

“More than money: the flow of social remittances through migrant networks of transnational social relations”



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Bachelor thesis Human Geography - August 11th, 2011

Radboud University 2011

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“More than money: the flow of social remittances in migrant networks of transnational social relations”

-The perspective of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands-

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Preface

Driving on the road of curiosity

Ever since I made my first 'far away' trip by airplane to an unknown, foreign destination and met some Turkish people during a holiday, I have been fascinated by foreign cultures and the movement of people. This encounter determined my choice to study International Tourism Management and Consultancy. During this study I have had several opportunities to go abroad and meet different kinds of people and see a variety of places. My fascination for the movement of people did not stop at the phenomenon of tourism, which is a temporary movement and involves a return. Over the years the phenomenon of migration, a more permanent movement, was added to my fascination for tourism. After finishing tourism education, the theme of migration took hold of my mind and I enrolled in Human Geography studies. The tourism studies already challenged my mind in terms of being realist or idealist? Until today I am still at this crossroad. Unfortunately this road does not feature a pedestrian crossing. Researching this thesis subject is another attempt to find a way on this road. Interest and curiosity lead the way for this thesis.

After returning home from a seven month internship period in Danang, Vietnam, I assumed that my relations with my host family and close friends in Vietnam would remain tight. The contact did last for about two years, but after this time contacts started to fade. This surprised me very much, as I still think of them regularly. Yet somehow the contact has disappeared. This experience is one of my motivations to study transnational personal relations. Since technically I was a tourist, I have always wondered whether the situation is different when it comes to international migrants?

This thesis is written as the final project of the bachelor study Human Geography at Nijmegen School of Management of Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The main topic of this thesis is the impact of international migration, in the form of (social) remittances, as a product of transnational social relations which form the initial field of interest for this thesis. The empirical part of this thesis takes explores the perspectives of individual migrants. It focuses on transnational relations between migrants and their country of origin and explores the social aspects of the remittances within these contacts.

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been an exciting and valuable experience. Hereby I would like to express my sincere thanks to my interviewees, Rohlee Deguzman, Jessie Cultura Ligan, Grace Cabactulan and Esperanza, for being so hospitable and open to invite me to your homes and sharing your stories with me.

To Marisha Maas for advising me how to proceed with my initial research proposal.

I also owe thanks to my friends and classmates who supported me throughout the process of writing this thesis.

Special thanks go out to my supervisor Lothar Smith, for being enthusiastically involved and for inspiring me during feedback sessions.

Sabrina Willems,

Nijmegen, 11th August 2011

Executive Summary

A transnational turn took place in the 1990s in the study of migration. When we consider migration as transnational, the focus lies not on origin or destination but rather on social networks, transgressing and blurring borders. A growing body of research includes social networks into the theory of migration. Some theories explain the existence and continuation of migration, whereas this thesis instead will look into the impacts of migration. One of the impacts of migration that has recently been booming in literature and the news is that of remittances. Remittances are commonly understood as being financial, monetary transfers from migrants to their country of origin. This focus on financial remittances reflects a one-sided perspective on the impacts of migration as the social aspects are lacking. When we take the perspective of social networks, the focus lies not only on the migration of people but corollary on the migration of ideas. Several scholars, among which the most prominent being Peggy Levitt, address the social impacts of migration in the form of social remittances. Levitt defines social remittances as being the ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital that migrants export to their home communities (Levitt and Sørensen 2004, p.8). This research forms an attempt to look beyond the financial aspect of remittances and to move social remittances away from being in the shadow of financial remittances. The relevance of this thesis lies not only in a scholarly deficit of social aspects but also accords with a sense of frustration from international migrants, since they experience the overtly focus on 'their' money as lacking the emotional value that is attached to remittance coins. Moreover, the conceptualization of migration and its impacts as taking place due to and within social relations, makes the phenomenon bigger than only the migrants themselves.

The research into social remittances will be conducted using a case study. The social networks of migrants are regarded as the transnational sphere in which social remittances emerge or are enhanced and transmitted. The transnational relations that make up (part) of a transnational migrant network form the core of the empirical research in this thesis. The elements of a social network in this context are transnational ties. The content and character of several social relations of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands are researched. This study is based on in-depth interviews and it seeks to analyse the story of migrants in a qualitative rather than quantitative way. It is about migrants' subjective experiences which result in an intersubjective understanding of the phenomenon of social remittances.

From the research, it can be concluded that financial and social aspects are interrelated when it comes to the phenomenon of remittances. Financial relations often involve several social aspects as they are preceded by social motives and/or induce social consequences, and migrant social relations have demonstrated to often have an underlying financial aspect.

A theme within social remittances that has come forward more than once is the habit of being assertive and upfront. The value of financial literacy, which carries out the value of earning your own money, save money and invest in the future, is often especially direct towards women. Formalization of procedures is one of the main social remittances that have been identified in this research in the form of drafting and sticking to contracts, paying a loan back in time or otherwise having to pay interest and keeping track of receipts for accounting practices. Similar to the findings of Levitt in her study of return migrants to Governor Valadares in Brazil, it has been found that the relationship with and the trust in governmental officers is another important social remittance theme. A development project initiated by a migrant or migrants has been illustrated to be able to

become a joint citizen-state effort that negotiates the responsibilities within a community. Social remittance transfers also take place the other way around as the Filipina migrants share their values and habits with their social relations in the Netherlands.

Vertovec (2004) in his article calls the technological improvements in communication means, especially cheap telephone calls, the social glue of migrant transnationalism. Throughout the years the means of communication have evolved, which created not only different modes of communication but also differences in frequency of contacts. The findings of this study corroborate Vertovec's point as well as add to this concept of social glue. Development projects and the rather compulsory nature of family relations can also be regarded as elements of this social glue.

Let us link the means of communication through which ties towards the Philippines are maintained to the means of social remittance transmission according to Levitt (1998) who writes that social remittances are exchanged in several situations:

- When migrants return to live or visit their communities of origin
- When non-migrants visit the migrant
- When migrant and non-migrant(s) communicate through letters, telephone or other mediums.

Where Levitt stops at 'other mediums', this research has revealed another very important means of communication or rather a means to stay connected to the country of origin. Development projects in which migrants engage in are an important form of contact with their country of origin. Development projects can be considered as transmission channels and spaces of negotiation when it comes to social remittances. The monetary flow, the project proposal, the project contract and the actual building or goods that are part of the project include social remittances.

What can be said about how the perspective of migrant social networks to the country of origin can elucidate the understanding of social remittances? It has been found to be an important element of norms and values that they are negotiated in social networks and do not exist or travel in a locked box. Moreover, the role of intermediaries in the transmission of remittances has been established in this study. The migrant social networks expand beyond the host society. This implies that values and norms are not only learnt in the host society of the destination country, but norms and values are shared through international networks. This eliminates methodological nationalism. The phenomenon of social remittances is often attributed to the integration with the (Western) host society. They are depicted as alien ideas to non-migrants. However, this research contains a finding that is inconsistent with this assumption. These findings imply that social remittances not necessarily be completely new or alien ideas, norms or values, experienced exclusively in the new society. For social remittances this implies that the ideas are not necessarily generated within migrants' host society, or transmitted necessarily only and directly towards migrants' country of origin, as is often narrowly assumed.

The effects of migrants' transnational activities, specifically in the form of remittances as outlined throughout this thesis, can be incorporated in the migration-development nexus. The inclusion of social remittances into the migration-development nexus is one form of positioning of social remittances in a wider frame. Another interesting finding that has come up is that the relation to migration is absent in the definition of social remittances by Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen and Virkama (2010). The question is raised whether social remittances is a phenomenon exclusively inherent to migration? Or perhaps it can also be inherent to other fields like for example tourism practices? This challenges the position of social remittances to be beyond migration studies.

Table of contents

Preface	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Executive summary	v
Abbreviations	ix
Tables and figures	ix
1 – Introduction	1
1.1 Incorporating the social and transnational aspect in migration perspectives	1
1.2 Research objective and relevance	3
1.3 Research perspective	4
1.4 Research model	5
1.5 Research questions	6
1.6 Key elements	7
1.7 The research population	7
1.7.1 The culture of emigration and its management in the Philippines	8
1.7.2 The importance of financial remittances for the Philippines	9
1.7.3 A gendered research- The choice for Filipina respondents	12
1.7.4 Profile of respondents	14
1.7.5 The respondents – Let me introduce...	15
2 – Theory	19
2.1 Perspectives on the impacts of international migration	19
2.2 Social remittances	20
2.2.1 A one-sided and unidirectional focus in the literature	20
2.2.2 Conceptualizing social remittances	22
2.3 Migrant social networks	26
2.3.1 Granovetter: the strength of weak ties	26
2.4 The relation between migrant social networks and social remittances	28
2.5 Conclusion	30

3 – Methodology	32
3.1 Research strategy	32
3.2 Level of research and research units	33
3.3 Research method	34
4 – Empirical exploration	36
4.1 Financial and social aspects in relation to remittances	36
4.2 The social networks of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands	41
4.2.1 Who are migrants in contact with?	42
4.2.2 How do migrants maintain transnational ties?	43
4.3 To what extent can social remittances be identified as being contextualized within transnational ties?	46
4.3.1 Mentality change	46
4.3.2 Development projects	47
4.3.3 Where do the ideas come from?	48
4.4 Summary	50
5 – Conclusions	53
5.1 Key findings	53
5.2 Critical reflection	56
Bibliography	57
Appendices	61
Appendix 1 – Interview preparation	61
Appendix 2 – Initial conceptual framework	63

Abbreviations

COS - Centrum voor Internationale Samenwerking

ODA - Official Development Aid

OFW - Overseas Filipino Worker

OWWA - Overseas Workers Welfare Administration

POEA - Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

PPP - Partidong Pandaigdigang Pilipino

Tables and figures

Table 1 - Financial remittances to the Philippines

Figure 1 - South East Asia

Figure 2 - The Philippines

1 – Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis will start by narrowing down and introducing the research subject, namely social remittances. Why this subject should be researched is explained according to societal and scientific arguments. Subsequently the objective of the study is presented which leads the way for following decisions in this research. In this chapter the reader will also be introduced to the research population of the study.

1.1 Incorporating the social and transnational aspect into migration perspectives

International migration is a complex phenomenon. For many centuries people have been migrating to distant or more nearby places. Several strands of thought have analyzed this dynamic phenomenon. According to Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino and Taylor (1993), the oldest theory on international migration is the Macroeconomic Neoclassical theory. This theory's basic assumption is that geographical differences as well as demand for labour are key triggers for migration. Then there is also the Microeconomic Neoclassical theory that gives more attention to individual, rational choice. What Massey calls a New Economics of Labour Migration has emerged, appointing the family unit as the main decision making unit in migration decisions. Wallerstein and his World Systems theory assume that migration is a natural outgrowth of disruptions and dislocations that inevitably occur in the process of capitalist development (in Massey *et al.* 1993, p.445). Yet, these theories on migration lack an integrated approach, or inclusion of social elements in their explanations of international migration. These theories reveal the dominant way of approaching the phenomenon of migration, in a structural and rational way.

A growing body of research emerged that includes social networks into the theory of migration. Analysts in the 1960s and 1970s studied the process of chain migration and the role of family and friends in triggering migration (e.g. Anderson 1974, Ritchey 1976). These analysts mainly studied social networks as a means that begets migration. By sharing information on migration procedures, help in finding housing and a job, these social networks are seen as a pull factor for migration. Above mentioned theories and lenses of analyses mainly analyze the *existence* and *continuation* of migration. This thesis instead will look into the *impact* of migration.

There is a need for understanding the impact of migration in a 'bigger picture'. Migration does not stand on its own, it is influenced by and influences other fields and processes such as globalization, economics, politics and gender relations. Interconnected elements come into play and need to be included in the lens of migration impacts. One of the impacts of migration that has recently been booming in literature and the news is that of remittances. Remittances are commonly understood as being financial, monetary transfers from migrants to their country of origin. Statistics on remittances are published widely, from World Bank to Inter-American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, websites like remittancegateway.org, the Arab Monetary Fund, together with 8.660.000 (on August 10th, 2011) hits on Google for the term 'remittance'. As Nyberg-Sorenson (2004) nicely puts it:

“Remittances have become the most visible evidence and yardstick for the ties connecting migrants with their societies of origin” (Nyberg-Sorensen 2004, p.3).

This boom is directed towards *financial* remittances. This concept does not only thrive in literature, it is also significant for governments and economies in some countries, among which the Philippines, as will be outlined in section 1.7. However, this focus on financial remittances reflects a one-sided perspective on the impacts of migration as the social aspects are lacking. Several scholars, among which the most prominent being Peggy Levitt, address the social impacts of migration in the form of *social* remittances. This inclusion of social aspects is important in the contemporary discourse on remittances, that has an overly financial focus. There is a particular need for a better understanding of social remittances. Financial transfers are not isolated, faceless flows of a monetary substance but are triggered by and generate social aspects. These flows of money take place in the myriad of transnational flows.

This research forms an attempt to look beyond the financial aspect of remittances and to move social remittances away from being in the shadow of financial remittances. It will bring nuance to the concept of social remittances and take a human perspective on remittances in general. On the basis of a case study featuring Filipina migrants to the Netherlands, the concept of social remittances is endeavoured to be unravelled. The relevance of this thesis lies not only in a scholarly deficit of social aspects as will be outlined in the next section, but also accords with a sense of frustration from international migrants.

“Remittances are only discussed in terms of technique, how can we send remittances in a cheaper way? There is not much attention for the value, the emotions that are attached to the money” (Interview Grace Cabactulan, May 18th 2011).¹

The migrant social networks will be approached as the means for transnational flows to stream. Remittances, whether financial or social, are negotiated. Financial remittances as a family livelihood strategy involve not only economic but also social decision elements and include more than one person to make this decision, and thus the impacts of migration affect not only the migrant. This view makes migration to be a social product, influenced and negotiated by human beings, involving emotional as well as rational, but contemporary, aspects.

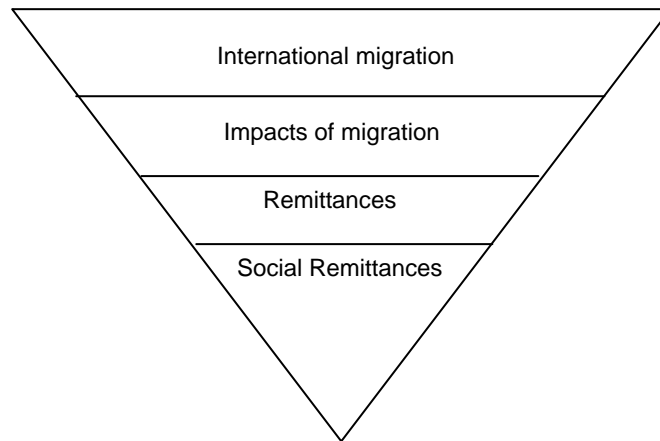
“Studying networks, particularly those linked to family and households, permits understanding migration as a social product - not as the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actors, not as the sole result of economic or political parameters, but rather as an outcome of all these factors in interaction” (Boyd 1989, p.642).

Social remittances move alongside and beyond financial remittances and therefore have a significant value for the study of migration and even beyond. For example, ‘the migrant as a broker for development’ is also beginning to settle in the literature discussions and therewith migration and development studies encounter each other. Social remittances have a potentially transformative power that reaches beyond the financial remittance-receiving people.

Let us uncover the black box of social remittances and exchange the eye patch for glasses to look beyond the deficient scope of financial remittances.

1.2 Research objective and relevance

The subject of this thesis is narrowed down from the broad theme of international migration, to a focus on the impacts rather than the continuation of migration and then to the specific impact in the form of remittances and within this concept, special attention is paid to social remittances rather than the financial remittances.



International migration is a life-changing phenomenon. Its impacts do not only affect the migrants themselves, but also the people in trajectory and destination countries, and last but not least it influences people who stay behind in originating areas. Besides the financial form of remittances that are possibly sent, social remittances can trigger changes in attitude and behaviour which can result in social transformations, both in Western and developing countries. Although migration is not an isolated phenomenon that single-handedly causes all social transformations, it does have an effect on individuals, families or even whole areas. For example the Todra Valley in Morocco changed due to, among other factors, international migration. It changed in the sense that the town broke out of isolation because around 40% of the households are related to migration in some way. These families often receive extra income which is invested in the local economy. For example 1100 wells have been established (de Haas 2005). These wells are material forms of remittances but they can influence the lifestyle and health of people. A change in lifestyle and health can have further consequences for the society. The *societal relevance* of this thesis subject lies in researching the effects that migration has beyond financial or material forms, on individuals, families and potentially larger communities.

The study of migration is relevant to the geographical field of studies as it is related to the development of places and the relationships between them (Skeldon 1997; Black 1998, in Gregory *et al.* 2009). Furthermore, studying social remittances is *scientifically* relevant because this phenomenon is understudied, since the study of remittances focuses mainly on financial remittances (de Haas 2007). Faist writes that migration should not be studied without taking into account the relations of migrants in their living contexts (Faist 2000). The ongoing debate between scholars to put social effects of migration on the map (Goldring 2003; Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen and Virkama 2010; Levitt 1998; Suksomboon 2008; de Haas 2007) is not finished. The dynamic, multidimensional nature of the phenomenon is now increasingly addressed, but not yet successfully integrated into the theorization of the phenomenon. This research does not aspire to develop a conclusive theory on migration or social remittances. However, by empirically researching the case of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands and relating this to the literature, this study can further explore the link between social networks and social remittances. It will find out whether the empirical findings fit into the current literature. It will possibly advance or adapt current terminology, definitions and position of social remittances.

The objective of this thesis is to research the link between social remittances and migrant social networks, and thereby contribute to a better, more holistic understanding of the concept of social remittances.

To contribute to the understanding of the concept of social remittances by exploring the social aspects inherent to the ties of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands with their country of origin.

1.3 Research perspective

In this thesis a relational view of space is adopted, in which space is not bounded and containerized. Despite the fact that I am a bit uneasy using the term 'country of origin' I will use this term in this thesis in order to facilitate the research and keep it simple. One reason for which I am uneasy using the term country of origin in this context, is because even within countries, major place differences exist. In other words, the entity of a country is heterogeneous. A second reason is that social ties, ideas, values and knowledge cannot be containerized within the borders of a country since migration, among other processes, creates transnational spaces which supersede national boundaries. National borders are not the same as borders of society. This is in line with what Glick-Schiller calls 'methodological nationalism'. This implies that the nation-state is the accepted field where social and political actions take place (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, 2002). Glick Schiller opposes this methodological nationalist perspective as she advocates a transnational perspective.

"I use the term methodological nationalism to critique the tendency of migration scholars to conflate a nation state with a concept of society" (Glick- Schiller 2009, p.4).

A transnational lens is thus required through which the migration phenomenon can be researched. Sørensen and Olwig (2002) add to this that a transnational perspective on migration requires a redirection of analytical focus from place to mobility, and from 'place of origin' and 'place of destination' to the movements involved in sustaining cross-border livelihoods (in Levitt and Sørensen, 2004). A transnational research perspective is necessary in the study of social remittance in order to see the whole of transnational flows in which to position the phenomenon.

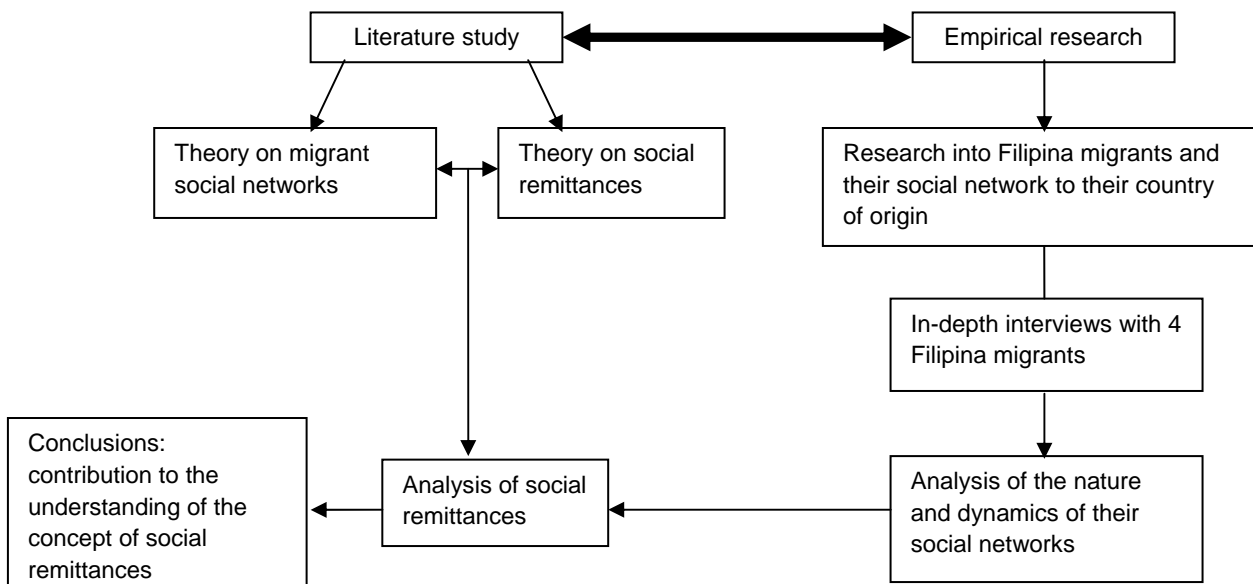
Dichotomies and bipolar thinking are attempted to be replaced by thinking in dynamics and in terms of flows. In addition, the term country of *origin* will be used rather than *home*. Home is regarded as a subjective interpretation of where one feels as home. One person can feel at home in several places over time, or even at the same time. This is affirmed by the research of Lucas and Purkayastha. In their study 'Where is home?' Here and there: transnational experiences of home among Canadian migrants in the United States', they wrote that:

"The understandings of home that result reflect the reality of living in social worlds that span two countries and the development of decentred multiple attachments and feelings of belonging in more than one place" (Lucas & Purkayastha 2007, p.243).

The value of migrant ideas, perspectives and money lies in the fact that they are currently not residents of the Philippines. They have both insider and outsider knowledge and understanding of processes in the Philippines and beyond, which creates a transnational space where social remittances can emerge or enhance and be transferred. In this study, the country of origin, being the Philippines is used despite the doubtful nature of a country being a research entity in relation to migration. For this bachelor research however, time and resources are limited and therefore the research question has to be manageable. It is however acknowledged and highlighted that for the respondents, the Philippines does not only refer to the actual piece of land in South East Asia, but is far broader than that. This dichotomy of the nation state should be considered here because social remittances are an abstract phenomenon that can be situated above and beyond spaces. Social remittances are ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital (Levitt and Sørensen 2004, p.8) which are not bound to nation states. The ideas, values and social capital of international migrants in particular are gained through and exchanged in transnational social networks which are not related to a specific country or society. Rather international migrants act in transnational social fields, which implies that migrants are situated across social relationships that connect them to different places, regulations, experiences and social obligations. For social remittances this implies that the ideas are not necessarily generated within migrants' host society, or transmitted necessarily only and directly towards migrants' country of origin, as is often narrowly assumed.

1.4 Research model

In order to attain the research objective, two types of studies will be conducted. The nature and dynamics of the migrants' social networks to their country of origin will be researched empirically. Through a theoretical literature study, the context of migrant social networks in general and the theorization of social remittances will be explored. These two studies will then be combined, linking migrant social networks to social remittances.



This thesis is based on two main types of research, namely literature review and empirical research in the form of in-depth interviews with four Filipina migrants of a specific profile (see section 1.7.4). The empirical findings are compared to the findings of the literature review, in order to comment on and add to the existing ideas and theories. The literature review is focused on two concepts, namely migrant social networks and social remittances. These concepts are linked as they are considered to be interrelated and a network perspective is considered to provide an appropriate lens to capture the dynamics in studying social remittances. The empirical research focuses in the first place on migrant's ego-centred social networks in order to distil insights into social remittances from the content and nature of their social relations.

1.5 Research questions

The research into social remittances will be conducted using a case study. Since the social networks of migrants are regarded as the transnational sphere in which social remittances emerge or are enhanced and transmitted, this forms the core of the empirical research element in this thesis. The perspective of Filipina migrants to the Netherlands is explored. In section 1.7 a detailed elaboration of the choice of research population can be found.

On the basis of the nature and dynamics of the social networks of Filipina migrants, the concept of remittances will be positioned and explored.

How does the perspective of migrant social networks to the country of origin, in the case of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands, elucidate the understanding of social remittances?

Sub-questions:

1. How is the concept of social remittances defined in literature?
2. What are the nature and dynamics of the social networks of Filipina immigrants in the Netherlands towards their country of origin?
 - 2.1 Who/what are they in contact with?
 - 2.2 What is the content of the contacts?
3. Which forms of social remittances can be identified as taking place in the contacts of Filipina migrants with their country of origin?
4. In which ways can the concepts of migrant social networks and social remittances be related and positioned?

1.6 Key elements

Here follows a short, preliminary description of the two main concepts that will feature in this thesis. An elaboration of each concept will follow further along in this thesis.

Migrant social networks

In this thesis, migrant social networks are interpreted as ego-centred networks, the migrant experience and conception are central. The research focuses on all forms of communication or connectedness to the country of origin since this is one of the research objectives of this thesis, to find out how the migrant women are in touch with their country of origin, and then again what they define as country of origin. In this thesis, the existence of ties between migrants is added to the definition by Massey *et al.* who define migrant social networks as:

“Recurrent sets of interpersonal ties that bind migrants and non-migrants together within a web of reciprocal obligations that can be drawn upon to facilitate entry, adjustment, and employment at points of destination” (Massey, 1987; Boyd, 1989 and Portes, 1995 in Spittel 1998).

In this thesis, non-migrant implies both people who stay behind in the migrant’s country of origin as well as people in the host society and beyond. Social remittances, as will be explained below, are about ideas, norms and values, which are not possible to capture and travel in a box, but instead are a negotiation and interpretation of everyday interactions between people.

- Nature and dynamics of the social networks

Nature points to a descriptive knowledge whereas dynamics points to fluidity and change. The nature of the social network involves a description of the characteristics of this network. The dynamics of the social network involves both an analysis of the changes of the nature of the social network over time, and a critical mindset.

Social remittances

Social remittances are a rather poorly defined and ambiguous phenomenon. Peggy Levitt is a pioneer in defining social remittances. She applies a definition of social remittances as being the ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital that migrants export to their home communities (Levitt and Sørensen 2004, p.8). It is generally assumed that migrants, exposed to a new environment, gain new ideas and in their communication with relatives, friends or other relations, migrants will communicate about their lives, and thus about their (newly gained) ideas, values, habits, codes of conduct. They may consciously or unconsciously transmit these aspects to their country of origin which could lead to social transformation.

1.7 The research population

In this thesis, the research into social remittances is guided by the perspective of Filipina migrants. This research population is chosen on the basis of several grounds. Firstly, the familiarity with the research population through previous research which has been conducted in the Philippines has played a role in deciding on this specific research population. Moreover, when it comes to emigration and remittances, the Philippines rank 3rd in the top 10 remittance receiving countries according to the World Bank. The choice for migrant women has been made because gender is becoming an increasing focus in migration research. There has even been a special issue on gender and migration in

International Migration Review. In addition, male Filipino migrants are often seafarers whereas the Filipinas in this research are married and settled in the Netherlands, which makes them more accessible. In this following section, these motives will be confirmed.

1.7.1 The culture of emigration and its management in the Philippines.

The Republic of the Philippines is located in South East Asia. The country is made up of more than 7,000 islands. It has a population of 92 million (Migration and Remittance Factbook the Philippines 2011) that represents various linguistic, cultural and racial groups and a colonial history. Three centuries in a convent followed by 50 years in Hollywood characterizes the 300 years of Spanish rule and the 48 years of American government (Dorai & Bell, 2006). The Spanish and American's have left their footprints in the language and culture. Moreover, the Philippines is the only predominantly Christian nation in Asia.



Figure 1 - South East Asia
 Scale: 1:32,000,000 at 5° N
 Source: http://www.freeworldacademy.com/globalleader/images/southeast_asia_ref_2002.jpg

Figure 2 – the Philippines
 Source: http://www.cia.gov/rp.htmlfactbook/maps/maptemplate_library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate_rp.html

The Philippines are not only out of the ordinary when it comes to cultural or religious aspects. When it comes to migration we see remarkable numbers and policies. The World Bank Migration and Remittance Factbook on the Philippines shows that emigrants make up 4,3% of the population in 2010, whereas the world average lies as 3,2% (2011). When we look at statistics of the East Asia and Pacific region, the average percentage of emigrants of the population in that region is 1.1% (World Bank 2011). China is stated as top emigration country in the region, followed by the Philippines, since the stock of emigrants of China in 2010 is 8,343.6 thousands (World Bank 2011) and that of the Philippines 4,275.2 thousands (World Bank 2011). In sheer numbers, China is the biggest emigration country in the region, yet when we look at relative numbers, the Philippines rank highest since emigrants make up only 0.6% of the population of China (World Bank 2011). In total, over 8.2 million native Filipinos work or live abroad, equivalent to almost 25 percent of the total labour force (Ruiz, 2008).

This raises the question why the Philippines have such high numbers of emigrants? The Philippine government plays a part in this. Initially, Filipinos emigrated to the United States, which was a result of the Philippines being a US colony. In the 1970s however, president Ferdinand Marcos, in need of foreign currency, saw an opportunity in sending his population to countries in the Middle East where labour was needed for the oil industry. This pull factor from the Middle East was accompanied by an internal push factor, that of low economic growth and high unemployment. The Marcos government practices institutionalized management of temporary contract workers. The government promotes labour migration in several ways. Ruiz (2008) names four main sets of resources which the Philippines government provides:

Regulation of the overseas recruitment industry:

The main element of the government's emigration policy is the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) which was established in 1982. The mission of the POEA is:

"POEA connects to the world, and in partnership with all stakeholders, facilitates the generation and preservation of decent jobs for Filipino migrant workers, promotes their protection and advocates their smooth reintegration into Philippine society" (POEA Annual Report 2009).

A managed deployment process:

In order to emigrate legally, the migrant has to attend pre-departure orientation seminars in which education about the destination country is a central element. Also, the migrant gets an Overseas Filipino Worker's (OFW) identification card that also functions as a Visa card.

Representation and protection:

Besides the POEA, the government has also established the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA). The government tries to encourage migration through official channels, in order to have a form of control over the workers. If workers engage in an official contract, they are offered benefits:

"For its duly registered members, OWWA delivers a wide range of health care, disability and death benefits, scholarships and financial assistance for education and training, workers assistance and on-site services, and social services and family welfare assistance subject to the qualification requirements and availability of OWWA funds." (OWWA official website).

Recording mechanisms:

The before mentioned identification card is part of the registration system of migrants, along with an annual Survey of Overseas Filipinos.

Among countries in its region, the Philippines offers a fairly comprehensive package of programs and services covering all phases of migration, from pre-departure to services in the destination country to return and reintegration (Asis, 2006). Moreover, the Philippines was the first country to officially aim at protecting its OFWs. In order to strengthen a culture of emigration, every year since 1983 the Bagong Bayni Awards are handed out to twenty outstanding migrant workers. Bagong Bayni means modern-day hero. What constitutes an outstanding migrant worker you may ask? The award is given to workers who have demonstrated moral fortitude, hard work, and a track record of sending money home (O'Neil, 2004).

1.7.2 The importance of financial remittances for the Philippines

Money sent home is called remittance. Remittances are an important source of foreign exchange. Worldwide, the size of the remittance flows, which are on a world level three times higher than Official Development Aid (ODA) has produced much enthusiasm towards this source of income. Remittance receiving countries are concentrated in the regions East Asia, Latin America, and South Asia. Within these regions, there are dominating countries. In Latin America, Mexico accounts for 34% of remittances. India, with USD 10 billion accounts for 73% of South Asia. In East Asia, the Philippines are relatively the number one remittance receiving country with 43% of East Asia (Mellyn, 2003), see table 1 below.

Remittances form an important factor in the emigration policy of the Philippines. In order to encourage migrants to remit, the OWWA provides an identification card that also works as a Visa Card and allows remittances to be sent for \$3 per transaction (O'Neil, 2004). Some theories on remittances, as will be explained later in this thesis, indicate that the better the ties with the homeland, the more stable the flow of remittances will be. The Philippine government promotes these ties to the homeland by emphasizing Filipino values, supporting migrant networks and allowing overseas workers to vote in Philippine elections. The large numbers of emigrants and the government's policies result in an enormous flow of financial remittances to the country.

In 2010, according to the World Bank, the Philippines rank 3rd in the top 10 remittance receiving countries in the world in billions of USD, with an amount of USD 21.3 bn. In 2007, the remittances accounted for 11.6% of GDP.

Remittances

<i>US\$ millions</i>	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010e
Inward remittance flows^a	10,243	11,471	13,566	15,251	16,302	18,642	19,766	21,311
<i>of which</i>								
Workers' remittances	7,681	8,617	10,668	12,481	13,255	14,536	15,141	–
Compensation of employees	2,558	2,851	2,893	2,758	3,030	4,092	4,585	–
Migrants' transfers	4	3	5	12	17	14	40	–
Outward remittance flows	18	17	15	20	35	44	58	–
<i>of which</i>								
Workers' remittances	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Compensation of employees	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Migrants' transfers	18	17	15	20	35	44	58	–

a. For comparison: net FDI inflows US\$1.4 bn, net ODA received US\$0.1 bn, total international reserves US\$37.5 bn, exports of goods and services US\$61.5 bn in 2008.

Table 1 - Financial remittances to the Philippines
Source: Philippines Factbook 2011, World Bank

The Philippine economy is for a large part dependent on remittances. This can have advantages such as the way the economy came through crises. The Philippine economy stands out as a resilient economy (Le Borgne, 2009). This resilience is related to the large income from remittances, which has been proven counter-cyclical during crises (Le Borgne 2009 ; Philippines Development Report 2009). The Philippines have a diversified OFW source, that has sustained its economy during the crisis:

“In previous crises, remittances have been counter-cyclical thanks to the country’s extensive diversification—in terms of geography, skills, occupation, gender—of its overseas workforce” (Philippines Development Report 2009).

Several scholars point to remittances being a development tool. Often named advantages of remittance flows is that they are rather stable. Moreover, remittance flows are higher than ODA and reach individuals and families rather than governments. Remittances are argued to protect families from income shocks, household welfare, nutrition, food, health and living conditions (Haas, de, 2007). Migration in this view is seen as a livelihood strategy. However, this Philippine emigration culture with its strong focus on overseas employment opportunities and remittance enthusiasm, comes at the expense of the internal job market. It should be noted that this remittance-dependency has also another face. Mitchell (2006) terms the contemporary approach to remittances narrow, economic and short-term oriented. The statement that migration begets migration also implies in some cases that migrants come from few, specific regions of a country, which then again leads to remittances flowing to these regions, and not being spread equally over the country. Migrants generally remit to family and friends in their social networks. In the case of the Philippines, the clustering of OFWs is not extreme, yet the National Statistics Office reports from the Survey of Overseas Filipinos April-September 2009 indicates that 45% of the total OFWs came from three regions, namely Calabarzon, Central Luzon and the National Capital Region. This is similar to the findings in this study, of which three out of four interviewees are originally from the Manila area or have studied in the capital city. The remittance-dependency makes the Philippine economy reliant on other economies and countries and their rules of contracts with the workers. As a consequence of high remittance flows governments, like is the case in the Philippines, devoid attention from their own internal job market. The culture of migration that has emerged in the Philippines makes people seeking dreams overseas, because of a lack of trust and opportunities in their home country. The government is promoting temporary migrant workers, yet when the economic and political climate in the Philippines is not improved, the chances of migrants returning will be smaller, which can lead to brain-drain. These elements may lead to structural problems. Moreover, Mitchell (2006) argues that the social and psychological costs of migration on sending families and communities must also be offset against remittance benefits.

In their blog ‘standplaats Siquijor’ in the magazine Tambuli, Bea Jacobs en Jerry Hofmans, two Dutch people who emigrated to the Philippines to engage in social welfare projects, write about the effects of remittances they see in their daily lives. They write that migration has led to a high degree of desire for luxury and idleness among the people in the Philippines who receive remittances from an OFW (Jacobs and Hofmans 2008). They see the two faces of the coin named remittances:

“The remittances both stimulate and threaten the local economy” (Jacobs and Hofmans 2008).²

Remittances threatening the local economy is related to this desire for luxury products, which are mainly imported goods and thus do not create employment opportunities in the Philippines. De Boer (2009) notices two opposing trends. On the one hand, remittances

are sometimes used to set up small businesses by relatives of the migrant in the Philippines, whereas on other occasions it has been observed that relatives in the Philippines choose the idle path and quit their jobs, since the remittances will fulfil their needs. These effects of financial remittances hint at an element of migration that goes beyond business. This element, the social element of migration, forms the main theme of this thesis.

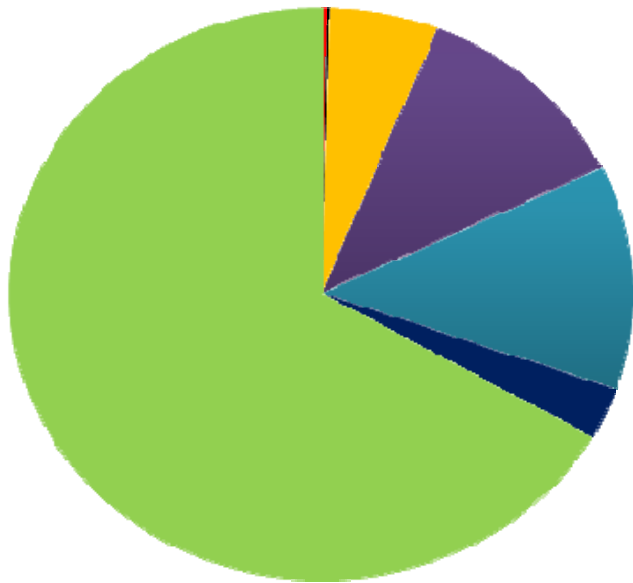
1.7.3 A gendered research - The choice for Filipina respondents

As explained before in this thesis, the research population is made up of Filipina migrants to the Netherlands. Why the choice for this specific nationality and why a gendered research?

During the final year of my bachelor studies of International Tourism Management and Consultancy I conducted research into host-guest relations due to tourism on Boracay Island, the Philippines. I spent four weeks on this island conducting research and a few days in the capital city Manila. These two places do not represent the whole of 7107 islands of the country. This visit to the country formed the initial interest in Filipino people. Related to the topic of migration, a lack of knowledge about the Filipino migrants in the Netherlands urged a sense of curiosity. According to Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (1), the Filipino population grew from 7.738 persons in 1996 to 16.719 persons in 2011. Filipinos made up only 0.31 percent of the foreign population of the Netherlands in 1996, and make up 0,49 percent of this group in 2011 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2011 (2)). Filipinos are a small but well integrated and organised group of immigrants.

Female migrants from the Philippines to the Netherlands represented 68.4 percent in 1996 and currently represent 67.4 percent of the total migrants from the Philippines in 2011 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2011, (3)). Of the first generation migrants from the Philippines, even 78.9% is female. The percentage of male/female for all Asian migrants in the Netherlands is almost 50/50 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2011 (4)). When we look at migrants from the Philippines throughout Europe, even 80% is female (Bagasao 2007, p.30). This dominance of women among migrants from the Philippines can to some extent be related to means of migration, namely marriage to a Dutch man and the kind of work which they perform. According to POEA of the total new hires registered in 2009, 53% are female. Of the 175,296 new female hires the lion share of 67% performed an occupation in the category service workers. The diagrams on the next page indicate the labour division of female migrants from the Philippines to all countries in the year 2009.

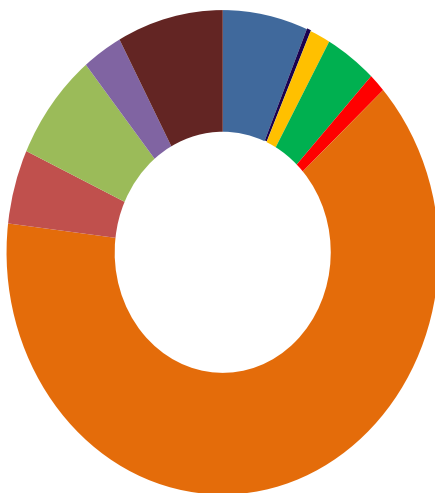
Occupation of newly hired Filipina migrants in 2009



- ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL WORKERS
- AGRICULTURAL ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND FORESTRY WORKERS FISHERMEN AND HUNTERS
- CLERICAL AND RELATED WORKERS
- PRODUCTION AND RELATED WORKERS TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT OPERATORS AND LABORERS
- PROFESSIONAL TECHNICAL AND RELATED WORKERS
- SALES WORKERS
- SERVICE WORKERS

Based on statistics of POEA. OFW Deployment per Skill and Country - New hires for the Year 2009.
http://www.poea.gov.ph/stats/Skills/Skill_Country_Sex/Deployment%20per%20Skill,%20Country%20and%20Sex%202009.pdf

Service workers subdivision



- WAITERS BARTENDERS
- SUPERVISORS HOUSEKEEPING
- MAIDS AND HOUSEKEEPING SERVICE
- LAUNDERERS DRY CLEANERS PRESSERS
- HOUSEKEEPING
- HAIR DRESSERS BARBERS BEAUTICIANS
- DOMESTIC HELPERS AND HOUSEHOLD
- COOKS WAITERS BARTENDERS
- CHARWOKERS CLEANERS
- CARETAKES BUILDINGS
- CAREGIVERS AND CARETAKERS

Based on statistics of POEA. OFW Deployment per Skill and Country - New hires for the Year 2009.
http://www.poea.gov.ph/stats/Skills/Skill_Country_Sex/Deployment%20per%20Skill,%20Country%20and%20Sex%202009.pdf

The gendered aspect of this thesis can for one reason be related to these statistics. Another reason for a gendered aspect in this thesis is the well-organized character of Filipinas. Van den Muijzenberg (2004) notes that the Filipino community in the Netherlands has proven “an organizational hub for European-scale political activism, feminist organizing and NGO-related mobilizing of the host society” (in Maas 2011). The social networks of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands (even throughout Europe) is also quite dense. They live all over the country, but are in contact with each other. Padilla (2007) characterizes the Filipino community as one of the most highly organized migrant communities in the Netherlands.

It has been demonstrated that most female migrants from the Philippines engage in service and domestic related work. The respondents who participated in this research do not comply with this most common typification of Filipina migrants.. The women occupy jobs in tourism, international development and caretaking. Besides these day jobs, the women are actively involved in feminist networks and development projects. They are quite prominent members of the Filipino community in the Netherlands and beyond and have been engaged with some renowned organisations like COS, Novib and Diaspora Forum for Development. This organised character has implications for the forming but especially the negotiation of social remittances and also for the transmission and impact, as will be explained in chapter 4. The research population in this study thus does not reflect the common Filipina migrant over the world. The migrant women in this study more than the common Filipina migrant live in two worlds for caretaker migrant are often temporary migrants and their engagement with the host society is more limited than that of the migrant women in this study. The choice for activists has been made on the basis of theory on social remittances. As Levitt and others assume, a higher degree of integration to the host society would augment the probability for social remittances to be transmitted. Moreover, since the phenomenon of social remittances is a rather abstract one, to study this concept in a limited period of time and resources, the probability of discovering social remittances as such has been deemed highest by studying this particular group of migrant women who actively and openly engage in transnational activities, beyond family contacts.

1.7.4 Profile of Filipina respondents

As outlined in the previous paragraph, the empirical part of this thesis explores the social ties of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands towards their country of origin. The previous paragraph explains the choice for female migrants from the Philippines, but this group of respondents can be narrowed down even further. Filipina women already came to the Netherlands since the 1960s, for various reasons. Moreover we can distinguish several types of women among this group of migrants. For example there are the large group of au-pairs and caregivers and also the undocumented migrants. For this research, the respondents have several characteristics that are expected to give the most insight into social remittances. These characteristics will be:

- Born and raised in the Philippines
- Female
- Migrated to the Netherland in the period of 1975-1985 (the Marcos period):

The migrants who migrated during the period of 1975-1985 are assumed to have different experiences than migrants who migrated in other periods. Moreover the current age is important because this group of migrants has a lot of experience in the Netherlands and has participated in the technology and IT wave, which older migrants might not have and which can have an effect on their social networks.

- First-generation migrant:

First-generation migrants have different experiences and mentalities towards their country of origin than second-generation migrants. The ties of first-generation migrants towards their country of origin are assumed to be tighter than those of second-generation migrants (See section 2.4).

- Speaking Dutch language:

This is a form of integration into the host society and facilitates the interviews.

- Actively involved in the Dutch society

With actively involved I mean speaking the language, being actively involved in society by working for a company or organisation other than as a caregiver in a Dutch family's house, and taking part in social activities like sports or volunteering. I chose for migrants who are actively involved in the Dutch society because theory (Levitt 1998, Oké 2008) argues that the level of integration into the host society has an effect on the emergence and transfer of social remittances.

- Maintaining ties to the country of origin

This is the core of the research, therefore this is a crucial criteria for respondents to fulfil. Ideas and values are shared and negotiated in social networks. Hence social relations are a prerequisite for social remittance transfers to take place.

1.7.5 The respondents - Let me introduce...

The respondents that participated in this research can be characterized along the criteria in the profile mentioned in the previous section. The four respondents all migrated to the Netherlands in the same period, and they are all 'activists' in relation to their country of origin. All of them have been educated in the Philippines. Prior to their international migration these women were 'revolutionaries' in their area of origin as they for example participated in political protests. All of them are, or have been, married to a Dutch man, whom 3 out of 4 met in the Philippines. The women have been living in the Netherlands for approximately 25 years already, but have until today remained contact to their country of origin in several ways as will be outlined in the course of this chapter. Since they have been living in the Netherlands for such a long time, one can question whether these women still fit in the category of being international migrants? The answer would be yes, since these women have migrated for personal, voluntary reasons and have become a member of the host society as well as maintained ties to the country of origin. Moreover, all of them plan to return to the Philippines one day. According to the glossary of migration related term of UNESCO, the term migrant can be understood as "any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country" (UNESCO). The migrants in this research qualify as migrants according to this definition. They all have a job, and most of them have a Dutch husband, which can be considered to produce significant social ties to the Netherlands. Interesting is that Esperanza mentions that her Dutch husband will join her as they will build a house together in the Philippines one day, but they will come to the Netherlands for holiday every year. This makes the husband to become an international migrant.

In order to understand their story and the analyses in this thesis, the respondents are shortly introduced. The respondents have approved for the use of their real names and therefore these are stated in this thesis. Esperanza requested for her last name to be confidential.

Ms. Rohlee Deguzman

Interviewed on april 18th 2011, at 09.00 in her house in Maastricht.

Rohlee Deguzman studied in Manila and was actively involved in a student movement. Later, she got involved in a feminist movement. She attends international conferences and this is how she got in touch with a Dutch feminist organisation who invited her to the Netherlands. In 1987 she first arrived here. In the Netherlands she was informed about an IT course, which she took part in and eventually stayed here as a student. She learned the Dutch language and remained active in feminist movements. She established a foundation against women-trafficking. She got married to a Dutchman and has one daughter, who she lives with in her house in Maastricht. She has separated from her husband. Currently she is working for COS Limburg, a regional expertise centre for development issues and international cooperation, which is how I got in touch with Rohlee.

Mrs. Jessie Cultura Ligan

Interviewed May 16th, at 13.30 and June 29th, at 14.30 in her house in Utrecht.

Jessie Ligan was raised by her grandparents and she left her town Cabubuhan at the age of 17 to study in the city. She met her Dutch husband in the Philippines as he was working there as a volunteer for Novib. They have been married for 30 years now. Of these 30 years of marriage, she spend the last 27 years in the Netherlands. Jessie and her husband did not plan to leave the Philippines, as they were involved in an organization for development, especially focused on farmers and women and also their daughter was born in the Phillipines. The hard Marcos regime and her rebelling nature made that the couple was wanted, and they needed to leave the country. On April 24th 1984 they came to the Netherlands, where both of them had to face a process of integration since they had lived in the Philippines for a long time. Jessie had never left the country before. Here, their son was born and Jessie wanted to be actively involved and needed to get her hands on something, so she joined a cultural group that promotes the Filipino culture. She organized workshops and performances in the Netherlands and abroad. Later, she established Damayan foundation, which lives out projects in the Philippines, again the focus lies on women. Under the umbrella of the Damayan foundation she started a project called Salamat. Together with her Dutch friend Lia she approached a school in the area that adopted Salamat as a beneficiary for their fundraising activities. Moreover, with her project 'Maria goes to town' she won a migrant-idea competition organized by Oikos and Cordaid, and with this she won 10.000 Euros for her idea of setting up a market in her town of origin. Currently she works in an elderly home as a caregiver. I got in touch with Jessie via Rohlee, who introduced me to her.

Mrs. Grace Cabactulan

Interviewed May 18th, at 17.00 in her office in Rotterdam.

Grace Cabactulan is married to a Dutchman whom she met in the Philippines. Together they have two children, who are born in the Philippines. In 1983 she came to the Netherlands as a political refugee. Her family in the Philippines is politically active and so is Grace. She worked for KPN for a number of years but has always carried out voluntary activities related to advocacy and development. She is a member of the Diaspora forum for Development and is actively involved in the church. She sings and performs in a cultural group. She aims at women empowerment both here and in the Philippines. Currently she is working for Stella Maris where she provides pastoral care for seamen. I got in touch with Grace via Rohlee, who introduced me to her.

Mrs. Esperanza

Interviewed June 16th, at 14.00 in Eindhoven

Esperanza was born into a well-off family in the Philippines. She grew up Manila. Her father is a businessman and her mother actively helps him. Esperanza graduated from university and worked for a travel company in the Philippines. She met her Dutch husband via this job. She got married and migrated to the Netherlands with him. Here she took Dutch language classes and worked for KPN. After five more jobs she is currently working for @Leisure, again a leisure and holiday related company, which is how I met Esperanza. Besides her job she is involved in volunteering for a Filipino foundation for women. They organize meetings and give workshops.

Quotes

1

“Alleen de remittances wordt alleen veel over techniek gepraat, hoe moeten wij goedkoper remittances sturen, hoe moeten wij dit, maar niet de waarde en niet over de emoties die eraan gekoppeld aan het geld” (Interview Grace Cabactulan).

2

“Het buitenlandse geld stimuleert én bedreigt de lokale economie” (Jacobs and Hofmans 2008).

2- Theory

Some perspectives on the existence and continuation of migration were presented in the introductory section of this thesis. In this theoretical section the perspectives and theories will be more specific, focusing on the *impacts* of international migration in relation to *social networks* and *remittances*. In this thesis, when it comes to theory, an interpretative rather than a positivistic approach is adopted. It is not assumed that there is only one truth, but rather we can speak of intersubjective constructed reality. For a rather abstract phenomenon like social remittances, a tight theoretical framework of the emergence and transmission is not applicable. This thesis represents a contextual story that attempts to elaborate on the concept of social remittances through the perspective of a group of Filipina migrants.

2.1 Perspectives on the impacts of international migration

In his work, de Haas (2007) points to three perspectives on the impacts of international migration: Optimists, Pessimists and Pluralists. How do these strands of thought look at remittances? Where the neoclassical theory on migration does not consider remittances at all, the developmentalist optimist-perspective in the 1950s and 1960s highlights the financial stream from North to South and its development opportunities. The pessimist perspective that rules the 1970s and 1980s sees remittances as a form of dependency and decay rather than development. The pluralist lens considers remittances as part of a broader household livelihood strategy. Migration is seen as a family decision and the income of the migrant provides an additional source of income for the family back home which diversifies income sources and gives more security. To what extent do these three perspectives capture the dynamics and complexity of international migration? It can be said that both the optimist and pessimist approach take a rather narrow view of migration and remittances. The optimist perspective of the 1950s and 1960s as mentioned above mainly considers remittance streams from North to South:

“Developmentalist ‘migration optimists’ tend to think that migration leads to a North-South transfer of investment capital and accelerates the exposure of traditional communities to liberal, rational and democratic ideas, modern knowledge and education” (de Haas 2007, p.3).

The optimist perspective thus only considers one-way traffic when it comes to migration and its consequences, not being open for the complexity of multi-directional transnational flows that are inherent to international migration. The pessimist perspective was developed in a time period when structural visions flourished. The pessimists regard origin countries as passive and dependent and therewith do not capture the dynamics of international migration. The pluralist perspective on migration changed the static, bilateral view by recognizing both advantages and opportunities as well as on disadvantages and challenges of international migration. Hereby thus acknowledging the multidimensional nature of migration. The focus from the individual migrant as rational agent in the optimist view and the focus on the structural side of the pessimists have evolved following the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens where agency and structure reinforce and depend on each other. The pluralist perspective is thereby a transnational perspective and is the perspective that leads the way for both research and analyses in this study. A transnational approach challenges common terminology and the meaning of certain

concepts. One of such concepts is a border, more specifically the border of a nation-state. There is a body of literature that focuses on migrant trajectories which also influences the migrant and his or her potential destination. Social ties and decision making also take place in these trajectory spaces. Borders and specifically border management determine these trajectories to a certain extent, in the sense that they can influence the movements of people through e.g. visa regulations. A migrant brings things and ideas from his or her place of origin, through his trajectory journey, crossing borders, all the way to his or her destination. The border of a country could determine the migrant's trajectory via visa and other regulations, yet his or her social and financial activities are not limited to a nation-state border. They are transnational features and migration is blurring borders. Migration thus does not just take place between the country of origin and the country of destination. In line with this, Castles (2003) problematizes a containerized nation-state perspective:

"The tunnel vision brought about by such national models is a major barrier to understanding in migration research" (Castles 2003, p.24).

Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2009) agree with Castles in the sense that they also oppose nationalist thinking. The border of a country is not the same as the borders of society. Not only society expands beyond national borders, also economic affairs take place across borders. A country cannot be self-catered in this globalizing world. Especially the Philippines has redefined its national borders and affairs by actively sending migrant workers abroad. The affairs of the nation state as an inward-minded entity has made way for transnational nation-states. These states are often dependent on migrant remittances and develop policies to make emigrants and especially their remittances an internal part or their national affairs. This nationalist perspective forms also a burden for social remittances since ideas and values do not travel in a locked box from the Netherlands to the Philippines. Rather, ideas flow through many channels and are negotiated and often have multiple sources, that transcend national borders.

When we consider migration as transnational, the focus lies not on origin or destination but rather on social networks, transgressing and blurring borders. This transnational perspective leads us to see beyond the tangible and the focus lies not only on the migration of people but corollary on the migration of ideas. This leads us to explore the concept of social remittances.

2.2 Social remittances

This migration of ideas and values appears in the form of social remittances. This paragraph outlines the facets of social remittances and discusses the one-sided and unidirectional focus that is often attributed to social remittances and remittances in general.

2.2.1 A one-sided and unidirectional focus in the literature

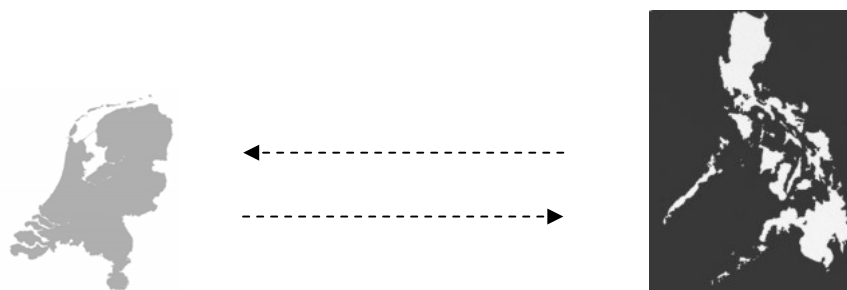
From exploration of the literature on remittances, a strong focus on financial remittances can be detected. According to de Haas, "(...) there has been a one-sided focus on remittances and their direct economic consequences' (2007, p.2). Other scholars like Faist, Pitkanen, Gerdes and Reisenauer in their working paper of 2010 for the Centre on Migration, Citizenship and Development share this view as they mention that there is much research literature focusing on the quantity and impact of migrants' cash transfers to their families and communities back home (2010, p.194) yet less on the social and

emotional aspects related to these cash transfers. Several scholars have however contributed to a broader scope of remittances (Goldring 2003; Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen and Virkama 2010; Levitt 1998; Suksomboon 2008; de Haas). This in the form of social remittances.

Besides the one-sided focus on remittances, being centred around financial aspects, there is also a unidirectional focus in the literature on remittances. Often the remittances, both financial and social, are described as taking place from the destination country to the country of origin.

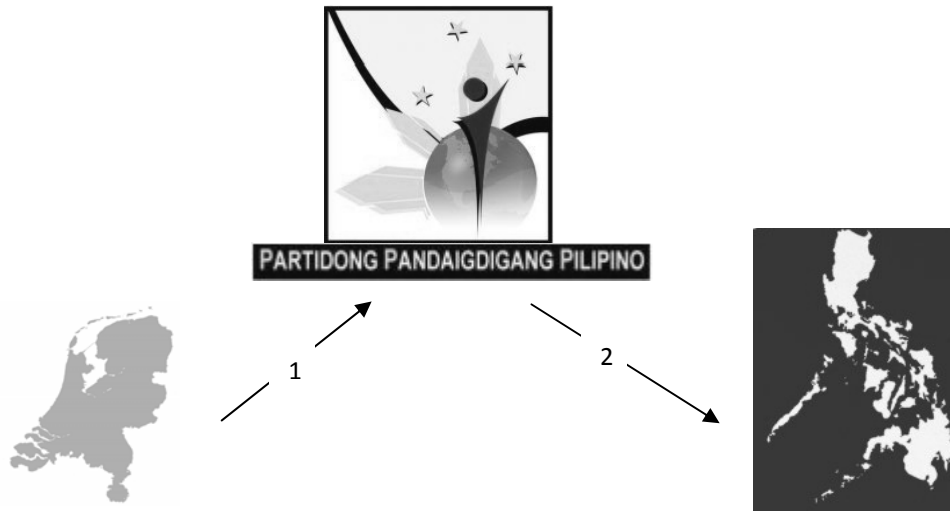
“The transmission of social remittances has mainly been described as a one-way process where migrants adopt new ideas and models of behaviour in the immigration country and convey them back home to non-migrants living in the country of origin” (Faist et al. 2010, p.195).

Financial remittances are not solely flowing in one direction. Monetary flows from the country of origin in order to support the migrant during his or her initial period abroad are an example of a financial flow in the opposite direction.



Messent, Saleh and Solomon in their article ‘Asian Families “Back Home”’: An Unexplored Resource’ (2005) highlight the multi-dimensional nature of remittances. In this article, a number of case examples are used to illustrate how Bangladeshi migrants living in the east end of London make use of the relationships to their families back home as a crucial resource in overcoming difficulties encountered in their new country. First generation Asian migrants in England are said to consider ‘home’ as a resource in times of crisis as it provides a sense of connectedness. Moreover, financial flows do not only take place between the country of origin and the country of destination. For example, several Filipino migrants all over the world are members of Partidong Pandaigdigang Pilipino (PPP), a political party of the Philippines, led by overseas Filipinos worldwide. Members of this party transfer money and ideas to this organisation, which are then negotiated and directed towards the Philippines, forming a mediating factor. Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen, and Virkama (2010) argue that there are more aspects and entities to migration than only sending and destination country.

“Our conception is that the binary constellation of ‘receiving country’ and ‘sending country’ in explaining border-crossing transmission of social remittances is problematic and should be supplemented by a transnational approach, taking into account the role of mediating factors such as individual migrants, transnational networks and improved communication technology” (Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen, and Virkama 2010, in Faist, T., Pitkanen, P., Gerdes, J. and Reisenauer, E. (2010) p.196)



In a transnational lens, including the whole Filipino population, then of course this image fails to portray all other countries/communities in the world where members of PPP live. Also, all other (maybe virtual) communities that influence the ideas and values of migrants in the Netherlands are missing. The display of the countries should be seen as purely an instrument to make a point about intermediating aspects and thus counteracting the direct travel path perspective and to illustrate the combination of social and financial remittances.

Let us look at what these arrows represent. In the context of this paragraph, the arrows are to represent monetary flows, and the image is to illustrate that financial remittances are not one-way or straight-way processes. However, when we adapt another lens, the arrows can also represent social remittances in the form of political ideas and influences being transferred to the Philippines. Both arrows can be seen in the form of purely social remittances in the form of ideas and values, however arrow 1 can also be seen as financial remittances being transformed into social remittances in the form of political activities in the Philippines that are sponsored by money from overseas Filipinos.

Although Levitt is considered a pioneer in defining social remittances and many scholars use the definition that she proposed, Levitt is not the only scholar defining social remittances. Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen and Virkama (2010) provide a more general understanding of social remittances, as conceptions and practices transferred through interaction between individuals or within transnational networks, communities or organizations in transnational social spaces (Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen, and Virkama, 2010, p.196). They provide an additional element to the theorization of social remittances. They argue that social remittances play an important role in three specific spheres of life, namely family, work and politics. When it comes to the family sphere, it is argued that social remittances can alter family structures. For example through introducing birth control, changing gender roles within families or different marital practices. In the work sphere, changes in work organization, occupation types and work attitudes are possibly transformed due to migrant influences, see section 4.3.1 for an example from the Philippine case study.

2.2.2 Conceptualizing social remittances

Levitt, being a pioneer when it comes to developing the concept of social remittances as a distinct phenomenon, defines social remittances as being the ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that migrants export to their home communities (Levitt and Sørensen 2004, p.8). This description indicates the social element and makes clear that this is

distinct from financial remittances. Yet this definition adopts a unidirectional focus. The existence of social remittances would imply that international migrants have different ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital than non-migrants. How is that? It is argued that the act of physical movement across space, i.e international migration, exposes the migrant to a new environment including new ideas, behaviours and people. This encounter with another society is argued to have an effect on a migrant in the sense that the migrant will adopt some new principles into his own ideas and behaviour. In her article of 1998, she researches migrants from the Dominican Republic to the USA and related to this case study she argues that “more contact with the host society means greater exposure to its different features, more reflection on existing practices, and a greater potential for incorporating new routines” (Levitt 1998, p.930). Portes and Zhou already established this as they argued in 1993 that “the degree to which migrants' interpretative frames are altered is a function of their interaction with the host society (Portes and Zhou, 1993 in Levitt 1998, p.930). This is among others, a reason for choosing specifically this profile of Filipina respondents as was outlined in section 1.7.4. The Filipinas interviewed for this research are all Dutch-speaking and participating to a high degree in the Dutch society as well as remaining committed to their country of origin. Moreover, the respondents are also highly involved in issues concerning their country of origin. The rationale behind this theory is that more contact with the host society would impose more ‘new’ ideas, values and perspectives to the migrant which means that the chance of his or her ideas changing is higher. These ideas could form a social remittance.

We have established that social remittances are ideas, values, habits and social capital and that these travel across transnational social spaces. Now we look at what exactly travels and how Levitt theorizes this journey. There are three kinds of social remittances according to Levitt. She specifies social remittances into three categories. One of these categories is called normative structures. This is a rather general category of norms which can range from norms for social behaviour, familial responsibility, gender roles, community participation to political aspirations. Then there is the category of systems of practice, which implies the actual acts based on the normative structures. For example the act of household labor, religious practices or political participation are examples of systems of practice. Social capital is a third kind of social remittance that refers to the effect of the migrant status and the ability to attain advantages in the community of origin and vice versa.

These social remittances can be transmitted to the country of origin. Levitt (1998) writes that social remittances are exchanged in several situations. One situation in which social remittances are exchanged is when migrants return to live or visit their communities of origin. All of the respondents indicated that they have visited the Philippines on a regular basis over the years and intend to remain to continue to do so. The other way around, when non-migrants visit the migrant, a situation also arises in which social remittances can be exchanged. These two situations involve a physical presence. Besides this physical presence, communication between migrant and non-migrant(s) over a distance through letters, telephone or other mediums also forms a situation for social remittance exchange according to Levitt. In this thesis, the sum of these contact moments is congregated in the form of social networks.

Situations in which social remittances are exchanged according to Levitt

- When migrants return to live or visit their communities of origin
- When non-migrants visit the migrant
- When migrant and non-migrant(s) communicate through letters, telephone or other media

In her article of 2005 Levitt states:

“First, while it is often difficult to distinguish how global culture is disseminated, it is possible to specify how social remittances flow. They travel through identifiable pathways; their source and destination are clear. Migrants and non-migrants can state how they learned of a particular idea or practice and why they decided to adopt it” (Levitt 2005, p.3).

The statement that social remittances emanate from clear sources and travel through identifiable pathways to clear destinations, seems a bit unduly. If by clear sources she means a migrant who remits, then this could indeed be rather clear. However if by clear sources she means the source from where the migrant has adopted a social remittance, this would not so easily be defined as a clear source. Where do we get our ideas from? Of course, new technological ideas might be easy to track down, like in the story of Grace where she points at specific technological tools that she encountered here in the Netherlands.

“When I came here I saw for example that there is a portable something.. equipment for mowing the lawn. We do not have that in our country. Here you also have a portable, for maintenance of the roads, you know, for tarmac, a small one, we do not have that either. Technology from here, something to cut the branches of the trees, I do not know what it is called, but the technology is something you can transmit, talk about” (Interview Grace Cabactulan, May 18th 2011).¹

When it comes to norms and values however, tracking down where one learnt these is not so easy. It is often stated that the level of contact with the host society matters in attaining new norms and values that might constitute a social remittance. However, as can be seen from Levitt’s latest work and the stories of the migrants in this thesis, the migrant social network expands beyond the host society. In her talk for the Joint Seminar Series of UNU-MERIT and Maastricht School of Governance, Levitt (2011) asks what are the salient sites of experience for international migrants? This is where the networks and the people they are connected to are located around the world. It is not just a question of one sending and a receiving country, it is more expansive than that. In her article together with Jaworski she denotes that these salient sites are “multi-layered and multi-sited, including not just the home and host countries but other sites around the world that connect migrants to their conational’s and coreligionists” (Levitt and Jaworski 2007, p.131). This implies that values and norms are not only learnt in the host society of the destination country, but norms and values are shared through international networks. Grace, for example, is an active member of Diaspora for Development, which is a network of migrants of different nationalities that spreads over four continents. She says:

“When you talk about the Philippines, it is not just about the country, Filipinos are all over the world. That is a layer that also belongs to your Filipino contacts, Filipino family, friends who live and work in other parts of the world. They also exist and matter. These days it is easier to contact family, friends, classmates that live all over the world and for me those are all part of the Filipino network” (Interview Grace Cabactulan, May 18th 2011).²

Rohlee also mentions her contacts outside the Netherlands. She has contacts in Scotland, Switzerland, Denmark and Italy. Her transnational networks extend even outside Europe.

“That is why I always say that migrants are transnational. Borders are crossed indeed. Not only between the Philippines and the Netherlands, no. Also America, when I go to Amerika I have contacts in California, in San Fransisco and New York” (Interview Rohlee Deguzman, April 18th 2011).³

This means that migrants do not only have access to the information and ways of live in the Netherlands, but also elsewhere. That implies that the exposure to norms and values is not limited to those of the host society. This again eliminates methodological nationalism.

Even if the source of a norm or value would be clear, norms and values are negotiated and transformed. They do not exist in a pure form and therefore, in my opinion, the source of such a social remittance cannot be defined as being clear. This finding is in line with what Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen and Virkama state. They comment that Levitt's findings should be critically amended. They similarly question the ability to identify the source of ideas and values as they talk about gender identities:

“Stating that migrants adopt and transfer gender identities of receiving societies would be difficult to prove empirically, since it would require a deep analysis of ideas and beliefs behind certain type of gendered practices and a reliable way to prove that migrant has really internalized these ideas” (Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen and Virkama 2010, pp.196-197).

Financial remittances are, compared to social remittances, easier to track down due to registration of financial flows. Especially through time, it is not always clear where a certain idea or tradition came from or how one took notice of this. This is especially the case when social remittances scale out and scale up. Scaling out happens for example when migrants transmit for example a plan to open a health clinic according to a Western example. It is possible that this practice does not just stay in the health care sector but transfers to educational or other sectors as well. Migrant ideas and values might also scale up to other levels of governance, like for example happens in the ‘tres por uno’ arrangement where governments also contribute to a migrant project, often in the form of providing maintenance or land.

Let's consider what Levitt writes about when a social remittance arrives, and consider what actually adopted thereof or what is ignored. Levitt (2011) argues that the difference between what is in place and what is being introduced is significant in this respect. When something is very different from what one knows, from one's frame of reference, it can be resisted because it is so different. Social remittances are an ambiguous phenomenon, even more so because the remittance that is transmitted is constantly being negotiated, debated and transformed. This can have multiple causes. For one, the receiving person might not agree with the remittances in its pure form, but might use some elements of the remittance. For example, the women in this study highlight the value of earning your own money and being independent. The women in the Philippines might agree that they have to earn their own money, but might earn this income in a way that the migrants do not agree with. Another way in which the remittance can be transformed is through the process of transmission. This can be compared to a gossip story that goes from one person to the next, and with every step the story changes a bit due to a lack of remembrance or addition of fictional elements. Social remittances can also already be negotiated by the migrant before transmission.

This negotiation takes place in social networks. We have seen that social remittance transmission usually occurs between individuals or groups that know one another personally or who are connected to one another by mutual social ties in the form of migrant networks.

2.3 Migrant social networks

Adopting a pluralist perspective on migration provides a lens that allows for complexity, fluidity and change to be captured. Migrants are not seen as either departing or arriving, but in a constant state of mobility through communications and actions that take place in transnational networks of social relations. This conceptualization of migration and its impacts as taking place due to and within social relations, makes the phenomenon bigger than only the migrants themselves. Non-migrants are connected to migrants through social relations. Already in the 1960s and 1970s social networks were studied as part of the process of chain migration. Often the phenomenon of chain migration is studied in the sense that 'migration begets migration' (Massey *et al.* 1993, in Gregory *et al.* 2009). The article of Boyd (1989) calls for greater specification of the role of networks in migration research and the inclusion of women. The perspective that Vertovec (1993), Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004 in Gregory *et al.* 2009) take, namely that of transnational networks, is in line with the focus of this thesis. Studying international migration through social networks has already been linked to a meso level of research (Meyer 2001). This approach bridges macroeconomic and microeconomic neoclassical theory.

"Thus, studying networks, particularly those linked to family and households, permits understanding migration as a social product - not as the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actors, not as the sole result of economic or political parameters, but rather as an outcome of all these factors in interaction" (Boyd, 1989, p. 642).

Social networks are significant elements of all people's lives. In this thesis social networks are examined in the context of international migration and are consequently often referred to as migrant networks. Migrants have networks to their area of origin, they develop networks in trajectory spaces and in the destination.

"Migrant networks are defined in the extant literature as recurrent sets of interpersonal ties that bind migrants and non-migrants together within a web of reciprocal obligations that can be drawn upon to facilitate entry, adjustment, and employment at points of destination" (Spittel 1998, p.1).

The elements of a social network in this context are transnational ties. The content and character of several social relations from a Filipina migrant perspective are researched. These transnational ties are frequently seen as a resource, particularly in the case of Asian migrants (Messent *et al.* 2005). These networks can be helpful for all sorts of things. Often named advantages are connections to housing, labor, information about legal procedures, transit routes etc. Another argument for keeping ties to the area of origin is to possibly return, or sometimes pressure from the area of origin as a social obligation. Often risk and costs are main motives and reasons for the establishment and maintenance of migrant networks (Faist 2000). In short, research related to remittances often characterizes social networks as foundations of social support and sources of information.

2.3.1 Granovetter: the strength of weak ties

Granovetter (1973) introduced the theory on the strength of weak ties. This is a theory about social networks, not necessarily related to migration. The theory unravels a person's social networks into strong and weak ties. The strong ties refer to close friends and family relations. This is a rather homogenous group as they share much in common. The weak ties refer to acquaintances. One person can access ties outside his or her own social networks through these weak ties. With weak ties, a person does not necessarily need to share common grounds, which makes the network of weak ties more diverse than the network of strong ties. The relations in the network of strong ties are also likely to know each other. Faist (In Hammer *et al.* 1997 p. 199) also speaks about strong and weak

ties. He however defines strong ties as direct, face-to-face transactions between actors involved and he argues that weak ties are defined by indirect relationships that involve no direct or only fleeting contact. In this perspective of Faist then, the ties that the Filipina migrants have towards their family in the Philippines, that involve very limited face-to-face contact moments can be regarded as being weak ties. The status of skype conversations should be negotiated in this case, as this medium does allow to see one's face in real time. Looking through the lens of the approach of Granovetter or Faist could thus have diverging effects on the analysis. In this case, the definitions of Granovetter are used to analyze the findings in this study. The ties of the migrant women with their family and friends in the Philippines are considered to be familial ties and thus would fit into Granovetter's definition of strong ties. For migrants who live transnational lives however, the debate about this can continue. Yes the ties to the Philippines are mainly familial ties, but if we look at the sharing of common grounds, which is also an element of Granovetter's definition of strong ties, it can be questioned to what extent the migrant and non-migrant share common grounds. Of course they share their roots, and it can be argued that through social remittances, their ideas and values are exchanged and therewith levelled.

The theory of Granovetter argues that weak ties are of significant importance for a person's accomplishment of goals. This significance lies in the cohesive nature of weak ties. One person's weak tie has his or her own network of both strong and weak ties, which are likely to be diverse type of contacts. For example, finding a job is often facilitated by a network of acquaintances rather than family members. As Granovetter (1983) explains the network of strong and weak ties:

"Ego will have a collection of close friends, most of whom are in touch with one another a densely knit clump of social structure. Moreover, Ego will have a collection of acquaintances, few of whom know one another. Each of these acquaintances, however, is likely to have close friends in his own right and therefore to be enmeshed in a closely knit clump of social structure, but one different from Ego's. The weak tie between Ego and his acquaintance, therefore, becomes not merely a trivial acquaintance tie but rather a crucial bridge between the two densely knit clumps of close friends" (Granovetter 1983, p.202).

From this, Granovetter (1983) argues that it follows that a person with few weak ties will be deprived of information from distant parts of the social system and is dependent on local, partial information from his or her strong ties. This strength-of-weak-ties-principle underpins that different social relations are used for different purposes.

Let us now apply the strength-of-weak-ties-principle of Granovetter to migrant social networks. Like mentioned, strong ties generally share common grounds and without communication outside the strong ties, habits would stay the same. Weak ties connect several social groups and through these ties, ideas are introduced. Granovetter talks about this effect in the context of cultural diffusion:

"What makes cultural diffusion possible, then, is the fact that small cohesive groups who are liable to share a culture are not so cohesive that they are entirely closed; rather, ideas may penetrate from other such groups via the connecting medium of weak ties" (Granovetter 1983, p.215).

This principle of Granovetter can be applied to the transmission of social remittances via migrant networks. The international migrant brings ideas, values and norms to his or her country of origin through his social networks. The strong ties with family members will be the first ones to receive these ideas. The family members in the country of origin have their own networks of strong and weak ties, and so the ideas transmitted by the migrant

can be spread over a larger area, including people who are not directly related to an international migrant.

In this research, the social networks of Filipina migrants have not been unravelled into strong and weak ties. During the interviews, the respondents were asked to describe some social relations that are significant in their perspective. Mostly family and friends were mentioned, which would classify as strong ties. This is a natural response as people are more aware of their strong ties when asked, than of their weak ties. However the development projects which they mentioned can be considered to be composed of both strong and weak ties. Jessie's brother, a strong tie, is also related to her projects, as are the doctors of the hospital in her village, which can be considered to be weak ties. Together they form the project. In the Netherlands Jessie works together with a close friend, a strong tie. Via this friend she comes into contact with a primary school, who eventually ended up supporting the project financially. Thus, strong and weak ties are both necessary for a development project to emerge and be fulfilled.

In relation to social remittances, the strong and weak ties in social networks are the channels along which social remittances can be transmitted. A division of a social network into strong and weak ties is significant in the sense that the level of influence varies. For a development project, according to Grace it is better to work through weak ties, as the contact can be more professional, and emotions are not likely interfere with the business. Moreover, in order to realise a project that involves building a market space, like Jessie did, the network of strong ties is not sufficient since it involves communal space and commitment.

An argument of Faist that is considered to be significant in this context is his reasoning that a person's social capital is not only related to his personal skills and knowledge but is defined also by the extent of his or her social networks. A person does not need to have all skills, but the level of access to people or companies with a variety of skills matters to a large extent. Rohlee for example uses her networks when organising a Filipino party. When she needs a singer, she consults her social network of singers and finds one. If she cannot find a singer among her strong ties, she moves to the weak ties. For example one time she could not find a Filipina singer, so she consulted her network of migrants of other nationalities and found a singer among the African women who was able to contribute to the party. Moreover, the social networks of a person can define his or her status to a certain extent. Rohlee experiences this as she mentions that her family consults her for problems, while she is the youngest child which normally means that she would be the last one they would consult. However because her family knows about the social connections that she has, her position is upgraded and they trust her advices.

2.4 The relation between migrant social networks and social remittances

Migrant social networks and social remittances are linked in several ways. For one it is argued that migrant social networks in the host society influence the *forming* of social remittances:

"The degree to which migrants' interpretative frames are altered is a function of their interaction with the host society" (Portes and Zhou, 1993 in Levitt 1998, p. 930).

In his master thesis on 'Remittance and Socio-Economic Conditions of Nigerian Migrants in The Netherlands', Oké reinforces this theory as one of Oké's major findings was that the degree of integration into the host society matters (Oké, 2008, p.6). The interviewees

in this research are highly integrated into the host society. They are, or have been married to a Dutch husband, speak the Dutch language, some have attended education in the Netherlands and all are actively involved in community life. For example, Jessie Cultura Ligan organizes a party in her residential block every two months. Moreover, she organizes workshops and charity fundraisers. The forming of social remittances should thus theoretically be at a maximum level. This link between migrant social networks and social remittances in the form of forming social remittances will not be further discussed as in this study, the social networks in the origin society are central. Even though section 4.3.3 addresses the question where do the ideas come from, the main focus of this study is what and how is transmitted rather than where the ideas come from. This section has been added to this thesis because this latter question forms one of the unexpected outcomes of the empirical findings.

Besides the link that social networks are regarded as a source of social remittance, another link between the concept of the migrant social network and the concept of social remittances is that of social networks being a *transportation means* for social remittances. Piotrowski states that research on social networks and migrant remittances remains "rudimentary" (Piotrowski 2006, p.69). Coe and Bunnell (2003) argue that know-how in general is transferred through social networks by processes of social interaction and therefore, regarding social remittances, social interaction is a prerequisite for such transfers to take place (Coe and Bunnell, 2003 in Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen and Virkama, 2010). Here we can see another relation between migrant social networks and social remittances.

Not all social relations have the same transmission power. Part of this has already been explained according to Granovetter's theory of strong and weak ties. What's more is that the relation between social networks and social remittances also points to the difference between first- and second-generation migrants and the transmission of social remittances. The second-generation is likely to have less ties towards the country of their mothers and their knowledge of the Filipino language is in all cases in this research lower than their mothers'. A lower amount of transnational ties implies a lower amount of social remittances to be transferred.

"While acknowledging the salience of transnational ties for the first generation, predicted they might rapidly decline among their children" (Lucassen 2006, Portes et al. 1999 IN Levitt and Jaworsky 2007).

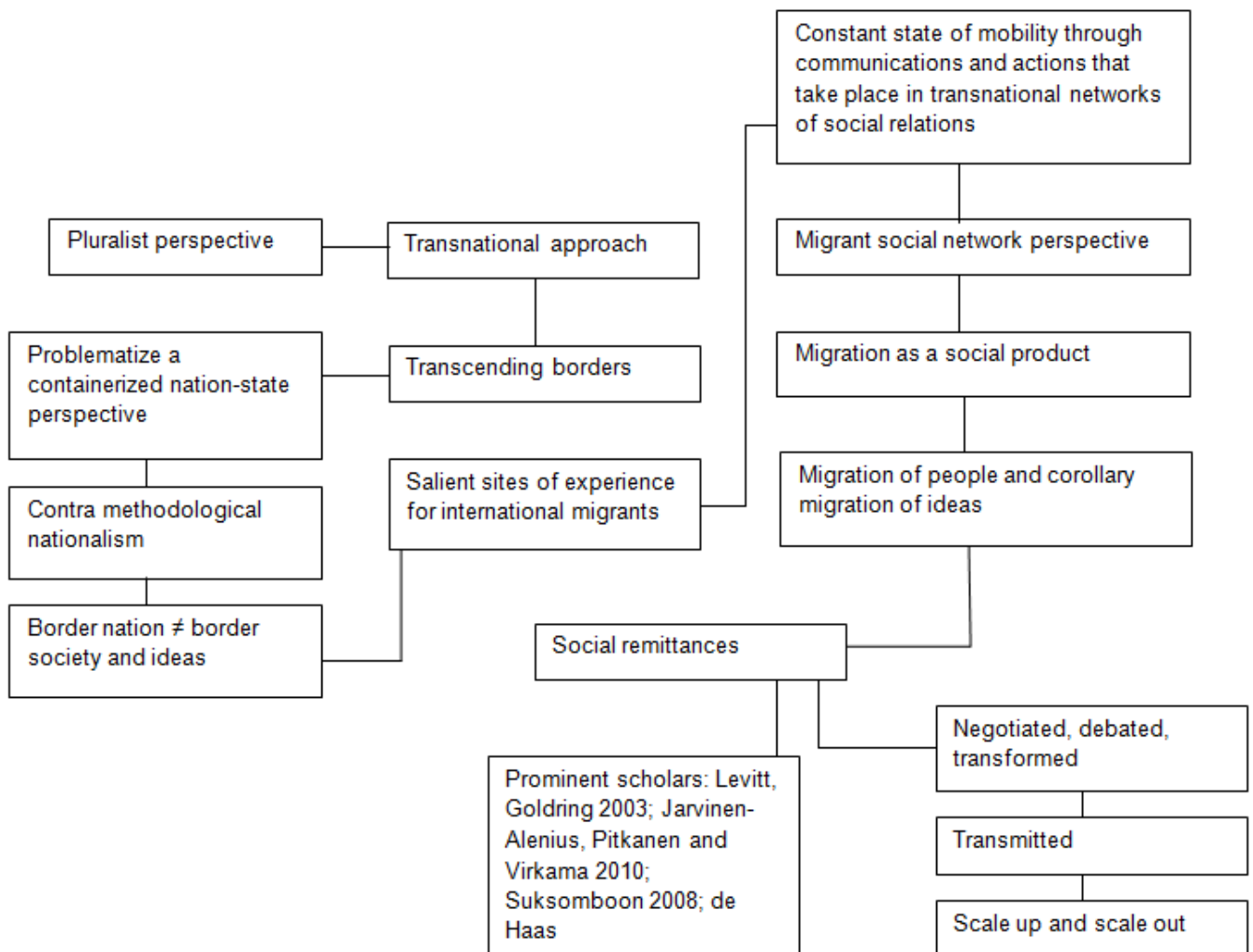
This decline has among other reasons to do with the lack of familiarity of second-generation migrants with people in the Philippines. Often they have met uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins, but only during holidays. One of the powers of social remittances lies in the personalised nature of transmission (Levitt in Faist, Pitkanen, Gerdes and Reisenauer 2010, p.207), which second-generation Filipino migrants in general lack. As mentioned before, migration is not the only transformative process that affects developing countries. Globalisation with specifically forms of media influence people in all parts of the world. Ideas, habits and values transmitted through familiar people has a different effect than global flows of media. For one, migrants can nuance the image that media provide of life in Western countries. Many Filipinos assume life in the Netherlands is a paradise, but migrants explain to them that working and paying taxes is also the reality. Esperanza mentions in the interview that in the Netherlands, one has to pay for everything and that her backyard is municipal property, whereas in the Philippines one can grow all kinds of crops. By telling these stories the migrants aim to alter the image that non-migrants have of life abroad. These personal stories, from migrants who in this research, have a rather high status in the form of a dense network including officials or through monetary powers, have a different affect than impersonal global media flows.

Migrant social networks thus can strengthen the status of a migrant, which makes her messages more reliable and the personal character of the network affect the way the social remittance is received.

2.5 Conclusion

The lack of social perspectives on migration and the one-sided focus are being replaced by a transnational focus by several prominent scholars in this area. Adopting a pluralist lens allows for complexity to be incorporated and a migrant social networks perspective makes migration to be a social product not only focussing on people transcending borders but also ideas and values, in the form of social remittances. Moreover these ideas and values are not to be captured in a box but rather are negotiated and debated in salient sites of experiences for international migrants, which is broader than only the host society as is often mentioned.

This framework illustrates the content and reasoning of this chapter.



Quotes

1

“Toen ik hier kwam zag ik bijvoorbeeld dat hier een draagbare iets, equipment waar jij de gras kan maaien, nou dat hebben wij daar niet. Heb je hier ook een draagbare, voor onderhoud van de wegen heb jij zoiets draaiende ding, weetje, voor asfalt, een kleine, hebben wij ook niet. Technologie je hebt hier ook bijvoorbeeld iets om de takken bijvoorbeeld van de bomen te hakken, ik weet niet hoe het heet maar de techniek dat kun je wel overdragen, over vertellen” (Interview Grace Cabactulan).

2

“Als je over alleen de Filippijnen praat, het is natuurlijk niet Filippijnen per se als het land, Filippijnen zit overal hele wereld. Dat is een laag dat ook behoort tot je eigen Filippijnse contacten, Filipinos familie, vrienden die in, elders wonen en werken. Nou, dat is dan ook gewoon daar. Bijvoorbeeld beschikbaar, tegenwoordig makkelijker, familie die overal in de hele wereld wonen of vrienden, klasgenoten die over de hele wereld dus voor mij dat zijn allemaal Filippijnen netwerk” (Interview Grace Cabactulan).

3

“Daarom zeg ik ook altijd dat migranten zijn eigenlijk transnationaal. Inderdaad het overschrijden grenzen, niet alleen Filippijnen en Nederland, nee hoor. Ja maar ook Amerika, als ik naar Amerika ga hebben we daar contacten in California, in San Francisco in New York” (Interview Rohlee Deguzman).

3 – Methodology

Part of how the research objective is reached is through an empirical case study into the perspectives of Filipina migrants. How this study has been conducted will be outlined according to the perspective that has been taken and the method of research.

3.1 Research strategy

Following from the research question and objective, it is clear that this research focuses on a specific element of international migration, namely social remittances. Within this theme, it only considers several aspects and does not touch ground with others. For example, the element of continuation of migration through social networks is not discussed. It follows that the research strategy is in-depth rather than wide. It seeks to analyse the story of migrants in a qualitative rather than quantitative way. It is about migrants' subjective experiences which are not to be counted but rather understood. This research is thus a qualitative one. There are many definitions of what qualitative research means, but there is no single one that leads the way. Researchers do not look at facts as in statistical research. Rather, an intersubjective understanding of a phenomenon is the result of qualitative research. It aims at understanding underlying motives, beliefs and meanings that *people* attach to things or processes. It is called a 'naturalistic' approach (Richie and Lewis 2003, p. 3) which implies that objects or people are studied in their natural environment. In this research, this element has been incorporated by interviewing the migrants at their house, a familiar environment for them. Moreover, this environment gives the researcher the opportunity to see more of the interviewee than just her words. The house gives away additional clues about personality and lifestyle which are useful in qualitative research. Another important aspect, universally agreed upon in qualitative research is that of taking the 'emic' perspective, exploring the frame of meaning of the interviewee.

Verschuren and Doorewaard in their book 'Het ontwerpen van een onderzoek' state five research strategies: Survey, experiment, casestudy, founded theory and desk research. Being in-depth rather than wide, this research dismisses the strategies of survey and experiment. The empirical part of this thesis makes the strategy of desk research not sufficient. The two options then are case study and founded theory. The founded theory strategy involves the founding of a theory. Theory plays a role in this research, as the concept of social remittances is the focus of this thesis. Yet the aim of this thesis is not purely theoretical. Moreover this study is characterised by a rather explorative nature and therefore the founded theory strategy is not fully applied here. Rather, a case study research that provides a detailed description/analysis of one or few parts of a phenomenon, in this case social remittances accompanies the theoretical core of this thesis. It involves empirical research, combining several methods like interviews and research into literature.

The research aims at creating an understanding of underlying processes related to the theme of the thesis, that is not yet comprehensively researched and defined by scholars. The cases in this research are transnational social relations. The population of the case study research exists of a particular group of migrants to the Netherlands, namely

Filipinas. In-depth interviews in the form of semi-structured interviews will be the main method within the case study research. Ritchie and Lewis state two alternative perspectives on the interview as provided by Kvale (1996). The first is called 'miner metaphor' and sees knowledge as given and unambiguous. It sees an interview as 'mining' into the head of the interviewee to extract knowledge. The knowledge is pure, not affected by the interviewee or interviewer. The second perspective is the 'traveler metaphor'. This falls within the constructivist strand of science and sees knowledge as dynamic and subjective. The interviewee journeys during the interview and meanings are constructed through interpretation. The researcher and interviewee thus construct reality in an interaction. Personally, and in line with the theoretical perspective of structuration that will be applied, this last 'traveler metaphor' is the leading interview perspective in this thesis. The interview in that sense makes the interviewees re-think their own social relations and thus takes their thoughts on a voyage.

3.2 Level of research and research units

In "The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces" (2000) Faist writes about three levels of migration analysis: Micro, meso and macro. In his chapter in the book *International Migration, Immobility and Development* (Hammer, Brochmann, Tamas and Faist 1997), Faist uses the term relational level of analysis. This level includes density, strength and content of social relations between stayers and movers within units in the areas of origin and destination (Hammer *et al.* 1997, p. 195). He describes some forms of migration research as taking place on micro and macro level, and addresses the necessity of analyses on meso level:

"A relational analysis obviates the rigid micro vs. macro distinction because it focuses more on the form and the content of the relationship rather than on the properties or attributes of the actors or positions" (Faist 2000, p.33).

This meso level is comprised of collectives and social networks. This perspective suits this research as it is a bridge between individual and structural approaches. It focuses on social ties (weak or strong), symbolic ties and, for this research important, the content of ties and transactions (Faist 2000, p. 31). Faist sees this meso-link as the crucial link to studying migration as it bridges micro and macro levels. From the main theories on migration as outlined in the first chapter, it was indicated that the dominant way of approaching the phenomenon of migration is in a structural and rational way. By studying social networks, this research attempts to take a relational lens which allows for a more holistic analysis of migration. Social remittances involve emotions and ideas and values that are negotiated in social networks. A rational or structural approach would not capture the dynamics of this phenomenon.

This qualitative case study involves only a small number of research units since these are researched in-depth. The study does not aim to provide a general theory but rather address understudied parts of the concept of social remittances. The case study therefore functions as an illustration, not as statistical proof. The number of four respondents was dependent on time resources as well as the similarity of answers which did not require more participants of this kind. The aim of the study is not to display the particular perspective of this group of Filipina respondents, but to indicate how the use of a migrant social networks perspective can elucidate the understanding of social remittances.

3.3 Research method

In qualitative research several methods can be applied. Some of these methods are participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group, analysis of documents and narratives (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). For this bachelor research the method of in-depth interviewing has been chosen as the main empirical method. Since the experiences of the salient sites of the migrants is the central empirical research objective and in-depth refers to uncovering the deeper frame of meaning of respondents. According to Ritchie and Lewis the role of the researcher is to enable the interviewee to talk about their thoughts, feelings, views and experiences (Ritchie and Lewis 2003, p.147). Observation has been applied to a certain limited degree, in the form of observing the interior of the houses of interviewees which reinforced their stories of their transnational lives. Clues about transnational social relations were displayed in souvenirs and pictures of people in exotic places (the Philippines). The method of focus group has not been applied in this research since the interaction of migrants towards their country of origin was thought to be more significant in this thesis than is the interaction between Filipina migrants. During the research however, this field of interaction between migrants has also shown to have a significant effect on social remittances in the sense that this field of interaction allows for ideas and values to be negotiated and possibly be collectively transferred.

Interviews involve talking to people. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) the expressive power of language is a crucial feature. It presents descriptions and explanations (in Ritchie and Lewis 2003, p. 138). For this reason, this thesis will feature several quotes from the empirical interviews, in order to let the respondents' own words speak in this research. The interviews have been conducted in Dutch. Therefore the quotes have been translated by the researcher and an original Dutch version of the quotes is featured after every chapter. Moreover, this allows for personal interpretation by the reader and makes it possible to co-construct interpretations.

The interviews in qualitative research are specifically in-depth in nature. What does this mean? Webb and Webb portray this interview method as being "a conversation with a purpose" (Webb and Webb 1932, p. 130 as cited in Ritchie and Lewis 2003, p.138). In the research strategy it is very much strived for the interviews to be indeed like conversations. This is reflected in the setting/environment of the interviews and in the secondary role of the interviewee as steering but not leading. The interviewer does not prepare a long list of questions but rather puts together a simplistic topic guide. This topic list provides mainstay for the interviewer to make sure that the main topics are covered but at the same time allows for flexibility and input of the respondent. It is important for the interviewees to tell their story and mention significant social relations. The questions that the interviewer poses are open, general questions that provoke a story and the respondent does the main talking. The average time of the interviews is 2 hours and 15 minutes. In appendix 1, an overview of the interview preparation is incorporated, including the topic list. The topic list starts with an exploration of the migrant's migration process and living situation. The interviewees were stimulated to talk about their process of migration to the Netherlands in order to get an idea about their background and introduce the theme of this thesis. Then the interviewees were asked to name a handful significant social relations, as in people that are important to them, in whatever way. The answer to this question will indicate the 'amount' of and prominence of transnational ties. This sets the tone for further questions related to transnational ties. From this, the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on the content and ways of contact with the transnational social ties. These questions are allocated to answering research question two, what are the nature and dynamics of the social networks of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands with their country of origin? Both during but especially after the interview, research question three, which forms of social remittances can be identified as taking place in the contacts of Filipina migrants with their

country of origin, is addressed. The women were free to talk and bring up subjects that are apparently important to them. This reserved role of the interviewer, as listener rather than questioner was aimed at touching ground with what is important in the lives of Filipina migrants when it comes to social relations. Seen the explorative nature, the specific subjects related to social remittances were un- or vaguely known prior to the empirical research phase and the subjects brought up naturally by the women formed important aspects of this research. For example, the apparent role of development projects in the lives of the women has been a significant connection to social remittances, as will be outlined in the next chapter, was not anticipated in the initial conceptual framework (see appendix 2) and did not become evident from the literature review. There was no hypothesis to be tested. Moreover, asking directly about social remittances is difficult because for one, this term is not widely known, and second because one of the characteristics of social remittances is that the element of unconscious transmission. Asking the migrant women directly about which ideas and values they transmit might make them think rationally and provide answers that they think the researcher is looking for. This happened to a certain extent during the interview with Grace Cabactulan, as can be seen from the quote on page 23, where she uses the term transnational. Her involvement in political and developmental activities on a high level explains her familiarization with the terminology of this subject.

The interviews were all tape-recorded. The possible disadvantages of tape-recording, such as hesitation to talk freely, were exceeded by the advantages of this method. Tape recording appeared to have a minimal effect on the migrant women as they all confidently agreed to having the interview recorded. Some even mentioned to be familiar with this since they had been interviewed before (Jessie Ligan in the context of her development projects and Rohlee Deguzman in work related settings). This recording both facilitates the research and researcher. The research can be more objective in the sense that the findings can be checked. For the researcher tape-recording is a solution both during and after the interview. It is difficult to take comprehensive notes during a two-hour interview and interact with the respondent at the same time. During the analysis stage the recordings can be rewound and zoomed in on specific parts.

The specific themes of interest that have been revealed during the empirical research are described and analysed in the following chapter.

4 – Empirical exploration

After having described the strategy of the research and having outlined some theoretical positions and insights as found in literature, this chapter will look into the empirical findings of this research. These will be related to general ideas and characteristics of social remittances as have been described in chapter 2.

4.1 Financial and social aspects in relation to remittances

Regularly, social remittance are explained in relation to and as a function of financial remittances, often in the sense that the financial remittances have social effects. For example, when there are some households in a village that receive remittance money, and some households do not, this would create social divisions within the village as some families can afford to send their children to private schools and built bigger houses. Prior to conducting the field research, the concept of social remittances was not planned to be examined in relation to financial remittances, but it was approached as a distinct phenomenon, in the way that among others Peggy Levitt (1998) approaches it, and the relation to financial remittances was not included in the initial research lens. Throughout the research however, the link between the financial and social aspects became more prominent.

When asked about their social networks towards the Philippines, all four interviewees named family, cultural organizations or development projects. These development projects include financial aspects in the sense that they feature a material aspect. It was found and therefore at this stage acknowledged that financial or material aspects and social aspects often go hand in hand. In this context, social aspects can be seen as a motive for sending financial or material remittances. Sana (2005) links social aspects to financial remittances as he conceptualizes remittances as the fee that buys the migrant membership in the transnational community. Not only Sana approaches financial remittances as a way of maintaining ties to the country of origin. From her research into Thai migrant women in the Netherlands (2008), Suskomboon concluded that the migrant women also contribute financially to development of their community of origin, by donating to causes such as temples, schools and hospitals. These donations to development of the community are argued to ensure a high social status in the community of origin and to enhance migrants' self-esteem and reinforce community membership (Suskomboon 2008).

Cindy Horst, senior Researcher at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) who conducted a PHD on migration and transnationalism among Somalis, formulates an idea about social remittances that is in line with the above two scholars. She approaches financial remittances in part as investments in keeping connected and she investigated the social dynamics of sending remittances (Horst 2008a), thereby recognizing the link between financial and social aspects in relation to remittances. In her research into Somali immigrants in Norway, she asks, 'why send?'. In her work she divides the answer to this question into individual characteristics and social factors. Possible motives on the individual level are 'altruism' or 'self-interest'. Under social factors she proposes 'being a member of a collectivity' and/or 'awarding status, prestige' as possible underlying motives to send remittances.

The results from this research confirm the above mentioned link. However, the interviewees do not put much attention on sending financial sums of money for everyday expenses but rather talk about material aspects like sewing machines or money for buildings. Some do mention sending money for educational purposes, but for them this is an investment rather than a daily expense. So, in this research we can better speak of material remittances than of financial remittances. The financial remittances that these migrant women send are mainly monetary remittances with a specific purpose, other than daily expenditures or luxury goods.

Like Cindy Horst asks in her research, the question 'why send?' will be discussed in this section as it relates social aspects, in the form of motivation, to remit financially. When it comes to factors on the individual level, both altruistic and self-interest reasons have been found during the research. Two interviewees mention that they feel sorry for the poor people in the Philippines, especially when it comes to women and children. In their absence, they want to help the people in their country of origin, as their situation is perceived to be better, mostly in an economic perspective. They feel that their responsibility is bigger than only themselves or even their families. Since the respondents are all connected to movements and foundations, they have a will to help people and trigger changes. Grace characterizes herself as being a "veranderaar" (agent of change), mainly when it comes to politics. The women in this research can be described as being idealists, which relates to their altruistic motivations to send remittances, whether financial, or in this case rather material, or social. The motive of self-interest has also been detected in their answers to my interview questions. This self-interest can be divided into more concrete and abstract interests. Jessie, for example, wants to create a legacy after her death. Rohlee and Grace express self-interest motives related to their return to the Philippines. They maintain ties in order to get good deals on land prices and locations.

When it comes to social factors for sending remittances, again both categories as proposed by Horst have been encountered in this research. Being a member of a collectivity has proven to matter to all participants. However, what this collectivity implies, differs. For Jessie, a collectivity would be a foundation or cultural group to which she is a member. It is important for her to be actively involved and to have a place in such organizations. She was very proud to have won the Migrant Idea competition of Oikos (Ideeënwedstrijd Migranten en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking 18 december 2006). Also for Grace, collectivity can mean foundations and organizations. It is important for her that through Diaspora Forum for Development, migrants can join forces and speak their voices in the Netherlands and Europe. Another meaning of the word collectivity that has appeared is the collectivity of the family. It is important for the migrants to be part of their family, even across large distances. The question remains however, whether the migrants want to be a part of this family, or whether it is more a social obligation for them to be part of this family unit in the Philippines. The welfare of the family is often mentioned as a reason to remain ties and to remit. Grace mentions the family-oriented mentality as a reason for remitting and keeping ties. She hints however also to the more obligatory aspect as she says that it is indispensable to help family members in the Philippines.

"Because you are partly responsible, you are originally from that place, your family lives there, your friends live there, you have to help, you have to do it. That, a sense of responsibility is bigger than a sense of pleasure. It is hardly a choice. Otherwise your family drowns, you see? It is out of love that you do it. Out of love, not for fun. I do not do it because it is fun. It is not fun because I could do luxurious stuff here but I do not, because I love my country, I love my village so I have to" (Interview Grace Cabactulan, May 18th 2011).¹

Grace points to the fact that family has a different meaning to Filipinos than to Dutch people. She cannot step away, family is family. Grace describes the concept of family as being clanish, including not only direct family members but also cousins, uncles etc. This clannish nature of the Philippine family plays a role in the nature of transnational contacts and consequently in social remittances. For migrants from a culture in which family is perceived to be less clannish, the relations with family members abroad will be different. This is an example in which the research population has an effect on the outcomes.

Another form of a collectivity, especially for Grace, is the Church. Jessie also relates her motives to religion, but on a more personal basis of God making her His instrument. The Church is a collective that provides care and justice. The Church gives them inner strength and faith and the previously mentioned form of collectivity, namely the family, can be related to Christian values.

The social factor of status and prestige has literally been revealed as being of importance to one interviewee. For the others, this aspect is also present, however, one has to read between the lines to discover this. This motive has been found to be important to the Filipina who is most involved in projects in the Philippines. This can be seen as a causal relation. Whenever a school, hospital, water pump or sewing workplace has been established, a sign saying ' Donated by...' is incorporated. Jessie talks about her visits to the Philippines and ceremonies of cutting a ribbon when one of her projects is launched. Through her projects she establishes her good name, both in the Philippines and in the Netherlands:



“There were a lot of people and a ribbon too. I am so famous there, in the Philippines. I am so famous at the school [in the Netherlands where she collects money] too” (Jessie Cultura Ligan).⁷

Besides these social motives for sending financial remittances as mentioned by Horst (2008), other factors related to the motive of maintaining ties and remitting can be distinguished according to this research. Related to the obligatory feeling caused by the direct family, which has been related to a Christian family-mentality is the influence of the wider community and a sense of guild. Also more distinct from prestige is the importance of a sense of responsibility and a good name. All migrants have encountered gossiping behind their backs about their expected or supposed functioning. All four interviewees started projects in the Philippines in general, often by being part of a larger organization. Some started only abstract projects, like Grace who values advocacy and strives for peacemaking. An important motivator for starting concrete projects in their own villages has appeared to be the 'burden of gossip' in the community of origin:

"What happens is that people in the village, since a couple of years, 2006, 2007, say: You have projects. And then they said: You have done a lot in other areas, other provinces and you have never done anything concrete in our village. They have been gossiping about that. She is not helping us, you see? I feel a bit guilty about that" (Interview Grace Cabactulan, May 18th 2011).²

This burden of distant gossip can be related to two elements, as far as this research concerns. One is the intended return to the Philippines and the other is the importance of the family name. The migrants might be away from the community, but their family members are still living there. Further research is necessary in order to explain this motive for remitting in more detail.

Their own accountability towards the money they use for the projects, which is not their own but comes from people in the Netherlands or abroad, which they attain through fundraising activities like collecting clothing, selling goods, giving workshops or dance performances, also plays a role in their sending activities. This external money comes with accountability and the need for concrete results which can be feed backed to the donors. Once they have collected money, they need good results. This makes that they try to control the process of remitting as much as possible and sometimes apply Western ways of doing business, in the form of contracts. Jessie feels very responsible for using the acquired money correctly. This money and project are attached to her good name and honor. If the project fails, her name will be damaged:

"And the money that I will send you [her brother] is not mine, I have my honor, my name will also be damaged. I have to see the result. There are already many water pumps with my name, donated by" (Interview Jessie Cultura Ligan, May 16th 2011).³

It has been illustrated that remitting in a material or financial way is often preceded by social motives. Underlying motives to remit are not the only social aspects in relation to remittances. Remitting materially or financially can have social consequences. Within one village, differences in income and therefore lifestyle emerge due to financial remittances. Families who have a family member abroad often have bigger houses, a car, television or luxurious fridge. Also, Grace names having a garden as an asset of remittance receiving families. Education of children is an expenditure item that migrants often value. But the difference that emerges is that children are not sent to a normal school, which would be an achievement already, but rather to an expensive school, as Grace expresses it. Not only within villages but also amongst villages, the presence of remittance (financial or material) receiving families in a village becomes visible. This visibility has also strong invisible consequences, like for example the feeling of jealousy. Jessie tells me that all surrounding villages are jealous of her village, since her village is a site of many development projects. On an individual level, a negative consequence of receiving remittances is the growing dependence of non-migrants on migrants. Social relations with family members frequently have an underlying financial aspect. Even though the

respondents only scarcely mentioned cash transfers for non-migrants' daily expenditures, their development projects do involve monetary transfers. This underlying financial element can have disturbing effects on the social relation. Grace points to this social, or rather she calls it emotional aspect of the monetary remittances:

"Remittances are only discussed in terms of technique, how can we send remittances in a cheaper way? There is not much attention for the value, the emotions that are attached to the money" (Interview Grace Cabactulan, May 18th 2011).⁴

Jessie for example appointed her brother as her main contact for her projects. He is the chairman of several project groups that Jessie has set up. Having her brother as her main contact person is advantageous because first of all, Jessie can trust him, since he is her family. Second, her brother is present in the village in the Philippines and therefore he has access to local information and he can manage the daily activities. Jessie transfers the money for projects to him. Grace mentions the potential negative aspects of dealing with family members when it comes to monetary transfers for development projects. She points to the potential trust issue. When she would ask her brother about the money, what has been bought, what is left, her brother might feel upset because he feels that his sister does not trust him. Moreover, family members might feel reluctant to report on their activities because they feel it is 'family money', whereas migrants feel a responsibility for the money that is often not their own, but rather collected through charity activities. Handling business activities through family members is not a very good idea according to Grace. Jessie however did not mention any problems or tensions in her relation with her brother.

" (...)with a brother or sister, it is difficult. After a while they think they also have power over the money or project and that is a disappointment because I am honest and clear, I tell them that it is not theirs. It is for the group, for everybody. That is a negative consequence of trust. Money is an emotional affair. The sense of accountability, responsibility, you have to justify the money, that is difficult when family members have the money" (Interview Grace Cabactulan).⁵

The title of this thesis, more than money, can be related to Grace's statement that money is an emotional affair. In this thesis we look beyond the money and see which other elements come into play when it comes to remittances. Another way in which the social relation between migrants and non-migrants can be disturbed through an underlying financial aspect, takes place in the sense that migrants can feel more like a cash-cow than a family member at times. During this research, some signs of this uneasy feeling have been recorded. When letters are exchanged or during telephone conversations, the migrants sometimes feel that the family only speaks out their problems and does not show interest in the migrant's live. Esperanza counter-acts this statement by saying that her contact with her family members does provide emotional support for her. She makes a rather strong distinguish between social or emotional contacts and more professional contacts. The contacts with organizations are more related to news updates and information regarding law and regulations. Emotional support on the other hand is received from contact with family members or other multi-cultural groups.

"To get support where needed, emotional, mostly from family members. From organizations we get information about laws, developments and solutions for certain problems like isolation, passport application, immigration problems, etc. Contact with other multi-cultural groups gives the feeling of unionism, of having something in common, the same experiences and problems" (Interview Esperanza, June 16th 2011).⁶

Being married to a 'white' man triggers the prejudice that money should not be a problem. The reality is often different which is a point of friction between the migrants and their

family. The migrants have to work or organize charity events in order to raise the money needed for development projects. The family members are not always aware of the source and effort that is attached to the money.

This discussion has shown that financial relations often involve several social aspects and that migrant social relations often have an underlying financial aspect. Financial relations are for example preceded by social motives and/or induce social consequences. We can conclude that financial and social aspects are interrelated when it comes to the phenomenon of remittances. Moreover, as will be discussed later on in this thesis, a monetary element accompanying a social remittance can reinforce the strength and spread of a social remittance.

Like mentioned before in chapter two, a relational analysis that takes a meso perspective bridging micro and macro levels is adopted in this study. The relational aspects take the form of transnational social networks of migrants. These networks are seen as the space where social remittances emerge and are negotiated and also transmitted. Therefore we look at the nature and dynamics of the social networks of Filipina migrants in order to discuss the ways in which these transnational ties are shaped and which consequences this has for social remittances.

4.2 The social networks of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands

One of the goals of this research was to find data that would enable me to portray the nature and dynamics of the social networks of Filipina immigrants in the Netherlands towards their country of origin. Soon it appeared that the social networks of these women within the Netherlands and Europe are also very significant to them. As can be seen from the initial conceptual framework in appendix 2, for this research, the social networks were divided between 'here' and 'there'. 'Here' is colored red, signifying that this part is not included in the research plan. However, the interviewees all talked about their social networks 'here' when asked about important social relations. Moreover, the meaning of the term 'here' in relation to social contacts has become ambiguous during the research. Like mentioned before, Grace talks about Filipino classmates, colleagues, family and friends who live outside the Philippines, but not in the Netherlands. Would we then characterize these contacts as 'here' since these people are not living in the Philippines, or as 'there' since they are Filipino people? This again highlights the fluid nature of social remittance study, as fixed categories are not applicable. A transnational approach can overcome problems related to these fixed and narrow categories like 'here' and 'there'.

The women in this research actively want to remain and even expand to some extent their social networks towards the country of origin. This was mainly the case in their earlier years of living in the Netherlands. In order to gain ideas for development projects and in order for these to be successful, close relations to the Philippines were necessary. Over the years, when the women grew older and a feeling of satisfaction to what has been reached in their country of origin starts to sink in, the need to expand the network diminishes. The content of the contacts have also varied over the years. In the early years of migration, the family ties were important as they provided a sense of familiarity in an alien environment. But all four women actively took part in language courses and Jessie for example sent her child to a participation crèche which meant that she had to work there too and therefore it was necessary to speak the Dutch language. The profile of educated, revolutionary women makes that the processes of integration and remaining connected to their country of origin take part simultaneously.

The content of the contact in the early, for two women childless years, was more on a professional basis. Later, the conversations would be more related to children and nurture, or other family affairs. This can be seen as a logical consequence of aging. Their role as wise aunt came up when their nieces and nephews are old enough to start their own lives. A difference in the scale of the interest of the women has also been detected. In the earlier years, the women were interested in national affairs, as their idealist and revolutionary aspirations were big. Later on, the focus shifted towards the more local level of their own provinces. In the current years, the content of the relations has become focused on the local level and instead of starting many new development projects in favor of the community, the women are all planning to return to the Philippines in the coming years. In order for this to happen, they are all focusing their attention towards land prices and regulations, which is something they were not interested in during their first years of migration.

4.2.1 Who are migrants in contact with?

During the interview, the respondents were asked to name a couple of important social relations in their current lives. This question was intended to derive the possible importance of transnational social relations and offered an entry to ask further details about these specific relations. All of the interviewees named first and foremost family members. Grace divided her social networks into three layers:

- Family layer
- General layer including friends
- Filipinos elsewhere in the world

From the analysis of the interviews it appears that these categories as mentioned by Grace should also be loosely interpreted because for example, Rohlee talks about former colleagues becoming friends over time. For Jessie, her brother is a main contact with the country of origin. In this case, her brother would be included in both the family layer as well as that of project related contacts, since besides being her brother, he is also the chairman of several of her projects. Two of the interviewees state the mayor to be one of their significant social contacts in the Philippines. They argue that the Philippines is a country where one needs connections to get something done. Through their projects and partner organizations, their networks in the Philippines are multiplied. Many of their contact persons are either family members or people related to development projects, or sometimes both.

For the migrants in this study, the social network of family members is regarded as self-evident. Whether they like it or not, keeping in touch with family members in their country of origin is something they feel they have to do. The nature of the ties towards family members is sometimes financial in a personal way, when the migrants send money for education or fixing a leaking roof. As explained before, some family ties involve financial means related to development projects for the community. Besides the at times financial nature of the relationship, family ties are often related to discussing problems. A frequently mentioned discussion is that about good practice between parent and child. An example follows:

“When my niece, my other niece from my brother, the eldest one, had finished high school, my brother wanted her to take part in a pre-medical course. But my niece wanted to take a break and study physiotherapy, then work and maybe later take part in a medical course. My brother did not agree and preferred his daughter to start the medical course right away in order to save time. That is between father and daughter, a quarrel. Those things I talked about with my brother, mainly listen. Even though I live so far away, I can give advice. In the end the choice of my niece prevailed” (Interview Rohlee Deguzman, April 18th 2011).⁷

When it comes to transnational ties in the form of colleagues or partner organizations of development projects, we can distinguish between newly founded ties after migration, and already existing ties before migration. All four women were actively involved in organizations or movements in their country of origin prior to migration. Jessie and her husband worked for Cordaid, Rohlee started her career in the student movement and later joined a feminist movement which ultimately lead her to live in the Netherlands, and Grace was politically active in the Philippines. The women who mentioned the mayor as a social contact in the Philippines were active members in the community back home. These connections that go back to the times when they lived in the Philippines are still existing. Although most of the interviewees are not in touch with all of their former colleagues anymore, usually they are in touch with a few people who then keep them updated about the whole organization.

After arrival in the Netherlands, the idealist and active character of the women pursued them to join cultural groups or start a foundation related to the Philippines. Jessie for example is an active member of Damayan foundation and Grace works for Stella Maris, through which her networks grow. Besides this, the social relations of the migrant women have changed in nature over the years. The people that form an active part of the social networks of these migrants have slightly changed over time. New contacts were added, other contacts faded. Some former colleagues have become friends or a common phenomenon is that property investment contacts are highlighted in recent years.

“The differences could be that when I was younger, I did not think about buying a piece of land. That has to do with economic prosperity and the personal need. When you are young, you just work and enjoy but when you get older you start to think of such things. Nowadays I ask people whether they know about land lots and prices in which we can invest. Also condominium, you see them all over the Philippines since a lot of migrants buy a condominium which they rent out. That kind of information comes to me now as well. And I request this kind of information actively” (Interview Rohlee Deguzman, April 18th 2011).⁸

Now that we have an idea of whom the migrants are in contact with, let us look at how these contacts take place.

4.2.2 How do migrants maintain transnational ties?

An additional form of a transnational tie that was frequently mentioned are news facts. The migrants subscribe to mailing lists, visit websites or ask family members about news related to their country of origin. They are interested in news facts either for professional reasons, since they have projects in the Philippines, or for their personal goals, when they are interested in buying a piece of land. They are specifically interested in law and regulation. Jessie points to other news that she is eager to hear. She is interested to know about the local needs and wants of the population, which can inspire her to start a project. How do the migrants hear about these news facts, and how do they communicate with their transnational social ties? In order to answer this question, a dynamic lens needs to be adopted. Furthermore we will go back to the theory of Levitt that explains when social remittances can be transferred.

These ties that the women actively maintain are face-to-face contacts as well as mediated contacts. All women have visited the Philippines on a frequent basis during their years of migration, either for holiday purposes or work-related occasions. They visit family, friends, running and potential project sites and use this location also as a meeting point with their last layer of social ties, namely Filipinos living elsewhere in the world.

“We made a plan to travel to the Philippines all in the same period in September and meet up. Someone from Germany, Denmark, me from the Netherlands and Annie from Switzerland. That is fun” (Interview Rohlee Deguzman, April 18th 2011).⁹

Visits from the Philippines to the Netherlands also take place, however to a lesser degree. When their (Rohlee’s and Grace’s) mothers were still a bit younger, they have visited their daughters in the Netherlands. Nowadays the contact with their mothers goes through other family members since the elderly women do not know how to use new communication means. When it comes to mediated contacts, again a dynamics lens comes into play. Throughout the years the means of communication have evolved, which creates not only different modes of communication but also differences in frequency of contacts. Moreover, the means of communication are dependent on both the technological situation here and there. In their early years of migration, using a telephone to call to the Philippines would have been very expensive, and mostly impossible since telephones were not very common in Filipino villages. The methods of communication in this time were letters and cards, that had to be sent strategically sooner than the actual event in order for the card to arrive at the right time. Another creative method that was mentioned is the use of tape recordings. This tape recording had an advantage, namely that the family members can hear voices and emotions, yet the tape would be recorded over a certain period of time and then be sent which meant that the message, as it was recorded, arrived much later. This is not a responsive method. Telecommunications infrastructure is developing in poor areas happens largely on the back of transnational migration practices (Vertovec 2004, p.222). Through the technological changes, the methods of contact increased and so did the frequency and responsiveness.

“Grace: Due to technological advantages nowadays it is more than thirty years ago. Sabrina: You mean that the amount of contact has increased? Grace: Yes. Faster, more efficient, cheaper, more extensive. That is very important” (Interview Grace Cabactulan, May 18th 2011).¹⁰

Contradictory to the theory of decay, the amount of contact between a migrant and her transnational social relations has increased over time. Nowadays the migrants communicate with their families via telephone, e-mail and skype. Skype is mainly used during the weekends to have longer conversations. Moreover, Esperanza mentions that skype is advantageous because it includes video which makes you feel more connected. Some family members in the Philippines have to travel to a bigger village or city to have access to a computer which forms a constraint to communication. For contact with work related people, the skype or videoconference is a preferred means of communication. One of the respondents mentioned social media as a good medium to stay updated with news facts and to stay in touch with her second layer of contacts.

"I call my parents every week, sometimes via skype. I send card on holidays and birthdays and e-mails or text messages to other family members and friends. Facebook is also the newest way through which I communicate through photos and stories, and the other way around" (Interview Esperanza, June 16th 2011).¹¹

Vertovec in his article calls these technological improvements in communication means, especially cheap telephone calls, the social glue of migrant transnationalism. As can be seen from the quotes in this section, Vertovec is right about that. The faster, easier and cheaper means of communication facilitate contacts and increase the possibilities for maintaining dense and wide social networks across borders and distances.

Let us link these means of communication through which ties towards the Philippines are maintained to the means of social remittance transmission according to Levitt (1998) who writes that social remittances are exchanged in several situations:

- When migrants return to live or visit their communities of origin
- When non-migrants visit the migrant
- When migrant and non-migrant(s) communicate through letters, telephone or other mediums.

During this research, an additional form of contact and potential means of remittance transfer has been discovered to be of great importance to this group of Filipina migrants. The development projects that they engage in are a form of contact with their country of origin. Moreover, these projects are a reason for maintaining contacts. For these projects to start and succeed the migrants often visit their community of origin, which could be related to the first situation according to Levitt. They make phone calls and engage in skype conferences in order to follow the project when they are back in the Netherlands, which could be classified to fit under the third situation. Besides these verbal or physical contacts, there are other elements involved when it comes to development projects which cannot be classified according to the situations of remittance exchange according to Levitt. Levitt does mention migrant associations, organizations, informally-organized groups and social networks to be possible transmission channels. Development projects can be considered part of this group of transmission channels. The prominence of these projects for the women in this study however makes that this form of transmission channel requires to be named specifically, which Levitt does not recognize as such.

The monetary flow, the project proposal, the project contract and the actual building or goods that are part of the project. These are all elements of connections to the Philippines. A very direct and lasting way of contact between the migrant and her country of origin are the signs saying 'Donated by'. Where Levitt stops at 'other mediums', this research has revealed another very important means of communication or rather a means to stay connected to the country of origin. An elaboration about this form of connectedness will follow in section 4.4.2. Inherent to these development projects, daily conversations and videoconferences are ideas, values and habits. Next the content of these transnational ties will be analysed to touch ground with social remittances.

4.3 To what extent can social remittances be identified as being contextualized within transnational contacts?

In order to describe social remittances that have been found during the empirical part of this research, let us go back and reconsider what social remittances are? According to Levitt (1998), social remittances can be defined as being ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital. The title of this paragraph, to what extent can social remittances be identified as taking place in the transnational contacts, is a question and features the phrase 'to what extent'. This question is started with that phrase because finding social remittances from the interview transcripts involves for a large part reading between the lines. Moreover, the empirical part of this research has aimed for the interviewees to tell their stories about migration and transnational ties, and was not specifically directed towards social remittances. Rather, from the stories of the nature, dynamics and contents of the transnational ties of the migrant women, social remittances are distilled.

From the interviews and thorough reading of the related transcripts, several types of social remittances have been found. The familial ties often involved the theme of good practice between parent and child. The migrant is often consulted for mediating in familial disputes. Inherent to this mediating role are ideas about nurture and education. Two migrants talked about disputes between parent and child that involved the life-path of the child, and how this should be substantiated. The migrant women were consulted to advise in these disputes. Grace also mentioned conversations with her family members in the Philippines about homosexuality and the monarchic system of the Netherlands. She explains about the way of doing things in the Netherlands through stories and photos. A theme of social remittances that has come forward more than once is the habit of being assertive and upfront. Instead of gossiping and waiting for things to change, the migrant women have experienced awkward situations in interactions with friends and family members in the Philippines due to them being upfront in daily conversations.

4.3.1 Mentality changes

The theme of disputes can be related to another value that the migrants mentioned often, which is the value of independence. Grace talks about independence in a financial way. She explains to her family members that in the Netherlands, when a child is sixteen years old, it is supposed to get a job.

"Norms and values, you talk about independence and you explain, very concrete, that when you are sixteen years old in the Netherlands, you can work, you do not earn much, but you can start a small job. That is a value" (Interview Grace Cabactulan, May 18th 2011).¹²

Financial literacy, which carries out the value of earning your own money, save money and invest in the future, is often especially direct towards women. Traditionally, women stay at home and wait for their husbands to bring money into the household. Jessie strives for women empowerment as she feels that men and women should be equal and that the women's value for society should be acknowledged. When she goes to the Philippines, and through her projects (sewing workplace and market place) she encourages women to work outside the home and earn their own living. All migrant women mention financial literacy as an important skill they want their family and village members to acquire. This wish can be related to the often dependent nature of the family towards the migrant and to the need for responsibility when it comes to money related to a development project. This financial literacy can indirectly also be related to the aspired change in mentality of the non-migrants. The day-to-day approach is in contrast with the migrant's long term outlook. 'Saving for the rain days' is an idea that two migrants literally mentioned as being

attempted to be transmitted to their non-migrant family and friends. Another change in mentality that is endeavored to be communicated is the rather negative outlook of their own life situation, especially compared to the migrant's life. Jessie urges her family's fellow villages not to wait for the coconuts to be mature, or to think that they do not have capital. She explains to them that they should diversify their livelihood strategy by planting other crops underneath the coconut trees and consider land to be a valuable asset which they possess and can cultivate. Many of the interviewees relate this to the wait-and-see and dependent mentality of the non-migrants. The migrants oppose this mentality by their active, self-reliant attitude which is attempted to be transferred.

Related to the importance that Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen, and Virkama (2010) attribute to remittances in the works sphere is the change in gender roles when it comes to occupations. The sewing workplace that Jessie established also stimulates men to pursue a career in the sewing business, which was previously a female dominated sector. The change in work organisation in the form of formalization of procedures can also be related to this category of influence of social remittances.

These social remittances are being transferred in the form of norms and values because they come up in disputes, daily conversations or development projects. But what has also been mentioned is social remittances being transferred through attitude in daily activities. When the migrant women visit the Philippines, awkward situations sometimes occur. Esperanza explains that middle-class families in the Philippines have a maid. Here in the Netherlands, the migrant women do not have a maid which makes them take an active part in the household business when they are in the Philippines. They do the dishes and help with the groceries, which their family members do not.

Social remittance transfers also takes place the other way around. The Filipina migrants share their cultural values and habits with their social relations in the Netherlands. This takes place for example during parties, where Philippine food, dance and other traditions are shared with Dutch people. Moreover, Grace says that migrants can 'Philippinize' the world since the au-pairs are raising the children of Western people and that the Filipino migrants add to Dutch society since it is mainly migrants filling the churches in this country. Jessie adds to this that she wants to inspire people in the Netherlands to devalue material aspects in life and instead aspire a more human goal in life, by helping people.

4.3.2 Development projects

In carrying out these projects from a distance, non-migrants in the Philippines are exposed to Western ways of doing business. This often occurs in the form of drafting and sticking to contracts, paying a loan back in time or otherwise having to pay interest and keeping track of receipts for accounting practices. Another form of social remittance related to development projects is that of active networking. Jessie shares the experiences which she gained in the Netherlands, especially her courage and presentation skills which she gained through her membership of and performances with the cultural group, with the people in her village.

What can also be considered to be a social remittance is a side effect of these development projects, specifically from the award-winning idea of the local market is that the relations between the mayor and the villagers have improved. Before this project, the villagers did not have successful contacts with the mayor. Jessie approached the mayor for land for the market, which opened up social relations between the mayor and his villagers. Grace confirms this as she says that people in her village cannot imagine talking to governmental officers or officials in the commercial sector. Grace introduces this

dialogue both through development projects based on the 'tres por uno' principle as well as through her commitment to the PPP.

Similar to the findings of Levitt and Lamba-Nieves in their study of return migrants to Governor Valadares in Brazil (2010), it has been found that the relationship with and the trust in the governmental officers is an important social remittance theme. The return migrant in Levitt's study says about the workings of politicians:

"I learned this in the United States – that governments can do what they're supposed to do and that citizens should make sure that happens. I'm trying to get people here to understand that they don't have to accept business as usual" (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010).

The migrant women in this study also strive to fight the gap between people and government and try to make the people see that they can change the way things are going now and that corruption can be battled.

"The people in the Philippines think that the government can only exploit them. We migrants push their involvement and the forming of partnerships with the government in order to create mutual accountability" (Interview Grace Cabactulan, May 18th 2011).¹³

Such a project like the market in Jessie's village, initiated by a migrant or migrants can become a joint citizen-state effort that negotiates the responsibilities within a community. In addition to pointing towards the accountability and responsibility of government officials, the migrant women also point towards the people's own responsibility. Once a project is finished, the maintenance is the responsibility of the people in the village. Also, Jessie points towards the people's more effective and creative use of their own resources. She gets a bit heated during the interview, when she tells me that the people complain that they do not have money, or capital. She gives the people ideas of how to use their resources more effectively. Besides the relations between the government and the people, the social relations among village women has also improved due to one of Jessie's development projects. Around the water pumps, a plateau for on-site washing was created which emerged into a social gathering spot for the women in the village. An example of increased social connectedness among villagers is the insurance system which they have set up. Every member donates a certain amount of money into a collective money-box every month. This money can be used to finance funerals or other unexpected costs.

This paragraph has provided some examples of social remittances that have been found to take place in the Philippine case study. The most common social remittances have been described, but now we go one step further and ask where do these ideas come from?

4.3.3 Where do the ideas come from?

The phenomenon of social remittances is often attributed to the integration with the (Western) host society. They are depicted as alien ideas to non-migrants. However, this research contains a finding that is inconsistent with this assumption. In fact, on several occasions, the Filipinas' 'revolutionary' ideas, ideas that are deviant from the general Filipino population, are already gained in the country of origin. For example, the value of financial independence had already gotten into Jessie when she was a child. Her grandmother had been her role model and she sold vegetables when she was still a child. In the Netherlands, this value of independence may have increased by seeing that many women work outside the home, however the roots of this value can be traced back to the

Philippines. Grace's political aspirations have a better chance to become reality now that she has left the Philippines. During the Marcos regime, it was not safe for her to express her ideas. Now that she is abroad, she can compare several political systems and is a member of PPP. Her aspirations however can be traced back to the Philippines. Her family has always had a prominent role in society. Her grandfather has been a mayor and long before that her family members were teachers, which had a high position in society. Additionally, her father has been the head of the police department. Grace herself has been involved in political manifestations when she was still living in the Philippines and her political aspirations are one of the reasons she decided to, or had no choice but to migrate.

These findings imply that social remittances not necessarily be completely new or alien ideas, norms or values, experienced exclusively in the new society. In an attempt to discover the extent to which social remittances are related to migration, I asked Jessie about how she thinks her life and mentality would have been if she would not have migrated. She thinks about my question for a while but does not know exactly. She says however, that she does not think that she would be the same as the people in her village, because she has always been a fighter, she always aspired change.

What has been discovered in most cases, at least for the interviewed migrants, is that formalization plays a big role in social remittances. When it comes to already existing ideas of saving money or political aspirations, what has been added in the Netherlands is often a formalization of procedures and measures. The migrants mention the ideas of signing contracts, scheduling meetings, accounting practices etcetera. These ideas are likely to be related to their encounter with other societies than their own.

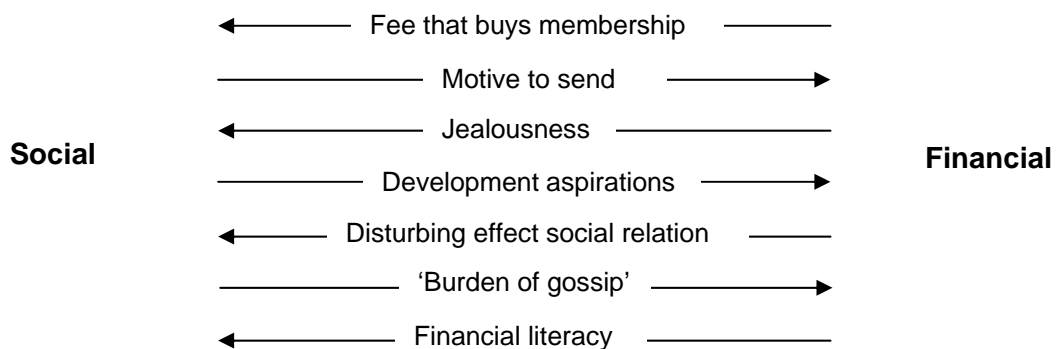
Besides this finding that several social remittances actually originate in the country of origin, the sources of these ideas are not simply evident. The degree of integration into the host society has been argued to matter when it comes to the emergence of social remittances, however the concept of host society is also debatable. What constitutes the host society? Can the Dutch society be distinguished as a homogenous entity? In other words is that a clear, unambiguous source of ideas? No, it is not. Moreover, the migrant women operate in transnational environments, also incorporating migrant organizations of other nationalities and Filipinos in other parts of the world. In addition, the women in this research operate in a specific, developmentalist environment. This environment implies that the women have a specific lens through which they view ideas and habits that could be remitted. They mainly focus on political and social factors which can trigger change that is positive in their perspective. A process of formalization is considered to be a positive contribution to the local environment in the Philippines. Some of the women aspire development in a naturalistic way, for example by using natural products in projects because they suit the environment and are cheaper than manufactured products. The local population initially preferred a PVC pipe over one made of bamboo, which Jessie suggested to use in one of her projects.

Migrants' ideas for remittances do not always have a clear source from which they emanate. They are a combination of the frame of reference which the migrants brought along from their childhood and are influenced by global media flows and encounters with other people, within and beyond the host society. The migrant women in this research actively aspire to contribute to their country of origin by being engaged in development projects or political parties. Every migrant has her own lens through which she interprets the world and what are good and bad habits, values and ideas. An au-pair migrant who does not speak the Dutch language and does not operate outside the family for which she works, can get a whole different idea of Dutch society than do the women in this research. What will count for all migrants is that being outside of your own culture makes one to

reinterpret one's own culture in a different light, which forms a basis for social remittances to emerge.

4.4 Summary

Throughout this chapter some significant findings from the interviews have been illustrated and have been related to some earlier findings regarding social remittances. It has become clear that the size and nature of Filipina migrants' social networks has changed over time. One of the factors that have had an effect on the change in the maintenance of social networks is that of new technologies in communication means. Family and development projects have appeared to be the most significant transnational ties that these migrants maintain. It has also become clear that social and financial elements are often interrelated when it comes to the process of remitting.



This interrelation has been established based on some empirical findings as have been described throughout the chapter. This interrelation becomes most evident in the form of development projects, in which both social and financial aspects are inherent. The scaling up and out of social remittances has been demonstrated by examples of respectively citizen-state effects and improved social relations among villagers. The idea of formalization is the remittances that is most visible to scale out into other sectors than to which it was initially introduced. By asking where the social remittance ideas come from, a critical perspective was offered to challenge common definitions and interpretations of social remittances as being new, Western ideas and values. Also, it has been illustrated that remittances, both social and financial, take the form of flows and are not unidirectional.

Quotes

1

"Omdat jij bent medeverantwoordelijk, jij komt daarvandaan, je familie woont daar, je vrienden woont daar, je moet het helpen, je moet het doen. Dat, een gevoel van verantwoordelijkheid is sterker dan dan leuk vinden. Het is eh, het is een, het is haast geen keuze meer. Anders verzuipt je familie ook, snapje. Het is uit liefde dat jij het doet. Als liefde, is niet dat leuk is. Ik doe het omdat het leuk is, helemaal niet. Is niet leuk want ja ik zou hier gewoon luxueuze dingen kunnen doen maar dat doe ik niet want ik hou van mijn land, ik hou van mijn dorp dus ik moet het wel" (Interview Grace Cabactulan).

2

"Wat gebeurt nu, de mensen in het dorp sinds een paar jaar, 2006,2007, zeggen altijd jij hebt projecten, ik heb ook projecten hoor maar anders, en toen hebben ze al gezegd van je hebt heel veel gedaan in andere gebieden, andere provincies en je hebt nooit iets concreets gedaan in ons dorp. En hebben ze dus gewoon daarover geroddeld van ja zij helpt ons niet, snap je. Ik voel me wel een beetje schuldig" (Interview Grace Cabactulan).

3

"En het geld wat ik je [aan haar broer] ga sturen is niet van mij, ik heb mijn eer, mijn naam is ook beschadigt. Ik moet het resultaat zien. Er is al zoveel waterpomp daar met mijn naam, is donated by" (Interview Jessie Cultura Ligan).

4

"Alleen de remittances wordt alleen veel over techniek gepraat, hoe moeten wij goedkoper remittances sturen, hoe moeten wij dit, maar niet de waarde en niet over de emoties die eraan gekoppeld aan het geld" (Interview Grace Cabactulan).

5

"(...) met een broer of een zus, het is heel lastig, blijft lastig. Ik heb natuurlijk dat ook, maar na een tijdje denken ze altijd dat ze ook macht over een geld of over een project en ja dan is dat wel teleurstelling want ik ben gewoon duidelijk ik zeg gewoon eerlijk, dat is niet van jou. Het is gewoon voor de groep, het is voor iedereen. Ja, dat zijn de negatieve gevolgen van vertrouwen. Geld is een emotionele kwestie natuurlijk. Het gevoel van accountability, verantwoordelijkheid, je moet je verantwoorden natuurlijk het geld, dat is lastig als familieleden dat beheren zeg maar" (Interview Grace Cabactulan).

6

"Om steun te krijgen waar het nodig is, emotioneel, vooral van familie. Met organisaties krijgen wij informatie over wetten, ontwikkelingen en oplossingen voor bepaalde problemen net zoals isolatie, paspoort aanvraag, immigratie problemen, enz. Contact met andere multi-culturele groepen geven ook het gevoel dat wij hebben iets gemeens met hen, dezelfde ervaringen en ook drempelen en problemen" (Interview Esperanza).

7

"Toen mijn nicht, andere nicht van mijn broer, de oudste van hem, die was toen net klaar met middelbaar en dan de eerste voorkeur is dat zij dan, of de eerste voorkeur, wat mijn broer wilt, dat zij dan uhm, pre-medical course gaat volgen. En voor mijn nicht, mijn nicht heeft zoiets van nou ja ik wil eerst even iets anders doen en dat is dan naar fysiotherapie en van daaruit kijken of, ze wilt eerst fysiotherapie doen en daar gaan werken en daarna als ze daar nog iets voor voelt wilt zij geneeskunde studeren. En mijn broer was, ja, mijn broer is een beetje zo van nou dan kun je toch ook gelijk geneeskunde dat scheelt je de tijd en uh. En dat is tussen vader en dochter een beetje, ja, strijd. En die dingen die heb ik dus met mijn broer besproken, en luisteren en zo. Wat dat betreft zelfs als ik al zo ver woon ik kan ook wel wat advies geven en maar ja uiteindelijk was het toch wel eh, de keus van mijn nicht" (Interview Rohlee Deguzman).

8

“Dus het verschil zit misschien, toen ik nog jonger was, denken nog niet aan ja uhm stuk grond kopen of dat soort dingen. Ja dat heeft economisch gezien te maken toen heb ik nog geen echte salaris, vaste en dat soort dingen, maar ook nog niet echt de behoefte, daar denk je nog niet aan je bent gewoon zo jong, je werkt gewoon en ja je geniet en ja naarmate je ouder wordt denk je dat soort dingen. Want inderdaad dat vraag ik nou bijvoorbeeld aan mensen wel kennen jullie een stuk of wat wij kunnen investeren. Zeg maar condominium, condominium zie je overal op de Filippijnen en veel migranten kopen een condominium daar en dat verhuren ze dan. Dat soort informatie krijg ik nu ook. En daar vraag ik ook actief naar, wat de mogelijkheden zijn” (Interview Rohlee Deguzman).

9

“Nu hebben we bijvoorbeeld het plan om in september iemand uit Duitsland, Denemarken, ik dus van hier en Annie uit Zwitserland, we hebben dat zeg maar uhm uhm afgesproken dat wij op dezelfde periode naar de Filippijnen gaan en dan als we daar zijn komen ook alle Filippijnse contacten komen bij elkaar. Ja dat is eh leuk” (Interview Rohlee Deguzman).

10

“Grace: Behulp tegenwoordig van technologie is het veel meer dan dertig jaar geleden.

Sabrina: U bedoelt dat het contact nu meer is?

Grace: Ja. Sneller, efficiënter, goedkoper, breed, uitgebreider met behulp van de moderne manier van communicatie natuurlijk. Dat is heel belangrijk” (Interview Grace Cabactulan).

11

“Ik bel elke week naar mijn ouders, soms met Skype. Ik stuur kaarten tijdens feestdagen, verjaardagen en stuur emails/SMS naar andere familie leden en vrienden. Facebook is ook het nieuwste manier om te communiceren waar ik met photos en verhaaltjes meedeel en anders om” (Interview Esperanza).

12

“Waarden en normen, kijk je praat over onafhankelijkheid en je vertelt heel concreet over Nederland, 16 jaar oud mag je hier werken, je verdient weinig maar je mag beginnen met klein werk. Dat is een waarde” (Interview Grace Cabactulan) .

13

“De mensen daar denken die zijn toch alleen maar profiteren van ons eigenlijk, de overheid, het exploitation gedeelte. Door het zeggen dat, wij pushen dat, nee wij moeten een partnerschap juist met hen zodat wij met z'n allen de accountability, de verantwoordelijkheid gezamenlijk op een project” (Interview Grace Cabactulan).

5- Conclusions

In this chapter conclusions are drawn based on findings as described in the previous chapters. Key findings of the research are presented here. The chapter will look back to the previous chapters and bring this thesis to a close with a critical reflection.

5.1 Key findings

At the beginning of this thesis we have seen that migration research has undergone a transnational turn in the 1990s. This turn has deemed several perspectives on migration to be unfit. The emotional was added to the rational and static principles like methodical nationalism were replaced by fluidity. Furthermore this thesis has attempted to shed a light on the social aspects, alongside and beyond the financial aspects of international migration, specifically focussed on social remittances. The objective of this thesis has been to contribute to the understanding of the concept of social remittances by exploring the social aspects inherent to the ties of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands towards their country of origin. The exploration of the migrant social network has been the perspective through which social remittances have been analysed. Therefore the conclusions of this research especially focuses on the concept of social remittances. Moreover, this thesis represents a contextual story in the sense that it elaborates on the concept of social remittances through the perspective of a specific group of Filipina migrants.

The theory that the degree to which migrants' interpretative frames are altered is a function of their interaction with the host society (Portes and Zhou, 1993 in Levitt 1998, p.930) has been important in the initial phase of this research as it forms the basis of which the interviewees have been selected. However this theory has been nuanced during the process of research. The use of the word altered in their theory makes that it cannot be fully counteracted by the finding that some ideas and values originated in the Philippines in this study, yet it can be argued whether 'altered' in this theory implies a transformation or repositioning of existing frames of reference? What can be challenged in the statement of Portes and Zhou is that the interaction with the host society is an unsatisfactory concept that has proven to be insufficient since migrants have multiple social networks, within and beyond the host society. The frame of reference is altered also through visiting the country of origin after long periods of time, of interaction with Filipinos worldwide and with other immigrant groups in the Netherlands.

What can be said about how migrant social networks to the country of origin, in the case of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands, can elucidate the understanding of social remittances? Studying social remittances from the perspective of migrant social networks induces a transnational lens that allows for social remittances to be studied in the form of flows. This relational view has diminished the linear thinking when it comes to (social) remittances. The statement that social remittances emanate from clear sources and travel through identifiable pathways has been discussed. It has found to be an important element of norms and values that they are negotiated in social networks and do not exist or travel in a locked box. The link between migrant social networks and social remittances is among other ways constituted in the sense that migrant social networks form salient sites of experiences for migrants. Despite the fact that this role of migrant social networks in forming social remittances has not been thoroughly researched or analyzed in this study, a key finding is that the ideas, norms and values to be remitted do not necessarily

emerge from contact with the host society (and beyond), but as far as this case study has demonstrated, the seeds of the ideas and values may often be traced back to the country of origin. This can imply that the earlier posed question of transformation vs. repositioning can be answered according to this case by repositioning of existing ideas and values. Since ideas, norms and values are not to be captured in a locked box, this also means that the outcomes are not fully manageable. For example Jessie has experienced a few projects gone wrong because the money she sent has not been used properly, that is according to her perceptions and intentions. Moreover, the values that are transmitted are locally interpreted and may not have the expected outcome.

The relation between the two concepts has also been regarded in the form of migrant social networks as being a transportation means for social remittances. This has been a basic assumption in the research. In this context the role of development projects can be mentioned. Firstly because development projects are dependent upon both strong and weak ties from migrant social networks. Furthermore the outcomes of these development projects, in the form of water pumps or buildings, can produce social transformations in the community. The personalized, or in the case of development projects materialized nature of migrant social networks can be related to the power of transformation. Social remittances transmitted through migrant social networks have a more focused and individual effect than global media or tourism flows. The role of development projects is an example of intermediates in the transmission of remittances that has been established in this study. Also PPP is a kind of intermediate in the forming and transmission of social remittances, here on a more collective basis. Filipinos from all over the world share their experiences and negotiate ideas, norms and values through PPP. A specific message is formulated which is transmitted to the Philippines.

An interesting finding that has led to discussing the positioning social remittances has to do with its debated link towards financial remittances. Prior to conducting the field research, the concept of social remittances was not planned to be examined in relation to financial remittances, rather it was approached as a distinct phenomenon, in the way that among others Peggy Levitt approaches it, and the relation to financial remittances was not included in the initial research lens. Throughout the research however, the link between the financial and social aspects became more prominent as migrant social relations in the case of these Filipina migrants have proven to encompass an underlying financial nature which can disturb the relationship but possibly enhance the effect of social remittances. Therefore, social remittances are not considered a fully distinct phenomenon, but as an integral part of transnational flows, among which also financial and media flows. Nevertheless the need to research social remittances is high, particularly to equilibrate the current one-sided focus on financial and macro structures related to international migration.

It has also been aimed to say something about the positioning of social remittances within the wider framework of studies. The effects of migrants' transnational activities, specifically in the form of remittances as outlined throughout this thesis, can be incorporated in the migration-development nexus. The personalised nature and both insider- and outsider knowledge of migrant relations and ideas is perceived to possibly be a significant contribution to development issues. The inclusion of social remittances into the migration-development nexus is one form of positioning of social remittances in a wider frame. Another interesting finding that has come up is that the relation to migration is absent in the definition of social remittances by Jarvinen-Alenius, Pitkanen and Virkama (2010). This raises the question whether social remittances is a phenomenon inherent to migration only? How about development projects by NGOs, these also incorporate the transmission of ideas and values. Or how about tourism or my internship in Vietnam? Or even within a country, how about urbanisation and changing lifestyles? Does that not

trigger a flow of ideas, values and habits to be exchanged? There is something unique about migrant remittances in the sense that transnational ties are longitudinal and more personal as opposed to tourism relations. However, the position of social remittances is challenged to be beyond (international) migration studies.

Let us consider that Levitt and Sørensen (2004) define social remittances as being the ideas, behaviors, identities and social capital that migrants export to their home communities, and reconsider this definition based on the key findings in this study. In the first chapter of this thesis, the ambiguous nature of the term home has been indicated. Also, the unidirectional nature that is often ascribed to the concept of social remittances, and that features in the definition of Levitt and Sørensen, has been addressed. Moreover social remittances are regarded as a distinct phenomenon, which has been important in establishing studies regarding this subject and to break through the one-sided focus on financial remittances. Yet despite the need for focused attention to the social side of the impact of migration, the link to financial elements cannot be fully disclosed. Further research should indicate whether and to what extent an underlying financial element to a social relation can have on the transformative power of social remittances. The important characteristic of negotiation of ideas and values also deserves a place in the discourse on social remittances.

This research has not been able to verify the extent of the transformative effect of social remittances. Yet the importance of the concept has been demonstrated by confirming that remittances are more than money and that the concept is still poorly defined and positioned. In addition, social remittances have been briefly indicated to form a potential means for development, and to be potentially relevant beyond international migration studies.

5.2 Critical reflection

The results of this study are strongly linked to the perspectives of a somewhat specific group of Filipina migrants in the Netherlands, and can therefore not generate general results, albeit this was not the intention of this study. The migrants in this study are transnational orientated, and it has to be acknowledged that not all migrants necessarily are. Moreover it has been a research focused that on women. A research focussing on Filipino migrants may have generate different results. Furthermore the culture of the research population may also have played a role. Social remittances may be culturally dependent. Perhaps Muslim migrants have a different social network, perspective on remittances and likeliness to reposition ideas and values than do Christian migrants.

Moreover, while this study has sought to capture the dynamics of remittances and transnational social ties, this study interviewed the migrants only at one point in their migratory process. In order to more adequately capture the dynamics, the migrants should be followed and interviewed in several stages of their migratory process. This bachelor thesis research features a group of migrant women who have been in the Netherlands for many years already. This makes that several cycles of networks and remittance behaviour and important events that can have an effect on social networks and remittance behaviour have already taken place and might not be the subject for these women to bring up during the interview. Migrants who have just arrived may have a different story regarding social networks and remittances. There are possibly many factors of influence when it comes to the complex concept of social remittances, that not all have been able to be captured in this study.

It has been my experience that an empirical investigation in the initial stage of the research of the subject can contribute to a better research proposal. During the interviews some things came to the light that were not considered to be significant in the initial research proposal that was based on a literature review only.

I have considered to increase the number of interviewees for this study. However due to the migrants' and my own tight schedule this appeared to be difficult. It has been concluded that the general representativeness of this study would not increase proportionally with the number of respondents, since the respondents are drawn from a very specific category of migrants therefore the study will not become representative for all Filipino migrants in all countries of the world. This representativeness has not been the aim of this study. Rather it has been an explorative study to uncover some perspectives and insights into social remittances, which has been achieved with this study. Due to the explorative nature, this research has not only answered some questions and covered others only partially, it has also raised new questions and points of interest, which may be addressed in a future master research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Interview preparation

An in-depth interview features open-ended questions which allow for the respondents to answer according to their experience and in their own words. A topic list is drafted in order to focus the interview without locking the interviewer into a specific set of questions. Moreover, the topics on the list are shortly formulated so that specific wording is avoided (Webber and Byrd, 2010).

GOAL OF THE INTERVIEW: To explore the nature and dynamics of the (transnational) social networks of the Filipina migrant.

TIPS

Do not analyze during the interview!

Find out what something means to the interviewee!

Do not summarize extensively!

Reach an understanding of the interviewee's perspective!

Extended interview guide

-Arrival:

Make conversation but avoid the research topic.

Finding the way to the house, the weather, the city, etc.

-Introducing the research:

Provide a clear reiteration of the nature and purpose of the research.

Study human geography → bachelor thesis → goal research: illustrating elements of the social networks of a migrant. Social relations imply anyone from the neighbors to lovers and acquaintances. The contact with the person can be frequent or rare and the connection can be positive or negative.

The thesis will be read by my thesis supervisor and a second reader, connected to the university. When the thesis is approved, it will be available in the library.

It is important for this research for you to feel free and talk freely, so if for example you feel more comfortable not using the real names of the social relations, that is fine.

-Beginning the interview:

Recorder on.

First question is about something with which the interviewee is familiar with, for example the migration process. When was it that you came to the Netherlands?

-During the interview:

TOPIC LIST

- Migratie proces
- “Ponsplaatje” – werk, educatie, gezinssituatie
- Aantal belangrijke mensen in uw leven → salient sites
- Ingaan op contacten IN Filippijnen!
- **5-10 jaar geleden deze vraag gesteld had, hoe had uw antwoord dan geweest?
- **Over 5-10 jaar deze vraag stel, ziet uw antwoord er dan weer anders uit?
- Relatie met deze persoon beschrijven (type transnationale relatie)
- Content of contact
- Frequency of contact
- Medium of contact
- Veranderingen in gebied van herkomst
- Financial remittances
- Ideeën, normen en waarden
- Decay
 - Is het aantal of de intensiteit van uw contacten met mensen in de Filippijnen verandert door uw leven in Nederland?

-Ending the interview:

“ The last topic...”

Make sure the interviewee does not get left with unfinished business.

-After the interview:

Switch off tape-recorder. Thank the interviewee.

Appendix 2 – Initial conceptual framework

