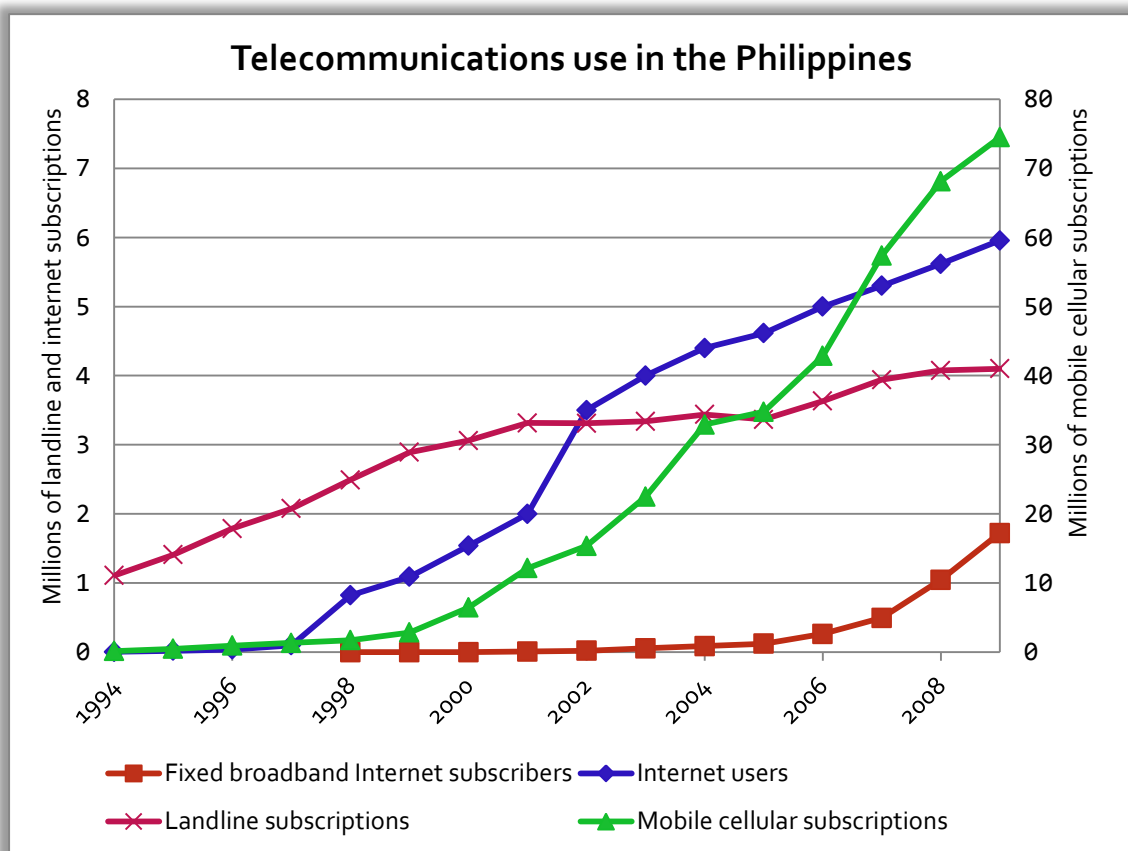


Figure 5 Telecommunications use in the Philippines. Source: World Bank (2011)

unlimited texting). A consequent plateau in landline subscriptions is also visible around that time, rising only slightly in the next decade, while cellular phone subscriptions rose to almost 20 times the number of landlines in 2009. It has been said that the Philippines is the “text capital of the world” (Celdran, 2002, p. 91; Domingo, 2007; Madianou & Miller, 2011, p. 458) even in the early stages of mobile phone popularity. Celdran (2002) attributes this well-deserved reputation to a lack of trust in a centralized media system, economical price structure, easy to understand technology, smart investments in infrastructure, and the capability for group messaging—which mimics Philippine group discourses, wherein all parties discuss the options and their opinions, coming to a mu-

tually-beneficial consensus. SMS has been the conduit for a number of other social uses. The potential of SMS as a form of advertisement is apparent in the use of the Philippine government and the Catholic Church providing texting services to their subscribers, and SMS as a form of charity or expense-sharing can be seen in some companies' making it easy to transfer *load*, or phone credit (Nagasaka, 2007). Mobile phones have also provided an opportunity for paperless transfer of remittances through mobile money, through which a typical bottom-of-pyramid Filipina and her family can potentially spend 90% less in sending fees (Alampay & Bala, 2009), contributing more to the household income and thus to the development of the Philippines (Porter, 2009). In summary, we can safely presume that Filipino thumbs have an unyielding grasp on their mobile phones.

Internet in the Philippines has experienced a similar climb in the number of subscriptions since the country received its first internet connection in 1994 at a rate of 64 Kbps (Faustino, 2005, p. 26); today, though it ranks 135th in the world, its average download speed is 3.4 Mbps (Ookla, 2011), a speed more than capable of carrying conversations according to internet telephony industry leader Skype¹⁵. While the average speed is still relatively low, the upward trajectories of the number of general internet and faster broadband subscriptions can be clearly seen in Figure 5. According to Faustino (2005), increasing the number of broadband connections has been a strategic policy initiative for the Philippine government, mainly to improve the foreign business investment potential of the country, for instance in expanding its industry-leading role in outsourced call centers. Key to this goal is the technology of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)—the digitization, compression, transmittance, and reconstitution of a vocal conversation—which has been seen as a pro-competitive benefit of internet technologies since it can be deployed to underserved communities that already have internet connections, can add value to internet cafés, and allows for cheaper communication overall. One of its most valuable uses, though, is in “link[ing] the global Filipino community and helping to minimize the social cost of labor migration by providing access to cheap voice calls so that families can keep in touch”, a usage that has been embraced by the President’s Development Agenda and with specific VoIP providers targeting OFW families (Faustino, 2005, p. 67). Since VoIP is an efficient user of bandwidth (the rate of data transfer, in megabits per second), does not “choke up” the infrastructure, and can be used with existing computers, poor or cost-mindful OFWs and their households take advantage of this technology to speak to each other from afar. This sets up a discussion of the topic of transnationalism.

2.3.2 Transnationalism

Transnationalism has appeared hand in hand with globalization, as migrants are better able to communicate with contacts of their country of origin and return with greater ease than in the past. These abilities create return/repeat flows and transna-

¹⁵ Source: <http://forum.skype.com/index.php?showtopic=34265>

tional social fields, which are sets of “multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2008, p. 188). Social fields need not be limited to one nation or state (hence “transnational”) and we cannot judge a person’s level of transnational involvement based on their placement in a transnational social field: Someone playing the part of a central node, distributing information and resources from another person abroad, is not necessarily “more transnational” than someone on the distributing end of these transferences (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2008). Collectively, the reciprocal sending and receiving of information and resources are called transnational activities, defined as “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch, et al., 1994, p. 7) and that “take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and that require a regular and significant commitment of time by participants” (Portes, 1999, p. 464). In short, transnationalism is the regular and reciprocal maintenance of relationships across borders.

There are a number of factors that allow for more intense and durable transnational ties, including the following that are most relevant for this thesis:

- ease of travel and communication
- the increasingly important role migrants play in sending-country economies
- attempts by sending states to legitimize themselves by providing services to migrants and their children.

(Levitt, 1998, p. 928)

These factors can significantly affect the social outcome of migration, as “both migrants and nonmigrants [can harbor] a sense of consciously belonging to a group [spanning] two settings” (Levitt, 1998, p. 929), resulting in “deterritorialized nation-states” (Basch, et al., 1994). However, some groups of migrants remain more transnational than others—though they may share the same countries of origin and destination—for many reasons but this is especially dependent on “the cultural resources that a particular group brings with it” (Portes, 1999, p. 465). As we go through the list, we can see how the case of Philippine migration provides a strong foundation for laying down a transnational network. We have discussed the improved technological advances in relation to globalizing processes in section 2.3.1 above; the second factor in the list above is fulfilled by what we have seen in section 1.4 above regarding the important role that migrants play in the Philippine economy; and the third factor of Levitt can be witnessed in the government’s role in establishing programs and departments specializing in OFW welfare, evidenced in section 1.4.2 above. The first factor that intensifies transnationalism, however, is the most relevant for my argument, on which I will expand in the following subsection.

2.3.3 ICTs as the (current) “social glue” for transnational social formations

The role of communication between migrants and their friends, family and acquaintances in their country of origin has gained in importance in the past decades

(Appadurai, 1996). According to Vertovec (2004, p. 219), “nothing has facilitated processes of global linkage more than the boom in ordinary, cheap international telephone calls”; hence his proclamation that these form the “social glue” between migrants and their contacts. This is especially true in the case of the Philippines, where an estimated 90% of OFWs own a mobile phone (Ramey, 2008). In the past, OFWs would need to pre-arrange a date and time to speak (sometimes using a borrowed landline or a payphone) whereas today migrants and their families can simply “use texts or missed-calls to at least signal to [each other] that they need to speak and should be phoned back” (Madianou & Miller, 2011, p. 462). The leading role of telephony (in any form) as a means to communicate between OFWs and their contacts can be seen in the 452% increase in calls made from the US to the Philippines between 1995 and 2001 (Vertovec, 2004, p. 220). From the online discussion of exciting news and events (del Rosario, 2001) to the “quotidian” goings-on in their country of origin (González & Castro, 2007), ICTs help migrants to better connect with their peers in their country of origin; thus, globalization has had weighty effects in the past decade on communication between OFWs and their countries of origin.

The main question regarding ICT and migration is whether the increased use and availability of such technologies also increases one’s feelings of connectedness to household members: How much do ICTs affect the emotional detachment inherent in migration? Contrary to the optimism expressed by globalization scholars who would claim that “the world . . . has shrunk” (Harvey, 1989; Ernste, Houtum, & Zoomers, 2009, p. 577), much “previous research has confirmed that distance (physical or emotional, or both) deeply threatens relationships” (Aguila, 2011, p. 95) and that face-to-face contact is still the most ideal form of communication (Appadurai, 1996; Fortunati, 2005; Castells, 2010). In the context of Filipino migration, however, a visit by the migrant only once a year corresponds to having a “close” relationship (Arlan, Shrestha, & Wingo, 2008, p. 39), suggesting that relationships can at least survive with remote communication. Thus, ICTs must be relied on for maintaining cross-border relationships, but that does not mean that only face-to-face contact (and care) is authentic (Mckay, D., 2007). An ICT interaction is no mere “semblance of intimate family life across borders” (Parreñas, 2005b, p. 334) but is *part of life* for a transnational household.

This is not to say that long-distance relationship maintenance involves communicating only vital matters. The mere act of sending an SMS, rather than the explicit content, can affirm a relationship (Licoppe & Smoreda, 2005), while the exchange of “small talk”, and (when a webcam is available) silent gazes into the digital eyes of a significant other have been seen to strengthen it (Aguila, 2011). On the other hand, the negative experience of transnational “nagging” has been reported by migrants and minor miscommunications, made more volatile by the distance, are more likely to erupt into negative outcomes (Panagakos & Horst, 2006; Aguila, 2011). These details underline the potential for ICTs to change transnational relationships—positively in the former examples, negatively in the latter. Furthermore, Deidre McKay (2007) found that the almost non-existent relationship between her respondent parents and their children strengthened post-migration, with ICTs as a major cause or conduit.

The frequency of contact can then be a factor in determining the perceived strength of a relationship. Madianou and Miller (2011) found that unexpected phone calls (or, conversely, unfulfilled expectation of a call) could bring about feelings of annoyance and high calling costs, and Aguila (2011) noted that a deluge of messages resulted in a “communication overload” and that a long silence from a partner brought about unfounded suspicion of infidelity. From these instances, we can appreciate the capacity of ICTs to transmit certain emotions even in the act of sending a message, much less the actual content.

The encouragement of transnational practices by the Philippine government—such as by boosting migrant–nonmigrant communication (Vaese, 2006)—is varied but relies upon two assumptions. First, the health of the OFW, and thus their earning potential, is at stake. Lacking communication and/or technology skills or the ability to access communication networks has been shown in migrants to correlate with anxiety (Grzywacz et al., 2006); depression (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, p. 222); and higher instances of infidelity, sometimes resulting in high-risk sexual behavior (Weine, Bahromov, & Mirzoev, 2008), among other post-migration complications that can result in diminished ability to work. However, these studies have found that increased frequency and quality of communication with their country of origin may be a key factor in decreasing symptoms. Second, the government faces a brain drain when its migrants find that they can have a better situation by staying abroad permanently (Tharan, 2009), and so it encourages its OFWs to contact their loved ones to limit brain drain: For example, in a pre-departure seminar by the POEA, OFWs were warned that silence might as well be sheer abandonment (Madianou & Miller, 2011, p. 458). Nevertheless, with advancements of ICTs, the permanent settlement of a highly-skilled migrant does not necessarily mean that their labor does not benefit their country of origin: The Medical City in Manila recently received its first Da Vinci Robotic System, allowing world-class surgeons to ply their trade from afar (Yu, 2011), and it is not unreasonable to suggest that some overseas Filipinos could be working these machines already.

2.4 Theme—Gender, Masculinities, and Femininities

The variable that differentiates this study from other remittance-behavior findings is the focus on the role of gender in relation to societal expectations. *Gender*, as opposed to the biologically-dichotomous *sex* of a person, is a culturally constructed value for the meaning given to the individual (Curran & Saguy, 2001); they are not synonymous, although in many contexts using the term provides a hedge in effect. Gender and the hierarchical power relations between genders are based on these social constructions. Idealized gender roles, constructed of a continuum of masculinities and femininities, vary within and between cultures: As Reeves and Baden (2000) explain, “the use of the term gender, rather than sex, signals an awareness of the cultural and geographic specificity of gender identities, roles and relations”. Expanding on this scope, Helmich (2009, p. 22) adds that “gender is learned through socialization processes, ...is context and time specific and ...is—above all—subject to negotiation and change”. The variability of

gender norms throughout space and time necessitates a disclaimer that the findings of this thesis, wrought in Metro Cebu, may not be valid for even the rural *barangays* surrounding the city, much less the country as a whole.

The literature has proven to be resistant to the separation of biologically- and socially-constructed concepts, and Carling (2005, p. 3) opines that most gender and development (GAD) studies are actually studies of only one gender, cautioning that the recent shift in focus away from women alone “has largely been a move from ‘women per se’ to ‘women in relation to men.’” Many studies include the word “gender” in the title, but discuss only the female and femininities, but as Carver (1996) put it, “gender is not synonymous with women”. I agree with the efforts and attempts at gender equality by many of these authors, and I take Carver’s and Carling’s warnings and make efforts to

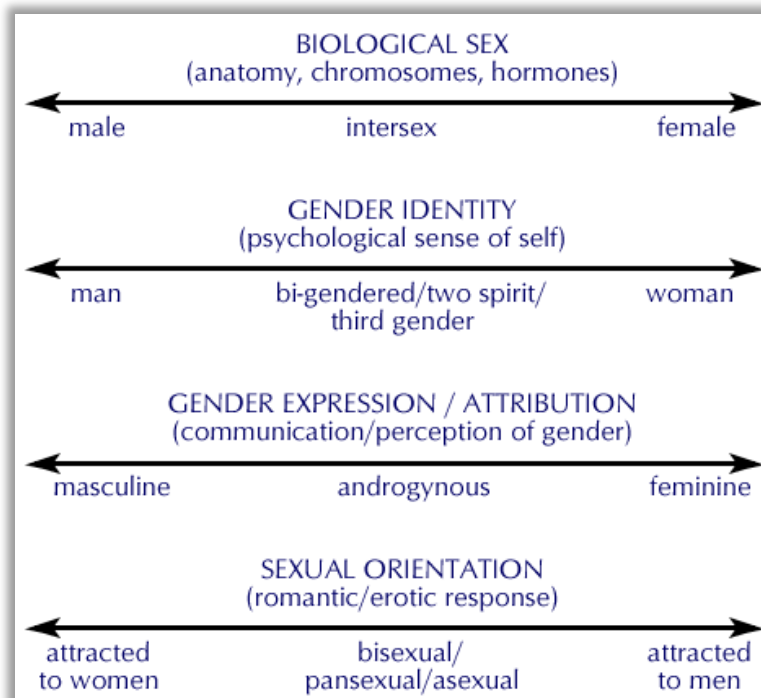


Figure 6 Diagram of sex, sexuality, and gender. Source: Ethan (2009)

ensure that I give a fair treatment to the concept of gender. I agree that “a critical feminist engagement with remittances and qualitative analyses of decision making, as well as the concrete social relations—in which remittances are embedded—will pay greater attention” to remittance behaviors than other approaches (Wong, 2006, p. 356).

Masculinities do not refer to gender roles adopted by men only. As Connell (1995, p. 69) wrote, “to define masculinity as what-men-empirically-are is to rule out the usage in which we call some women ‘masculine’ and some men ‘feminine’, or some actions or attitudes ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ regardless of who displays them.” Indeed, even one’s appearance can sometimes not be enough to “convince” another of one’s self-professed gender, as Parreñas (2005a, pp. 2–3) reported being mistaken as a man due to her *galaw*, her movement, which apparently contrasted with her otherwise feminine ap-

pearance. Similarly, in his study of queer¹⁶ Filipinos and Filipinas, Thoreson (2010) finds that masculinities and femininities are compared to the outward appearance or performance of a person: “if they are gay, they feel pressured to be flawlessly beautiful, and if they are lesbian, they feel pressured to show machismo.” Masculinities and femininities are therefore not necessarily confined to biological males and biological females, respectively, and are “neither universal nor static” (Silberschmidt, 2001, p. 658).

Challenging hegemonic masculinities—the “most honored or desired [form of masculinity] in a particular context” (Connell, 1995, p. 5)—is not only important in improving women’s lives (Sternberg, 2000; Angeles, 2008) but also has the potential to improve the quality of life for men (Pingol, 2001). Men are constantly pressured to live up to masculine expectations, so the contestation of a dominant masculinity (though it may be replaced) by feminine empowerment pursuits equally removes the performative burden for men. Figure 6 shows the host of characteristics of which a personal identity can be composed, with hegemonic masculinities lining the left-hand side and hegemonic femininities on the right-hand side.

It is important to keep in mind that my research focused on the masculine role of remittance behavior *relative* to that of the idealized norms. Concordantly and in the Philippine context, Angeles (2008, p. 11) remarks:

The inclusion of Filipino men and masculinities in gender studies...has often been confined to the unmasking of androcentric assumptions, the “problematic male” and images of masculinity. What is rarely analyzed are the varieties of men and the varieties of masculinities which are not necessarily problematic, but often destabilizing, contradictory and unsettling, and sometimes disempowering. Bringing in men and masculinities within gender studies would not only make sound scholarship, but could also qualify some of the insights and conclusions reached by Filipino feminists about gender identities and relations in the Philippines, and potentially carve a role for men in gender liberation and empowerment.

I believe that this study is a step in the right direction for including men and masculinities in Philippinist feminist literature.

2.4.1 Masculinities and machismo in the Philippines

According to Pingol (2001, p. 4), masculinities in the Philippines “span a wide continuum ranging from ideal typical characteristics of the responsible husband or provider or *kinalalaki* to the machismo of rogues and daredevils or *malalaki*.”¹⁷ Despite

¹⁶ Once a term of homophobic abuse, *queer* has now become “an umbrella term that refers collectively to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, intersex, questioning, and other individuals who identify with non-normative sexualities and/or gender identities” and “can also include ‘allies’ who may not identify [as in the above] but stand in solidarity with their queer sisters and brothers in terms of seeking a more just world with respect to sexuality and gender identity” (Cheng, 2011)

¹⁷ These terms, emphasized in the original, seem endemic to the rural province where Pingol conducted her fieldwork, and did not appear in any other literature I encountered or in the words of my respondents.

gaining an invaluable and deep insider's perspective in the matter of Filipino masculinities by examining Pingol's work, she, like many others, assumes that using *machismo* and its adjectival form, *macho*, are self-explanatory. (Her continuum is also less developed than it could be, and my own model is illustrated in Figure 7 below). Much of the literature mentioning machismo fails to elaborate on what Beattie (2002, p. 303) calls the "sometimes favorable but mostly offensive behaviors associated with male abuse of sanctioned social prerogatives" and what Connell (1995, p. 31) defines as, "a masculine ideal stressing domination of women, competition between men, aggressive display, predatory sexuality and a double standard". I propose that a critical discourse of Filipino machismo is needed by mapping the historical precedents and exploring the reception of certain characteristics of Filipino masculinity. This will become useful in explaining some of the gender-related decisions surrounding the migratory process.

To begin, a Google Scholar search—using parameters "machismo AND (Philippine OR Filipino)"—netted 1500 hits and yet most of the promising links I clicked through were only solitary mentions-in-passing. As an example, take this excerpt of a gender-aware analysis of Filipino internet usernames:

Males, on the other hand, use names that denigrate women and affirm their *machismo*. (Lanuza, 2003)

In this usage (representative of many of the search results), we can understand from context that machismo has to do with males in sole opposition to females, is an inherently violent process ("denigrate"), and that it is a process that must be continually performed ("affirm") for community approval. While these are, in fact, accurate details of Filipino machismo, Lanuza, like many other authors, does not formally define machismo (indeed, this is the only mention of it in his article), and thus commits a fallacy of assumption—expecting the conceptual literacy of the reader, concluding that the culture of the reader contains similar concepts of masculinity, or otherwise purporting machismo's self-evidence—despite the importance of definition in his analysis of gender inequality. The concept of machismo is also often erroneously assumed to be a universal constant that derives, like the term itself, from Spanish colonial influence. By pluralizing the term in his article, *Beyond Machismos*, Beattie (2002) attempts to counter this notion; however, he notes, there do seem to be uncontested similarities between the flavors of machismo within the former Spanish colonies:

Caution is certainly in order, but it seems incumbent to consider the effect of what one might call "masculine fashions" that transcend the borders of neighborhoods and nations and, at least in idealized forms, demonstrate some striking similarities in many cultures. (2002, p. 304)

The "fashions" here indicate common characteristics of masculinity around the world that are often attributed to the Spanish word *machismo*, but the point of this section is to try to find the characteristics of Filipino machismo as separate from "fashionable" machismo.

In almost every reviewed case wherein the term is discussed in a Philippine con-

text, the author concludes that the concept descended from Spanish colonizers, likely because the term itself derives from the Spanish language, meaning “an attitude of superiority of men over women”¹⁸. Stevens (1973, p. 91; cited in Helmich, 2009, p. 24), for instance, wrote that “the fully developed syndrome occurs only in Latin America”, suggesting both that using the term *machismo* outside of the realm of Latin America is incorrect and that machismo has a negative connotation akin to a mental disorder. Instead, I argue that since the term has been in use in the Philippine context in peer-reviewed articles (seemingly without contention), and was used verbatim by my respondents (without my prior introduction), its presence in the Filipino usage is valid. I disagree with Helmich, who went on to note that there are redeeming qualities of (Latin American) machismo, such as the social pressure to provide for one’s family (this sentiment is mirrored in the definition of Beattie, above). I argue, however, that Philippine machismo lies at the extreme end of the continuum of masculinities and is composed of *only* unfavorable characteristics but which become commendable in times of need; in other words, few (if any) permanent macho characteristics exist in the ideal Filipino man, but he has the capacity to exhibit those characteristics. I will go more into depth with this analysis later.

Despite its assumed genesis, there is a dearth of critical analysis regarding a Spanish genealogy in the Philippine context. This is not unusual for many trying to discern the origin of Filipino cultural characteristics, as Aguilar (1989, p. 529) lamented, “So great is the predilection for seeing only superior ways in the conqueror races (and, conversely, inferiority in the conquered) that the mutilation of historical evidence proceeds with unusual facility.” Connell (1995) similarly notes that, “It is a familiar suggestion that Latin American machismo was a product of the interplay of cultures under colonialism”. In a rare attempt to remove the Spanish veil, Winter (2005) tries to “look beyond” the “Hispanic culture of machismo, a remnant from several hundred years of Spanish colonial rule”, but his gaze reaches only so far as to consider the religion of the colonizers as a primary influence. The importation of Catholicism is, to him, more important than other cultural artifacts the Spaniards introduced. More significant is an analysis by Kikuchi (2003), where he attributes a great deal of the current kinship system¹⁹ to the colonizers and their religion, but also “looks beyond” the era of colonization and recognizes the role of indigenous culture in shaping contemporary Filipino kinship. In apparent discord with the male-dominating machismo of Latin American cultures, Kikuchi finds that “in a society such as that of the Philippines with a cognatic kinship structure, women are usually treated well by men, rather than being socially discriminated against as in patrilineal societies” (2003, p. 42). We can use his conclusion to mark that a main difference between the two is the apparently higher standing of Filipi-

¹⁸ Source: http://buscon.rae.es/draef/SrvltConsulta?TIPO_BUS=3&LEMA=machismo

¹⁹ Defined as: “Relationship based on or modeled on the culturally recognized connection between parents and children (and extended to siblings and through parents to more distant relatives.)” (Keesing, 1975, p. 150).

na women, but more importantly, that the shared term *machismo* speaks of different forms of masculinity depending on the cultural context, directly due to the effects of surviving indigenous culture (e.g., its kinship relations). Citing the Spanish conquistadors as the singular influence on Filipino machismo is therefore an incomplete assessment. Furthermore, evaluation in the context of the Philippines is necessary to differentiate it (if possible) from its Latin American cousin.

There is a semantic misalignment between the term and the meaning of the term, which is contextualized by the culture in which it is adopted. In Saussurian terms, the *significant* (the word “machismo”) has been assumed to match the *signifié* (the concept) of “Latin American machismo”, with no regard for cultural context (Saussure, 1993/1910). There is a need for specification when we talk about culture-specific masculinities and femininities.

We can, however, speak of common elements, such as the dominant religion between the two cultural realms. Guerrero (1983, pp. 111–114) wrote that, “the machismo displayed by the Filipino is an attempt to retrieve his lost manhood, stripped away by centuries of colonization and the imposition of Roman Catholicism.” In reading this, Kenny (1995) brushed it off by citing a statistic that over 80% of male Filipinos are members of the Church—confirmed five years later by the 2000 Census of Population and Housing (Erica, Tia, Sevilla, & Orteza, 2003)—however, he argued,

Like their Latin counterparts many are only occasional Catholics. They will appear at important ceremonies like baptisms and marriages, but in their minds religion is best left to the women.... Religion is central to the lives of many Filipino women. For men such a preoccupation would be considered unmanly because for a true man actions speak louder than words or prayers. (Kenny, 1995, p. 113)

So, exhibiting religiosity is not considered a macho characteristic; on the other hand, in my research and observations in the Philippines, I witnessed many examples of religion within the lives of everyday Filipino men. Nary a jeepney²⁰ can be seen without a religious reference, whether it be its painted name (e.g., “Señor Santo Niño”, the patron saint of Cebu) or a bumper sticker asking “God Bless Our Trip”; the almost-complete stoppage of activity within a Cebu City mall during the broadcast afternoon prayer included just as many men as women; and the many religious artifacts strung around my (male) respondents’ homes were dust-free. This has been a trend for at least the past 25 years, as Meñez (1988, pp. 40–41) had written about jeepney decoration:

A central place is assigned to religious paraphernalia—rosary beads, assorted medals and holy pictures, a miniature altar dedicated to the Christ Child or the Virgin Mary, garlanded with fresh and dried flowers, and adorned with electric votive lights.

²⁰ The jeepney is the most popular form of transportation in the Philippines, converted from a surplus jeep left by the American army, and is almost always driven by a man. A “conductor”, who announces the jeepney’s route, attracts passengers, and collects fares, is usually male; a woman sometimes perform this function, although she is always seated and is never as rowdy as male conductors.

This provides a breaking point between *M. latinoamericano* and *M. filipino*, because the outward projection of religiosity in the Philippines is a point of pride. It also gives credence to my argument that macho characteristics are favored only ephemerally, while these exhibitions are obviously permanent.

Other characteristics of a macho man can be compared to the opposite end of the masculinities/femininities continuum, that of the extremely feminine. In relation to machismo, this concept is termed *marianismo*, defined as “all elements of Marian devotion as a broadly perceived cultural pattern” (Kemper, 2009). A macho man, ideally, has none of the characteristics of a marianistic woman. Naylor (1997, p. 307) provided a succinct discussion since it “helps to clarify Hispanic family relationships [in the United States]”:

There are numerous definitions of [machismo]. However, in the literal sense, machismo refers to manliness and also to sexual virility and power. It also refers to the male role of protecting and defending the honor of women. In a cultural sense it means that the male is the defender of the family and is its chief provider.

Naylor goes on to mention that the familial model within these belief systems is the Holy Family itself, although it seems the onus of religious responsibility is put on the shoulders of the wife. A man seeking to perform his machismo should marry an “appropriate” woman, who must live up to the idealization of Mary herself. Religion is therefore an intricate part of machismo, albeit through the effect of marianismo:

Masculinities and femininities can play a role in the hiring potential of OFWs, and Steven McKay (2007) uses the largest sector of OFWs, seafarers—a sector wherein 97% are men—to illustrate how these are part of the seafaring labor industry’s advertisement campaign. Worldwide, the exposure of the female OFW as “‘prostitute,’ ‘mailorder bride,’ or ‘DH’” (Fajardo, 2008) results in a feminine, or “weak”, image of the Philippines (Rafael, 1997), thus putting the onus of masculine responsibility on the shoulders of seafarers. However, in an effort to position more Filipino seamen aboard the vessels of foreign companies, the international image of the Filipino seaman was deliberately shifted away from the traditionally macho and towards a more feminine image, one of pliability and of willing subservience rather than that of discipline and dependability. Furthermore, individual masculinities are challenged onboard by domineering seafarers’ constant ascription of homosexuality, which is correctable by performing machismo by seeking out a woman that is not their wife.

The frequent “common-sense” definition of machismo (as “having double standards”) thus has some truth in it, but makes no further attempts at elucidation. The sexual pranks, double entendre, and offensive language toward women found in jeepney inscriptions is “not meant to be taken seriously” and thus “passes censorship” (Meñez, 1988, p. 47), while women plastering similar sayings on the fronts of their *sari-sari* stores²¹ would not be met with such forgiveness. In a study of Filipino seafarers and

²¹ A sari-sari store is a convenience and variety store, sometimes compared to an American “mom-and-
(... continues on next page)

their wives, Santos and Muñez (2006) found that although many interviewed wives knew that their husbands had engaged in extramarital affairs and sexual encounters, and although some were tempted themselves, “the women were more interested to speak about their anxieties as wives looking after the children while their husbands were absent.... They referred to the stigma that bears heavily on married women who enter into extramarital sexual liaisons” (p. 310). Similar to the double standards in extramarital affairs, Tuason (2002, p. 10) reviewed case studies of abused wives and wrote:

In the Philippines, it is not easy to leave one's husband. There are social norms and pressure that perpetuate “machismo” (having double standards) and “pagtitiis” (passivity and martyrdom). The strong masculine orientation, high collectivism, and high uncertainty avoidance...reinforce staying in marriages that may be unhealthy, unhappy, or even unsafe.

Unelaborated on by Tuason is the difficulty with which marriage is dissolved within the Philippines, and wherein a double standard is viewed once more, albeit in a starkly literal fashion. Divorce is officially prohibited both by the state and by the Philippine Catholic Church, and heavily favors men, where more evidence of adultery is needed against the husband than against the wife (Constable, 2003). A culture composed of abusive masculinities, pressure to maintain the standard of marianismo, and a restrictive marital law system provides incentive for some women to migrate (Parreñas, 2001b). The double standard of Philippine machismo shows again the inequality between men and women in this country.

One of the final observations I would like to make is the temporal length of macho characteristics that is rarely discussed. For instance, while the macho man in the literature demonstrates power over women at every occasion, the general trend in the Philippines is for the wife to hold the “power of the purse”, which is not a temporary position. Similarly, the role as “protector of the family” is only brought up in moments of need, rather than the macho man performing the role of a guard dog. Machismo in the Philippines, then, is revealed in the need to bring it up. An ideal masculinity (not a macho one), for example, is to “choose fights wisely”, rather than trying to prove oneself at every chance.

(Footnote continues from last page)

pop” store. There are approximately 650 000 sari-sari stores, often with many stringing a single street. (Duplito, 2007).

In conclusion, societal roles are prescribed by a person's perceived gender, rather than their sex, and these roles must be consistently performed in order to gain acceptance within society. Although many authors have proposed that contemporary Philippine gender roles derive from Spanish origin, many characteristics of Filipino masculinities differ significantly from Hispanic or Latin American *machismo*. The spectrum of gender roles in the Philippines can be summarized (as illustrated in Figure 7) as spanning the extremes of the Filipino variants of marianismo and machismo, characteristics of which are ideally only temporarily exhibited; in other words, a list of the characteristics of the ideal Filipino man includes few exhibitions of macho behavior. Focusing on the masculine end of the spectrum, ideal characteristics include the responsibility to provide for loved ones, taking care of the children, saving money, and displaying appropriate levels of religiosity; he does not hold the pride suggesting that he must be the only provider, that religiosity and childcare are for women only, or that gambling is a means of making money. Men must treat women with respect, must remain faithful to their wives, and are sexual virile; they are not domineering,

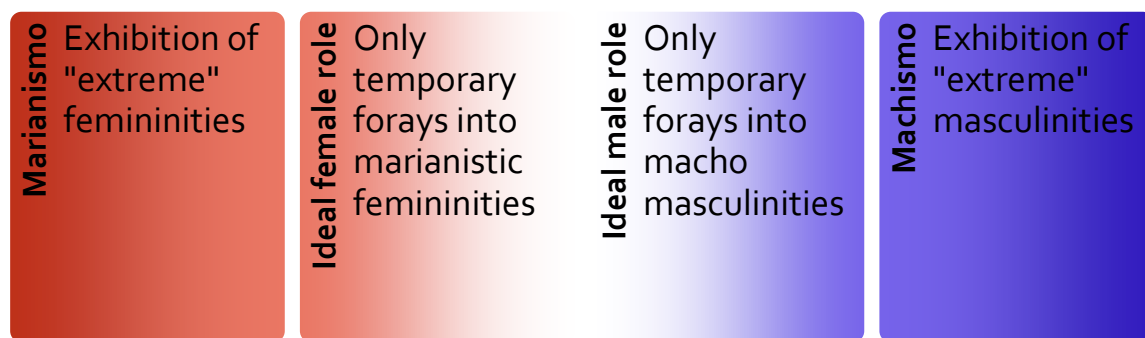


Figure 7 Spectrum of femininities and masculinities in the Philippines

womanizing, or overly (and overtly) sexual. The Filipino marriage is thus a partnership with equal member status, although the labors assigned to each spouse vary. While the ideal Filipino exhibits his intelligence through linguistic wit and "brains before brawn" problem solving, a macho man insists that physical strength is the only indicator of masculinity. Finally, we can say that the ideal Filipino has the capability to foray into macho territory when exhibitions of such traits are necessary to carry out his masculine responsibilities.

2.5 Relations Between Migration and Gender

Gender and migration interact with each other in multiple ways, as can be seen in Figure 8. Instead of viewing gender as a simple variable that can be measured, we should view it as “a set of social relations that organize immigration patterns” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, p. 3, cited in Mahler, 2001, p. 586). Gender roles sculpt much of the migratory process, especially in migration intentions and behaviors (De Jong, 2000) and thus the effects of gender should be duly examined. This section focuses on how gender affects migration, while the thesis and overall study are focused on how migration and remittances affect gender relations and how these create social consequences. How gender relations affect the representations of migration will be dealt with in the closing chapters.

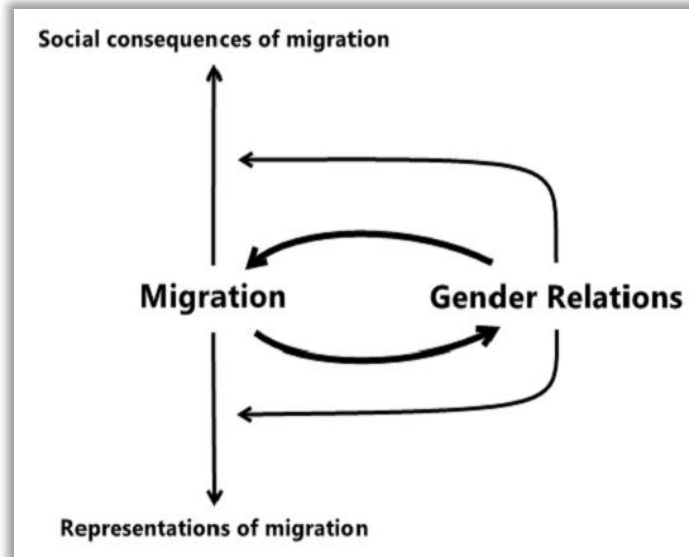


Figure 8 Different forms of interaction between migration and gender relations. Adapted from: Carling (2005)

2.5.1 Feminization of migration

Coupled with a GCIM report (2005) revealing that women now constitute almost half (48.6%) of the worldwide migrant population—49.6% in South-East Asia (IOM, 2010)—the term “feminization of migration” might suggest only that the percentage of

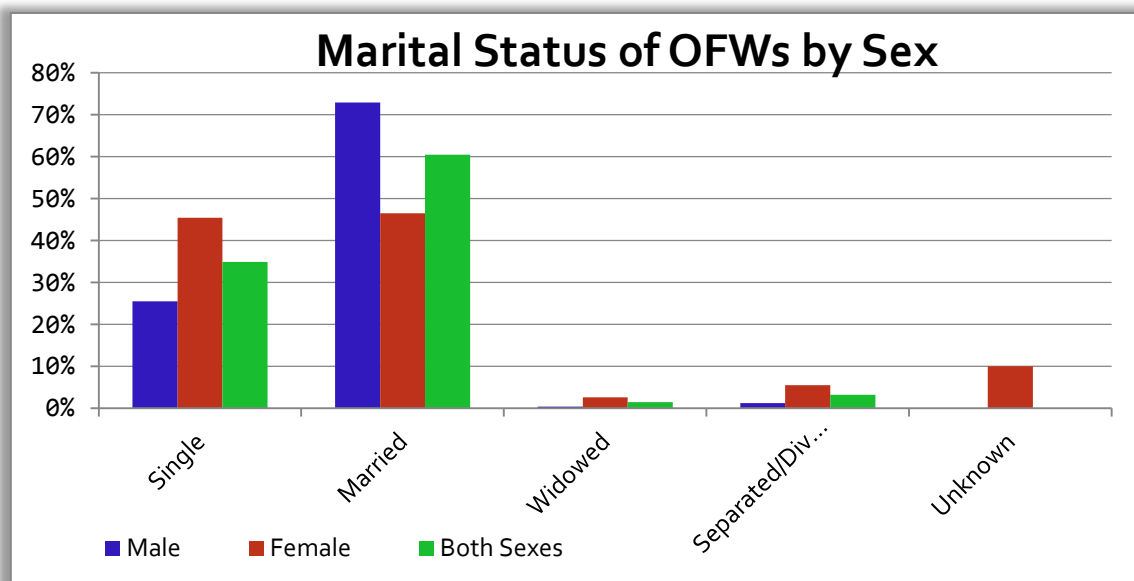


Figure 9 Marital status of OFWs by sex. Source: NSO (2009)

female migrants has been steadily increasing. While the relative number of female migrants worldwide has not changed significantly over the past 40 years, rising only a couple of percentage points from 47% in 1980 (Yinger, 2007), this number is much higher in the number of first-time migrants from the Philippines, growing from 50% in 1992 to 72% in 2006 (Castles & Miller, 2009, p. 133). Fajardo (2008, p. 403) suggests that there are more women than men from the South migrate to work in the North. Setting aside the numbers for now, the crucial fact to note is female migrants are moving with more economic independence (Guzmán, et al., 2008) and “no longer in relation to their family position or under a man’s authority” (IOM, 2004b, p. 24). Although female migrants still migrate primarily in roles perceived as “typically female” (as domestic workers, caregivers, prostitutes, wives, etc.; see Figure 2), they do so as non-dependents. Figure 9 illustrates this in the Philippine context, where it is obvious that there are many married women migrating for economic reasons.²² This brings us to the definition of the *feminization of migration* as “the increasing tendency of women to move for economic reasons rather than because of family ties” (Yinger, 2006).

Has the upward trend of female economic migration been noticed only recently, despite female migrants comprising a sizeable portion of many migrant flows? In other words, perhaps female migrants were economically motivated in the past but were shunned as “producers” because they did not fit the spatiotemporal stereotype of the migrant (and, indeed, of the woman), and were thus excluded from economic migrant censuses. Carling (2005) devotes a section of his argument to gender’s effects on representations of migration, which includes the perceptions of women as migrants and positing that stereotypical images of men as producers and women as reproducers contribute(d) to the establishment of sexist laws that could alter migrant flows and opportunities upon arrival: “Laws which themselves have a sexist bias might channel women into certain forms of migration, but this does not mean that migrant women are inherently non-productive” (p. 8). Concomitantly, influential members of the public (outside of the field of law) can and have formalized racism or sexism to portray incoming migrants in a negative light. According to at least one historian, women stepping off a transatlantic ship into the United States in the last decades of the 1800s competed with female migrants from other regions along multiple axes of discrimination, with some contemporary authors having “ascribed distinct characteristics to particular immigrant groups and saw those characteristics as rooted, variously, in blood or culture” (Irving, 2000, p. 19). As an example, “the Alpine and the Mediterranean, like the idealized nineteenth-century woman, are represented as innately domestic and conservative

²² What is admittedly hidden in this chart is how often family members accompany female OFWs. The literature explains that while there are many opportunities for family reunification for skilled and professional workers, un- or deskilled laborers do not have such good odds (Asis, et al., 2004) and the age of the children may become a factor (Parreñas, 2001a). However, combined with the data from Figure 2, we can safely assume that many (if not most) of female OFWs are un/deskilled and thus work separate from their family. Special thanks to Solficar Pescuela and Emma Fabian at the NSO for providing this special tabulation.

as opposed to virile Anglo-Saxons, whose energetic enterprise facilitated the conquest of the Western World” (p. 21). No doubt that any woman seeking employment in what was perceived as man’s realm (e.g., Rosie the Riveter in the United States, circa WWII) would be turned away, despite her qualifications, but probably more quickly so for female migrants who were assigned economic value even before their arrival. These racist and sexist concepts have certainly been quashed in recent decades, as ethnocentrism and political correctness have been brought to the fore of nearly all political debates, but this example serves to illuminate the compact workplace accorded to migrant women in the past. The feminization of migration thus describes the trend of more women being able to free themselves from the chains of popular and legal pressures to be employed in only certain sectors.

This is not to say female migrants feel less pressure overall, as many have suggested that women who have migrated and women who have become heads of their household in their husband’s absence have enjoyed “emancipatory” benefits such as increased power in household negotiations and community affairs. Among other feminist migration scholars, Yinger (2007) reveals the excitement in this newfound phenomenon:

The available data tell a powerful but broad story of movement and the feminization of migration. The next step must be to add analysis to identify in a strategic way how many women are experiencing an empowering migration process and why, and how many are having a negative experience and why.

In investigating the relative improvement or degradation of women’s power post-migration, De Haas and Van Rooij (2010, p. 4) remind the reader (and subsequent researchers including myself) that “the valuation of whether such changes in women’s position constitute an ‘improvement’ or ‘worsening’ always has a normative dimension. For instance, the positive valuation of small family norms might not necessarily be shared by traditionalist or religiously conservative analysts.” Through an extensive literature review and firsthand experience in rural (patriarchal) Morocco, they find several methodological flaws from which conclusions are harder to generalize.

As an example of how migration affects cultural gender roles, witness the change in perception of the word “Filipina.” The majority of female OFWs end up working in “typically female” industries such as nursing and domestic help, resulting in what Barber (2000, p. 400) called “commoditized domestic labour, so much so that the word ‘Filipina’ has undergone a shift in meaning”:

Once proudly (and sometimes controversially) mobilized discursively by Philippine feminists and others who wished to distinguish Philippine women from the generic Filipino, “Filipina” is becoming negatively coloured by the demeaned class and status connotations accorded paid domestic labour. To speak of Filipina now, particularly when speaking from outside of the Philippines, is to conjure up the idea of domestic service. For example, “Filipina” has become synonymous with “maid” in Hong Kong...and with “nanny” in some affluent urban neighbourhoods in Canada.

2.5.2 Remittances and gender

An International Organization for Migration (IOM; 2004a) report lists several differences in remittance behavior between the genders: In general, women make less in wages but tend to remit a higher proportion of their wages than men; men tend to send remittances directly to their wives, and spending decisions usually involve both parties, although the woman's education level is a factor; when they are able to save money as receivers of remittances, women invest more in their children's education and upgraded housing rather than on consumables. Wong (2006, p. 360) concurs and brings up the point that not only does gender affect remittance behavior, but remittances may affect gendered norms within the household:

Not only do remittance practices differ for men and women (individually), according to social norms concerning gender roles and identities and cultural constructions of femininities and masculinities, they also affect the production and reproduction of the daily lives of households and families, which has the potential to transform gender norms in the host and home communities.

We presume that the economic differences found by the IOM can be seen in our research site but we are more interested in the non-economic factors of migration, and we are curious to see if Wong's prediction holds true for the Philippines.

De Haas and Van Rooij (2010) explicate that depending on household income, women experience the migration of their spouses as either a decrease in their workload and increased ability to plan on their own time (higher-income households) or an increase in their workload, and not in greater freedom (lower-income households); however, all women responded as feeling an increase in responsibility after their husband migrated. The ability to hire a domestic worker or the presence of adolescent children has much to do with how the workload level changes. Despite the increase in responsibility and decision-making power ("which the naïve outsider might easily misunderstand as 'emancipation'" from "traditional" norms), these levels resettled once the migrant husband returned even if for a short time. This Moroccan case holds similarities with the case of the Philippines: both seem to be established "cultures of emigration" within a patrilineal society, with frequent comings and goings of family members (for instance, in the case of Filipino seamen, who often have 10-month contracts).

The GCIM (2005) report revealed that female migrants send higher percentages and more regularly on average, creating leverage for the creation of empowering programs in the country of origin (Dannecker & Sieveking, 2009). Moreover, female migrants who remit to their origin households may gain greater sway over allocation decisions (Pingol, 2001; Guzmán, et al., 2008). Remittances, however, may have negative consequences: Among other considerations, migrants may reinforce gender hierarchies by sending only to their same gender (Jolly & Reeves, 2005); remittances may increase inequality between migrants, non-migrants and the families thereof; North-South social remittance flows may not be beneficial; and the perceived obligation to send earnings back, as well as the expectation of remittances, may place constant

stress on the migrant and their family (GCIM, Levitt, 1998; 2005; Massey, Arango, & Hugo, 2005).

2.5.3 Pre- and post-migration household roles

In many cultures around the world, household gender roles are “traditionally” divided with the father primarily taking up the economic labor and the mother primarily taking up reproductive labor such as housework, child- and eldercare, (Lamb & Bougher, 2009, pp. 611–612), and Patterson and Farr (2011) write that this kind of labor specialization “is most pronounced among families in which the wife/mother does not participate in the labor force, and it is least pronounced in families where both wife/mother and husband/father work full-time at professional careers”. This is certainly the situation in the “traditional” patriarchal-nuclear family of the Philippines (Parreñas, 2005a; Isaksen, et al., 2008) with both parents involved in parenting decisions—termed “coparenting” (Patterson & Farr, 2011)—with the father “traditionally” taking up disciplinary action and helping with school matters. Maternal care is emphasized more than paternal care, however, and in the surveyed needs of Filipino migrant-parent children, “children's feelings of emotional insecurity are only exacerbated by the belief that mothers are the only ones fit to provide care” (Parreñas, 2001a, pp. 383–384); hence, the priority of the father migrating over the mother, especially when children are younger. In this context, parenting and household reproductive labors are often synonymous with “mothering”; “fathering” in general seems to indicate only economic support of the household and an expectation to, when necessary, derive that support from overseas employment. When the mother migrates, her movement results in households that Parreñas noted are considered “abnormal” and “broken”;

The question then concerns whether fathers in the Philippines are able to provide the “maternal love” sorely missing from their children's lives, if women are capable of assisting them with their ideologically prescribed role as the income producer. Unfortunately, fathers seem to avoid this responsibility. As I have noted, fathers are less apt to care for their children than are other female relatives. (2001a, p. 384; emphasis added)

Mothering from a distance, depicted here, has been presented as a tragic event in the vein of the *sacrifice and suffering* paradigm, in which the “picture of family life being torn apart by the necessity of migration” is painted (Carling, 2005, p. 10). Migrant women, especially mothers, are in this paradigm presented as in a state of constant anxiety but are also reminded that their toiling is for their family's welfare. The victim of the violence of migration is the family as a whole but the literature more often specifies the children:

What happens to the children? They are cared for either by female relatives or by women too poor to emigrate in search of work. The mothers try to keep in touch by phone and email, sometimes calling several times a week. When a child has problems at school, for example, the mother will try to solve them—attempting in effect to mother at a distance. But what almost never happens is that the fathers of these children get involved more

fully in caring for them and raising them. (In fact, often the fathers themselves work away from home elsewhere in the Philippines, only coming home at weekends.)
(Parreñas, 2002, p. 16)

Filipino fathers are thus seen as incapable of taking care of the children in a reasonable fashion after their mother migrates, which sets up the basis for the global care chain model. Using Parreñas's doctoral research data, Hochschild's (2000) model relies on a commodification of care throughout the world of women who care for another woman's child, as she cares for another woman's child, and so on. This may undoubtedly be the case for many Filipino families, as it seems to be a common assumption that Filipino fathers rarely "face up to the challenge to [*sic*] child rearing just as their female counterparts have done" (Isaksen, et al., 2008, p. 65).

A central criticism of these arguments is the use of dichotomous "traditional" roles: Under this pretext, men are confined to "providing" and "fathering" while women are ascribed "homemaking" and "mothering" roles, with little to no crossover—indeed, many times the nonmigrating mother's increased responsibilities post-migration are referred to as "tak[ing] the role of both the father as head of the family and mother as nurturer of their children" (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2008, p. 3). As can be seen in Figure 7 above, *sex roles* are extreme, while the *ideal male and female roles* in the Philippines lie in a zone of mutual interaction (i.e., men taking up some of the "women's roles", and vice-versa, is normal). Moreover, the arguments rely upon a comparison of the couple's labor differentiation as compared to the "traditional" model, placing a priority on conformity.

However, there are no set biological sex roles in regards to parenting (i.e., women are not naturally better at some aspects of parenting than are men, and vice versa) and here I defer to recent studies on gay and lesbian parenting couples. For American lesbian couples with children, "mothering" responsibilities were reported as about equally distributed between each parent, which was a preferable situation; lesbian couples worked a similar number of hours as their heterosexual peers, but with the latter relying more on the man's productive labor; in short, "lesbian couples are more likely to report that they divide childcare by sharing it equally and heterosexual couples are more likely to report that one of them specializes in childcare" (Patterson & Farr, 2011). However, this would seem to only strengthen the "sex role" argument by showing that mothers will provide "motherly" care regardless of the familial configuration, while the important question (especially as regards this thesis) is whether fathers can also provide such "maternal" care: Patterson and Farr (2011) found that, "much like lesbian couples, gay men who are involved in primary parenting couples have reported sharing childcare labor. Moreover, gay fathers also expressed a preference for equal sharing of childcare, just as lesbian mothers have". A natural follow-up question, then, is how gay and lesbian (i.e., non-traditional) familial configurations affect a child's development. Children of same-sex parents had similar levels of psychological adjustment as, but reported warmer feelings toward both their parents than, children of heterosexual-parent peers (Tasker, 2005); moreover, children of lesbian parents were more well-adjusted behaviorally than their peers (Patterson & Farr, 2011). These findings are important in

dismissing the notion that the distribution of childcare is biologically set by sex.

Post-migration parenting from a distance

The literature places a large weight on the effects of reduced communication between the migrant and his/her family, and this has been shown to be a major influence of dissension, with an extreme occurring “when migrants completely cut themselves off from their families at home” (Schmalzbauer, 2004, p. 28, cited in Isaksen et al., 2008). As mentioned in the section on global communication above, new and faster forms of communication (including the internet and mobile telephony networks) have allowed Filipino migrants “to make their presence felt by their children even if they are thousand miles [*sic*] away” (Bielza-Valdez, 2011, p. 40) at either party’s convenience. Additionally, Deirdre McKay (2007, p. 179) criticizes Parreñas (and those who use her conclusions as a point of departure) as “[appearing] to work from a tacit assumption that only care arising from face-to-face intimacy with a mother is authentic”, disregarding the care that can be given from abroad via voice or internet communication, especially the promise of a quick reaction (compared to post or telegram).

Within the last decade, but in the context of male Mexican migrants living in the US, “recent evidence suggests that a new generation of fathers is more involved with the daily emotional needs of their children and less focused on their economic roles” (Nobles, 2011, p. 730), which mirror those of Filipino men. Furthermore, and in apparent discord with Parreñas’s nonmigrating fathers, Nobles (2011, p. 733) found that Mexican “migrant fathers keep abreast of children’s education progress and, in a few cases, help with homework over the phone”. With an increase in militarization at the US–Mexico border, Mexican migrants are less able to return regularly than their Filipino counterparts are and often spend years abroad, so economically efficient forms of communication are essential and seem to be productive means of fathering from abroad. Many visiting Mexican migrant fathers “attend children’s school activities and take them to the doctor when needed, as opposed to participating solely in leisure activities with children” (p. 737). In the case of a Filipino father leaving, his children “do not fail to notice their fathers’ attempts to involve themselves in their lives whenever they are back at home” (Bielza-Valdez, pp. 40–41). Fathering from abroad seems to produce little negative change in the father-child relationship, despite some suggestion to the contrary as reported by respondent children:

I was still young then. I cried a lot. It took me a long time to adjust (to my father’s absence) because he was with me for about six years before suddenly going away. Ah...it seemed hard to adjust then since I was still very young.

Ric, 19 years old (p. 20)

It feels different without papa around. I remember when I was still in the elementary grades, I used to ask my Tito’s help with school projects...I miss him when he’s not around because when he’s here I’m so happy. We have such fun, especially the two of us, running around, throwing things at each other...I treat him like a close friend (*barkada*).

Don, 19 years old (p. 21)

(Scalabrini Migration Center & Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, 2004; ellipses in original)

Though there is an admittedly fair amount of evidence in the work by the Scalabrini Center suggesting that the children feel neutral or happier that their father is abroad—due to such reasons as, “there’s no one around to scold us or nag us” (p. 21)—the point is that the literature generalizes results to a large degree and ignores evidence contrary to a hypothesis. Ric and Don’s stories (i.e., evidence that children are in fact emotionally affected by the absence of a migrant father) are subducted beneath the weight of evidence suggesting that the father-provider gender role has nothing to do with emotion. In the case of either Filipino parent migrating, Bielza-Valdez finds from her own research and from a thorough literature review that “children with absent parents have generally adjusted well socially, have strong social support and get along well with other family members” (2011, pp. 40–41), so the differences in outcomes between the children of migrant fathers and those of migrant mothers seems slim to nil.

In conclusion, the husbands of OFWs are continually stereotyped as incapable of handling the added responsibilities vacated by the mother, despite a lack of recent evidence; advances in ICT and their ability to parent from abroad demand data revision rather than reinterpretation; and what has been passed as the feminist goal of female empowerment is actually an aim for male disempowerment.

2.6 Summation of Key Concepts

There are a number of important statements from this chapter that are worth reiterating. First, although the literature often confuses *household* and *family*, they are not synonymous and sometimes favor a co-resident “nuclear family” over a transnationally-arranged household, so we have derived a definition that aims to include both for the purposes of this and future studies. Second and naturally, international migration was discussed, which involves crossing a border, most commonly for economic reasons but not exclusively, and although the reasons vary, it should be noted that choices made throughout the migratory process cannot be judged as perfect decisions. Remittances, notably (for this thesis) of a financial sort, flow across boundaries and contribute heavily to the incomes of poorer countries, including the Philippines. These flows are aided by processes of globalization and the subsequent advances in information and communications technologies, which are also quite important in maintaining transnational relationships, especially for Filipinos who have wholeheartedly embraced mobile phones and the internet.

As discussed in the section that followed, *gender* is discerned from *sex* in this study in an aim to identify the social institution of household roles. I noted that masculinities and femininities are arranged on a spectrum and men and women locate themselves based on the behaviors they exhibit and how these compare to the ideal and extreme points. In the case of the Philippines, the ideal masculinities and femininities are located in between the extreme endpoints of machismo and marianismo, respectively. As social relations, gender organizes migration just as much as the economic and political climate and interacts with international migration in many ways. The economic and individual migration of more women recently, termed the feminization of migration, is one such

example, with the remittances sent back as determined by gender representing another. Finally, gender roles challenge and are challenged by international migration, especially when it comes to parenting decisions. I argue that the increased ability for parents to communicate to their children from abroad eliminates the viewpoint that reproductive labor is only accomplished by a single parent. These points will be expanded on with empirical examples in the chapters that follow.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy of a study determines the over-arching assumptions the researcher makes regarding such concepts as truth and reality. The philosophy can determine and be determined by the research strategies (desired to be) employed. In an effort to keep the study as open to new concepts as possible, and to limit the effect that assuming a certain strategy may have on the research, I chose to use a pragmatic philosophy, which depends on the research question as “the most important determinant of the epistemology, ontology, and axiology...one may be more appropriate than the other for answering particular questions” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009, p. 109)²³. Adopting pragmatism as the research philosophy, I argue, is in line with the exploratory nature of and grounded theory approach to this study.

The ontological stance of this study is of specific concern. Divided into two aspects, the study of ontology aims to find the nature of reality and both will be used throughout the thesis in different ways. The first aspect, objectivism, “portrays the position that social entities exist in reality external to social actors concerned with their existence” (p. 110). Under such a definition, this study entails the production of concrete data about the units of investigation: Households containing a family member who has migrated and sends remittances back home, including household composition, migrant status, educational level and working experiences of both migrant and partner, as well as information about the exact remittance behavior. A full dossier of characteristics of the research units and the conditions under which the migration occurs remained the over-arching goal of our interviews. The second ontological aspect, subjectivism, is often associated with social constructionism. Instead of merely focusing on the research units, we analyze phenomena as socially constructed and created from the perceptions and consequent actions of actors. Phenomena relating to gender (e.g., masculine identity) are effectively analyzed using a constructionist view (Pingol, 2001, p. 14). Taking both these aspects in mind, this research brings further elaboration to the topic of gender and remittances.

3.2 Research Methods and Strategies

3.2.1 Time horizon

The time horizon of the research is cross-sectional, which means that a “snapshot” is taken about a particular situation at a particular time. This delimitation was selected as preferential in conducting interviews to fit within the scope of the fieldwork period, sampling methods, and availability of our student partners, as compared to, for exam-

²³ Unless otherwise noted, the source for this chapter is *Research Methods for Business Students* by Saunders, et al.

ple, the longitudinal format of the ethnography. However, gender is a part of a historical process, something that will not be forgotten as we evaluate change over time (e.g., the feminization of migration).

3.2.2 Grounded theory

Though the development of certain methodological facets is rarely discussed, it is important to begin a discussion of grounded theory with a brief historical overview because it relates to the approaches made by this thesis. Using a grounded theory approach as the main research method in this thesis has a number of advantages and consequences. Considering our research topic to be underexposed, grounded theory allowed us to examine embedded case studies on an exploratory basis: After some data were produced, they were analyzed preliminarily in an effort to produce better data in future interviews, and so on. This iterative process is the core of grounded theory, summarized by Saunders et al. (2009, p. 149) as “developed from data generated by a series of observations... [that] lead to the generation of predictions which are then tested in further observations that may confirm, or otherwise, the predictions”. Both induction and deduction are utilized in this process, as can be seen in Figure 10 below.

Grounded theory arose out of a thrust to move social sciences beyond an emphasis on verification, which formed the foundation of the epochal sociology of Glaser and Strauss, the authors of the seminal work (1980). Verification was prioritized in response to improvements in quantitative measuring and testing; as such, quantification of variables was the norm, which meant that qualitative research “would provide quantitative research with a few substantive categories and hypotheses. Then, of course, quantitative research would take over, explore further, discover facts and test current theory” (pp. 15–16). Qualitative research was thus seen as only another way to collect data but not as a true theorizing method, but the authors contended that:

There is no fundamental clash between the purposes and capacities of qualitative and quantitative methods or data. What clash there is concerns the primacy of emphasis on verification or generation of theory—to which heated discussions on qualitative *versus* quantitative data have been linked historically. ... *In many instances, both forms of data are necessary*—not quantitative used to test qualitative, but both used as supplements, as mutual verification and, most important for us, as different forms of data on the same subject, which, when compared, will each generate theory. (Glaser & Strauss, 1980, pp. 17–18, emphasis in original)

Concurrently, “grand theory” was taking hold of sociology students, such that their mentors would challenge them to find exceptions to their theories, only to find “the refined theory and the theorist on firmer ground, while [the students were] soon forgotten” (p. 11). As well, the authors noted that data collection and theorizing were often completed in isolated stages of the research, and responded with theoretical sampling, which is data collection “controlled by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal” (p. 45). Through their discussion of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss proposed equal status of qualitative and quantitative methods and data, suggested more localization of theories, and formalized the process of data collection and theorizing in a feedback loop.

They also believed that “grounded theory will be more successful than theories logically deduced from *a priori* assumptions”, which is to say that the researcher goes into data-production with a minimum of initial hypotheses and concepts in mind. This is *not* to say that the researcher goes into the field having read naught of the literature and de-

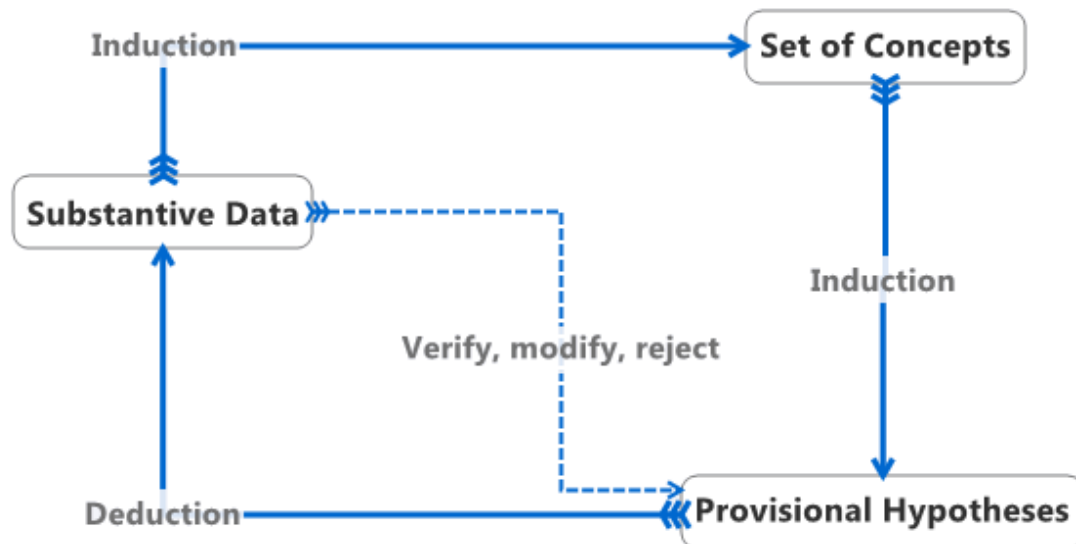


Figure 10 Conceptual model of grounded theory. Adapted from: Fernández (2004)

void of all ideas, concepts, existing theories, or otherwise. Instead, the literature and data are consulted in turn to amend, append, or create grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1980; Suddaby, 2006).

3.2.3 Literature review

An extensive critical literature review drawn from myriad disciplines forms the backbone of the formulation of the thesis. The background reading provided the mold to make sense of the data in the development of the theoretical framework; it was also used for practical purposes, such as selecting research methods and becoming familiar with local circumstances in preparation for the fieldwork (our student partners aided in this quest as well). The literature review is an important process in the research cycle in the use of grounded theory: while the literature review of other methods is a single, early stage in the project, grounded-theory studies must adapt to the data produced and must also adapt the production methods based on field conditions (see Sampling below). Therefore, the literature review “phase” proceeded parallel to the fieldwork, with new theoretical and methodological readings taking place in response to data production.

An important part of the literature review process is judging the usefulness of a work. The literature has been judged appropriate and relevant along three axes (evalua-

tion, rigor and evaluative criteria)²⁴ as prepared by Baxter and Eyles's (1997, p. 506) review of qualitative interviews in social geography:

- Generally, *evaluation* is the process whereby a study is deemed worthy of attention through a critical review of a study's methods, corroboration of findings, and fit with the existing literature.
- The authors claim that “‘*rigour*’ has come to mean the satisfaction of the conventional criteria of validity, reliability and objectivity within quantitative research. Yet we must not forget the general context of rigour around the principles of academic integrity... including responsibility and honesty: dimensions of self-reflection, essential to qualitative research.” This last aspect of published self-criticism has been implemented extensively in my thesis.
- According to the authors, “‘*evaluative criteria*’ are the basic principles used to guide the judgment of the integrity or trustworthiness of a study” with detection techniques ranging from “passive observation and personal reflection to intervention, with a common theme of shared meanings and subjective understanding.” Here, a major tool to judge trustworthiness is in noting rationales for decisions; a lack of or lax justification negatively weights a work.

If a piece of literature has been deemed inappropriate or non-rigorous according to these characteristics, but still holds some value held up to the light of this research, its caveats have been explicitly mentioned.

After analyzing the literature, it is clear that the ON research project is largely unique relative to previous studies since scant research on this topic has been completed and the extant research seems general and generalizing, often tending toward spotlighting special cases rather than the status quo. In this thesis, I try to reveal the general attitudes and patterns of my respondents while also highlighting their distinguishing cases. Focusing policy on those phenomena that lie on the middle of the curve (at the expense of “improbable” cases) or on those that lie on the tail (at the expense of the broad majority), while claiming either as universal, are logical fallacies²⁵ that I try to avoid reproducing. Great care has been taken to be critical of works representing such generalizations, noting their downsides when fitting, and to be especially critical of my own conclusions.

3.2.4 Embedded case studies

Arguably, the most important research strategy is the use of *embedded case studies*—“a number of logical sub-units” of the unit of analysis (Yin, 2009)—within the case

²⁴ These criteria have been frequently applied to my own writing to evaluate how this thesis will become a productive addition to the literature, including providing rationale for such decisions as selecting respondents and presenting verbatim respondent quotations, which are, according to Baxter and Eyles, historically lacking within human geographic literature. Seemingly insignificant choices may seem unimportant or irrelevant, “should be stated, since similarities [or contrasts] between interviewers and interviewees may, for example, foster or stifle interview conversations” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 508).

²⁵ Sweeping generalization and hasty generalization, respectively; see Walton (1999).

study of the Philippines. These are useful in conducting empirical investigations on contemporary phenomena in a real life context. The number of embedded case study households aimed for (20) was derived from the terms of the ON project, in which a comparison will be made with two existing researches with households numbering around this number. The multiple embedded case studies performed can establish the potential to notice possible similarities and diversity in order to draw conclusions. The research for this thesis, however, was based on 10 case households in Cebu City with multiple interviews for each.²⁶ A point of concern was the possible bias of cultural differences between our respondents and us, which was lessened by investigating the local culture and customs beforehand and by employing local graduate student partners from the University of San Carlos, who assisted us in overcoming these difficulties as much as possible and shared insights into our respondents' meaning. The method of data production by interviews offered opportunity to explore meanings and definitions to reduce the threat of bias, with our cultural ambassadors immediately available to discuss what we heard.

The cases in this research are embedded, which means that the same case study (i.e., male members of a migrant's household in Cebu City) involves more than one analytical unit (i.e., multiple households). It can include main and smaller units on different levels in search for consistent patterns across the units. The unit of analysis will be the household, but there will be variation on the actual persons being examined. This will diverge from one family member, who can be male or female with a different relation to the migrant, to more or even all members of the household.

3.2.5 Interview techniques

The chosen interview format was semi-structured, which would allow us to control the direction of the interview (via relevant questions) while remaining open to new inferences (from the open-ended answer format). When we first began interviewing, we brought a brief list of questions with us to the interview site in order to familiarize ourselves with the household situation, asking for information beginning with such information as age, marital status, education level, religion, and the composition of the family, and moving on to questions according to the project's sub-questions laid out above (see Appendix B for the list of interview questions). We had expected these questions to be answered easily and to gain rapport as the census-esque questions built up to the more sensitive questions that followed. However, we quickly noted that reliance upon the list of questions shifted the interview format from one searching for in-depth answers to that of a simple (albeit lengthy) survey. Additionally, some of our respondents perceived the initial questions as off-topic and became suspicious that it would be misused; their answers became shorter and less expansive as time went on. After this realization (before any male respondents were found), we began interviewing in a more conversational style, referring to the questions only when necessary to ensure enough

²⁶ Please see Section 3.5 and Chapter 5 below for hypotheses of why my respondent count came up short.

information had been gathered and indeed intentionally leaving the list of questions tucked in our rucksacks. Our student partners greatly aided in this process, forming rapport with our respondents by keeping the mood light, empathizing, asking follow-up questions themselves, and anticipating the direction in which we wanted to push the conversation.

Each participant was formally interviewed at least once depending on their free time (usually in the evening for the men, because they worked during the day), with 6 second interviews. We met some of our respondents outside of a formal interview environment and we think we gained more of their trust as a result: In the case of Bayani, a president of the local senior citizens' group whom we met with several times, this trust extended to helping us gain respondents through a group meeting and also a meeting of the barangay citizens, but we were unable to attain any further contacts. Nonetheless, we were able to talk in front of several dozen people in the meetings, enhancing our probability of gaining respondents.

Interviews began with an introduction of ourselves and of our research, an assurance that the information discussed would be kept confidential and that pseudonyms²⁷ would be put into place, a suggestion of how participation might benefit the respondent and his/her family, and asking permission to take notes and/or record audio. Respondents would often decline to be recorded and sometimes would appear uncomfortable with our taking notes, in which case we would close or set our notebooks down and jot our thoughts down after leaving. Our student partners would take notes along with us and we would sometimes compare our fieldnotes afterward to ensure that none of the information was lost. Jeff and Karen would often converse with our respondents in Cebuano but would only summarize the exchange, rather than providing a verbatim translation. While this prevented a more detailed analysis, it kept the flow of the conversation going, which was crucial to ensuring a genial mood. We naturally limited the length of the interview to the desires of the respondent, with interviews rarely surpassing an hour in total length.

After Marieke conducted a number of interviews with women and with our male respondent count still lingering at zero, I decided that the question I continually asked myself ("Why is it hard to contact male respondents?") should be posed to the respondents themselves, in an effort to gain local insight. This turned out to be an invaluable source of information and became a standard question posed toward the end of the first interview of male respondents. We also began asking hypothetical questions based on the conversation direction we wanted our respondents to expand upon, an example framework being, "What advice would you give the families of new migrants?" We reasoned that answers to this question would reveal hidden information of the hardships

²⁷ In an effort to maintain pseudonymity in connection with the Philippine culture (as opposed to simply choosing names), we chose to use a website that provided "typically Philippine given names." (Source: <http://www.aboutnames.ch/phil.htm#Names>)

and changes faced by migrants' families, opening up a new direction for the interview to head.

3.3 Sampling

Although this is a qualitative study and thus sampling methods may appear less crucial to the results than quantitative, statistics-focused research, it is important to note our sampling methods to provide future studies in this topic with methodological rigor. As Baxter and Eyles (1997, p. 508) found in their analysis of a human geography journal article corpus:

Only in ten papers [out of thirty-one] do the researchers mention how respondents were recruited and several do not indicate how many people were interviewed. Sample size is relevant for qualitative researchers. It is the basis of discovery and description and, while an N of 1 can be easily justified.... a rationale should be provided.

This last line is particularly significant for this thesis due to the difficulties in recruiting the desired number of respondents; in this case, a rationale is to be provided for why an n of 10 is undesirable and how future studies of this topic might benefit from our experience.

In this study, respondents were initiated from a non-probability sample, meaning that the general research population is not from a randomized selection processes, or representative for the whole population. Non-probability samples are a frequent method of data gathering because of their accessibility; in this case, in-depth interviews about an unknown population with many variables are being conducted and accessibility is a valuable asset. Non-probability samples can provide rich information to answer research questions and enhance the opportunity to gain theoretical insights, therefore contributing to the research objectives of both ON and the master thesis students.

The initial sample for this project began with our student partners, Jeff and Karen, and our faculty advisor, Dr. Leny Ocasiones, providing us with a short list of friends, family, and acquaintances that fit our desired respondent characteristics, including a women's group that Dr. Ocasiones heads. Since this network centered on the university lives of our colleagues, there was a danger we would be excluding households who have no connection to the university while favoring middle-class households. By then using the snowball technique, we would risk becoming stuck in this rut. Due to this concern, as well as the seeming unavailability of male respondents, we attempted to diversify our respondent pool. Our initial contacts may have been characterized exclusively by those people who (are willing to) associate with university students and scholars (or who they are willing to speak to), and indeed, we received instructions many times to avoid wandering into certain neighborhoods. It was generally assumed that the need to go abroad was an economic decision, which would suggest that poorer households are overrepresented. However, it was also generally assumed that poorer households would be located in more crime-ridden neighborhoods, and since our research partners and faculty advisor knew which neighborhoods held a nasty reputation, these neighborhoods are thus absent from our sample, perhaps to our safety but nevertheless

something to consider as far as validity is regarded.

Non-probability sampling methods cannot be used to deduce conclusions from the sample in application to the general population. To try to contact enough respondents to interview, several sampling types were applied, the first being purposive sampling, enabling the selection of cases that can possibly contribute to answering research questions, rather than selecting random respondents and excluding them later. In this study, the key characteristic of respondents was being part of a household with a member working abroad and sending remittances.

The second method was chain or snowball sampling, which made it easier after some initial cases have been found with the purposive sampling. The aim of the snowball sampling is to identify new cases by asking interviewed persons for the contact information of people they know satisfying our purposive-sampling qualifications, “until ‘redundancy’ or ‘saturation’; that is, until no new themes or constructs emerge” (Baxter & Eyles, p. 513). While Marieke and I enjoyed some success when a potential respondent was in the room or nearby and available to talk, the snowball technique did not have the desired effect.

From our initial contacts (friends, family, acquaintances and colleagues of Dr. Ocasiones, Karen and Jeff) we then gained respondents, but with the exception of Bayani (who referred us to his son, Liberato), we did not experience success with the snowball technique.

3.3.1 Difficulties gaining male respondents

Sensing that the population I was trying to reach may feel uncomfortable talking with us, and faced with a high dropout rate of contacts (also known as mortality), I read some literature regarding sampling methods and discovered respondent-driven sampling. This method is similar to that of snowball but is used in situations where the desired sample is a “hidden population”, i.e., “when no sampling frame exists and public acknowledgement of membership in the population is potentially threatening” (Heckathorn, 1997, p. 174). Respondent-driven sampling—usually used for researching illicit or dangerous activities—relies on the first respondent to convince further respondents to participate in the study, thus relieving the researcher of much of the possible selection bias and improving the probability that another respondent will participate, given the advice of a friend or acquaintance. However, and as I will explain more in depth below, the technique also did not produce a significant effect, probably because respondent-driven sampling also requires strong incentives both for prior respondents in recruiting further waves and for new respondents to participate. I argue that since we could not provide monetary incentive and since the incentive we could provide (in the form of confidentiality assurances, possible effects of the study on respondents’ personal lives, etc.) were too weak to overcome the stigma attached with being the husband of an OFW, this sampling technique did not work in our study.

An interesting part of this research that sets it apart from many others is our use of radio for recruiting respondents. Dr. Ocasiones had a contact at a popular local radio station (DYAB) and was able to secure about a half-hour of airtime for us to explain our

project, ask for respondents and assure listeners of their confidentiality. Our phone numbers were broadcast over the radio and very quickly, we amassed a number of inquiries. However, after contacting them again we lost many due to lessened interest, exclusion due to distant location (the radio station broadcast throughout the whole province of Cebu), irreconcilable time conflicts, or other reasons.

3.4 Analysis

The analysis of interview data was accomplished as it was conducted. Since we used an open-ended interview format, we were free to develop certain ideas during the interview itself. Afterward, Marieke and I usually discussed our separate interviews and our theories on the material. These were formalized toward the end of our data-gathering period.

As this is a qualitative study, the routine and efficient way to go about analyzing the interview data is to input the interview transcripts into a computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program. These programs allow you to annotate transcripts and then use queries to develop themes and theories in a much more time-efficient manner than the methods of prior generations of analysts. However, we did not use computer-aided software to analyze our data. The choice to use grounded theory meant that a significant amount of analysis was accomplished by simply discussing the interviews between ourselves, which fed back to the way we conducted our next interviews, and so on. While these loose sessions did contribute much to our final analysis, we did have an ad hoc method to coordinate the ON report. In short, we organized a spreadsheet with basic facts about our respondents. From there, we went through our interview notes looking for “answers” to the central questions of the ON project (see Aims, above)—these were just the rough copied and pasted notes and quotes. Then we divided our questions and, using the notes from each respondent, looked for common responses and themes on which to center our theories (inductive approach) and confirm other theories (deductive approach). While this method may not have afforded as much detail or accuracy as a CAQDAS strategy may have, it generally followed the same steps and characteristics and in a time-efficient manner. We used our research questions in much the same way one might use *codes* in a CAQDAS program, and our notes became the *units of data*.

Another form of analysis we used related both to the interview data and to the literature is critical discourse analysis, which, as Saunders et al. (2009, pp. 512–513) write, “assumes that the constructions that individuals make operate not only in a sense-making way but also reproduce or challenge the underlying ideological belief systems of society at large” and “encourages you not to accept your research data at face value”. This means comparing the text itself (i.e., the face value), the discursive practice and the social practice. The most obvious result of this kind of analysis in my thesis may be seen in the way I reject the “New Heroes” ideology as propaganda.

3.5 Methodological Considerations

There are a few considerations to take into account immediately, the most glaring of which is the low number of respondents (to be further discussed later). However, I believe there are good reasons for the failure of my recruitment strategies. With additional respondents, I may have come across new ideas and themes; at the same time, my respondents became non-confirmative of the predictions of popular theorists, and with a greater N, this may have come across as a “fluke” or they as outliers. I actively encourage additional research into this topic for these reasons.

The short preparatory and fieldwork periods dictate a literature review bounded similarly to the choice of the study’s time horizon: While we would have liked to read all available literature ahead of our arrival and during our fieldwork so as to produce the best data and conclusions, we are limited to what works are readily available, whereas a wider scope (such as what might be seen in doctoral fieldwork) would allow for more cross-discipline appraisal. Our review of physical books, for instance, has been severely hampered due to the restrictive borrowing policies of USC’s libraries, and thus we rely on the pieces viewable through Google Books and the related literature of the authors and citations. Thankfully, we had a stable, unlimited internet connection, allowing us to search for and peruse electronic articles via the proxy server of the library of the Radboud University Nijmegen; our colleagues in Ghana were not so fortunate.

Since this is not a longitudinal study, we cannot know for certain which changes are temporary and which are permanent. De Haas and Van Rooij (2010) found that some of the empowering changes in the households of Moroccan migrants reverted after the (male) migrant returned. Perhaps the changes we noted are of similar temporal duration and effect. More longitudinal studies are needed to explore the permanence of household changes.

4. Findings—Demonstrable Evidence of Equal Spousal Partnerships

While the sections of this chapter follow the sub-questions laid out in Chapter 1 and were generally adhered to between all researches of the 2x2 Oxfam Novib study, this chapter only uses data produced in the Philippines and specifically highlights those from male respondents. The focus of this chapter is on how transnational spousal relationships are maintained and on how the general consensus shows that spouses form an equal partnership, rather than a one-sided dictatorship. This chapter presents the more testable results of the research, whereas I will present the more interpretive results in Chapter 5, with some necessary cross-referencing (in this chapter, foreshadowing) in order to give the full picture of the study.

4.1 General Characteristics of Respondents

During the preparation and proposal stages, our plan was to contact 20 male and 20 female respondents (i.e., 40 members of households with current OFWs), however our final tally resulted in 11 male respondents and 19 female. I interviewed 10 male respondents and Marieke interviewed 20, including one male respondent, Robbie, who is an employer of OFWs in Hong Kong.²⁸ My respondents' ages ranged from 22 to 71 and included three sons of OFWs, six husbands of OFWs, and a father (and father-in-law) of OFWs currently working abroad.²⁹ Two of our respondents worked abroad at some point in their lives. A total of 27 households were sampled.

These men came from a variety of backgrounds, education levels and occupations, and all of the men had at least a high school diploma with most being university-educated, with an average number of post-secondary years of 3.3. Notably, all of the older men earned money in some way, while the younger men were students or recent graduates. All but the young men I interviewed were married with an average of 3.1 children. With the exception of Ephraim³⁰, my respondents could be classified as being in the working or middle classes; based on the appearance of their housing and the ready supply of electricity and running water, they would not fall into a class of poverty. We did not consider geography to be a variable in the selection of respondents, because Metro Cebu does not vary socioeconomically as much as in, for instance, Sucre, Bolivia as reported by Helmich (2009). While there are certainly affluent neighborhoods, these are bounded as *subdivisions* that regularly bump up against slums in a non-geographic

²⁸ The tally would seem to indicate that we preferred nicely rounded numbers, but all assurances should be made that this is merely due to chance.

²⁹ The decision to include sons and the father of OFWs was to gain insight from a non-primary household member into how and what household changes occurred, with an arbitrary minimum age of 15 to be included in the study.

³⁰ All respondents' names were changed; see Footnote 27 for the method.

pattern. More detail of the respondents' basic characteristics can be found in Table 2 below.

I roughly separate my respondents into two groups: The spouses of current OFWs in one, and the sons and father of OFWs in the other, with the focus of this thesis on the former group. The testimony of the latter group, however, was nonetheless invaluable at better understanding the effects of migration on household dynamics, and for getting a feel for how migration specifically affects younger generations.

Pseudonym	Age	Occupation	Children	Relationship to OFW	Years OFW abroad	Years of tertiary education	Household members
Arvin	22	Student		Son	25	2	6
Ramil	24	Clerk		Son	20	0	3
Joseph	24	Student/ customer service		Son	11	5	7
Alvin	40	Roomboy	5	Spouse	4	4	6
Arnel	41	Elementary school teacher	2	Spouse	5	4	5
Virgilio	42	Salesman	3	Spouse	5	4	5
Liberato	43	Manages a piggery	5	Spouse			7
Ephraim	46	Managing director of a recruitment agency	2	Spouse	6	4	3
Rodel	54	Driver	3	Spouse	11		8
Bayani	71	President of retirees' association	2	Father, father-in-law	2	3	5
Average	40,7		3,1		10	3,3	5,5

Table 2 Summary of respondents' basic characteristics

4.2 Decision to Migrate

While the focus of this thesis is on post-migration changes, it is helpful to set the embedded case studies within the context of their pre-migration decision-making dynamics, and asking about the decision to migrate illustrated these power relations well. Furthermore, asking why and how migrants decided to migrate helped give reveal an economic motivation (or not) which gave a comparison with their current situation as to how much remittances affect the finances of a household. With a single exception, all of my respondents reported that the decision to migrate had economic motives and that

a single income in the household was insufficient to meet expenditures. In the exceptional case, Ephraim (46) accepted that his wife, currently in Singapore, wanted to work abroad in order to see more of the world. His family could survive without her income because he has a high-level and regular position, but he admits that her remittances help with the household finances. For many respondents, the promises of a greater income abroad drew them to decide to migrate. The decision of whether the husband or wife would migrate was always made between the partners and was most often decided with the wife migrating because the husband had a relatively regular (“established”) or senior occupation. When I asked Arnel (41), whose wife works in Abu Dhabi, his thoughts on why I was having a hard time finding male respondents, he replied:

One reason is the nature of our work. Because her work as a coordinator is not established, so she’s thinking of the future, so we talked about it and we decided to have one idea that she would be there for how many years until we earn—so thus we have come up with a decision. Because I have an established [position]... I am supposed to be there! But, my work is established here, that’s why we chose to, we decided [that she would migrate].

Arnel’s position as a teacher, with the promise of a promotion on the horizon, meant that he would stay. Similarly, Alvin (40) and his full-time position as a roomboy trumped his wife’s part-time job as a cashier. In the case of Liberato (43), he and his wife applied to separate positions overseas at the same time and agreed that whoever was hired first would take the job.

As in the interview itself, the question of decisions of the migratory process leads up to the questions that follow. Here we can summarize that the decision to migrate was mutual, lacking the domination of one spouse over the other. It also depended mainly upon the relative regularity of employment of the spouses, so that (on average) whoever earned the less-steady income would migrate.

4.3 Characteristics of Remittance Sending Behavior

During the interviews, absolute and relative differences between sending behavior by men and women were observed, meaning that the amount as well the percentage of the wage that was sent is dissimilar. The male household members of our respondents sent a greater part of their salary and a higher total amount, as can be seen in Table 3 below. Some important side notes about these numbers must be mentioned. In almost all cases, men sent remittances to only one person, who was usually the spouse. Howev-

	Male migrants	Female migrants
Absolute amount of remittances	US\$25–1300 \bar{x} = \$518	US\$115–400 \bar{x} = \$252
Relative amount of income	48–100% \bar{x} = 73%	10–80% \bar{x} = 35%

Table 3 Comparison by sex of migrant of absolute and relative remittances

er, females appeared to give often to more persons. A variable that probably influences these numbers is the fact that we spoke to only one member of what can be a vast network of the OFW. In many cases, it became clear that there were other remittance recipients. Since the migrant was not interviewed we cannot be sure about the exact numbers, but compared to the findings of other scholars, the real remitting of female migrants must certainly be higher. The big difference here is that women make decisions about the person to whom they remit before the money is sent, while men remit to a single person (the spouse or older daughter) who then disperses monies. Besides the spouse, women also remit to their parents, sisters and separately to their children. When remittances are sent to extended family, the receivers are usually female family members, perhaps because men are expected to provide their own income. The wives are in this concern the distributors of the remittances, and a steady remittance flow is sent to other relatives by the wife, generally to the parents of the OFW. Often it also depends on the financial situation of the family; when there is more money to spend or when a relative is in need, there is a larger amount shared with other members beyond the nuclear family. It is unclear as to whether the sending of remittances to a certain person indicates a level of (dis)trust and whether these sentiments preceded the migration.

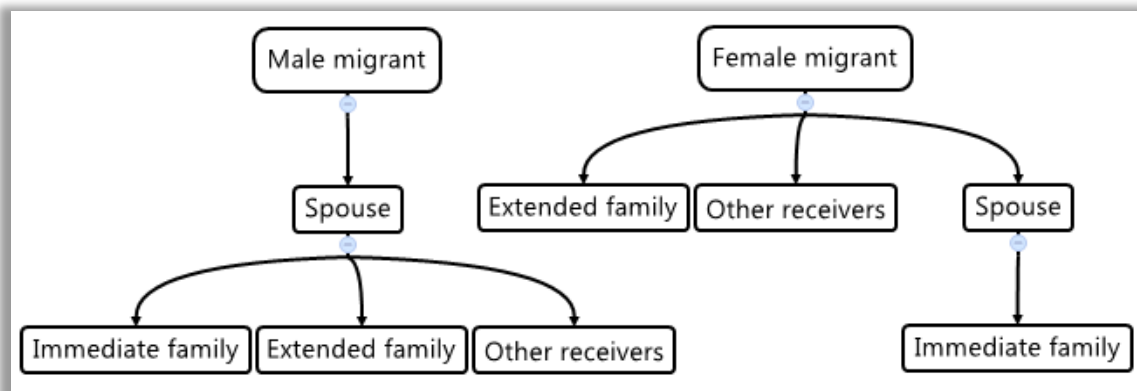


Figure 11 Observed remittance sending patterns by sex of migrant

However, it can still be concluded that women are sending a smaller amount and percentage to their *spouses* than would be expected from the international literature. Several explanations can be made—besides the fact that the remittances of women are shared with more individuals—one reason being the kind of employment where the women are more likely to be involved. Respondent Robbie, a businessman from Hong Kong who has hired many Filipino employees, remarked that women stay mostly in low-skilled jobs (such as domestic help or the entertainment industry) with little room for promotion, while the men are employed in positions with possible promotion. As an employer, he also admits to discriminating based on gender and marital status: He prefers married men and woman because they are in a mindset of taking care of their families. The effects of these familial obligations (perceived or otherwise) are that the employees are more responsible because the greater dependency of themselves and

their families on their jobs. Another explanation is that all nine interviewed male spouses are employed and have their own source of income, while only 3/19 female migrants have a paid occupation. As will be shown in the following section, remittances are mostly spent on investment in the future, such as real estate and the education of the children. Nonmigrating men would have to give up these expenditures if they did not receive remittances, however they can still earn a living in contrast with the women that do not have any recourses of their own. These motives probably ground the idea that women send more often to other women. However, it also provides the freedom to send their remittances to people other than their husband, since he does not completely depend upon the remitted money. Whether this leads to female empowerment will be discussed in the thesis of Marieke Smit.

There are some structural functions that have an influence on the remitting behavior of OFWs, including company policy and national laws. There appears to be a difference between migrants that are hired abroad (from within the borders of the country of employment) and migrants that are sent abroad by Philippine companies and intermediary agencies. Workers hired within another country are not obligated to certain remitting restrictions, while workers employed by Philippine companies are subject to remittance laws. Seafarers, for example, are required by law to send at least 80% back to a Philippines bank account of a third party. In our interviews, these bank accounts all belonged to the wives of seafarers but this is not restricted. The high number of male seafarers can explain, in part, the high remittances (and/or high percentage of earnings) sent back by male OFWs. Agencies that mediate often require a contribution or finder's-fee, but this is usually a one-time event. Another factor dependent on employment are secondary conditions such as complimentary housing, provision of food and traveling expenses, etc. Not unexpectedly, the better these conditions, the more money is remitted. These conditions are not gendered per se, but the country of employment and kind of work is more influential, and these may be gendered.

Furthermore, a salient conclusion from the interviews showed that spouses are in many cases not cognizant of the entire financial situation of the OFW. Many respondents are not aware of the total income of their spouse. Husbands and wives often communicate how much money should be sent home, but many times our respondents could only guess at their spouses' income levels. Men appear to be more up to date about the migrant's salary, but they report being unknowledgeable of other receivers and the amount remitted to them. In any case, we must keep in mind that we had a limited view

While most of our respondents noted popular and advertised methods of sending remittances, including bank-to-bank transfers and wire services like Western Union, one of my respondents was at a loss as to how the money from his wife in Singapore reaches him. From my notes:

There is a complex system to sending the money that Ephraim does not fully understand, but he notes that there is a section in Singapore with many booths where a lot of OFWs gather; cash is given to someone at these stands with directions, and somehow it is deposited in his bank account, at a cost of S\$6.

Box 2

A mysterious remittance transfer method

of the remittance network and that it is quite possible that women send the “expected” amount/percentage of their earnings, albeit to persons we did not interview.

4.4 Characteristics of Remittance Receiving Behavior

The receiving and use of remittances in the Philippines are very similar between men and women. Our respondents reported similar ranges and mean/medians of types of remittances, modes of transfer, regularity of sending, and other factors. Of particular congruence is the desire by all respondents to invest heavily in the future.

Among almost all respondents, there was an interest to invest in non-consumable goods. The largest among these were the purchase of a house and/or lot of land and improvements upon existing structures, such as the construction of additional stories or rooms. Since these investments require large amounts of money, many households opt for a loan/mortgage to finance the purchase of a house/lot, with remittances going toward paying off that debt. Other large planned purchases, such as a car, are often financed by saving remittance money on the migrant’s side and sending it as a separate, lump-sum transfer, rather than the recipient saving on their side. None of the men owned or operated a business, although Liberato (43) had planned to open a laundry service in his home before his wife, working in Canada, dissuaded him.

Similarly, payment for the education of children is often sent in a separate monthly installment and is always listed as an investment, regardless of the hardships this might place on other consumptive practices. For example, the mother of Michelle (28), who works in Singapore, sends about \$50 weekly for foodstuffs and a separate \$200 monthly for tuition fees. The wife of Virgilio (42), who works in Ireland, also sends tuition fees directly to the schools. The educational investment in children takes precedence over investments in the home, sometimes to the detriment of the house: Alvin, after starting construction on a second story and firing the lazy and wasteful crew, has been trying to complete construction by himself. He has very little time to spare, however, and so there are sections of the roof that are covered in only a tarpaulin, with the rainy season advancing. The family of Rodel (54, father of Michelle) is in a similar situation and is barely able to live on the weekly food allowance, but they would not dream of taking money away from the children’s education. When the (male) children are older, however, they attempt to relieve some of the burden that their education is placing on the household ledger by gaining employment themselves. The seafaring fathers of Joseph and Ramil (both 24) are nearing retirement age but there are still many years left in Joseph’s youngest siblings’ education, and the payment of these is questioned. Joseph and Ramil thus took it upon themselves to become more financially independent by gaining employment, while the sons of Liberato accomplished the equivalent by not asking their mother for additional allowance, all in the name of allowing for their own and siblings’ education.

Health and social security are also listed as investments using remittance monies. One of our respondents mentioned funeral insurance as a regular expense to which remittances contribute, and a few more talked about vital daily medicines, which could

only be purchased with the additional income. Migrants' families sometimes keep a fund saved in case of sickness or emergency, and this practice helped save the life of the son of Liberato, for instance (see Box 3). These instances were (interestingly) differentiated from day-to-day expenses, indicating that the health of (certain) household members was seen more as an investment in the future and taking priority over other daily expenses.

There are some differences between remittance receivers' behavior by gender. As mentioned in the section above, male migrants tend to send remittances only to their wife or daughter, who then distributes the money in an agreed-upon manner, compared to female migrants who are more likely to send remittances directly to other family members (or, as we have seen, directly to the school to pay tuition). While all our respondents seem to have figured out a system for dividing (or, more rarely, pooling) expenses from post-migration income, nonmigrating women need to discuss new expenses with their OFW husband more so than vice versa. Most expenses at home are discussed, while this is barely the case for the spending in the foreign country. As mentioned above, a majority of respondents do not know the exact salary of the migrant and any other recipients of remittances. Conversely, almost all expenses in the Philippines are discussed by both men and women between their spouses. This is particularly the case with large expenses, like the children's education, investment in a house, or the purchase of electronic goods. Smaller expenses like daily provisions are usually decided on by the nonmigrating members with little disagreement; women usually mention that their partner trusts their spending patterns. A difference here should be made between women that earn their own income and they who rely on their husbands. All 3 employed women stated that their income is of great significance, since it makes them independent.

In conclusion, the spending patterns between male and female recipients of remit-

Liberato is a 43-year-old father of five who splits his time between a house in the province and the residence of his father in Cebu City. His wife, Sheryl, has been working abroad as a human resources manager for 11 years now in various locations: Taiwan, Hong Kong, and now Canada. Liberato manages a piggery and subsistence farm on his provincial land, while the children there take care of most of the chores under the direction of their grandmother. Sheryl sends money back to the family through Western Union accounts, primarily to Liberato but each child and the grandmother have an "allowance" account. Liberato is not aware of how much money the rest of his family receives and he does not ask, presumably due to trust in his wife, but possibly also because he does not want to compare his own (meager) income to that of his wife. He sometimes saves money in the bank so that he does not have to ask his wife for more money. He told us about a trip to the hospital for his son, where he was turned away because he did not have any cash on hand and all of the nearby cash machines were out of order. Liberato had brought his bank statements, however, and with some negotiation with the hospital clerk, his son was treated. In this case, having saved remittance money contributed directly to lifesaving.

Box 3

Liberato's story: Remittances savings kept my son alive

tances are generally the same, focusing on large material investments and the education of the children. While expenses made in the Philippines are overall made known and discussed between partners, our respondents did not report exact knowledge of their migrant partners' salary or expenditures abroad.

4.5 Impact on Household Roles

Overall, the absence of the migrant introduces a vacuum of household labor that must be filled. Both males and females experienced an increase in workload and responsibilities in the household and both took over the larger part of the tasks of the migrated spouse. The workload of men is significantly increased in the absence of their wives. They appear to suffer a "triple burden"³¹ of housekeeping, child rearing and earning a living. Rodel said that beyond his day job as a driver, he would do all the chores in the house and take care of the children (as he put it, "I'm the one singing and the one dancing!") and Arnel voiced similar exasperation. However, men are more likely to pay for help from a person outside of the household, be it professional help or another family member such as a niece of the migrant or a mother(-in-law) of the migrant. Comparably, most women take care of everything in the house by themselves, and only a minority hired a helper. The greater amount of help can be explained because the men are employed while the (externally unemployed) women are able to focus full-time on household chores. Men place great importance on their role as income earners of the household, especially when their wives earn a higher salary abroad. Virgilio states:

I don't want to have no work while my wife is working abroad, it's too unfair for her, and it's too unfair for my masculinity. I feel like I'm just a wife during that time: I will tend to my children, I will bring them to school, so that's the work of a housewife. It's not me, it's not my type.

This sense of masculinity is also illustrated in the same of men asking for additional money from their mothers or wives. Alvin (22) says that he very often does not have money to maintain expenses, but he does not ask his wife to send more money even though they are facing poverty. Additionally, Liberato's sons refuse to ask their mother for more allowance after they spend it all, to the pride of Liberato who explains that they are becoming "macho". The absence of the wife, in spite of the increased level of income (in most cases), causes a heightened level of stress for men when they need to pick up the duties she used to take care of, and may contribute to the absolute and relative difference in remittances between male and female migrants, as discussed above.

Another implicit stressor is the physical absence of a loved one: Migrants as mothers, fathers, and spouses are missed when they migrate to another country. Arvin (22) does not feel that he has a close relationship with his mother and that they do not talk about anything too personal. The absence of his mother in his life, he says, makes him

³¹ Follosco and Soler (2011, p. 41) used a similar term when she notes that some women take on a "triple role" of productive, reproductive and community-managing labors.

feel, “lonely, a little bit of empty.” Besides the children, spouses also miss their partner in the raising of the children. Virgilio said that they had been married 14 years and “never parted with each other, never made a separation from each other, so it really hurts” and as for his children, “I feel the sadness in them because they do not have their mother.” Many respondents mention that the absence of a parent is compensated by material goods, mainly electronics like laptops or game controllers, or by extra allowance. Father especially are missed when it comes to the discipline of the children, the masculine role concerning the education of the children being focused on strictness with boys regarded as being more disobedient. The role of child rearing is culturally assigned to the women of the family, and the “reproductive labor” is transferred to the father in the mother’s absence. Ephraim said that he was not used to taking care of the children (“that sort of thing”) but he has become closer with his children as a result of their mother leaving. He misses his wife because she is not there physically, and he said that their children would sometimes wander around the house when they were younger, looking for their mother.

Despite all of the changes that occur when a family member goes abroad, families remain close by keeping in frequent communication, made easier in the last decade with the spread of internet technologies and free communication portals, such as email or Skype. Many of our respondents reported owning a computer at home with an internet connection, which is the cheapest form of communication; otherwise, prepaid cell phones are used. There seems to be a widespread switch from post and telegram (which Ramil said his seafaring father would use in the past) to new technologies. With the exception of seafarers’ families, who are often unable to communicate for long periods of time, most families talk to their relatives at least several times a week and sometimes even multiple times daily: Virgilio said he calls his wife (working in Ireland) in the morning before his working day begins and right after he arrives home. The availability of communication lines between the migrant and their family also provide some social restraint, visible especially in the case of Virgilio, who told us that his wife’s family hears of anything out of the ordinary from his neighbors, whose “eyes will become big if I am home late” and he will become the “talk of the town”. He is thus pressured to arrive home with little delay and to accept female visitors outside in the public area. Whether the increased levels of communication allow for changing power dynamics or if they facilitate power structures remains to be seen and deserves longitudinal study.

In short, the absence of the wife or husband means that migrants’ families (and especially spouses) must “pick up the slack” in household labor that the migrant had provided. This often means that “feminine labors” are taken up by the “left-behind” men and vice versa, resulting in both an introduction to these labors and in related stresses and feelings of lessened masculinity for men. Parenting and keeping in touch are not hampered by the distance, however, since internet and phone technologies allow for inexpensive communication, multiple times a week on average, which sometimes serves as a form of social control.

4.6 Impact on Decision-making and Power Dynamics

This section deals with the changes of gender power relations regarding decision-making within the household and whether those changes ultimately lead to the empowerment of women. Interestingly, we witnessed a few instances of the disempowerment of men. Unfortunately, due to the cross-sectional nature of this study, we cannot know for certain whether these “improvements” are permanent or if the household power dynamics will revert after the return of the migrant; in the case of Moroccan migrants in the study of De Haas and Van Rooij (2010), many changes were temporary and some were in fact negative in relation to female empowerment. A Malaysian study observed “a breaking down of traditional family labour along gender lines while the women were absent” but also resulted in a reestablishment of these institutions once the migrant returned (Asis, et al., 2004, p. 201).

There is still a strong pull for women to become exclusively housewives. Many women in this occupation described themselves to us as “plain housewives”, a motif that exhibits an amount of pride and modesty (some of the men used this term as well). It is seen as a traditional familial obligation for the breadwinner-husband to work abroad when necessary and for the wife to stop working and become a housewife, a story that we have heard several times. However, some would rather hold a job: Anelyn reported that she was used to doing work, researching and learning new things and that, while being a housewife was hard work, she did not find it fulfilling labor. Some women would also like to contribute economically to the household, such as Catherine, who was able to save and buy a sewing machine to do piecework. Joan also feels that, “it is not good when you are dependent on your husband” and “it should be that the wife also earns an income”. Significantly, some women (such as Christine) have unquestioningly obliged their husband when he wants them to stay home without providing a reason: She says, “that was my husband’s choice, he don’t want me to work” and “I don’t know why”. The mother of Mary Jane worked until 2003 when she stopped because he husband decided to work abroad. These feelings of obligation seem to be performances of the gender roles and are not empowering women.

Communication and trust is seen as important to housewives in order to maintain a good relationship with their husband. Grace reports that her husband rarely asks what remittances are spent on, saying that he knows she is a good housewife and that no explanation is needed. Her husband also has access to her friend, who reassures him on her location but she is usually at home. When it is hard to keep in contact (e.g., Joan’s husband is a seafarer and only calls once a month) the wife is in charge of all spending decisions, including unexpected large purchases, but also takes responsibility for problems: Joan says, “But is also my problem, when there is no money”. While the power of the purse has been in the hands of Filipina women for some time, Parreñas (2005b) notes that feminist Philippinists believe that “in the context that most household incomes do not sufficiently cover daily expenses of families, this responsibility of women is in fact a burden. In contrast, male privilege frees men of the stress and worry over household expenses (Medina, 2001). The freedom of purchases and trust involved

therein thus indicates an increase in women's power in the household. On the other hand, some women reported incidents that would indicate a lack of trust. The husband of Christine similarly tries to monitor his son, asking Christine where the child is, what he is doing, what he has eaten, etc. Melanie must let her husband know exactly whom she will be around at any particular time, and he sometimes calls to verify her guests or friends by speaking directly to them. The distrust often does not extend to male migrants.

There is a double standard when it comes to the potential for a spouse to have extramarital affairs abroad. For women, the mere possibility is enough to prevent them from becoming economic migrants. When pondering working abroad herself, Joan said she was dissuaded because there "is a lot of temptation of women". Similarly, Christine says, "When a female goes to somewhere else, they get easily tempted to cheat with a foreigner, because of the money". She says her husband sees that happening very often: "That is also why he does not want me to work, because of all the temptation". This suspicion is not present for male migrants or is at least not as well exhibited, although Santos and Muñez's (2006, p. 306) chapter regarding seafarer's extramarital affairs says that they "are acknowledged to be an inevitable result of such long-term separation":

Male seafarers admit that it is unusual not to have extramarital affairs or other forms of sexual encounters while away from home. Seafarers' wives admit that they do not expect their husbands to stay celibate or not to engage in other sexual relationships while they are abroad.

At least one of our male respondents reported having an affair while his wife was abroad, although he said he broke it off and we are not sure if his wife ever knew. He told us that it was brief, immediately after his wife departed, and he was reminded that his wife was making a sacrifice by being away and soon afterward stopped "fooling around". Virgilio reported an intensification of monitoring by his migrant wife after she departed that extended to her family and neighbors "keeping tabs" on him: He feels pressured to call his wife regularly twice a day "to avoid [her] paranoia" and returns home from work as quickly as possible to prevent becoming the "talk of the town" in his neighborhood, which might otherwise think him to be cheating. This gossip can quickly spread to the family of his wife, and he does not want to give her the wrong impression. He also reservedly admits that he enjoys cock-fighting, a notable exception to the nationwide view of gambling as a vice (the lottery is also an exception, with *sari-sari* stores liberally selling tickets) but withholds this information from his wife and the neighbors (we do not know if he raises a fighter or if he only bets, but either would amount to money spent on gambling). These are exceptional admissions according to Pingol (2001), whose respondents only sometimes reported infidelity (of either the migrant or the nonmigrating husband). According to her, there is a "double standard of morality which is greatly challenged by the phenomenon of migration. Men, as well as women, committed indiscretions even before women started leaving for abroad. Women were expected to forgive while men were less likely to forgive" (p. 92). It seems that increased communication hand-in-hand with trust has a positive effect on the marriage.

5. Discussion—Disputing the “Woman as Victim, Men as Problem” Paradigm

Whereas Chapter 4 consisted of the more “testable” findings of the research project, this chapter will explore the interpretative findings of my individual section in the 2x2 grid of the Oxfam Novib project. The title of this section derives from Angeles (2008, p. 11), who laments that men and masculinities are noticeably missing from the Philippinist literature. Increasing this topic’s exposure within gender and development studies, according to her, “entails more than the tasks of interrogating the ‘men-as-problem’ line of argument or bursting the ‘hegemonic masculinity’ bubble. It entails bringing in the layers and multiple grids of intersectionality” between gender and a number of other social variables (p. 16). While this thesis naturally cannot cover the entire scope of her wishes, we can accomplish a little toward her first mention of the “men as problem” line, which unfortunately runs rampant in the Philippinist migration literature and potentially skews policy-making to the disadvantage of the nonmigrating father.

As mentioned in section 2.5.3, there is a stereotype in the literature that assumes husbands of migrant women to be incapable of raising children in the same manner as women. These portrayals also feature the reliance of these men on their wives’ remittances by living entirely on her earnings rather than treating them as a subsidy to the household income. With the wife abroad, there are also many stories of husbands engaging in extramarital affairs. These are understandably concerning stories in any case, even if they were not a “trend”, and I applaud my antecedents in bringing these tales to the fore of the Philippinist debate. However, what I cannot abide is that these stories form the backbone of many Philippinist (feminist) arguments as a generalization of the way nonmigrating fathers *will* act, and I suspect that self-fulfilling prophecy and confirmation bias abound. Rather than addressing the problem at its root (i.e., traditional gender roles), many authors attack men in general, resulting in a misrepresentation of men who have voluntarily made efforts to “face up to the challenge of traditional norms and notions” (Pingol, 2001, p. 3). The focus of this chapter is on defending the efforts of nonmigrating men as they take on the extra labor in the absence of their wives, using empirical evidence. As much as possible, I have included verbatim statements by the men in order to give the reader a feeling of the deeper feeling of their struggles.

5.1 Effects on Masculinity

As discussed above in section 2.4.1 detailing Philippine masculinities, machismo forms the extreme edge of masculine behavior. In contrast to some of the literature, machismo is not an everyday standard of masculinity; that is, there is a temporal factor with machismo such that acting in a macho way all the time is socially undesirable, even as viewed from another man’s eyes. This is important to consider when discussing the feeling of diminished masculinity that my respondents exhibited because a lessening of

machismo, at least on a household scale, can allow for gender equality; this is not a concrete law, however. The *effects of remittances* are difficult to discern from the *effects of the act of migration* alone, and in my argument that there is a general decrease in feelings of masculinity for the husbands of migrants this distinction can sometimes not be easily made, and in fact, my respondents noted that these feelings were a result of both.

5.1.1 Effects of the act of migration

The traditional male role of breadwinner means that if migration becomes necessary for the household survival strategy, the provider-father should migrate. In response to his wife migrating, Arnel said, “I am supposed to be there!” and this sentiment was echoed across most of my respondents, especially in fear that their wives would be put into danger or discomfort. Alvin tries to shift his wife’s discomfort toward himself by encouraging her to take more time off work, while he takes on additional shifts. He worries that she will be abused in Kuwait, but his male role of “protector of the family” cannot be put to use when their wives are distant, so he feels “less manly”. However, this puts him in a bind: He cannot protect his wife from afar directly, but in doing his best to do so (by taking extra shifts to make enough money), he effectively leaves his children in a vulnerable position on their own at home. The perception of protecting either cohort of his family would produce macho feelings, according to my model (Figure 7) but being unable to protect either results in a lessening of masculinity.

The ability for wives to direct their families’ futures also seems to be a point of contention for masculinities. Virgilio’s wife, working in Ireland, is in the process of applying for family reunification, since she holds permanent residency there. “Plan A”, according to him, is for the family to live in Ireland, but it seems to have been put on hold since he has been provisionally denied an entry visa. He noted that this is a point of stress for the whole family but since he has not control over the situation and must rely on his wife to carry out the application process, his masculinity is negatively affected. Liberato wanted to become an entrepreneur and open a laundry service in his father’s house close to downtown, which would improve his feelings of masculinity in the face of his wife’s migration; however, his wife wants to also petition for family reunification in Canada and dissuaded him from beginning a new venture. Liberato is now torn between wanting to prove his masculinity and waiting for the petition to become approved without a timeline.

5.1.2 Effects of remittance sending

The effects of remittances on masculinity are harder to separate but generally focus around the demotion of the father to a secondary breadwinner position in the household. The incongruence between the testimony of Rodel and his daughter, Michelle (who has taken over most of the responsibilities of her migrant mother), during our interviews with both of them provides an excellent example of the masculine need to feel like the breadwinner: We interviewed Michelle first, who told us that her father does not contribute to the household income but consumes money and goods originating from remittances. Rodel explained this in that he uses his own wages for his

“needs” away from the household income, waiting until he has exhausted his own funds to use the remittance money. Whether either told the truth is another matter, but I consider that Rodel tried to protect his masculinity by waiting until the last minute. Similarly, Ephraim avoided telling us how much his wife earned and sent home. He told us that her contribution was not necessary for the household to survive, but it may have still been an attempt to avoid looking like a secondary breadwinner.

5.1.3 Effects of migration and remittances on machismo

There are signs that a lessening of *machismo* has taken place as a result of female migration and their remittances. Pingol (2001) mentions that very few men go “market-ing” (shopping for foodstuffs) because it is part of the female role. Rodel, though, proudly said that he would go food- and clothes-shopping for his children, and Alvin also said he would wake early to shop for the day’s food. Hegemonic masculinities by definition require affirmation by others, but my lack of success in gaining additional respondents by using the snowball method suggest that the men either did not want me to talk with their peers, or did not know any. When I asked Bayani (71) why he thought we were having trouble finding male respondents, he suggested that “machismo pride”, fear of misuse of the information gathered, and a distrust of foreigners were all contributing factors; as he put it, pointing to my research partner Jeff (whom he had never met before) and then me, “I know you, but I don’t know him”. Overall, I experienced few exhibitions of macho behavior that remained in the face of migrating women.

5.2 “Left-behind” Husbands as Lazy, Cheating, Incapable Fathers?

The biggest factor, in my analysis, separating my respondents from those of Parreñas (2001b), Pingol (2001), or Angeles (2008) seems to be the employability of the region in which the study took place. Pingol spoke with “left-behind” husbands in a rural province, where gainful employment was scarce. Cebu Province is experiencing a labor surplus, indeed, but according to my respondents, it is still easier to find a paid and regular position in the city than in “the provinces” (although it seems from the experience of Liberato that it can be cheaper to live in the provinces). Many of Pingol’s respondents were full-time “househusbands” with little to no additional earnings. On the contrary, all of our male respondents created revenue for the family in some way, from the production of a piggery and small farm by Liberato, to being high-level managers (Ephraim and Robbie).

Employment leaves the men with little time to waste. In the case of Rodel, he rose early to shop at the market (which, from Pingol, is considered a womanly duty) and after a full day of work, returned to set up a barbecue stand on the street until the morning hours. Alvin sometimes works double shifts in order to earn enough to keep his family out of poverty and his children in school, and he must return home promptly to accomplish chores and take care of the children. Although Liberato is not as successfully employed as the other men, he and his wife debated opening a laundry service in the neighborhood of his father, but since they are still trying to move the family to Canada, they decided to put a hold on entrepreneurship. He also moves twice a month

between his father's home in the city and his house in the province, where he maintains a subsistence garden and piggery. In this context of constant movement, cheating is (almost) out of the question. Liberato did admit to having an extramarital affair directly after his wife migrated, but immediately broke it off after a reminder of his love for his wife. Virgilio is also feeling sexual tension in the absence of his wife, since feelings of masculinity (not machismo) include feeling like a good lover. Without this ability to exhibit his masculinity, Virgilio feels insecure, especially with his wife's (perceived) spying:

There's really a paranoid feeling, because I feel insecure...I really hate the distance. I prefer to be divorcing my wife, it's not a good thing, it sounds like shit.

These are by no means on the level of womanizing and mistress-keeping that much of the literature would have you believe of every female migrant's husband; by the same token, it is not the fidelity deserving of a Catholic marriage. As stated before, cheating is often prevented by the watchful eyes of the family of the migrant wife or of the neighborhood; Virgilio mentioned being threatened by becoming the "talk of the town" if he failed to return home on time. The caveat to my claim here is that we often did not reach a level of familiarity with our respondents that might be required of such bare confessions, but on the whole it would appear that the men are too busy trying to make a living to be wasteful or cheat on their wives.

The literature does not expect "left-behind" husbands to be capable parents, but I witnessed nothing like the detached and uninvolved fathers I was prepared to encounter. Arnel, for example, must rise early to feed his children, takes them to the school where he teaches (and they learn), and returns after school with them. There, they accomplish household chores together and he helps with their homework if they need it before tucking them in to bed. While we were interviewing him, his daughters played around us and sometimes interrupted their father, who did not discourage it; his wife also called while we were there and after some time excitedly invited his children to sign into their instant-messaging account on the computer upstairs to chat with their mother. His tone was not disciplining or disingenuous and we did not believe this to be a ploy to rid him of his annoying daughters. Rather, I saw it as a father happy to intercede between his migrant wife and his children. Albert also exhibited shame when he told us that it was difficult being a single parent with a wide age range of the children. Since they go to a couple different schools, and teacher meetings are often scheduled close to each other, he feels guilty about attending only one of them and having to explain to the teacher why he was unable to attend the other. When we visited him at around 20:00, he was busy making dinner for the children and doing their laundry at the same time, and could only spare a half hour to speak with us, signaling that his children were the priority. Not all nonmigrating fathers could be judged as "effective", however. Opening our interview, Liberato said his children do not listen to him as well since his wife migrated (though in my opinion, this could be a case of seemingly-universal teenage rebellion). He wants his older children to transfer to a university much closer to the residence of his father than their current university, but his wife in-

tercedes and lets the children go where they want. Liberato does not want his wife to think he is a bad father and so lets her make such commandments but insists that he is only worried about their safety and his ability to see them. While his relationship with his two older children is complicated by their studying in Cebu, he tells us he is very close to his younger children and enjoys teaching them (he mentions that he teaches them the rosary, which he says is usually the wife's job and doesn't seem to enjoy this part). Regardless of their sometimes-flagging efficacy, these are not certainly the actions of incapable or uninterested fathers.

The given reason for men's purported behavior is that they do not have to work as hard to maintain their standard of living after their wife begins remitting. As one can see from the above, however, the men I interviewed were too busy trying to make ends meet to relax. Beyond that, there was a feeling of guilt throughout my younger respondents, which encouraged them to find a job. Ramil and Joseph both found positions in order to ease their burden on the household income, and Ramil reported seeing an immediate rise in his family's well-being. Instead of relaxing and enjoying the "free money" being sent monthly by their migrant household members, my respondents chose to actively match the migrant's contribution.

In short, while I observed some negative characteristics in my respondents that fit the description of the supposedly-"average" nonmigrating father, they were not chronic nor were they seen in any one man. Furthermore, positive characteristics were also viewed in my younger, unmarried respondents, suggesting that even at a young age men do not lazily partake in remittances.

5.3 Global Care Chains

If the claim is not that nonmigrating fathers are incapable, it is that they are less apt to pick up the additional parenting responsibilities and more likely to hire a female helper to care for the children, the premise for the global/transnational care chains model (Hochschild, 2000; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002; Isaksen, et al., 2008). Again, this is not the case with my respondents. Three mentioned having hired helpers, but Ephraim had always had a helper and the other two were hired to take care of chores, not childcare. In Alvin's case, his helper would wander, stand idly by or would step outside for extended periods to chat with her boyfriend, all of which were behaviors Alvin saw as dangerous for his young children: She was fired not only for her laziness but also for the potential harm to the children if something were to happen in her temporary absence, which is in direct opposition to the transnational care model. Alvin's older children are now able to take care of the younger much more, but Alvin still does most of the care and rushes home after work, rather than entrusting that his older children will take care of the caring labor. Ephraim admitted to being uneasy with taking up the parental duties at first but quickly became closer to his children as a result of his wife's leaving, quite the opposite of an uninvolved father.

When we visited to interview them, the fathers would set us up in such a way that they could also keep an eye on their children. Alvin took us upstairs to the part of his

house under construction, which was quieter and away from his children, but beforehand, he asked a neighbor to watch over his children downstairs. Similarly, Arnel excused himself from our conversation so that he could talk to his wife and bring his children to the computer so that they could speak with their mother; the literature seems to predict that the men in these instances would carelessly let their children run wild. Again, common perceptions of nonmigrating fathers seem to be wrong.

5.4 Importance of Communication in Parenting from Abroad

The Philippinist literature has been somewhat slow in noticing the importance of transnational communication to changing household roles. In section 2.3 above, I argued that communication technology has increased in efficiency and decreased in price in the past decade. Transnational households are better able to communicate with their migrant members abroad than in the past, but these advances are not taken into account in current literature and the old conclusions are easily assumed with little regard to the role ICTs play in transnational Philippine networks. This would not be as important were it not for the effect that it has on the perception of nonmigrating fathers' parenting capabilities; since the old assumptions are recycled, men today face an uphill battle of proving themselves against the literature. The main thrust of my argument in this section is to highlight the effects of globalization on significantly improved global communication, in particular, that enhance the presence of parents in a transnational arrangement, allowing for a more balanced distribution of reproductive labor.

Communication was an integral part of the transnational character of my respondents' households and was a staple question at every interview. Most of our contacts mentioned the internet (gratis email and instant messaging programs, some with webcam accessibility) and mobile phone as primary means of contact. Many contact their migrant household member several times a week, and a few mentioned talking or texting them multiple times a day. While we were visiting Arnel, his wife called to let him know she was online to chat, and he sent his children upstairs to let them speak to their mother with the webcam while Arnel remained downstairs to finish our interview. The children did not signal that they showed a preference of one parent over another (i.e., they did not sigh or act as if they didn't want to talk to their mother, and did not run anxiously up the stairs either). This encounter reveals that 1) communication with his wife is frequent enough that he does not need to excuse himself or reschedule a chat with his wife and 2) his children are adjusted to living with a transnational parent and 3) that the forms of communication they use are satisfactory. The image portrayed here (one of a relatively happy transnational household), I conjecture, is due in large part to the availability of instantaneous and inexpensive communication.

On the other hand, infrequent communication correlated with enhanced feelings of distance. Ramil, whose father is a seafarer, mentioned the shift from his father's old means of communicating by telegram to mobile phone in the past 5 years. He is still only able to communicate while in ports of call and if he has a signal, but it saves much time compared to that taken to deliver and respond to a telegram. Ramil notes that he does

not talk as “deep” with his father on the phone than when he is back in the Philippines, because he knows that the phone call will have to be short to save money. Alvin also has a tough time speaking with his wife, because they are not able to afford call credit and so talk only once a week or less. He says that they usually only talk “business” as well, catching each other up on financial news and her up about how the children are doing. The inability to have deep conversations could be one of the larger stressor for Alvin and his family.

I argue that since communication has become nearly instantaneous, mobile, inexpensive, and available at a moment’s notice, the difference between co-present and distant communication has slimmed. Surely, co-presence has the potential for much more emotional conversations and parenting (especially the more physical requirements of discipline and comfort) but in the case where migration is a household economic survival strategy, the literature suggests that the emotional deficit overrides any economic benefits, and the suggestion is made instead to revert to traditional norms by having the father migrate instead. By being able to talk with their mother daily, the children of my respondents did not seem to be as distraught over her migration as the literature has predicted. There were, of course, expressions of missing her. Ephraim noted that he was unsure of his parenting capabilities and that the children would wander the house looking for their mother for a time, but after “taking the reins”, he became closer to his children. Liberato began our interview by talking about how his children will consult their mother if they disagree with his decision, whereby he will discuss the matter with his wife for consensus. It appears that Liberato has voluntarily given up his “traditional right” as the dominant disciplinarian and that this responsibility is equal and shared transnationally.

Older forms of communication, such as writing letters or sending voice-recorded cassette tapes (popular or at least uncommon in other migration scenarios) were not experienced in my research. Letters, emails and texts are often noted for their reduced ability to transfer emotion, but in the past were (indeed, for many poorer migrants today, *remain*) the only way to communicate, and cassette tapes were and are sent to make up for this deficit. The ability to quickly react to a message is the key attribute for modern ICTs, however.

While many of our respondents’ OFW spouses were able to visit once a year or more, few of our respondents had been able to visit their spouses abroad. Ephraim, however, has been able to afford multiple trips to visit his wife in Singapore, while Arvin and his brothers and Virgilio’s family have visited Ireland. These are to be considered extremely rare events, but they no doubt helped ease the pains of separation.

5.5 Adherence to the National Script

Throughout the interviews, we noted many occurrences of language built around the “culture of migration” and New Heroes script, including informally used acronyms such as OFW (which I had thought was only an academic convenience) and TNT, propa-

gandistic phrases like “greener pastures”³² (e.g., “He went to search for greener pastures”) and *balikbayan*, and the modesty-as-pride of the oft-heard “plain housewife” occupation. However, these terms were less likely to be heard from our male respondents than from our female respondents, suggesting that the propaganda has less of an effect on “left-behind” husbands than desired by the government. Frequent diatribes against the low recompense for migrant’s families from the government also contribute to this conclusion. Liberato, for instance, berated the government for deigning to provide a Christmas party for the families of OFWs but then only giving them ₱50 (<€1) food vouchers per person for the whole day. He wondered whether that was fair recompense for the sacrifices that the families have gone through. Similarly, many wondered how the government could put up with so much corruption and extortion surround OFWs. Alvin blamed the Philippine government for allowing his wife to live a very restricted life abroad, saying “the agency is very clever” and furthermore, blames the work destination, saying, “You know, Muslim country, lying people”, but these are perhaps only misplaced frustrations. Some households had put themselves in significant debt in order to pay for the initial costs of migration (such as paying a recruitment agency or airfare) and feel that these costs should be mitigated by the government since it receives all the tax money from remittances. When comparing this treatment to that of *balikbayans*—who receive priority treatment at the airport and discounts on travel and purchases—it would seem the government is less concerned with the well-being of its migrants’ households than in attracting remittances.

OFWs were not often viewed with the respect deserving of the “heroes and heroines of the nation” label, but this could be a feeling against migration in general, since some husbands voiced their concern of whether migrating was worth the costs. Alvin’s wife is stuck in a contract until she can afford to leave Kuwait, while Rodel himself lived precariously as TNT in Brunei, and these bad experiences could become extrapolated in their minds against migration in general. On the other hand, migration can sometimes be seen as a way out of the country for the entire household, as Liberato’s wife wants them to permanently relocate to Canada and Virgilio’s to Ireland. Rodel’s wife refuses to return from Singapore permanently, even shunning the house her remittances have paid for. When asked if he would want to return, even just to visit family, Liberato shrugged that Canada would have better opportunities and he would not want to “look back”. This bucks the view that returning to the country (as a migrant or *balikbayan*) garners the highest respect.

Similarly, the fathers did not want their children to become OFWs in the future. When I asked a few of my respondents if they would like their children to work abroad when they are old enough, none of them replied in the affirmative. Instead, they responded that they would like their children to follow through with every option first

³² According to <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>, “greener pastures” is an idiom for the allure of “a better or more promising situation”. It is seen on many blogs and in common conversation, but not often found in official sources, suggesting that it is not in the national script’s “dictionary” as such.

before trying to find a job abroad. Ramil, the son of a seafarer, decided against seafaring as vocation after hearing some of the dangerous stories from his father, and said that he would only work abroad if his family required it. Desperation and economic need, therefore, are higher priorities to the men than the increased social stature afforded the “new heroes and heroines”. These examples prove that not everyone accepts the governmental script regarding OFWs and migration.

5.6 Permanent Changes?

Despite the men’s optimistic actions, there still seems to be adherence to the “traditional” roles. When the women return, some of the fathers admitted that they would rather have their wives stay home with the children. Arnel proudly labeled his wife a “working woman”:

- Phil: So, if I may ask, sir, what would be different if she didn’t migrate, if she stayed here. Would you—you would still be a teacher—
- Arnel: Uh yeah.
- P: Yeah, would she stay at home with the children, would she get a job as well?
- A: Yes of course because my wife is a working woman [chuckles] she don’t like to stay in house, just to stay here, she wants to work, work and work, that’s her style. A working woman, that’s what we call her, I call her, she’s a working woman. She likes to work.

She will renew her contract once more but afterward, Arnel said he would “let her stay here with my kids”. Presumably, his wife would be against that proposition since she enjoys being employed, but the way in which Arnel voiced this expectation suggests that the male role as the “decider” of such plans will be upheld. When describing his father’s reasoning for becoming a seafarer, Ramil cited his older sister’s birth as the main cause. Despite Rami’s mother being a medical technology graduate with credentials, his father insisted on upholding “tradition—once you are married, your wife will stay indoors”. Ramil, in this case, demonstrates the stagnancy of female empowerment.

On the other hand, the absence of the wife of Virgilio has caused him enough pain that he will let his wife do what she pleases, as long as she is home. Alvin likewise suggested that his wife work a sari-sari store when she returns, which would have her closer to the children and able to bring in a stable income, to which she happily agreed.

6. Conclusion

In summary, the Philippines can be characterized by high levels of outmigration and consequently is a major receiver of remittances from international migrants. Approximately a tenth of its population works abroad, and their earnings sent back to the Philippines contribute to about 5% of its gross domestic product. The importance of remittances to the country's economy has been revealed in the number of governmental institutions, programs, and the *New Heroes* propaganda campaign. All of these serve to encourage outmigration but the last is particularly effective for people considering migration as a means to enhance the household income, and should therefore be deliberately targeted against as a means of policy recommendation.

Households of overseas Filipino workers have a difficult time maintaining coherence post-migration, and herein improvements in global communication have come into play as a means to contract the space between the migrant and his/her household members. Many of the conclusions in the Philippinist literature from the past ten years, however, have not taken the significant advances of mobile telephonic and internet technologies into account, and the intersection of international migration and these technologies should be further studied. As far as this thesis sees it, the availability of communication devices benefited the transnational organization of the household and did not contribute, as "expected", to a perseverance of "traditional" gender roles. On the contrary, the enhanced communication allowed men of even shaky parenting skills to contribute to reproductive labor, knowing that their wife was only a phone call or email away, and their children seemed secure with this arrangement as well.

The literature has formed an expectation of men that they will not pick up the reproductive labors of the wife (as "traditionally" divided) after she migrates. However, my research shows that men have not only taken up much of her labor, but they have done so at a cost, especially since all of my married respondents also earned their own share of the household income. Migration has affected men's levels of masculinity, especially when the migrant wife earns more than the husband does. Men are constantly comparing themselves to the gender norms of Philippine society, which see them as the providers of the household; part of this expectation is that, if a household member needs to migrate, the man should be the one to do it. When the wife migrates, whether it be because he holds a better position in the Philippines or she has skills more desirable abroad, his view in the community is diminished as a result of not being seen as the (main) provider of the household anymore. When his wife sends remittances that overvalue his earnings, his masculinity similarly drops. Overall we can say that this is a negative result of international migration, because women are not necessarily empowered by a drop in *masculinity*, but are more likely to have more say in the household as a result of a lessening of *machismo*, which I have characterized as the extreme and unfavorable endpoint of masculinities in the Philippines, but distinct from other Spanish-descendent extreme forms of masculinity also called *machismo*.

Gender in general has contributed to a differentiation of behaviors between men

and women in the activities of the migratory process, remittance sending, and remittance receiving. The Philippines has taken part in the feminization of migration, wherein the number of women migrating for economic reasons independent of other household members is increasing, and the numbers of men and women are reaching parity, but the positions they take up overseas are still based largely on their gender and reinforce “traditional” gender roles. Men, for example, take up “manly” positions in construction and seafaring overseas, while women participate in “womanly” duties such as nursing and domestic help. The decision to migrate was almost always reported as a joint decision between spouses, refuting the notion that men have more decision-making power within the household. Whereas women are reported, on average worldwide, to send a greater proportion of their earnings as remittances (although less in value), our respondents did not appear as such, perhaps because we only viewed a small portion of the greater migrant and remittance network. While men sent larger numbers, they often sent only to their wives or elder daughters, who then distributed funds, while women sent remittances to a greater number of people initially. Overall, remittances are sent with a priority toward investments, especially in the education of children and for housing improvements, rather than going toward consumptive practices.

My observations are thus significant to contribute to the understanding of migration and remittances as they relate to gender in the Philippines. I have shown that nonmigrating husbands of overseas Filipino workers are hardly what the literature would expect: They contribute to the household income, pick up the reproductive labors in their partner’s absence, and, as a result of peer pressure and the stigmatization of being the “lesser provider” (in part due to this perception in the Philippinist literature), they suffer a lessening of masculinity. I therefore recommend that the Philippine government institute a greater amount of energy into making sure that the nonmigrating spouses of migrants receive their fair share of the attention, because they, just as much as their migrating peers, are also heroes and heroines to the Philippine nation.

7. Recommendations for Policy, Praxis, and Future Study

7.1 Husbands of OFWs as a Hidden Population?

As mentioned in section 3.3.1 above, I had much difficulty finding male respondents. Part of my strategy for exploring this deficit was posing the question of *why* to my respondents, as can be seen throughout Chapters 4 and 5. I believe that husbands of OFWs could be treated as a hidden population “when no sampling frame exists and public acknowledgement of membership in the population is potentially threatening” (Heckathorn, 1997, p. 174). Since the husbands of OFWs are not often studied, with researchers heavily favoring migrants and their children over the effects on nonmigrating spouses, this would seem to satisfy the first requirement. The sampling frame actually does exist within the records of CFO (based on the mandatory registration of migrants) and with the NSO (based on responses to their Survey on Overseas Filipinos), but I considered sampling in this way to be a violation of personal privacy. Ethics guides state that respondent recruitment should be voluntary and considerate of privacy, and showing up at one’s door with a list of men in similar circumstances would seem to be a violation of such ethics, especially if, as discussed, there is a feeling of shame or lessening of masculinity inherent in being part of such a population. A respondent-driven sampling technique would—given a proper initial sample—work well in the case of husbands of OFWs.

However, there are some apparent drawbacks that might hinder such an approach. The men I talked to did not seem to know other husbands of OFWs, or were unwilling to give up their names. In respondent-driven sampling, peers recruit each other, so this fact might stall the study before it starts. Monetary incentive also seems to be vital to the success of respondent-driven sampling, since my attempts to “incentivize” recruiting (by emphasizing the effect respondents’ testimonies might have on local policy) had little to no effect. A study using respondent-driven sampling would have to be well funded, with such funding deriving from expected results. Since the current emphasis is on other effects of migration (especially economic effects), this level of funding may be out of reach. Nonetheless, I would recommend future studies of this topic try to test respondent-driven sampling on this population.

7.2 “Don’t hate the player, hate the game”—Criticism of the so-called feminist literature

The sports analogy I am invoking here refers to a suggestion to (poorer) players to blame the structural inequalities inherent in a game rather than the superior opponents with whom they play. In this metaphor³³, women could be said to be the “inferior play-

³³ In rare form, a user of the often crass Urban Dictionary defined it thus: “Do not fault the successful (... continues on next page)”

ers” while men are the “superior”, and the “game” they play is traditional household roles; also playing the game, but incognizant of their participation, are many authors who fail to recognize their reaffirmation of the “rules”.³⁴

As introduced in Chapter 2 and discussed throughout this thesis, “traditional” gender roles in the Philippines are based on assertions of the “father-provider” and “mother-nurturer”; that is, the father is responsible for economically and physically securing the household, while the mother is responsible for reproductively maintaining the household, which entails domestic chores and childcare. Fathers under this model provide discipline for the children and the wife holds the “power of the purse”, but otherwise there is little crossover in the “traditional” household. However, one’s performance of prescribed societal roles relies upon their peers’ affirmation; coming back to our sports analogy, “all players must adhere to the same rules”. But when some rules are obviously contentious and biased toward particular biased, are players (and spectators) not justified in crying “foul!” at every occasion, not merely those that disadvantage their own “team”? Much in the literature notes the inequalities inherent in the Philippine social system, but in failing to question, at *every* opportunity, whether the continuation of societal roles is beneficial, the authors essentially add to its permanence. Such authors miss an opportunity to add their (feminist) opinion to their involvement in the debate and, perhaps worse, endanger the efforts of others by enabling future scholars and nonprofessionals alike to misquote their works.

The inspiration for this chapter came out of noticing my own desire to denote (as often as possible) my apprehension toward such terms as *traditional*, *left-behind*, *deployed*, etc., within so-called “scare quotes” that “alert readers that a term is used in a nonstandard, ironic, or other special sense. . . . They imply ‘This is not my term’ or ‘This is not how the term is usually applied’” (University of Chicago Press, 2010, section 7.55). More significantly, scare quotes can signify the intention to distance oneself from the usage of another author, such that the reader is made aware of the perceived neutral, outdated or negative language being quoted (Wilson & Sperber, 1992). Such usage is essential in feminist literature as a way to challenge the hegemonic norm, as can be seen in my experiment that follows.

I decided to see which authors used scare quotes approvingly by searching for the phrase “left-behind” (with and without quotation marks, with and without hyphenation). *Left-behind*, as mentioned above in Footnote 1 above, is a loaded phrase that suggests that the nonmigrating party is involuntarily immobile, and can also be used in an effort to make a migrant feel guilty for migrating. A simple desktop search proved

(Footnote continues from last page)

participant in a flawed system; try instead to discern and rebuke that aspect of its organization which allows or encourages the behavior that has provoked your displeasure.” Source: <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Don%27t%20Hate%20The%20Playa%2FPlayette%20Hate%20The%20Game>

³⁴ N.B., I chose to use these comparative terms as drawn from Latin-based medical terminology for “below” and “above”, respectively.

fruitless, so I decided to merge as much of my downloaded literature into a single (searchable) PDF file, with the first result appearing (alphabetically, by author name) in Asis, Huang, and Yeoh's (2004) *When the Light of the Home is Abroad: Unskilled female migration and the Filipino family*:

The current body of research generated by transnational female-led labour migration has tended to take the perspective of either the migrant or her family "**left behind**", and does not often take the perspective of both sides into account simultaneously. (p. 200, emphasis added)

By surrounding the phrase in quotation marks (and by continuing to do so throughout most of the piece), the authors insist that the distance put between a migrant and their dependents, family- or household-members, and/or loved ones is not intentional, and they make clear to the reader their intention not to confirm the premise of the phrase. Conversely, the unmarked version appears in Aguila's (2011) *Living Long-Distance Relationships Through Computer-Mediated Communication*:

The wife, a nurse, had **left behind** her engineer husband and two young children in the Philippines while she worked in a hospital in the United Kingdom. (p. 88, emphasis added)

Taken out of context, as I have done here, this quote essentially chastises the woman mentioned for having abandoned her family. When we insert quotation marks around the phrase, the reader no longer has to question her motives. While I wholeheartedly embrace the conclusions of Aguila, however, and consider her intentions to be aligned with mine, she illustrates the dangers involved with ignoring the usage of scare quotes.

Consider, on the other hand, the usage within the extremely influential work of Parreñas (2001a):

Although enabling the family to maximize its earnings, the formation of female-headed transnational households also involves an emotional upheaval in the lives of transnational mothers and the children whom they have **left behind** in the Philippines. (p. 386, emphasis added)

Blame is thus squarely set on the shoulder of female migrants for causing the "upheaval" of the household order and for beleaguering their children with emotional difficulties. While Parreñas obviously has feminist intentions, her regrettably unmarked usage adds fuel to the fire of blaming the woman for creating a "broken home", as she noted. My main contention with Parreñas and other authors in this regard is that they have incredible influence over the Philippinist literature, notably through young Filipinos (Arlan, et al., 2008; Bielza-Valdez, 2011) and those with the ear of policy-makers such as Asis (2004) and other scholars at the Scalabrini Migration Center (2004). Their usage eventually reaches governmental reports, such as Jurado (1999) and Punzi (2009). These misguided mis-usages can carry forward in future quotations in a perpetual cycle, missing the point that the prescribed gender roles are to blame in the first place. As I said above, it is my opinion that if enough people call attention to "unfair" treatment, eventually the "rules" will be changed.

7.3 Bring in Nonmigrating Household Members as Heroes and Heroines

Throughout this thesis I have referred to the governmental campaign, entitled the *New Heroes and Heroines of the Nation*, which is essentially pro-migration propaganda. Heretofore, however, there has been little attention given to the needs and wishes of the nonmigrating population with migrant household members. They have received little in comparison to their migrating peers, and yet they are faced with a similar burden: Compensating for the absence of a household member is just as much, and arguably (in many cases), more work than their migrant member takes up. Their recompense, however, is in the form of a single family gaining respect as the “Model OFW Family of the Year”, and as a cheap annual banquet.

A simple recognition of their labors as equal to those of the migrant would go a long way, I argue, and with the numbers of remittances that enter the country every year, I would suggest going further. Perhaps a tax break as a consequence of remittances could be instituted; while this is not in the best interest of the government coffers, it might persuade more migrants to send their remittances through official channels rather than risk their earnings through unofficial means. Indeed, many men and women might forget to request this tax break, which would be in the governmental interest: It would signify an interest in the “left-behind” population while adding an extra step in order to make this abstract interest concrete. Another suggestion I would make is to increase the expenditures on nonmigrating persons outright, more than a Christmas ball where participants are only given ₱50 in food stamps. If the Philippine government wants an increase in migration (which I don’t support, but I recognize as a more stable form of income), perhaps they should woo the nonmigrating population by diminishing one of the risks of migration: The chance that the migrant will not be able to visit frequently due to the high cost of transportation. If the Philippine government instituted a prize for migrants to visit, that might inspire those who are on the fence of the decision to migrate to do so. It might also raise the morale of migrants abroad and of the nonmigrating population related to them, and increased morale would probably result in increased revenue streams. These are just some of the options the government could ponder as a result of this study.

Postscript—Comparison with Pingol's *Remaking Masculinities*

As I mentioned in the Introduction, this study proved very similar to that of Alicia Pingol (2001) in design and conclusions. Her book was only discovered at the end of my time in the Philippines, and it has therefore not formed a large part of my literature review and theoretical background. A few of the major variables that have affected the comparison of our studies include the location of her research, the time period that has elapsed since, and the fact that she has a deep insider's perspective. However, it is invaluable as a way to compare my conclusions with hers and to see whether generalizations can be made about the masculinities of husbands of OFWs.

The study of Pingol was designed as an exploratory work, similar to our own. She writes that her research interests converged into her dissertation (and later, this book) with the help of her respondents; indeed, she wrote that explaining her project to an interested respondent helped her see her research questions more clearly. In this respect, our studies are alike: We asked questions based on the answers of our respondents, which would form questions for future respondents as well. On the other hand, her interviews were based on life histories and often went into extreme depth, while the time limits of this thesis prohibited such detail. Again, this is as a consequence to her scope (doctoral research) and timeframe (longer than 3 months).

Her status as a (regional) "local" gave her an insider's perspective that she admitted was unique to such studies, and it often gave her an advantage. For instance, she knew the local dialect and customs and was able to interpret certain signs as resulting from certain events, and thus had a better understanding of the provincial ways. She was able to gain the trust of her respondents much faster and with greater ease than an outsider might, allowing her to ask such questions as regards sexual relations, which traditionally are not spoken of outside of the household and certainly not between the sexes. We did not have such an insider's perspective, but on the other hand, there may have been things Pingol overlooked as a result of her fluent knowledge. For instance, she may assume that particular activities are assigned to men or women, when in fact the individual household may have been dividing labor such even before the wife's migration. She may also have received different responses than a similarly-fluent male might have. These are considerations she has taken into account herself, though, and it is unreasonable to judge her appreciable work based upon her insider knowledge.

Pingol's study took place in a rural northern province of the Philippines, where there were few jobs and a labor oversupply. This could be similar to Cebu City if it weren't for her very good description of certain things, such as how many men resorted to driving tricycles (motorcycles with a sidecar, or a similarly small form of transporting customers), perfectly illustrating the point. In Cebu, one could imagine that a number of a man's skills could be used to make money in one way or another, while in her province, means of earning money were drastically limited. Correspondingly, this pushed men toward making a living by subsisting on their own food, whether by farming, fish-

ing or gathering vegetables and tubers, which also kept them in a traditional mindset, whereby the men were more likely to push “feminine” tasks on to a female relative or neighbor. Also, in the provinces, it made sense to live close to one’s in-laws for support and enhanced geniality, which brought this other part of the family into distribution of household labor, whereas in Cebu, it was not as common to live close to one’s in-laws. In short, the urban setting facilitated the need for men and women to get a job and thus contribute to the household income in multiple ways, so the dynamics of household labor are more fluid than in the province.

Her work was clearly focused on the changes in masculinity in husbands of OFWs as a result of *migration*, while we focused mainly on the changes due to *remittances*. As discussed in section 5.1 above, it is difficult to ascribe change explicitly to the act of migration or the sending of remittances, and while she recorded remittance levels, they are not central to her argument. As a point of similarity, however, Pingol did not regard the physical distance to be a variable such that the further an OFW was, the more complicated their situation became, for instance. Being abroad was an on/off factor, and to her, the location of the OFW was not a main point.

In short, the work of Pingol is an extremely valuable addition to the Philippinist literature, and we would be so lucky to have discovered it sooner. Her study mirrored our own, and especially my part of the 2x2 grid, and the questions that she asked her respondents and the concerns she raised would have been highly valued at the start of the research. As I only discovered her book at the end of my term in the country, I can merely appreciate her work and compare our studies with minimal contribution of her work to mine.

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Appendix A Profiles of Faculty Advisors and Student Partners

Ton van Naerssen, Ph.D., is a human geographer and physical planner, specialized in development geography. He is a senior research fellow at Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, a researcher at Global Society Foundation in the Netherlands, and a consultant at Avanna, through which he serves in his capacity as an advisor to Oxfam Novib for this project. He has more than 40 years of experience working with and for developing countries and has particular interest in the countries of Southeast Asia, wherein his work revolves around the theory of development and globalization on urban and regional development and international migration. In addition to having served on the editing boards for the *Journal of Economic and Social Geography* and *Derde Wereld*, Dr. van Naerssen continues to author and co-author publications with prominent migration scholars around the world.

Leny G. Ocasiones, Ph.D., is currently a professor of the University of San Carlos Department of Sociology and Anthropology in Cebu City, Philippines. She has conducted various researches ranging from women in prostitution, reproductive health and fertility management, women and armed conflict, environmental health among low-income barangays in Cebu City and young people's health challenges, among others. She has presented papers in conferences both in the Philippines and abroad. She has published in local and international journals and a co-author of the Guidebook on Gender Mainstreaming in Community Development Projects published by the Philippines Australia Community-Assisted Projects and Sidlak Gender Resource Center Region 7.

Jeff Lim completed his bachelor in sociology at the University of San Carlos and is currently teaching at Cebu Doctors' University in Cebu City.

Karen Dereche completed her bachelor in anthropology at the University of San Carlos. Her interests lie in the archaeological history of Cebu, especially surrounding the involvement of the Philippines in World War II. Currently, she works as a curation trainee in Museo Sugbo for Bank of Philippine Island Museum.

Appendix B Interview Questionnaire

In order for these question lists to be most useful, we have outlined the main questions with their topic. We expect our conversations to be more natural than any prepared question can really be, and for correspondents to provide more information than was asked, so we have tried to keep the main questions as open as possible.

Preliminary to the interview, it is important to provide the respondent with some basic information. The most important points of our story are as follows:

- Thank the respondent kindly for their willingness to spend time with us and with answering the interview questions.
- Explain to the respondent that everything that will be said, will be treated confidentially. It is only used for our own thesis, not for any governmental institution.
- Our research does not result in financial gain for the respondent nor their household, but one of the aims of the research is to contribute to policy development which might contribute to the development of the community.
- If you wish to record the interview, please discuss this with the respondent as soon as possible.
- If any problems occur during the interview of either emotional or practical origin (like a shortage of time, or an emergency) discuss the matter with the respondent in a respectful way and let them know that we could continue the interview on a later date and time, or not at all if they do not wish to continue.

What are the (background) characteristics of the migrated man or woman and his or her household and how do migrant, spouse and household relate to each other and their social environment?

1) Correspondent information:

- a) Tell me a little about yourself.
 - i) Name (Fake name):
 - ii) Age:
 - iii) Education level:
 - iv) Occupation:
 - v) Religion:
 - vi) Income:
 - vii) Tribe:

2) Migrant information: (see question 5 for migration information)

- a) Can you tell me about [migrant]?
 - i) Pseudonym
 - ii) Age:
 - iii) Education level:
 - iv) Occupation:

- v) Religion:
- vi) Income:
- vii) Tribe:
- 3) Household composition:
 - a) Besides [migrant], who else lives with you? Also ask for age!
 - i) [If 1+ are not blood relatives, gather some quick information like age, occupation]
 - b) How long have you lived here?
 - c) Do you or [migrant] have family nearby?
 - d) How often do you see your family members outside your household?
 - e) How often do you phone or email your family members outside your household?
 - f) How often do you see the family members of [migrant]?
 - g) How often do you phone or email the family members of [migrant]?
 - h) Do you like this neighborhood?
 - i) *If negative response:*
 - (1) Why?
 - (2) Where would you like to move?
- 4) Relation(ship) with migrant:
 - a) How are you related to [migrant]? If married, how long have you been married?
 - i) *If respondent is a spouse:* What is the reason for your marriage? Love, practical reasons, financial, family decisions?
 - If not a blood relative/spouse:* How long have you known [migrant]?
 - b) How do you maintain your relationship with [migrant]?
 - i) How do you keep in touch? (e.g. phone, internet, post?)
 - ii) How often do you hear from him/her?
 - iii) Is it difficult to keep in contact with him/her?
 - iv) Who makes the contacts between you? Who calls whom?
- 5) Migration information:
 - a) Where is [migrant] right now?
 - b) How long has [migrant] been there?
 - c) For what reasons did [migrant] migrate? Financial, education, political, status, problems?
 - d) Tell me about [migrant]'s current job.
 - i) What do you think about their job/position?
 - e) Tell me about the decision on where and when to travel.
 - i) How did you help make that decision?
 - ii) Did [migrant] know anybody in [migration location] before they left?
 - iii) Did anyone help with e.g. tickets, transportation, housing?
 - iv) What preparations did [migrant] need to make in order to travel? (E.g. save money for ticket, apply for working visa, sought for references in country of immigration)
 - v) Was there another location that might have been more attractive?
 - (1) If yes, why did [migrant] not move to this location?

- f) What do you know about [migrant]'s journey there?
 - i) Did [migrant] run into any trouble along the way?
 - ii) What happened right after [migrant] arrived?
- g) Do you know [migrant]'s plans for the future?
 - i) How long does [migrant] plan to remain or stay in current [migration location]?
 - ii) Have you been a part of that decision?
 - iii) Is there somewhere else that [migrant] would consider a better alternative?
- h) *Legal status: (sensitive issue)*
 - i) Was it easy for [migrant] to get a working permit? Do you know if [migrant] is staying legally in their current country of settlement?
 - ii) What kind of papers did [migrant] need in order to travel to [migration location]?
 - iii) Did [migrant] need any papers for his/her job? for housing?

What are the characteristics of remittance behaviour in sending migrant remittances as perceived by the spouse and/or household?

- 6) Does [migrant] send money home?
- 7) In what form does [migrant] send money home? Cash/bank/cheques/food/goods?
- 8) How often does [migrant] send money home? Are there any irregularities?
- 9) Is [migrant] able to live a comfortable life in the country he or she is working in?
- 10) Does [migrant] also save money for him/herself?
- 11) Does [migrant] have any future plans with his/her money (e.g. studying)?
- 12) Do you know how much money [migrant] earns?
- 13) How much money does [migrant] send home? (tell the respondent that they don't have to answer the question if they don't want to, but emphasize that the information will be treated confidentially.)
- 14) Do you know if [migrant] also sends money or goods to other family members or friends?
- 15) Do you know what kind of goods or how much money that is?
- 16) Does [migrant] have assets at home? When and how did [migrant] acquire these?
- 17) Did [migrant] acquire new assets while working in their current location?

What are the characteristics of remittance behaviour in receiving migrant remittances?

- 18) Do you receive remittances from [migrant]? If yes, in what form?
- 19) Do you receive remittances from other people? If yes, in what form?
- 20) Who (else) receives the remittances?
- 21) What is the meaning of receiving remittances? (E.g. emotional, rational)
- 22) Are the remittances used directly or will they be saved (bank account)?
- 23) On which expenses are remittances spent most?
- 24) What would be different if you or the household did not receive remittances?

- 25) Do you consult the person who is sending remittances before using the money?
- 26) Do you think the opinion of [migrant] about the spending of remittances is important? If so, why?
- 27) Does [migrant] have special wishes about the way the remittances are sent?
- 28) How do you or your family cope when remittances are not forthcoming/irregular? Does it have consequences for the household or [migrant]?
- 29) Have there been difficulties with reference to the way the family spends remittances?
- 30) How would you solve the situation if members of the household cannot agree on what expenses the remittances are used?
- 31) Do you and [migrant] share (all) your bankaccount(s)? Does any one of you also have your own bankaccount?

Is there a change of gender roles within the households' division of household labour between husband and wife before the migration and after? And if so, how are these gender roles perceived?

- 32) What are your daily activities?
- 33) Are these activities different since [migrant] migrated?
- 34) Since [migrant] migrated, are you doing different tasks in the household?
- 35) Do you get assistance/support in the household from family members? Who are these family members? Sisters, brothers, grandmother, father etc.
- 36) What were your roles and those of the [migrant] before the migration took place?
- 37) In what way did these roles change after the migration?
- 38) Are you having more responsibilities since your [migrant] migrated? Can you explain what kind of responsibilities?
- 39) Are you more busy with child caring and income earning than before?
- 40) What do you know about the way [migrant] is living his/her life? Do you think he/she gives substance to his/her life in the same way you did together here?
- 41) Do you feel [migrant]'s experience abroad has changed his or her norms, values and behaviour? Perception of things. Do you think this change is positive or negative?
- 42) Do you think their experience contribute to any other developments within your household? (refers to e.g. social remittances, different norms and values, childcaring, the way of behaving towards each other, the importance of education, lifestyle changes, certain skills, but without saying it with too many words).
- 43) Do you think [migrant] will try to incorporate these new ideas into the life here? Or are there things that already changed due to the ideas of [migrant]?
- 44) Has anything (else) changed since [migrant] left?
- 45) If so, how do you feel about this change? Are you happy with the change of your roles?
- 46) Do you think your occupation would be different if [migrant] was still living with you/your household?
- 47) Do you feel like you have more power to decide about what happens in the house-

hold since [migrant] left?

48) Are you happy in your relationship with your husband/wife?

49) Are you happy with the current situation or would you like to see it differently? If yes, what would you like to see different and how do you think that can be achieved?

50) Do you and [migrant] have any special rules or agreements when it comes to providing for the children? And how about taking care of them? Do they stay home all year?

Appendix C Plates



Plate 1 A typical *padala* advertisement, as seen in Manila. Photograph credit: Marieke Smit.



Plate 2 Philippines research team: From left, Karen, Dr. Leny, Marieke, Phillip, Jeff. *Photograph credit: Ubo Pakes.*