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Overseas Filipino Workers, Remittances and
Sustainability: A Study of Filipino Migrant Workers in
Papua New Guinea

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of

Master in Philosophy
in
Development Studies

at Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

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2005

Abstract

The chronic economic problems of the Philippines have resulted in the underdevelopment of that country compared to many of its Asian neighbours, forcing millions of its citizens to seek work abroad. Insufficient employment and economic opportunities await returnee migrants once their foreign contracts have expired, meaning that a significant number of migrants revert back to subsistence living upon returning to their home communities. When they have exhausted their savings in meeting the families' basic needs, they often find no alternative means to source an income. This desperate situation causes many returnee migrants to endure more poverty and desolation or to migrate once more.

This thesis is a study of the Filipino migrant workers in Papua New Guinea. The primary objective of this research is to identify the measures adopted by the Filipino migrant workers to ward off the potential effects of unemployment and economic hardship which may bring poverty and desolation when workers eventually return to live in their home communities. This study aims to establish how the migrants manage their remittances to make these sustainable in terms of providing income generating opportunities at home. In particular, the study examines whether part of their remittances are transformed into new forms of income-generating schemes that may deliver the same or similar levels of income when workers return to live in their home country.

This research also explores the different factors that influence people's decision to migrate. Typical migration movement is from the poorer Third World countries to the wealthier industrialized First World countries. This study, however, was a Third World-Third World migration relationship which is different from the conventional migration movement. The reason for this movement - why Filipino workers migrate to PNG, a Third World country, in search for employment is also examined.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following for the invaluable contributions they made in the preparation and completion of this thesis. To Professors Donovan Storey and Manuhua Barcham for their guidance; Oliver Ong and the staff of the Philippine Embassy in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea for their support and consent to access the Embassy library. The availability of the Embassy's books facilitated the preparation of background information on the socio-cultural context of Philippine society. To the President and members of the Filipino Association of Papua New Guinea, their assistance and participation in the questionnaire survey and focus group discussion made this thesis a reality. To the staff of the Library of Massey University, Palmerston North, their assistance and request response time for library materials has been excellent. To the James Cook University Library (Cairns, Australia), their assistance with library resources has been a great help. And most importantly, to Tony Cameron, his guidance, encouragement, patience and moral support has been an inspiration.

Abbreviations

BOI	Bureau of Investment
CVs	Curriculum Vitae
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
EO	Executive Order
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
LOI	Letter of Instruction
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NICs	Newly Industrializing Countries
NSB	National Seamen's Board
NZ	New Zealand
OCWs	Overseas Contract Workers
OEDB	Overseas Employment Development Board
OFs	Overseas Filipinos
OFWs	Overseas Filipino Workers
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
Php	Philippine Peso (currency unit)
PNG	Papua New Guinea
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
TFC	The Filipino Channel

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The concept of sustainability in this research is defined as the transformation of the economic benefit received overseas by the migrant workers into a new form of income-generating activity that would deliver a similar level of income to the migrant and his family. This research project argues that engaging in economic activity is the mechanism by which migrants could make their remittances sustainable so that there would be a continued flow of income for the family. This study will explore the thesis question: "Do Filipino migrant workers transform part of their remittances into some form of economic activity in their home country to make the economic benefit from working overseas sustainable?" The study will centre on Filipino migrant workers in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The objective of the research is to determine whether the Filipino migrant workers have initiated processes to convert part of their remittances into creating income-generating schemes while they were still working overseas to ensure the continuity of the economic benefits upon their return to their home country.

Through the evaluation and analysis of the migrants' questionnaire responses and group discussions, this thesis will show the different mechanisms put in place by the migrant workers that ensure sustainability of their remittances.

The increasing flow of labour migrants to international labour destinations has spawned numerous researches on the causes and outcome of international labour migration (e.g. Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2004; Massey et al, 1993; Piore, 1979; Lee, 1966). However, while the study and literature on the subject has grown considerably, very little, if any, research has been conducted on the sustainability of migrants' remittances. For example, a study to identify the mechanisms put in place by migrants to establish a means for an alternative income source, to form new income streams to make their benefits received overseas grow, is difficult to find. This research attempts to fill the gap by conducting a study on the measures adopted by migrant workers to ensure a sufficient flow of income is maintained when they return to live back in their country.

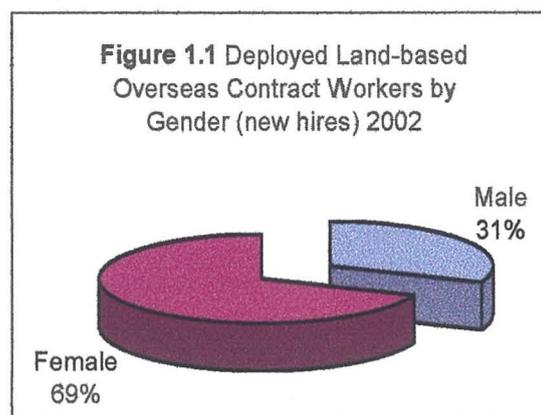
1.1 Setting the Scene for the Research

The flow of Philippine labour migration, since the first labour movement to Hawaii in the 1900s, has gained considerable importance to the Philippine economy, even to the present day. Because of the large scale flow of Filipino labour to international destinations, with an average 2,440¹ workers deployed every day (POEA, 2002), labour migration has helped reduce the pressure on the unemployment situation in the local economy. Initially, labour deployment was made up of mostly men destined to work in the construction and agricultural sectors, but since the labour potential of women was recognized and demanded overseas, the number of Filipino women migrant workers increased considerably, and now reaches 69% of the total migrants deployed (Figure 1.1).

Filipino migrant workers also play a significant part in the stability of the Philippine economy through their contribution to providing hard currencies needed in the home country through foreign currency remittances. In fact, during the

Philippine economic upheaval in the late 1980s which was caused by an unstable political situation and through the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the Filipino migrants' foreign currency remittances cushioned the Philippine economy against the effect of market shock, helping to stabilize the economy and keep it afloat (Commission on Filipino Overseas, 2000:13). Today, the Philippine Government considers the Filipino migrant workers as the "new heroes" because of the important contributions they provide for the betterment of the Philippine economy.

At the micro level, the massive inflow of hard currencies into the country indicates that for each migrant family, foreign currency remittances bring economic benefits and enhances the well-being of many families. However, certain economic



Source: POEA, 2005

¹ This figure was calculated from POEA data: Total 2002 migrant workers deployed of 891,908 divided by 365 days.

problems often arise when the migrants return to live in their home country. The returnee Filipino migrants must confront the harsh reality that in most cases, there are no employment or economic opportunities waiting for them in their home communities (Sison, 2002; Asian Migrants, 2005). Up till now the economic growth strategies the Philippine Government has implemented have failed to advance the economy to its full potential. This has attributed to the slow, or rather stalled, economic development that the Philippines is experiencing. The reality of insufficient employment opportunities at home creates a bleak certainty that there would be no means for returning migrants to generate income to sustain the day to day needs of the family. Statistics show that a significant number of migrant workers return to their original subsistence living when all their savings have been exhausted because their only source of income was the economic benefits they were receiving from overseas (Asian Migrants, 2005). This prospect of a dismal future for returnee migrants and their families is so real and widespread that a considerable number of returnee migrants have fallen victim to poverty and desolation. Other migrants resolve this kind of problem by deciding to re-migrate to create a renewed means of income stream for their families. Although the re-migration decision may be economically beneficial, the trade-off is hefty in terms of lack of social contacts particularly with the children. With a father or a mother re-migrating, family are once again left behind and the children grow up without close physical ties to that parent. This prolonged family separation impacts significantly on the psychological and emotional balance of the Filipino migrants particularly in maintaining the social values of a unified family unit. This, however, is the trade-off families have to bear in their desire to benefit from better opportunities abroad.

The prospect of a lack of income stream because of inadequate employment and economic opportunities awaiting the returnee migrant workers became the catalyst for conducting this research. The study is expected to determine the measures adopted by migrant workers to prevent this problem from happening to them. The thesis of this study maintains that engaging in economic activity is the means by which migrants make their remittances sustainable. This is founded on the assumption that if the migrants transform part of their remittances earned abroad into some form of economic activity in their home country, then they will have a new means of income stream to rely on when they return to live in their community. What is required is the establishment of a means for a constant flow

of income for the family without resorting to re-migration. The creation of this scheme, however, necessitated that the economic activity is managed well and to be profitable so that future revenue will be maintained.

The conduct of the research is important in understanding how the migrant workers use their remittances, particularly how they prioritise their household expenditure. Will remittances be mainly used for improving the household consumption level (i.e., standard of living)? (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2004: 8; Martin et al, 2004). Or will part of their remittances be saved for future engagement in economic activity? Or are there other means of making their remittances sustainable? It is of interest in the study to recognize the plans for which the remittances were to be expended by the migrants' families back home. But most importantly, the study will uncover the sustainability measures the migrants have adopted to ward against the potential future threat of unemployment and economic hardship when they return to live back in their community. The study was expected to explain the phenomena of labour remittances and uncover potentials for its sustainability.

This study started from the following key assumptions: that migrant workers desire the continued flow of their present level of economic benefits upon their return to their home country; that migrant workers desire the improvement in their family's quality of life; that migrant workers have definite plans for the usage of their remittances; and that migrant workers are the main breadwinners in their family.

In seeking the answer to the research question, a mixed method of enquiry was applied. One was the issuance of questionnaires to Filipino migrants and the other, a focus group discussion. About thirty-four (34) Filipino migrant workers working in various business sectors in Port Moresby participated in the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire responses were then summarized and analysed to obtain an understanding of the issues at hand. In conjunction with the questionnaire, five participants were selected to form a focus group for which more detailed and personal questions were asked. A list of mostly open-ended questions was presented to the group to stimulate conversation. A participatory rural appraisal (PRA) method of discussion was applied to encourage free flow of ideas and opinion from participants. The results of the focus group discussion was

transcribed and analysed together with the results obtained from the questionnaire. These are the empirical data of the research.

The research was expected to raise important issues in the socio-economic aspects of the migrant workers' lives, to understand why they migrate, how they used their remittances, the benefits the family received, and their plans for the future. The research was also expected to shed light on what the migrant workers considered as their greatest achievement since working overseas.

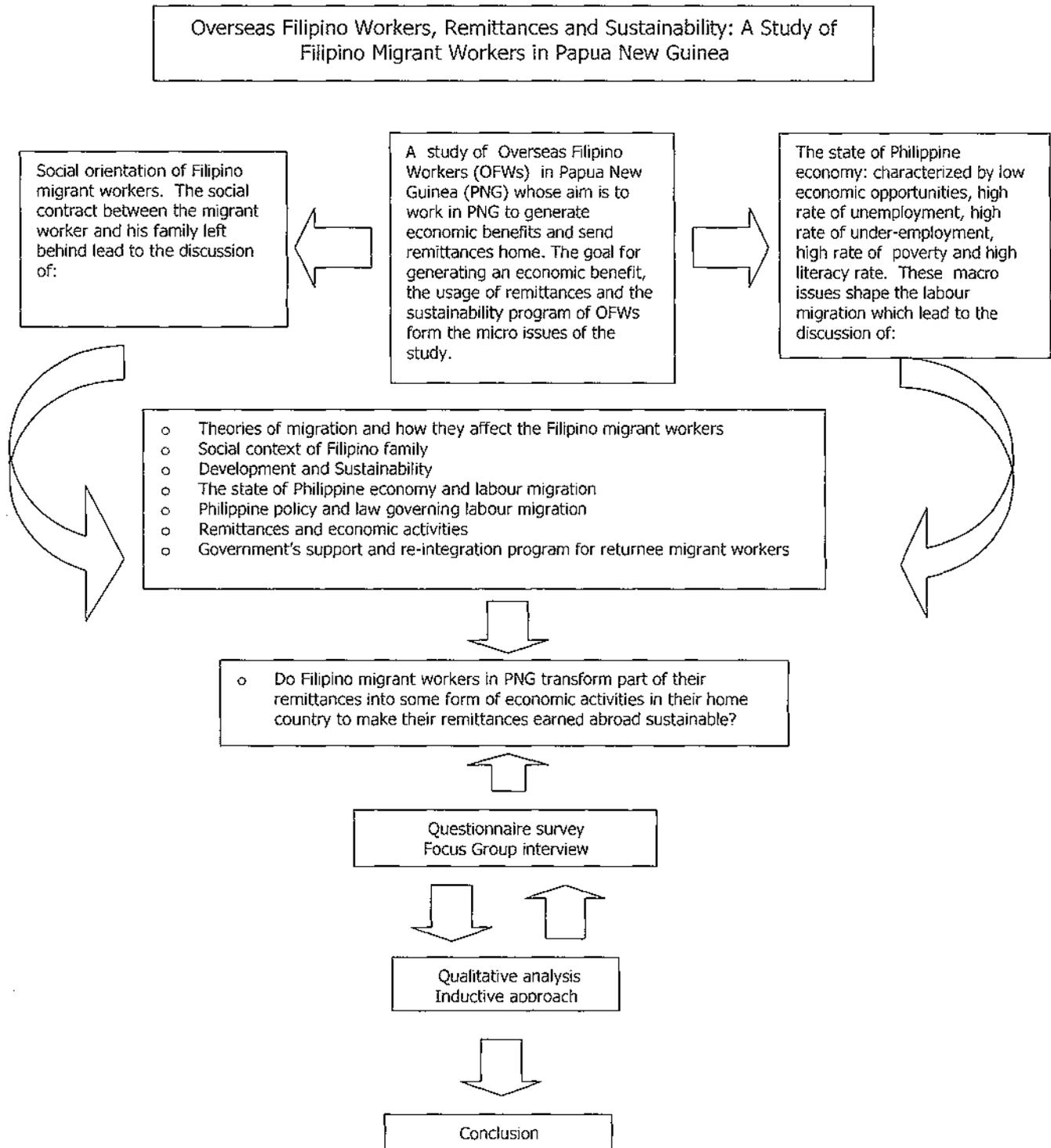
1.2 Presentation of this Study

The presentation of the study was arranged in such a way that a logical progression of the issues was obtained. Chapter 1 of the thesis sets the broad objectives of the study, defining the problem statement and presenting the research question, as well as presenting the aim of the thesis, its objectives and brief explanation of the methodology to be employed. It also states the key assumptions and the limitations of the study, as well as the importance of the thesis and what contribution to knowledge it would make. Chapter 2 builds the background to the thesis, discussing the social, economic, and legal context that influence migration. The significant prior research conducted on international migration and migrant workers, the effect of remittances and the socio-cultural and economic influences brought about by migration will be discussed in Chapter 3 while Chapter 4 introduces in detail the research methodology and techniques employed in gathering the empirical data; Chapter 5 presents the results of the study – the summary of data and the interpretation of the various responses from participants. Chapter 6 discusses the outcome of the study while Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of the research. These processes are presented in Figure 1.2 Venn Diagram.

Although the research was conducted with the Filipino workers in PNG, the study was limited to the Filipino contract workers that are legally working in PNG. The study also excludes Filipino workers with resident status in PNG or resident status in other countries such as Australia or New Zealand. This exclusion is based on the assumption that Filipinos with resident status in any country are not most likely to

go back and live in the Philippines; hence, there is no incentive for them to invest in economic activity in the Philippines.

Figure 1.2 Venn Diagram



Chapter 2. The Socio-Economic Background of the Philippines

Introduction

This chapter presents the state of the Philippine economy and the social construct of Philippine society for which we could have a means to understand the interplay of socio-economic factors that appear to contribute to the Filipino workers' decision to migrate. The history of labour movement is also presented to highlight the initial recognition and progression of Filipino migrants' capability in meeting labour demands overseas. This will also discuss the Philippine Government's thrust of supporting and encouraging labour migration by creating legislation that protects the Filipino workers and their families overseas, hence, the Philippine Government is recognized as the leading country in promoting and regulating international migration for its labour force.

Table 2.1

Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos
As at December 2004

Region	Permanent	Temporary	Irregular	Total
Africa	318	58,369	17,141	75,828
Asia, East and South	91,901	1,005,609	443,343	1,540,853
Asia West	2,312	1,449,031	112,750	1,564,093
Europe	174,387	506,997	143,035	824,419
Americas/Trust Territories	2,689,722	292,892	549,725	3,532,339
Oceania	228,946	57,357	30,978	317,281
Seabased Workers	-	229,002	-	229,002
World Total	3,187,586	3,599,257	1,296,972	8,083,815

Prepared by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas from CFO, DFA, POEA and other sources covering 194 countries/territories.

Permanent - Immigrants or legal permanent residents abroad whose stay do not depend on work contracts.

Temporary - Persons whose stay overseas is employment related and who are expected to return at the end of their work contract.

Irregular - Those not properly documented or without valid residence or work permits, or who are overstaying in a foreign country.

Source: POEA, 2005

It is estimated that about eight million one hundred thousand (8.1 million) Filipinos today work in more than one hundred ninety four (194) countries all over the world (Table 2.1; Appendix A1). The Philippines has a wide-ranging group of labour export made up of professional, skilled and unskilled workers whose services are demanded in numerous countries all over the world because of their "skills, fluency in English, and a talent for adapting to different cultures" (Martin et

al, 2004). These are the qualities of the Filipino migrant workers that made the Philippine Government the largest exporter of migrant workers in the world (IWRAP, 2005). The Philippine Government encourages the Filipino workers to migrate not only because it eases the unemployment and underemployment problems in the Philippines but also because the migrant workers provide the highly needed foreign currency remittances in the country. The Central Bank of the Philippines recorded the Filipino overseas workers' foreign currency contributions to the Philippine economy in 2001 to be US\$6.23 Billion (Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2002) nearly 10% of the Philippine annual budget. It was estimated that the Philippine Government received an average of US\$7 Billion dollars in remittances every year since.

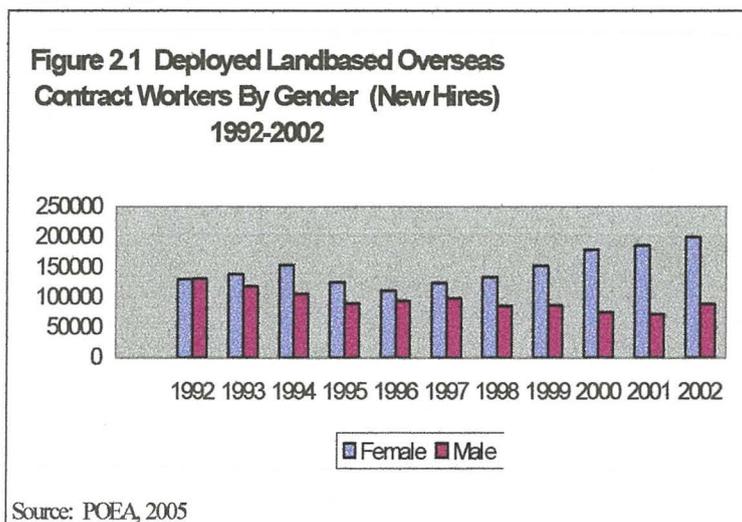
2.1 A Brief History of Philippine Migration

The Philippine labour migration started in 1906 when the government of Hawaii recruited about 120,000 Filipino workers to work in the sugar and pineapple plantations in Hawaii (Cabilao, 1995:10). When the contract for work was completed, half of the workers returned to the Philippines by 1934 while the rest of the Filipino workers stayed in Hawaii; with some shifting to the mainland of the United States. The migration of professional Filipino workers continued on from 1946 up to the late 1960s, destined mostly to work in the United States (Ibid).

A significant wave of migrant workers, mostly men, occurred in the early 1970s when the oil-rich Middle East countries required the importation of skilled workers to build infrastructure and assist in developing the region. Professional workers, such as engineers, architects and mechanics, as well as skilled and unskilled workers took the opportunity to work in the Middle East (Fong, 1994:252; Cabilao, 1995:10; Martin et al, 2004; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2004) with a large number of migrants deployed to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Most of the unskilled men were employed in manual labour as well as service occupations (Go, 1998; Tyner, 1994; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2004). By the late 1970s, when most of the infrastructure building had been completed in the Middle East, the demand for male workers reduced. However, there emerged a shift in the labour needs of the Middle East countries. The services of mostly female workers were demanded to fill

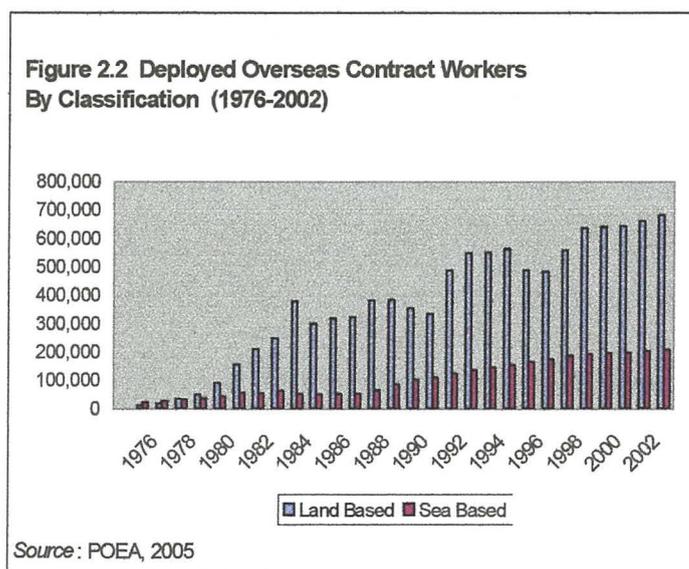
the needs for medical personnel, maintenance workers and domestic helpers (Asis, 2003).

At nearly the same time, at the start of 1980s, the expanding economies of the newly industrializing countries (NICs) of Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea and the established economy of Japan became the new destinations for most Filipino migrants. Filipino women were deployed in the NICs countries as domestic and childcare helpers, in Japan as nurses and entertainers and in other



industrialized countries as nurses, caretakers, and house maids (Asis, 2003; Martin et al, 2004). The increasing number of ageing populations in Japan, US, Canada and other countries encouraged the

migration of nurses to care for the elderly (Iredale, 2001:21), a sector for which the Philippines had a large stock of nurses and caregivers available.



The Filipino labour migration was wide ranging in terms of services so that both the male and the female labour forces were exported overseas. Philippine labour migration was previously dominated by male workers but with more women leaving to work

abroad more of a gender balance emerged around 1992 (Fig. 2.1; Appendix A2).

From 1993 onwards, although there were increases in the number of Filipino seamen organized to work in international vessels at that time (Fig. 2.2; Appendix A3), the number of female migrants still exceeded the total number of male workers. Women's numbers continued to increase to reach 69% of the total migrant labour force deployed (Figs. 1.1 and Appendix A2). Table 2.2 shows that 48% of women deployed in the last five years were employed in the service sector

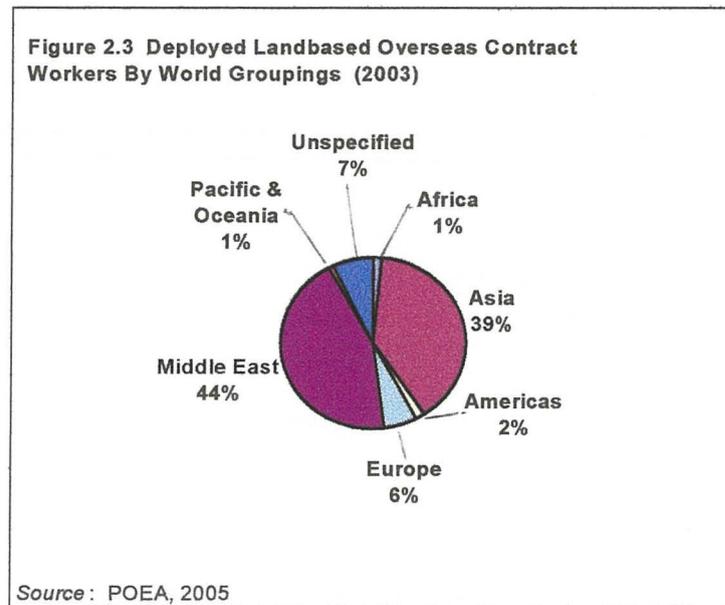
TABLE 2.2
DEPLOYMENT OF NEWLY HIRED OVERSEAS CONTRACT WORKERS BY SKILLS CATEGORY
(1998-2002)

Skills Category	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total	Per Cent
Female							
Professional & Technical	41,640	50,677	67,454	83,056	85,617	328,444	39%
Managerial	80	59	76	105	129	449	0%
Clerical	1,314	1,262	1,000	1,995	2,531	8,102	1%
Sales	1,121	785	949	1,814	1,464	6,133	1%
Service	73,048	76,792	83,794	83,951	88,669	406,254	48%
Agricultural	13	8	6	36	16	79	0%
Production	15,879	20,793	16,428	13,755	20,407	87,262	10%
Unclassified	363	1,464	8,616	1,306	590	12,339	1%
Total	133,458	151,840	178,323	186,018	199,423	849,062	100%
Male							
Professional & Technical	13,816	11,823	11,231	14,392	14,968	66,230	16%
Managerial	305	274	208	280	247	1,314	0%
Clerical	1,583	1,290	1,367	1,361	1,508	7,109	2%
Sales	1,393	1,459	1,134	1,374	1,605	6,965	2%
Service	7,627	7,346	7,412	8,400	9,338	40,123	10%
Agricultural	375	444	520	514	601	2,454	1%
Production	59,199	58,869	41,379	42,985	49,476	251,908	62%
Unclassified	1,459	3,915	11,456	2,880	10,989	30,699	8%
Total	85,757	85,420	74,707	72,186	88,732	406,802	100%

Source: POEA, 2005

mostly working as house helpers and in childcare, 39% were employed in the professional and technical sector working as nurses, caregivers and accountants, and 10% were working in production lines. It also shows that 60% of men were employed in production working as supervisors and labourers, 16% were working as professional and technical workers, such as engineers, architects, accountants, technicians, and mechanics while 10% were employed in the service sector. Figure 2.3 shows that 44% of deployed landbased Filipino migrants went to the Middle East, 39% to Asia and 6% went to Europe.

The Filipino workers left their home country to meet the demands for labour overseas. They were encouraged not only because of the expected better economic benefits offered by the host country but also because of the inherent responsibility they had to provide a better life for the family.



2.2 The Social Context of the Filipino Family

In a Filipino family, traditionally it is the father's responsibility to find a living to provide for the basic necessities of the family, such as food, shelter and education. However, in the emerging modern society, the female member of the family now has a role in the economic decision making where the mother or the daughter find employment to augment the income raised by the father of the family, in a way giving the female members not only a sense of financial freedom but also fulfilment in contributing to the family's financial needs. In decisions concerning generating income to mitigate any financial risk that threatens the family, the head of the family, that is, the father, usually takes the responsibility. However, considering the economic difficulty and the high rate of poverty in the country, if the father's income is insufficient to meet the needs of the family, or if the father can not work because of poor health, the strategy adopted by the family to maximize income flow and reduce economic risk is to send the most productive members of the

family, either the mother, the eldest son or the eldest daughter to find work to earn a living to support the entire family.

Collective responsibility characterizes a Filipino family, so that each family member looks after the other. Parents support their children, children support their parents or grand parents, a wealthy brother would support the family of a less fortunate sister or brother or provide education to a poor nephew or niece (Agoncillo, 1990:8). Looking after the extended family is a trait that does not tend to exist in Western society.

2.3 The Philippine Economy and Labour Migration

The Philippine economy experienced economic growth during the 1960s when it was second in Asia only to Japan in terms of per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (www.traveldocs.com; Martin et al, 2004). Its economic standing within Asian countries slid back because of "widespread corruption, complicated tax laws and tax evasion" (Martin et al, 2004) for which the Philippine economy was not able to recover. The situation was exacerbated when succeeding governments implemented economic strategies that failed to deliver the desired results for economic growth. The economy, according to Go (1998 cited in Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2004) was then characterized by poor economic conditions, high unemployment, high fertility rates, slow economic and industrial development, and an unstable political situation.

The 2005 Philippine census (www.census.gov), recently showed a rather mixed economic performance, hardly indicating a brighter future for economic growth. It showed the economy grew slightly to 6.1% in 2004 but this growth was threatened by the oil price hike experienced in the early part of 2005. The economy was expected then to have a down-turn. The inflation rate was high at 7%. The census also showed the Philippine population reaching an estimated 85.2 million in 2005 and continued to grow although at a somewhat reduced rate of 2.5%, down from 2.6% in 1980. Because of slow economic and industrial development exacerbated by heavy external debt (US\$57.96 Billion, 2003), the unemployment rate in the Philippines remains high, recorded at 7.7% (April 2005) while underemployment was logged at 20.5% (April 2005). Without a sufficient source of income for a

growing Philippine population, poverty is rife. Unicef (www.unicef.org) recorded 40% of the Philippine population lives below poverty line.

Although the economic statistics are grim, during the writing of this paper, the Presidential Spokesman, Ignacio Bunye, stated that the Philippine Government is confident that the major structural reform programs (such as tax reforms, privatisation, market liberalization to encourage foreign investment, etc.) the Government had implemented to address the problems of the economy would lead to an economic take off in 20 years' time (www.gazettephilippines.com). The implementation of the reforms shows positive steps and hopefully would work towards stabilizing and improving the Philippine economy. However, there may be some glitch in the reform programs because of instances of political instability. There are political moves by the opposition party to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo for alleged election fraud (Alexander, 2005) and to oust her from office through the popular people's movement called "people power", the same movement that ousted President Estrada from office in 2002 because of alleged corruption. This political instability does not encourage capital investment from foreign investors.

Although the economic performance of the country is low, the level of literacy is maintained at a high level. The Philippine education system is widespread and quite effective in achieving basic levels of education. The literacy rate stands at 95% (www.unicef.org) producing good quality graduates that add to the already oversupplied job market. With professional people competing for limited jobs in the labour market, competition is expected to get even tougher in late 2005 with the imminent availability of four hundred sixty thousand (460,000) new university graduates (TFC, 2005) ready to enter and compete in the labour market. With professional people unable to find employment in the Philippines, workers take the opportunity to search for employment and go overseas to work. In most cases, Semyonov & Gorodzeisky (2004) maintained that the overseas contracts are obtained to fill low-status-manual and service-occupations in the host country, jobs that the local population in the host country are unwilling to perform. For example, qualified teachers in the Philippines leave to go to Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore to work as domestic helpers. Although this kind of job is not very prestigious, it delivers better economic returns to the migrant's family.

2.4 Effects of Remittances

The remittances sent by migrants to their families have significant economic impacts. At the micro level, because the family received the money directly through financial channels, it eases the financial burden of the family, such as expenses for daily consumption and housing needs and repays loans when they become due. It also contributes to the enhancement of human capacity by providing better education to members of the family and improves the family's standard of living. The positive effect of remittances is also evident in the community when some migrants invest part of their remittances in small scale industries, such as handicraft business or pig and poultry farms (Martin et al, 2004), the usual kind of businesses the migrants invest in. These business schemes bring income to the community in terms of levies and employment for the local population. Martin et al (2004) further sited that the migrants' families direct more savings to the rural banks, more than the banks could lend locally.

At the macro level, the effect of remittances is significant. The World Bank (2006:86) maintained that there is persuasive evidence that remittances have made a significant contribution to poverty alleviation with poor workers given the chance to access better earnings abroad. Research also indicates that remittances increase the credit worthiness of the recipient country and has the potential to stimulate economic growth (Ibid).

Labour migration and remittances assist in relieving the strain on the Philippines' unemployment level and helps mitigate any threat of economic strife through continued sourcing of foreign exchange income for the Philippine economy. But, according to Martin et al (2004), although the Philippine labour migration has the "most diversified portfolio of foreign labour markets for its workers, labour migration was only but a palliative for the Filipino economic underdevelopment" (Ibid).

2.5 Philippine Policy and Law Governing Labour Migration

Because of the rising rate of Philippine migration in the early 1900s, the Philippine Legislature passed the Republic Act 2486 on 5 February 1915, a law that governed

contract workers from 1915 to 1974 (Cabilao, 1995:18). The law was passed to protect Filipino workers overseas by stipulating that guaranteed return transportation for all workers would be available, the prohibition of recruitment of 15 to 18 years olds without written consent from parents and the remittance of an annual fee to the provinces where the labourers were recruited as a form of contribution to their local economy. Other than passing legislation to protect the welfare of the workers, the Government then had a minimal role in the processes of labour migration and left its management to the private sector.

In May 1974, migration became an official government policy through Presidential Decree 442, known as the labour Code of the Philippines. The passage of this decree created the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB) and the National Seaman's Board (NSB). These were the government agencies that would manage the recruitment, placement and remittances of Filipino migrant workers. The code also established the processes and policies to manage the government agencies created indicating a shift in policy from a minimal intervention to an active government involvement in labour migration. In the same year, 1974, other Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) supporting labour migration were also established (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2004).

Because of an apparent overlap and duplication of tasks and responsibilities, the two governing bodies of OEDB and NSB were restructured and merged in 1982 through Executive Order 797. This executive order created what is now known as the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), the government agency that would manage overseas employment and recruitment. The POEA, together with the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) overseas were tasked to study the foreign markets where Filipinos accessed employment opportunities.

On 1 May 1977, the Letter of Instruction (LOI) No. 537 was passed to create the Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers. This Fund was eventually restructured in 1987 through Executive Order (EO) No. 126 and renamed the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA). This government organization was tasked to look after the welfare needs of the contract workers before, during and after overseas

employment; and to protect the interests and promote the well-being of the Filipino overseas contract workers, their families and dependents.

Due to the continued incidences of discrimination, unjust labour policies and ill-treatment of Filipino migrant workers abroad (Alcid, 2004:170), particularly highlighted by the case of Flor Contemplacion² who was hanged in Singapore, the Philippine Government passed the Republic Act No. 8042 in June 1995 known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995. This act was passed to protect the rights and interests and promote the welfare of Filipino migrant workers and their families overseas, particularly the Filipino workers in distress abroad.

The Philippine Government exerted extra effort through the enactment of such laws and regulations to protect the rights and welfare of Filipino migrant workers overseas. The Philippine Government also drafted resolutions encouraging various countries, such as members of ASEAN Governments to form bilateral agreements concerning overseas workers to adhere to International Labour Organization's (ILO) Conventions on labour migration (Cabilao, 1995:100). For example, the Philippine Government encouraged ASEAN Governments to ratify a draft resolution that would recognize ILO Convention Nos. 97 and 143. These conventions set special provision for conditions of work, the livelihood of labour migrants, the promotion of equal employment opportunities and equal treatment of migrants, respectively. Because of these efforts, the Philippine Government is considered a leader in promoting, protecting and guiding migrants abroad.

Although the Philippine Government's effort to support its migrants overseas is regarded highly internationally, domestically it is far from perfect. One example of this imperfection is the process for the repatriation of Filipino migrants in distress abroad. One focus group member commented that the Philippine Government had insufficient budget for emergency repatriations. The plane fare back to the

² Flor Contemplacion was a 42 year old Filipina housemaid convicted in 1991 by a Singapore Court of killing another Filipina housemaid, Delia Maga, and Nicholas Huang, the 3 year old son of Maga's Singaporean employer. The Singapore Government rejected an appeal from Philippine President Ramos for a stay of execution on humanitarian grounds until new evidence was considered. Contemplacion was hanged in Singapore on 17 March 1995. Her death caused a diplomatic uproar between the governments of the Philippines and Singapore. (<http://www.geocities.com>)

Philippines of migrants in distress, (as experienced in Saudi Arabia) were usually paid through contributions from fellow Filipino migrant workers (refer to Appendix C Q7). There is therefore a need for the Philippine Government to improve the services available to the migrant workers in distress abroad.

Summary

The chapter presented the socio-cultural and economic perspectives that played some role in the migration decision of Filipino workers. The responsibility of the head of the family as ascribed by Philippine society was a strong influencing factor which could impact on the decision to migrate. Other influencing factors were the poor domestic economic conditions and the availability and willingness of workers to utilize their skills in other countries to gain economic benefits. These factors appeared to be the major causes that pushed the migrant workers to leave their home country.

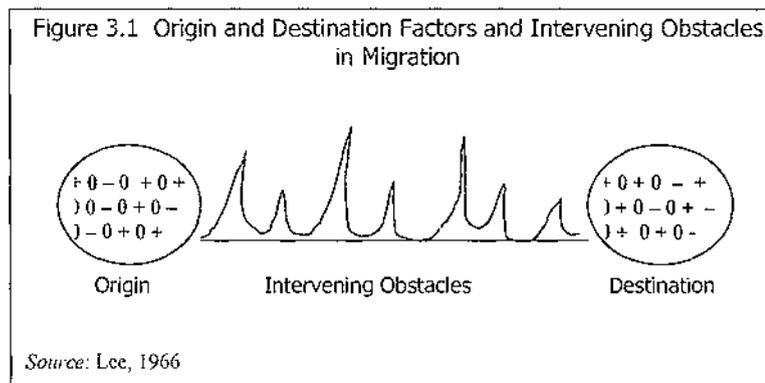
The discussion also outlined the efforts of the Philippine Government in supporting and promoting labour migration across international borders by creating legislation to protect the interests and welfare of the migrant workers overseas. This move of the Philippine Government had institutionalised labour migration in the Philippines and gained respectability among sending countries because of its efforts in protecting the deployment of Filipino migrant workers and their families.

Chapter 3. International Migration Theory, Development and Sustainability

Introduction

In the study of Philippine labour migration, the phenomenon of migration is seen to be driven by factors that induce the migrants to relocate. According to Lee (1966:50) there are four factors that influenced the decision to migrate: a) the factors associated with the area of origin; b) the factors associated with the area of destination; c) the intervening obstacles; and, e) personal factors. These factors, presented in Figure 3.1, will be discussed in this chapter as a means for: a) a foundation in understanding the reasons for labour movement; b) a means to appreciate the decision-making process that the Filipino migrants might have employed in deciding to relocate in search for work; and c) a basis for understanding the development of various migration theories.

While these fundamental elements of migration are presented here, other theories relevant to Philippine migration will also be discussed to build on the theoretical context for this research.



3.1 The Factors Influencing the Decision to Migrate

The decision to migrate has basic attributes that have to be considered: the origin, the destination, the intervening obstacles and personal preferences that influence the movement of labour (Figure 3.1). In any area, whether it be the area of origin or the area of destination, there exists varying factors that attract people to

settle (+), factors that deter people to stay (-), or factors that people are indifferent to (0) (Lee, 1966:50). For example, the positive encouraging factors in the area of destination could be lower or exempt taxation, higher superannuation benefits, a better standard of living, a higher salary or more economic benefits. The negative factors in the area of origin could be higher taxation, a lower social services, a lower standard of living, a higher rate of unemployment, a lower salary and lower economic benefits. The factors which people could be indifferent to vary from one group of people to another. This will depend on the preferences and sensitivities of that group of people. For example, some migrants might prefer to go to places with a milder climate while other migrants may find places with extreme winter just another challenge for them to cope with.

There are intervening obstacles in the migrants' decision to migrate that could prevent them from moving. Such obstacles could be the distance from country of origin to country of destination. There could also be financial reasons, the inability to meet the initial capital cost required to transfer, such as payment for airfares or high agency fees. It could also be political or social, where the government limits the number of citizens travelling overseas. Or there could be family reasons, the difficulty of leaving the family behind. Different obstacles exist for different people's situations, obstacles that need to be overcome for the migrants to proceed with the decision to travel. However, these obstacles would still be influenced by migrants' personal preferences.

Varying personal factors exist that could smoothen the progress of or impede the decision to migrate. Personal sensitivities, intelligence, and awareness of conditions on both areas of origin and destination (Lee, 1966:51) are preconditions for decision making. Only when these matters are evaluated, and their corresponding costs and benefits critically considered, could this lead to a sound decision. Migrants have varying personal reasons for labour movement, the most significant consideration that influences migrants' preferences are the higher wage differential and higher economic benefits that the country of destination is offering. However, Ravenstein (1889, II, p. 286 quoted in Lee, 1966:48) posited that the overriding desire inherent in all men to "better themselves in material respects" was the major personal factor that influenced the decision to migrate.

3.2 The Theories of Labour Migration

The geographical inequality in economic development is seen to be the major cause for labour migration particularly from the Third World environment (Parnwell, 1993:73). The dichotomy of wealthy and poor, well developed and underdeveloped, sufficient and needy are vividly reflected in the context of the First World and the Third World environments. The Third World countries are characterized by underdeveloped economies, with high rates of poverty, high population growth and high rates of unemployment and underemployment and the workers have relatively low wages. In contrast, the First World nations are characterized by well developed industrialized economies, with matured markets and workers having relatively high wages. Because of economic underdevelopment and over supply of available workers, the labour force of Third World countries have the propensity to shift geographically to different locations in search of employment. Parnwell (1993:73) claimed that labour migration provides the solution for labour shortages in the host country by encouraging migration from countries with a surplus but underutilized labour force, productively employing them to meet the hosts' human resource needs. Time and again, this theory applies particularly in the case of PNG where recruitment of skilled Filipino workers has been facilitated in order to fill the domestic skilled labour shortage of the country. Third World nations become an ideal source and mechanism for resolving the domestic human resource shortages in countries experiencing domestic labour shortages.

Piore (1979 cited in Massey et al, 1993:440) maintained that it is inherent to the economic structures of industrialized *developed* nations to encourage international migration to fill the shortage of skilled workers. Regions with developed economies like this are usually seen by migrants as potential labour destinations (whether legally or otherwise) to avail themselves of the economic benefits a wealthy nation may provide. The same target destinations could be assumed to be countries whose economies are undergoing rapid growth, such as the newly industrialized countries (NICs) or the oil-exporting countries where new industries are established and new infrastructure developed. In fact, NIC countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan are deployment destinations for Philippine migration as well as the United States of America and Canada (Cabilao, 1995:80) in the

recruitment of workers arranged by employment agencies in the Philippines. This research, however, is confined to a Third World-Third World migration movement, not a Third World- First World migration destination.

International migration can also be explained by the neo-classical economic theory of demand and supply for labour across international boundaries. Neo-classical economics is concerned with the study, management and allocation of the demand and supply of scarce resources. The allocation of these resources and the choices selected among competing alternatives involves trade-offs. For example, the migrant may choose to earn higher wages by working overseas but the trade-off is leaving his/her family behind.

One of the neo-classical economic theories that explain labour migration flow is the macroeconomic theory of international migration. This theory states that migration is instigated by the geographical differences in the supply of and demand for labour (Massey et al, 1993:433). Because of the effect of demand and supply, the country with high capital but experiences a short supply of domestic labour offers high market wages while the country with low capital but maintains an oversupply of domestic labour offers low market wages. In effect, the workers in the country with over supplied labour but with low wages are attracted to relocate to the country with a short supply of domestic workers but with relatively high market wages to avail themselves of the significant economic benefits the high waged country is offering.

Although obtaining better economic benefits appear to be the main reason for shifting, there are different theories that support labour movement. One of the theories, the theory of migration suggests that people migrate because the benefits from migrating are greater than the benefits the migrants would receive if they chose to stay in their country of origin (Sjaastad, 1962). Similarly, Lee (1966 cited in Parnwell, 1993:76) argued that people move because the positive conditions in the potential place of destination offer better opportunities than the place of origin. This theory was further supported by Piore (1979) stating that migration is caused by the pull factors in the receiving countries (a constant need for foreign workers), not by the push factor from the country of origin (i.e., low wages or high unemployment). In contrast to these theories, the studies of

Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2004), Mercado (2002) and Sison (2002), showed that the lack of economic opportunities in the Philippines is seen to be the major catalyst for migrant workers to leave and work overseas, that is, the push factors appear to be the driving force for people to migrate, not the pull factors. In the presence of this contradicting argument, this issue will be revisited when the research discussion progresses to the empirical data of this study to establish which theories apply.

Another theory that explains international migration concerns the social aspects of the decision-making process to relocate, called the household theory of migration.

3.3 The Household Theory of Migration

The household theory of migration holds the concept that the decision to move does not rest on the individual migrant alone but rather a collective decision of members of the migrants' household. This theory is particularly important in the Philippine context because of the nature of the Filipino nuclear family which is characterized by a collective responsibility. The head of the family is expected to consult the other family members to gain consensus in any decision affecting the family, a decision geared towards choosing the best alternative available that would progress the best interests of the family.

The theory has taken the household as the family unit that makes decisions in matters affecting the economic stability of the family. Therefore, in matters relating to increasing the income stream of the family and minimizing or mitigating financial risk, a collective decision is made. This household theory of migration states that labour migration is the approach agreed to by the household unit to increase its income stream and to decrease the level of economic risk posed in the family (Massey et al, 1993). This is manifested by sending at least one member of the family, usually the head of the family or the most productive member that could earn better wages, to work overseas with a collective agreement that the member working overseas would send remittances back home to meet the financial needs of the family. The higher wages earned overseas will increase the migrants' income stream while the remittances sent home will minimize the extent of financial burden on the family.

3.4 Development and Sustainability

The remittances sent to the migrant family left behind are expected to create a change in their way of life; a developmental change which is sometimes called progress, sometimes called growth (Ilich, 1992:88). One of the dimensions of development, according to Goulet (1992:469), is economic development which is concerned with the creation of wealth and the improvement in material life. This is exemplified in the accumulation of migrants' bank savings, buying of a new family house or investment in real estate which could be facilitated through the proper management of remittances. Another dimension of development is social development which is concerned with the improvement in well-being in health, education, housing and employment (Ibid:469-470). This again is demonstrated by the migrants providing better healthcare, nutrition, shelter and education for their families. Although development has always taken the notion of progress, improvement and economic growth, the development definition that this thesis would take as it applies to the personal context of Filipino migrant workers is development that is concerned with wealth creation, the improvement in material life and improvement in well-being. This kind of development requires certain strategies for investment if it is to be sustained.

The concept of sustainability is not new; it is always discussed in areas of development, an important issue which suggests that good development should be made sustainable. Sustainability is the ability to prolong positive outcomes from developmental inputs, such as, the continued stream of income, continued improvement in well-being, continued improvement in education; the enhancement of human life, and so on. Sustainability in the socio-economic context of migration ensures that the economic benefits that the migrant workers receive are transformed into a new form of benefit that would generate the same or better level of desired outcome.

While the desired outcome of socio-economic development is generally wealth accumulation, improvement of material life and well-being, another outcome could be dependency. This may arise where family members of migrant workers become so used to the additional income from their relative overseas that they neglect to improve their personal situation; failing to strive to become independent.

Dependency, however, is not the focus of this research as we are more concerned with how migrant workers' remittances are made sustainable, if at all. Dependency will therefore not be discussed in this study in any depth.

Summary

This chapter has presented the factors that influence migration decision-making in order to appreciate the fundamental elements that determine migration movement. When migrants analyse and understand the factors associated with the area of origin, the area of destination, the intervening obstacles, the migrants' personal preferences, and balance these factors with a thorough cost – benefit analysis, the process will help the migrant to make a sound decision as to whether to migrate or not. In understanding the influences of these four factors, the various migration theories emerge. For example, Piore's (1979) theory states that the pull factors from the host country induce workers to migrate, while Ravenstein's (1889, II, p. 286) theory states that the overriding desire of migrants is to better themselves in material respects. This chapter presented the various aspects which influence the Filipino migrant workers' decision to migrate but which of the factors was the most influential – the push factors, the pull factors, the migrants' personal preferences or the intervening obstacles? Why do Filipino migrant workers migrate, particularly to a Third World country like Papua New Guinea? Concerning the issue of sustainability of migrants' remittances, the thesis question was asked "Do migrant workers transform part of their remittances into some form of income-generating scheme to make their income earned abroad sustainable?" Had the migrant workers already established some form of economic activity? If not, why not? The empirical data of this study will provide answers to these questions, relating them to various migration theories.

The manifestation of the various migration concepts as they relate to international labour migration in the Philippine context has set the foundation for the theoretical frameworks of the study. It is intended to provide a wider perspective in the area of international labour movement. In the succeeding chapters, these theories will be situated with the outcome of the research to evaluate whether the research results were in keeping with the theories presented in this chapter.

Chapter 4. The Research Methodology

Introduction

When conceptualising the methodology of this thesis, the main concern was to gather valid and reliable data by using an instrument that would “measure what it is designed to measure” (Spector, 1981:14) and to apply a process that would produce the most realistic and factual results, a design that would present a counter-checking of responses to eliminate or minimize unsubstantiated answers. In assessing the thesis of this study, it was decided that the best way to obtain plausible responses was to apply two different methods to see whether the answers corroborate one another. This form of comparison is called triangulation, a “method derived from navigation where different bearings give the correct position of an object” (Silverman, 1993:233).

On matters concerning the study, it was decided to directly ask the participants about their opinion and experiences. This direct contact with the respondents would provide the opportunity to observe the body language and the facial expressions of the participants. These were important indicators which could be used to assess whether the respondents took the questions seriously and whether they considered the research topic important as these factors would be reflected in their responses.

This chapter will explain how methods of research were selected and why. It will also give a detailed description of the methods applied and explain what it was expected to deliver. The aim of applying a suitable methodology is naturally to acquire valid and reliable data from which findings can be based in answering the question of this thesis.

4.1 The Research, a Mixed Methodology

The research dealt with the study of the Filipino migrant workers living in Port Moresby. It aimed to find the answer to the question, “Do Filipino migrant workers in PNG transform part of their remittances into some form of economic activity in

their home country to make their economic benefits received from overseas sustainable?" To find the answer to this question, it was considered important to directly ask the potential participants about their personal opinions. Collecting information from participants in this case was best served by issuing out questionnaires and by interviewing participants. The use of questionnaires was favoured for the following reasons: a) questionnaires offer facility in obtaining quick returns; b) it provides participants with a convenient means to answer the questions, for example, they could answer the questions during their free time; c) the answers to questions are fixed, participants need only to select the option best suited to their situation; and d) responses are easier to compile and summarize (Silverman, 1993:13).

Aside from the questionnaire, it was also decided to conduct an interview with selected focus group members, a participatory discussion where each member had a chance to share his/her opinion on issues raised. The objective here was to generate authentic insights into participants' experiences which were achieved by using open-ended questions (Ibid: 87). The participants' answers in the focus group discussion were expected to substantiate the answers in the questionnaire, thus generating plausible responses and mitigating the incidence of error.

Just as the design of questions was important, it was equally significant to limit or bound the subject to obtain clarity of focus and a clear vision on where to proceed in obtaining the empirical data (Ragin, 1992). The Venn Diagram presented in Figure 1.2 was used as a guide to maintain the focus and limit the scope of the investigation to that which was only relevant to the thesis. Otherwise, with any broadening in focus, the research would expand and there would open up a consequent infinity of ideas and possibilities. This limiting and bounding of the subject was aimed at from the beginning although the process was not really evident during the design of the methodology. It was only in the course of the gathering and evaluation of empirical data that the impact and significance of setting limits to the enquiry was realized. It minimized any ripple effect where an ever increasing subject circle is created.

4.1.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire questions (Appendix B) were designed to have a fixed answer of "Yes" or "No" or a list of options from which the participant could choose. This kind of format was easier for participants to answer as the choices are readily available. All the participants had to do was to select the option that suited their situation. In cases where the answer needed elaboration, spaces were provided for participants to write brief answers.

The questionnaire was designed to contain 27 items. The first three questions contained general information such as gender, age group and highest educational qualification. The next three questions pertained to migrant's work history, such as, which country had they worked in before and how long had they been working overseas. These questions were followed by two questions about their reasons for migrating while the next eight questions were about income and remittances. The next question asked about the reason for staying longer overseas while the next six questions related to economic activity and sustainability measures adopted by migrants. The next two questions asked about the re-integration program of the Philippine government to assist migrant workers in their financial ventures - what were their experiences about it and whether the program was actually supporting them. This was followed by two questions about the migrants' economic plans when they return to live in their country of origin, while the last question asked about the most significant achievement since being a migrant worker.

Within the questionnaire, a number of questions were designed to cross-check the answer of another question posed. This was done to ensure the validity of the responses. For example, the answer in Question 9 cross-checks the answer in Question 10; Question 18 cross-checks the answer in Question 25. Any inconsistency in the answers was designed to be picked up during the evaluation and analysis of the data.

4.1.2 The Focus Group

The focus group questions (Appendix C) were prepared and designed to corroborate some significant pattern of answers in the questionnaire. The reason

for doing this was to enhance the validity and to check the plausibility of the participants' responses, to reduce the incidence of error in the data. Although the focus group questions were prepared, questions were fashioned in an open ended manner aimed at stimulating further discussion of related issues. The style of discussion was derived from the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) where each participant was given the chance to express his/her perception and opinion. Another reason was for the focus group participants to feel at ease with the style of discussion, to be comfortable and for them to be able to freely communicate their opinion and experiences regarding the issues being discussed. The focus group interview was scheduled as a one off session, however, consultation with the participants continued through email communication.

There was also ad hoc information that Filipino migrant workers conveyed, mostly unsolicited information which came out from casual conversations. As the information given was relevant and important to the research issues, they were given due consideration during the evaluation and analysis of the data.

4.2 The Participants

The survey/focus group participants were Philippine passport holders working legally in PNG but not including those Filipino workers with resident status in PNG or with resident status in other countries such as Australia or New Zealand. This requirement of excluding Filipino workers with resident status was based on the assumption that with their resident status, they were most likely to live and stay overseas when their work contract expired. This is not the case for Philippine passport holders. Once their contract expires, they are expected to either return to the Philippines or seek a work extension to be able to stay longer in PNG. Because of their limited tenure overseas, it was assumed that they may invest in some income-generating schemes to have other sources of income when they return to live in their home country.

The focus group consisted of one migrant worker who had stayed more than seven years in PNG with a business or investment in the Philippines; two migrant workers who had stayed more than seven years in PNG with no business or investment in the Philippines; one migrant worker who had previously worked overseas, returned

to the Philippines, and re-migrated to work in PNG; one first time migrant worker who was working in PNG for less than three years. This diversity in economic and employment background was expected to yield diverse but significant opinion, perception and experiences which would contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of the research result.

4.3 The Fieldwork

Issuance of the Questionnaire. Organizing the issuance of questionnaire proved not an easy one-stop exercise because most Filipino migrants work on week days and some work on weekends. The contact with the Philippine Embassy led to an introduction to the officers of the Filipino Association of PNG who were based in Port Moresby and subsequently made arrangements to conduct the questionnaire. The first wave of questionnaire issuance arranged with the officers' assistance was conducted during the June weekend tennis competition of the Filipino tennis club, the only available occasion in late June where most of migrant members grouped together. This was an opportunity to meet the migrants and ask them to participate in the research. Although the venue and the people were quite busy, some Filipino migrant workers were happy to participate in the survey; some completed the questionnaire in between games. This meant the respondents were under some time pressure which raised some concerns on the quality of answer the respondents might have made. At the start the author considered it important to see the respondents' facial expression and body language during the conduct of questionnaire. However, there was a realization that giving the respondents sufficient time to complete the questionnaire was more important. This concern was realized when the questionnaires were collected. The inevitable happened because a couple of respondents unfortunately missed answering page 3 of the questionnaire.

Because the number of respondents gathered was still low in terms of the optimal target number for questionnaire respondents, the second wave of survey questionnaires was issued out to the business establishments in Port Moresby known to have Filipino employees particularly in the pharmaceutical sector where many pharmacists are Filipinos. To address the inadequate process experienced in the first wave, each business establishment was visited, the questionnaire handed

out to the Filipino migrants and arrangement made to pick up the completed questionnaire after a couple of days. Through the willing participation of the pharmacists, the number of participants reached and even exceeded the target number for the questionnaire. While the target number of participants was thirty (30), the total number of questionnaire issued out to migrants was thirty nine (39). The issuance of thirty nine (39) questionnaires was intended to provide some leeway for any possible non-participation of some migrants. Thirty four (34) questionnaires were received back by the author while five (5) people did not participate in the questionnaire survey.

The pharmaceutical sector represented 47% of respondents, the financial and management sector 35%, security sector 9% and food industry sector 9%. This diverse collection of respondents was helpful, however, in retrospect, the selection of participants could have been widened to include non-professional workers working in the forestry or in fishing industries to gain a different insight from their experiences. A problem however existed in searching for this group of Filipino migrants because their number is relatively low, making them difficult to find, and their distance and remoteness of their working location hindered any communication with them. The low number of non-professional participants impacted adversely on the educational balance of the study. The study polled 92% professional migrant participants, that is, migrants with college or university degrees, holding managerial or supervisory posts in their own industry sectors.

The Focus Group. The focus group meeting was scheduled at midday in one of the hotel restaurants in Port Moresby. Of the invited participants consisting of one male and two female, one female participant was not able to attend the meeting. However, she sent some answers to the questions through email.

The author had prepared mostly open-ended questions aimed to stimulate discussion of issues and other related topics. The meeting was started with the introduction of members. This was followed by explaining what the research was about and what it was trying to achieve; a mention was given on confidentiality of the discussion and the participants were then asked to sign a consent form as required by the ethics policy. This form was freely signed by the participants as they were advised about its importance beforehand.

The questions were then asked, such as: what made you decide to become a migrant worker in PNG? What do you think is the effect of your absence on your family? What do you think is the best way to ensure that you receive the same level of income when you return to live in the Philippines? and so on. As the focus group members responded, the author jotted down notes of the discussion in the thesis diary. The discussion was spoken in either English or Tagalog whichever the respondent was comfortable in speaking. Any explanation made in Tagalog, the author transcribed in English for the record. At a certain point, the author experienced some difficulty in writing down notes while at the same time keeping pace with and guiding the discussion. Occasionally, the author postponed writing to pay attention to the discussion, in which case, the writing down of additional minutes of the discussion was made immediately after the meeting when the issues discussed were still fresh in memory.

The discussion lasted only one hour and fifteen minutes because one of the participants had another appointment. Although the discussion helped significantly in gathering the information needed in the study, the conduct of the discussion could have been improved if given more time for the discussion and time for participants to feel at ease in the meeting. It was observed that only one participant had shown spontaneity in the discussion indicating that he felt comfortable and happy with the questions while the other participant showed some reservations in answering questions on personal issues. The author could not assess the degree of impact this situation had on the quality of the responses, however, to improve the process of data gathering, the author learned the following lessons:

- a) That conducting a focus group discussion with gendered participants is ideal only on discussion matters not involving personal issues.
- b) Gender segregation appeared to be more useful in issues involving personal matters; or conduct personal interviews instead of focus group discussion.
- c) Sufficient time is required to achieve good quality responses.
- d) It was difficult to take down notes of the responses at the same time as listening to the discussion. The use of a tape recorder would be ideal.

4.4 The Means of Summarizing the Data: Simple Percentage Method

The answers to the completed questionnaire were recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was designed to reflect the following: the vertical header column of the spreadsheet recorded the questionnaire number allocated to each questionnaire file. This questionnaire number corresponded with the number in the original questionnaire document on file. This process was done to make the referencing of spreadsheet data back to the original document easier. The horizontal rows showed each question and the list of options for which the respondents selected the answer. The respondents' answers were posted to each corresponding cell, represented by an "x", in the spreadsheet. As the entry of questionnaire answers was completed, the number of "x's" in each row was totalled and the figure shown in the corresponding column labelled "Total". Another column labelled "Per Cent" was added where the percentage for each answer was calculated as a percentage of the total number of respondents, or as the rank of each option expressed in percentage.

There were questions where the respondents were asked to rank the options presented before them. For example: Question No. 7 had seven options. Each respondent was asked to rank each option from 1 to 5 where 1 was the most important and 5 the least important. As each option was ranked differently by each respondent, during the analysis, each ranking number was allocated with an equivalent value. For example: 1 = 1; 2 = .5; 3 = .33; 4 = .25 and 5 = .2. The ranking given by each participant was converted into this value. When all rankings in an option were converted to their corresponding values, the values were totalled and recorded in the "Total" column. The overall ranking of Question No. 7 options were made based on its cumulative value, arranged from the highest converted value to the lowest.

4.5 The Analysis Technique: A Qualitative Method

The study of the Filipino migrant workers in PNG concerned social science phenomena, that is, a study of their socio-cultural experiences in order to understand how they live. The use of questionnaire and interview were considered as the most appropriate means of gathering the data for this kind of study. In

analysing the data reflecting the point of view of the participants, a qualitative method of analysis was thought to be more appropriate because, according to Kaplan and Maxwell (1994), when textual data are quantified, it loses its meaning and value.

Although the answers to the questionnaire were represented with numerals converted as a percentage of total respondents, the core idea in the answers was mostly descriptive, relating to the experiences and perceptions of respondents. These required qualitative analysis. The percentage and/or ranking of each option was used only as a guide indicating the number of respondent preferences. However, the bigger picture lay in the interpretation of each answer which was done according to the socio-cultural and economic conditions in which they existed. This was analysed qualitatively.

Summary

In the gathering of empirical data, the methodology applied would be intended to meet the objective of the interrogation process. Just as the design of the methodology process to obtain reliable data was important, the same importance had been applied to limiting the scope of the interrogation process. Setting the limits or bounding the parameters of the study avoided the possibility of increasing the search for more information, blurring the issues and wasting valuable time. Establishing the focus of the investigation from the beginning of the research methodology ensured that only the relevant empirical data was gathered and analysed which would guarantee the validity and plausibility of the answers gathered.

Chapter 5. The Research Results

Introduction

The economic underdevelopment of the Philippines posed a threat to the returnee migrants through the country's lack of employment and economic opportunities. The likelihood of looming unemployment and financial hardship once migrants returned to their home community was quite high. To mitigate this kind of imminent strife for the Filipino migrants, this study argued that engaging in economic activity is the mechanism that would make migrants' remittances sustainable. This argument was made in the belief that if Filipino migrant workers transform part of their remittances into some form of an economic activity while they were still working overseas, it would ensure the continuity of their income when they return to live in the Philippines. Transforming part of their remittances into a new form of income stream would ensure continued income flow. To gather the empirical data for this research, it was considered paramount to directly enquire about the point of view of the Filipino migrant workers to understand how they managed their remittances and to appreciate the methods and plans put in place in making their remittances sustainable.

The method used to gather the empirical data for the research was through questionnaire and focus group interview. The research participants were all Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) working in Papua New Guinea who were current Philippine passport holders. Participants did not include those Philippine passport holders who were granted permanent residency in Papua New Guinea or by other countries.

Thirty four (34) Filipino migrant workers working in Port Moresby³ participated in the questionnaire survey while the three members of the focus group were selected to include: a male migrant worker who re-migrated from Saudi Arabia to Papua New Guinea, one female member working in PNG for less than a year and

³ There were two waves of questionnaire issued to participants. The first set of questionnaires was randomly issued during the gathering of the Filipino tennis club members in Port Moresby. The second set of questionnaires was issued out to the various business establishments in Port Moresby known to have Filipino migrant workers who were interested to participate in the research project.

one female member working for more than seven years in PNG with a business in the Philippines.

The results and analysis of the interview (Appendix C) and of the questionnaire responses (Appendix D) are presented in this chapter. The presentation of the data followed the sequence of the questionnaire's questions. The focus group interview results were also included as corroborative information to the answers obtained through the questionnaire.

5.1 Gender, Qualification and Country Experience of Migrant Workers

The gender participation (Appendix D1) of males and females in the research was satisfactory. Forty-four per cent (44%) were male while fifty-six per cent (56%) were female. These migrant workers were all living and working in Port Moresby. The questionnaire was issued out to migrant workers employed in various industrial sectors which included the food industry, the pharmaceutical industry, the business and finance sector, service and management industries. This gender participation data conformed with Figure 1.1 which showed the number of female migrants was higher than the number of male migrants.

The age range of participants was varied (Appendix D2). A significant number of the selected migrant workers were between 26-33 years old (41%), thirty-five per cent (35%) were aged between 34-41 years old, and nine per cent (9%) were in the 18-25 age bracket. The 18-25 years old participants were typical recent university graduates with a couple of years' work experience in the Philippines before deciding to leave the country to work in PNG. A further fifteen per cent (15%) of participants were in the 42-49 age bracket. These were the migrant workers who had worked overseas for nearly 20 years.

All participants were highly educated (Appendix D3), eighty-eight per cent (88%) of them holding a bachelors degree; three per cent (3%) had an uncompleted masteral study, another three per cent (3%) had an incomplete college degree, while six per cent (6%) of the participants had vocational studies certificates: one in automotive engineering and the other in typing and computing.

The labour migration history of participants (Appendix D4) was fairly similar. Ninety-one per cent (91%) had worked only in Papua New Guinea while six per cent (6%) of the migrant workers had worked in Saudi Arabia before working in PNG. A further three per cent (3%) had previously worked in Taiwan before re-migrating to PNG.

The contract term of migrant workers was diverse (Appendix D5). Eighteen per cent (18%) had been in PNG for less than a year, while forty-six per cent (46%) had stayed in PNG between 1-5 years. Twenty-seven per cent (27%) had been working as overseas migrant workers for 6-10 years, while nine per cent (9%) had been overseas migrant workers for 11-20 years. None of the participants sampled had worked overseas for more than 20 years.

The standard term of contract of migrant workers in PNG was three years. Of the research respondents, seventy per cent (70%) had renewed their contract (Appendix D6) while thirty per cent (30%) had not. Of that thirty per cent, sixty per cent (60%) were not due for contract renewal until they had reached their three year term while the remaining forty per cent (40%) had let their old contract expire yet they were allowed to continue to work under the terms of the old contract. During a casual conversation with one of the respondents whose contract had expired, she mentioned that her old contract had expired a few months earlier but the company management had not offered her a new contract to extend her term. However, she was working with a mutual understanding (with the company management) that the terms of the old contract continued to apply.

5.2 Migrant Workers' Reasons for Working Overseas

The Filipino migrant workers were asked about their reasons for choosing to work overseas. They were asked to state and rank what their short term reasons were when they left the Philippines to work overseas for the first time. Then they were asked again to state and rank what their long term reasons were now that they were working as migrant workers.

<u>Goals for Working Overseas</u>	<u>Short Term (Appx D7)</u>	<u>Long Term (Appx D8)</u>
Earn more money	38%	18%
Help in family household expenses	25%	-
Professional advancement (gain skills and experience overseas)	17%	18%
Work, travel and leisure	8%	-
Improve family's quality of life	-	33%
Stepping-stone for going to the US, Canada or Europe	-	15%
Other reasons	12%	16%
Total	100%	100%

Table 5.1 shows that the primary short term reason of Filipino migrant workers to work in PNG was to earn more money (38%). This was followed by their desire to help in the family household expenses (25%) and to gain work experience overseas (17%), as well as to work, travel and engage in leisure activities (8%). Those that had stayed overseas for a few years were asked about their reasons for continuing to work abroad and if they had shifted to a long term objective. The foremost response of which was to improve their family's quality of life (33%). This was followed by their desire to acquire professional advancement, that is, to gain skills and experience overseas (18%), to earn more money (18%) and to use their experience working in PNG as their stepping-stone to go to US, Canada or Europe (15%).

5.3 Migrant Workers' Employment and Remuneration in the Philippines (Appendix D9)

The respondents were asked about their profession and the level of remuneration they had in the Philippines before they started working in PNG. Forty-seven per cent (47%) of the migrant workers stated that they were employed in the Philippines in the same profession as their work in PNG but they were receiving lower remuneration in the Philippines. Twenty-six per cent (26%) responded that their work in the Philippines was in the same profession as their work in PNG but they were receiving the same or higher remuneration in the Philippines. Twenty one per cent (21%) of the respondents said that they were employed in the

Philippines in a different profession as their work in PNG and they were receiving lower remuneration in the Philippines. Six per cent (6%) said that they had different profession in the Philippines as their work in PNG but they were receiving the same or higher remuneration in the Philippines. None of the participants were unemployed in the Philippines before leaving to work in PNG.

The author believes that there was a general soundness in the responses of participants, except for one answer which was an oddity. There were 26% of respondents claiming that their work in the Philippines was the same as in PNG but they were receiving the same or higher remuneration in the Philippines. This answer however was not supported by the result in Appendix D10 where *none* of the respondents indicated that they were receiving in PNG the same or lower remuneration than what they were receiving in the Philippines. The author believe the respondents were confused by the way in which Question Number 9 was framed. Although the questionnaire was designed to cross-check the answers of the participants to ensure their accuracy, evidently, the validity of this particular response could be questioned.

5.4 Migrant Workers' Remuneration Scale in Papua New Guinea compared against the Remuneration Scale in the Philippines (Appendix D10)

During the conduct of the questionnaire, the migrant workers were asked to convert in pesos their combined salary and benefits (excluding housing benefits) received in PNG and compare it with their salary and benefits received in the Philippines. Eighty-five per cent (85%) of the respondents said they were receiving in PNG 2-5 times higher than their earnings and benefits in the Philippines, nine per cent (9%) said their remuneration in PNG was 6-10 times higher than their remuneration in the Philippines, while six per cent (6%) claimed they were receiving 11 and more times higher wages in PNG than their remuneration in the Philippines. None of the respondents indicated that they were receiving in PNG the same or lower remuneration compared to what they were receiving in the Philippines.

Although the remuneration comparison was relative, that is, the comparison could be skewed if the migrant worker was underemployed in the Philippines, the

general responses in the questionnaire had a sense of validity. The 2-5 times higher salary bracket was comprised mostly of pharmacists, security workers, supervisors and workers in food, service and management sectors. The nine per cent (9%) of respondents in the 6-10 times higher remuneration bracket were migrant workers that had senior positions in the company they were working for: one was an IT manager, the other one was a financial controller and the last one was the manager and owner of an electrical company in Port Moresby. The six per cent (6%) who indicated that their remuneration was at 11 and more times higher bracket were employed as a pharmacist and a supervisor. I can then infer, based from the result above, that the respondents in the 11 and more times higher remuneration bracket were receiving lower than the minimum wage rate in the Philippines so that the relative comparison of their salary scale in the Philippines and in PNG had been tilted by their underemployment.

5.5 Migrant Workers' Remittances and Beneficiaries

When the migrant workers were asked if they were sending remittances at home, all of the thirty-four (34) respondents said they sent remittances to the Philippines (Appendix D11) although the frequency of remittances varied (Appendix D12). Seventy-six per cent (76%) of the migrant workers said they sent money to their families every month, fifteen per cent (15%) remitted quarterly, three per cent (3%) sent rarely, while six per cent (6%) said they sent money whenever they could afford it.

The Filipino migrant workers were then asked to whom did they send their remittances to in the Philippines (Appendix D13). Fifty-two per cent (52%) said they were sending their money to their mother or father, nineteen per cent (19%) maintained they were remitting their money to their brother or sister, eighteen per cent (18%) said they were sending their remittances to their wife or husband, while five per cent (5%) were sending part of their money to their nephews and nieces and other relations for school fees. Two per cent (2%) were sending money to their children; another two per cent (2%) were remitting to their fiancé, while the last two per cent (2%) were sending money to a personal bank account in the Philippines.

5.6 Who Decides on How the Remittance is spent at Home (Appendix D14)?

The Filipino migrant workers were asked about who made the decision on how the remittances were spent at home. Thirty per cent (30%) held that they and their family had specific plans on how to spend their remittances at home. This meant that the migrant worker had a plan and a prior agreement with his/her family on specific items for which the remittances could be spent on at home. Nineteen per cent (19%) said that they themselves decided on how the money would be spent at home, while fifteen per cent (15%) of the respondents maintained that their wife decided on the regular expenses, such as household and educational expenses, but the migrant workers were advised if there were any major items to pay. Another fifteen per cent (15%) attested that they had given a delegated authority to their mother to spend the money as she found necessary including major expenses at home, while nine per cent (9%) said that their mother decided on the regular expenses at home but advised the migrant worker on any major items to pay. Six per cent (6%) stated that they let their father/fiancé decide on regular expenses but they advised the migrant worker on any major expenses to pay, while a further six per cent (6%) said that they gave a delegated authority to their wife/sister to spend the money as they found necessary, including any major expenditure.

5.7 Items or Things on which the Remittances were Expended (Appendix D15)

The respondents were asked to list the items they believed their remittances were spent on and ranked them according to their importance. The list they produced indicated that the priority for the expenditure was for meeting the household needs of the family (32%), followed by expenses to pay for the education of the children, brothers or sisters (23%). The third priority was to save some money in the bank (18%), followed by the payment of outstanding debts (6%), payment of medical expenses (6%) and the repair/renovation of the house (6%). Some migrant workers who had disposable income used part of their remittances to invest in a business (5%), or bought properties for rent (2%), and bought a new house and lot for the family (2%). The respondents said that none of their family had spent for family travel, recreation or entertainment, or spent for

communication equipment such as cell phones and computers or bought a family vehicle. These results showed strong indication of where migrants' priorities lay. While twenty three per cent (23%) of expenditure was made for education, only a total of seven per cent (7 %) was spent for business development and rental property investment. This suggested that migrants set a low priority on investing in economic activities. This result therefore challenges the premise of this study, that investment in economic activity is the means to sustain migrants' foreign earned income.

The Filipino migrant participants were then asked whether they had seen the items/things they believed their money were spent on (Appendix D16) for which seventy-three per cent (73%) said "yes" and twenty-seven per cent (27%) said "no". The migrant workers were then asked to list the items/things that their family bought which they had seen and to indicate whether the items/things bought were beneficial in the long term or not. The respondents prepared a list but did not indicate whether the items were beneficial or not. However, the list was presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 List of Items/Things Bought Through the Remittances which the Migrant Workers had Personally Seen

<u>Expenses/Savings from Remittances</u>	<u>%</u>
On going formal education of members of the family	18%
Sufficient savings in the bank	18%
Repair/renovation of the house was completed	13%
Purchase of new property	13%
Businesses were set up and operational	7%
Purchase of new vehicle	3%
On going payment for insurance	3%
Expenditure for basic expenses at home	3%
Purchase of rental property	3%
Purchase of household appliances	3%
Pay medical expenses of parent	3%
Purchase of jewelries for the mother	3%
Trip to Singapore for the mother	3%
Niece's christening, birthday party	3%
Have no idea what the remittances were spent for	3%
Other	1%
Total	100%

The items of expenditure personally seen by the migrant workers were mostly spent on improving the well-being of the family such as payment for education,

renovation of the house, purchase of new vehicle, purchase of new family house, basic expenses such as food, household expenses, medical expenses and insurance. The migrants' families also ensured that they retained some savings in the bank but only seven per cent (7%) of migrant workers invested in some form of business and three per cent (3%) invested in rental properties to generate income in the future. The trend of low investment priority again does not appear to support the premise of this research.

The list also showed expenditure on jewellery for their mother, spending for their mother's trip to Singapore, and spending for the christening and birthday party of their niece. Although these kinds of expenses were not economically sustainable, socially it fostered closer family relationships. Cash outflow for social or economic priorities were the migrant workers' prerogative.

5.8 Reasons for Working Longer Overseas (Appendix D17)

The migrant workers were asked to state and rank their reasons for deciding not to go back so soon to live and work in the Philippines. The responses showed that the foremost concern of the migrant workers was the low salary and standard of living in the Philippines (41%). This concern was supported during the focus group discussion where members aired their apprehension about the disparity between the rates of increase in salary against the increase in the prices of commodities in the Philippines, stressing that the salary increases approved by the Philippine Government could not compensate for the increased cost of basic commodities (Appendix C Q5). They also expressed their concern about the increase in the cost of education. They maintained that to sustain a good level of education for the children, both parents needed to work to generate a higher income, thereby justifying the reason for them staying longer overseas.

The second reason indicated was the lack of employment opportunities in the Philippines (34%). The focus group stated that in the Philippines the rate of unemployment and under employment was high (Appendix C Q1).

The third reason pointed out was the tougher competition in the labour or employment market in the Philippines (13%). The migrant workers also

recognized the fact that there was a lack of business opportunities in the country (4%). Small businesses needed to compete with the larger and stronger players in the industry which could easily squeeze out the smaller enterprises.

One respondent stated that he chose to be a migrant worker because of the honour and respectability attached to being an overseas Filipino worker (2%) which was recognized both nationally and locally. When asked about this, the focus group explained that the Filipino migrant workers were considered the "new heroes" of the Philippines because of their contribution to the Philippine economy, hence Presidential Proclamation No. 276 was signed by President Corazon Aquino in 1998 declaring December of every year as the "Month of Overseas Filipinos". Within the community itself, the migrant workers and their families were respected and admired and were usually given special treatment, such as preferential seats in community activities (Appendix C Q8).

5.9 Economic Sustainability Measures (Appendix D18)

Because of the economic improvement brought about by the higher annual remittances by the migrant workers, working abroad brought prosperity and enhanced the quality of life of both the migrants and their families. A question was posed on what actions the migrant workers had implemented or were implementing that would ensure that upon their return to live in the Philippines they would continue to receive the same or similar level of income as what they were receiving as migrant workers. Twenty-six per cent (26%) indicated that they had invested in properties for commercial or residential rentals, eighteen per cent (18%) stated they were investing in the money market with a plan to live on the interest on investment, twelve per cent (12%) maintained that they had opened up a business or had joined a cooperative venture, while another twelve per cent (12%) said that they were trying to gain technical skills overseas to enable them to find better employment when they return to live in the Philippines. Ten per cent (10%) of the respondents planned to retire and were therefore maintaining retirement plans in the Philippines, and twenty-two per cent (22%) of the respondents said that they had not implemented any investment yet. A focus group member (Appendix C Q6) indicated that their family had established small

businesses in the Philippines which not only generated income for their family but also provided employment for about 10-12 other people in the community. She believed that establishing businesses would help everyone – the migrant and his/her family, the community and the Philippine economy.

The migrant workers were further asked whether they considered it important to engage in gainful economic activities, such as a business or investment, while they were still working and earning money overseas (Appendix D19). Ninety-four per cent (94%) said "yes" while six per cent (6%) said "no".

Another question was posed asking the migrant workers whether they had saved part of their remittances with a plan to engage in business or investment in the Philippines (Appendix D20). Sixty-six per cent (66%) answered they had saved part of their remittances to engage in some form of investment in the future, while thirty-four per cent (34%) said no, they had not. Two of the focus group members indicated they already had established businesses in the Philippines while the male member said that he was saving some money to re-start another business in his community. The male focus group member mentioned that he previously had a business, a workshop, but the business failed when he left to work in Saudi Arabia because his wife did not possess the skill to manage the workshop (Appendix C Q6).

The migrants were then asked what could be their reasons for not engaging in business or investment (Appendix D21). Fifty-eight per cent (58%) maintained that the money or remittances they possessed was only just sufficient to meet the basic needs of their family, such as household and educational needs. Twenty-one per cent (21%) said they did not know which business or investments were profitable, fourteen per cent (14%) claimed they did not have the time to manage a business at the same time work as a migrant worker, and seven per cent (7%) said they did not have the support of their family to engage in a business or investment.

The focus group (Appendix C Q6) raised the issue of difficulties in starting a business while still working overseas. They pointed out that one of the problems was finding a trusted person who could manage the business while the migrant worker was still working overseas. Another problem identified was finding a niche in the market where business could flourish. If they could identify such a niche,

some respondents said, it would minimize the possibility of them losing money in a failed business venture.

The migrant workers who had not started any business or investment in the Philippines were asked whether they had a plan to start one in the future (Appendix D22). Ninety per cent (90%) said yes, they had a plan, while ten per cent (10%) said no.

The respondents were further asked to state the kind of plan they had (Appendix D22A). Thirty-five per cent (35%) said they planned to open up their own pharmacy in their provinces. Another forty-four per cent (44%) preferred to open up a small business enterprise such as a trading shop, a rice dealership, a car workshop or a transportation business. Three per cent (3%) wanted to own a rental apartment, another three per cent (3%) said they had already started up a business, a further three per cent (3%) preferred investing in real estate, while twelve per cent (12%) indicated they had no specific plan yet as they were still saving funds for capitalization.

5.10 The Philippine Government's Business Assistance Program for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) (Appendix D23)

The Philippine Government legislated that the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), in coordination with the Bureau of Investment (BOI), implement a business assistance program to assist entrepreneurial Filipino migrant workers in their business plans. This assistance was part of the re-integration program for returning OFWs. The migrant workers were asked whether they had availed themselves of the business assistance program facility of OWWA. Nine per cent (9%) of the respondents said "yes" while ninety-one per cent (91%) said "no".

For those who had answered "no", they were further asked whether they would use the OWWA business assistance facility in the future (Appendix D24). Sixty-one per cent (61%) said "Yes", they would use it in the future while thirty-nine per cent (39%) said "no". Negative respondents would not avail themselves of the OWWA business assistance facility because they were aware of the difficulties in

accessing the facility of the program (Appendix D24A). Twenty-eight per cent (28%) maintained they would rather start their own business, nine per cent (9%) said their family had already formulated a business plan. Another nine per cent (9%) stated that their capital was still insufficient, and another nine per cent (9%) claimed they had no idea about the business assistance program of OWWA. Forty-five per cent (45%) of the respondents had a critical comment about the program. They claimed it was hard to deal with the local officers running the program. They further maintained that it was difficult to access the program's services or benefits because the OWWA Office usually demanded numerous requirements.

These critical comments were supported by a member of the focus group who asserted that when he went to borrow Php 50,000 (equivalent to NZ\$1,315.00) to use as capital for his business, the OWWA Office asked for various requirements and supporting documents including the title on his property to be used, they said, as collateral for the loan (Appendix C Q7). The migrant worker believed that his property was valued too highly to serve as collateral for such a small amount of Php 50,000. He then decided to withdraw his loan application.

5.11 Migrant Workers' Future Plans upon Returning Back in the Philippines

The migrant workers who had not started any business or investment in the Philippines were asked what kind of work they planned to do when they returned to live in the Philippines (Appendix D25). Sixty-three per cent (63%) said they wanted to be self-employed and practice their profession; nineteen per cent (19%) maintained they would go back to their community and tend the small family farm. Six per cent (6%) said they would apply for any available job or would manage a small business if they could, three per cent (3%) said they would retire and enjoy life, while another three per cent (3%) said they would prefer to study in higher education, and six per cent (6%) said "bahala na", a Filipino colloquialism loosely meaning "come what may" or rather "the future will take care of itself", a fatalist approach to future challenges.

Another question was posed to the Filipino migrant participants as to how they would ensure the continued improvement of their family's quality of life if they did not have any means of income when they return to live in the Philippines

(Appendix D26). Sixty-five per cent (65%) maintained they had some savings in the bank which could sustain them for sometime, while thirty-five per cent (35%) claimed they had given better education to their children so that their children would be self sufficient in the future.

5.12 The Most important Achievement of the Migrant Workers (Appendix D27)

As a concluding question, the migrant workers were asked what they considered to be their greatest achievement since working as a migrant worker. Forty-five per cent (45%) said they considered improving their family's quality of life as their greatest achievement, while eighteen per cent (18%) considered giving better education to their children or brothers and sisters. Twelve per cent (12%) claimed they were happy they had built their new home, and a further twelve per cent (12%) said they felt good to have paid off all their debts and financial obligations which would give them less financial worry. Ten per cent (10%) of respondents mentioned that investing in a business or investment ventures to ensure a continued source of income was their greatest achievement, while three per cent (3%) of respondents said they were proud that they had renovated their parent's house.

These achievements reflected the priorities in the lives of the migrants. It showed that for them, the most important consideration was the improvement of their family's quality of life. Evidently, social stability and improvement comes as a priority in the lives of the migrant workers while economic ventures become priorities only once the social goals have been achieved successfully.

Summary

The empirical data collected in the survey appeared not to corroborate the thesis of the research. Troubled by this result, the author then revisited the questions in the survey and those asked in the interview to check why the empirical data did not uphold the theory of the research. There was the possibility that there were errors in framing the questions. Another possibility was that the study had lost its focus. Revisiting these issues the author concluded that she had successfully

"cased" or bounded the areas that needed to be investigated in the research. This meant that even though the result of the investigation may or may not have supported the thesis in the research, the data obtained was still valid and authentic in the sense that the study attained true understanding of the migrants' experiences and opinion which were obtained through the use of open-ended questions (Silverman, 1993:13). In obtaining the points of view of the Filipino migrant workers on the issues of their remittances and the sustainability measures they implement to maintain their level of income when they return to live in the Philippines, the method of enquiry employed using a questionnaire and an interview with open-ended questions proved sufficient to gather the required data. The responses in the questionnaire were married to the views put forward by the migrant workers during the focus group interview to form a coherent corroborative attestation from the participants to establish the strength of the research outcome.

The empirical data gathered would then be discussed in the next chapter with reference to other comparable research and theoretical framework.

Chapter 6. Discussion and Results

Introduction

The decision of people to move from one location to another is not a homogeneous decision. Different people have different reasons for migrating. Depending on peoples' sensitivities, preferences and needs, the inherent persuasiveness of the new location induces people to migrate. This chapter will explore why Filipino workers migrate, who made the decision to travel, the benefits they receive, what they do with the economic benefits they receive and what measures they had adopted to make their remittances sustainable. This chapter will situate the empirical data gathered from research participants against the numerous migration theories formulated to explain the reasons for Filipino workers' migration.

This discussion also aims to investigate the thesis of this research: to explore the sustainability measures adopted by the Filipino migrant workers to ensure the continuity of the economic benefits gained abroad when they return to live in the Philippines. This investigation is expected to produce some insights into the mode of remittance disbursements and priorities of the Filipino migrant workers which would lead to an understanding of the deeper sentiments of why Filipinos migrate. This chapter will present these insights and show how the responses and interview outcomes contributed to the thesis of this research and convey to the readers of this thesis the meanings derived from the investigation.

6.1 Influences on the Decision to Migrate

The outcome of the research showed that majority of the Filipino workers in PNG were bachelor degree holders; all gainfully employed in the Philippines before migrating to work in PNG; none were unemployed in the Philippines. However, the overriding reasons why skilled Filipino workers migrated to Papua New Guinea were mainly economic, that is, to earn more money overseas and social, to improve their family's quality of life and gain work experience for future re-migration to USA, Canada or Europe (shown in Table 5.1). The respondents

attested they were receiving higher remuneration in PNG than in the Philippines. This was confirmed by Appendix D10 showing that the Filipino migrant workers were receiving better wages and benefits by working in PNG than working in the same or similar jobs in the Philippines. These research outcomes support two migration theories. The first theory pertains to Ravenstein's (1889) claim that the desire to better themselves in material respects is inherent in peoples' will. This was supported in the research result by the fact that the Filipino migrants' reason for going overseas was their desire to improve their quality of life. Consequently, this outcome conforms with the theory of migration that suggest that people migrate because the benefit from migrating is greater than the benefit the migrants would get if they chose to stay in their home country (Sjaastad, 1962; Lee, 1969).

Better opportunities offered by the host country, such as a more favourable wage differential, were the pull factors that induced the Filipino migrants to move. The Filipino respondents maintained that they stayed longer working overseas because of the low salary and low standard of living in the Philippines (Appendix D17). Because of the slow economic and industrial development in the Philippines, the respondents argued that the lack of employment opportunities and tougher labour competition encouraged them to stay longer working overseas. These reasons depict the chronic state of the Philippines' economic and industrial underdevelopment. This situation, although dismal, is in keeping with the microeconomic theory of migration (Massey et al, 1993:434; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2004) that suggests that migration is a natural response of individuals to avail themselves of better economic opportunities in terms of wage differentials between the host country and the country of origin of migrant workers; where the host country offers higher wages than the wages in the country of origin. The difference in the salary scale proved very appealing to migrants searching for a better income and employment opportunities overseas. The research showed that the Filipino workers receive salaries two (2) to ten (10) times higher than what they were receiving in the same job in the Philippines. In a wider perspective, Filipino workers migrate because of higher expectations of achieving better economic returns.

The neo-classical economic theory is concerned with the study, management and allocation of the demand and supply of scarce resources. The allocation of these resources and the choices selected among competing alternatives involves trade-offs. Trade offs have profound impacts on the psychological state of Filipino migrant workers. The members of the focus group (Appendix C Q2) experienced the effect of this trade off attesting that when they made the decision to migrate, they did not consult their spouse or parents until after the job application was processed. The degree of impact of separation from the family was not realized until a couple of months after migrating. The emotional difficulty, nostalgia and spatial adjustment were factors that drove the migrants to weigh up and reconsider whether to stay or to go back home. However, the overriding objective to earn more money and to provide a better life to the family prevailed and they remained abroad.

In Chapter 2 we discussed the high literacy rates and high unemployment and underemployment rates in the Philippines. The inability of the Philippine Government to provide sufficient employment for its labour force necessitated that skilled workers seek employment elsewhere. The macroeconomic demand and supply for labour formed the theory of international migration which, according to Massey et al (1993:433), is caused by the differences in the labour supply and demand between the country of origin and the host country. Labour migration occurs when the host country demands the supply of foreign workers to solve its domestic labour shortage and utilize the skills of foreign migrants. The Philippines' massive skilled and unskilled aggregated labour force is ever ready to take on new employment. The best means to utilize this abundant supply of human resource is through migration to a host country experiencing shortages in skilled domestic labour (Parnwell, 1993:73). The Filipinos are highly educated, adaptable and fluent in English; the qualities the overseas employers often are looking for (Martin et al, 2004). The services of Filipinos are therefore demanded all over the world.

To promote labour migration, the host country could implement numerous persuasive mechanisms from relaxing migration laws, providing higher wages, to offering better economic opportunities to the potential workers. Piore (1979) maintained that international migration is encouraged not by the push factor from the country of origin, for example, poor economic development, but by the pull

factors in the host country, by enhancing the attractiveness of labour transfer through offering better benefits. During the focus group discussion, a question was posed whether the migrant would go back to their country of origin if the economy would improve or if there was employment available that would offer reasonable wages that would meet the basic needs and education of their family (Appendix C Q3). The answer of the focus group was that they would go back in their country of origin and be with their families. Considering this response, there appeared to be a possibility that the answers would not support the theory of Piore.

Piore's (1979) theory was mainly based on the belief that individuals will only migrate to "better" countries such as the industrialized nations with matured economies. The idea of migrating into an economically "poor" country such as PNG does not fit with Piore's theory. This study showed that a constant flow of Filipino migrants to PNG exists particularly in the accountancy and pharmaceutical sectors where employment agencies in the Philippines actively recruit Filipino workers to migrate to PNG. Although PNG has extreme security problems (BBC News, 2002) compared to the benign provincial localities where many migrants come from, Filipinos continued to seek employment in PNG regardless of the security risk. The reason behind this phenomenon is that Filipino workers migrate to PNG not only to earn more money but with the prospect of enhancing their work experience abroad and to strengthen their CVs. Many Filipinos claimed working in PNG was used only as a stepping-stone to eventually transfer to USA, Canada or Europe (Table 5.1). In fact, during casual conversations with some migrants, they admitted they had already applied to immigrate to other countries in the hope their qualifications would meet the prospective country's immigration requirements.

6.2 Labour Migration and the Decision to Migrate

The household theory of migration maintained that labour migration was an approach adopted by the household unit to increase the flow of income and to decrease the scope of economic risk (Massey et al, 1993; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2004). This denoted that members of the household unit decided and agreed to implement measures to minimize the incidence of economic hardship and maximize the potential possibility of earnings by sending at least one member

of the family to work overseas. In the case of Filipino workers in PNG, the experience of the focus group members proved otherwise. The responsibility as the head of the family, they explained, dictated that the future financial stability of the family needed to be protected. This was best served by searching for better opportunities overseas to provide for the needs of the family. The decision to migrate, they attested, was their own decision as a sign of a responsible head of the family, not a collective family decision, although consultation with the spouse and parents was done afterwards, including the arrangement of how the remittances would be sent home and disbursed. The selection of a geographic location to migrate to depended on where the demand for labour existed at the time when the migrants were searching for work.

6.3 Third World-Third World Migration

The viewpoint of Piore (1979 cited in Massey et al, 1993:440) was that the demand for international migration is inherent to the economic structure of industrialized *developed* nations, that is a Third World-First World labour movement relationship. Parnwell (1993:73) disagreed with this view arguing that the "existence of wealth disparities between nations does not in itself inevitably result in large-scale movements of economic migrants" (Ibid). The migration movement involved in this research agrees with Parnwell for the reason that this movement is a Third World-Third World migration, a relationship which emanated from the economic needs of PNG to control its skilled labour shortage by encouraging Filipino migrants to the country until such time as PNG could train their own pool of national skilled workers. The availability of labour supply in the Philippine market was not only seen as a solution to address the domestic skilled labour problem of PNG but an economically efficient solution as well. PNG companies frequently arrange with employment agencies in the Philippines to recruit Filipino migrants to work in PNG. It is more cost effective to engage Filipino migrants in PNG than hiring Australian expatriates, for example, in the pharmaceutical sector until PNG nationals were fully educated and trained to take on the job. This sentiment was expressed by some pharmacists when asked about the availability of Australian workers in the pharmaceutical sector in PNG.

The concept of Third World-Third World migration cooperation was considered healthy as both countries benefited in the arrangement. Although PNG is endowed with rich natural resources, it is still considered to be one of the world's least developed countries (UNDP, 2000; Rooney, 2004). Its economic and industrial development has not reached the stage of take off; the country, therefore, has not benefited from economic growth that its natural wealth potentially could provide. The country is currently experiencing, among others, social service delivery problems in health, education and law and order. Rooney (2004), stated that the literacy rates in PNG are low, about 45%; and the status of higher education sector "...is mixed and disorganized in structure... enrolments were estimated to number 6,345, representing about one per cent of the 19-24 year old group". Rooney (Ibid) further contended that students were awarded places in academic programs based on whom they knew and not what they knew. This poor state of the education system in PNG partly contributed to the shortage of skilled labour in the country. If the problem is left unresolved, it would indicate the continued need for the flow of labour migration to PNG to meet its skilled labour needs until such time as when PNG successfully builds up the professional capacity of their nationals.

Although Port Moresby was noted as the world's "worst place to live" because of extreme security problems (BBC News, 2002; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002), Filipinos continue to migrate to PNG because their services are in demand. This migration movement is encouraged by the Philippine Government not only because their remittances contribute to uplifting the economy of the home country but because it eases the impact of the unemployment and underemployment problems in the Philippines. Whilst the study showed that none of the Filipino migrant workers was unemployed in the Philippines before leaving to work in PNG, the migrants' labour movement overseas had a "trickle down" effect on unemployment in the Philippines; where their vacated positions were filled up by the next worker in the queue.

6.4 The Filipino Migrant Workers and Remittances

The research outcome indicated that all of the Filipino migrant workers remit money at home to support their family left behind. Although the frequency of

remittances varies, the majority of migrants remit monthly to their families. The beneficiaries of remittances who were in-charge of the disbursement of funds, usually the wife, husband or the parents disburse the funds primarily to meet the basic needs of the family, such as food, shelter and education and pay some other financial obligations. These remittance disbursement priorities were intended to minimize the financial risk and emotional stress of the family and increase its standard of living. The more important aspect of the result showed that the migrants have control on the disbursements of the money sent to their families at home. Either they were informed of what the disbursements were for or they made arrangements with the family members on the specific expenses on which the remittances must be expended. The majority of the migrant workers attested that during their visits home, they had seen most of the expenses paid through their remittances; the significant ones were for meeting the basic needs of the family, such as food, shelter, medicines, education expenses of the children/siblings and some savings in the bank. The use of remittances for basic needs and education was consistent with the findings from other studies conducted on migrants' remittances such as those of Semyonov and Gorodzeisky(2004) and Martin et al (2004).

As remittances were mainly spent on basic needs, the question of sustainability of economic benefits should be considered. Did the migrants engage in some form of economic activity to make their economic benefits received overseas sustainable? Or are migrant workers mainly meeting the day to day needs of the family? What problems hinder their plans to engage in income-generating schemes?

6.5 Sustainability Measures Adopted by Filipino Migrant Workers

The concept of sustainability in this research is defined as the transformation of the economic benefit received overseas by the migrant workers into a new form of income-generating activity that would deliver a similar level of income to the migrant and his family. We could ask what economic programs have been implemented by the migrant workers to ensure that they will receive the same or similar level of income when they return to live in the Philippines? Have they transformed part of their remittances into some form of economic activity?

The data in Appendix D17 indicates that the Filipino migrants were concerned about the low salary, low standard of living and lack of employment opportunities in the Philippines. In understanding this economic reality, it is only natural for Filipino migrant workers to ward these conditions by recognizing the importance of engaging in some form of an economic activity. The data in Appendix D19 also indicates that significant numbers of Filipino migrant workers do plan to open up some kind of small business enterprise which consists mainly of commercial or residential rental properties (Appendix D18) when they return to live in the Philippines (Appendices D22 and D22A). However, only twenty six per cent (26%) had actually started to invest in such economic activity. This low level of investment calls for more investigation into the reasons behind this trend.

In the study, the migrants maintained that investing in a business in the Philippines required substantial capital so they save money in the bank for this purpose (Table 5.1). However, during casual conversation with some migrants, they said that saving to meet that purpose was not easy because the savings fund was also treated as an emergency fund. For example, the fund was used as a means to meet the medical or hospitalisation expenses of members of the family. After the emergency situation passed, the migrants needed to re-start building up the savings meant for business capitalization.

Other reasons given by migrants for not establishing any sustainable economic activity was the lack of a dependable person who could manage the business at home while the migrants work overseas (Appendix C Q6). A focus group member raised the concern that there were instances when even immediate family members of some migrants could not be entrusted with the money allocated for starting a business. Another reason (Appendix D21) given was that the remittances migrant workers received were just sufficient to meet the family's basic needs while other migrants said they did not know which business venture would be profitable. Others claimed they have no time to manage the business at the same time as working overseas, and some said their family did not support the idea of establishing a business venture.

Further investigation of the issue showed that from the data results and enquiries from research participants, the Filipino migrant workers have their own priorities

on how their remittances would be spent in their household. The research enquiry showed that remittances were prioritised primarily on the meeting of basic needs of the family, that is, food, shelter and education and the payment of medical expenses. These were followed by the payment of debts, and if ever there was extra money left, payment for the renovation of the house. When these expenses were paid, the household ensured that any funds left were saved in the bank. Only once had these basic family necessities been met, and sufficient accumulated funds had been left unspent, the migrant workers and their families started investing money in economic ventures. The respondents mentioned that the remittances for the first three years of working overseas were mostly used to pay off loan security relating to the migration process.

Further enquiries revealed that as a duty of the head of the family, the Filipino migrant workers' priority was to give a better life to their families and provide a good level of education for the children or siblings. The money spent to achieve these goals was treated as an investment, not in the economic sense but an investment in developing human capacity, that is, the maintenance of a better standard of living providing a good level of education for the family (Table 5.2). The focus group discussion expressed strongly the Filipino workers' motivation for their migration. They argued that they chose to work overseas to earn more money (Appendix C Q1) aiming to provide a better life not only for themselves but for their children. This was achieved by enhancing their living standard and providing good education. According to the Filipino migrants, well educated children have a greater chance of finding better employment opportunities that would eventually deliver self sufficiency and a financially secure future for the family.

The preference of Filipino migrants to expend savings first on servicing basic needs and education of the family rather than long term investment in income generating schemes does not support the thesis put forward in this research. The premise of the thesis assumed migrant workers would consider business investment as a priority, to ensure sustainability of income stream. However, the result created a realization that social relations and kinship are more important in the lives of the Filipino migrant workers than that of pure economic advancement. This outcome proved that on a grand scale investment in economic activity is not a high priority

for Filipino migrant workers. Their first priority is the welfare of their family. The provision of education and a better life are, for them, their most important investment. One migrant worker said, "If my children are educated, with good employment and are happy, then I am happy".

6.6 The Philippine Government's Business Assistance Program

There also exists the Philippine Government's business assistance program as part of the re-integration program for the Filipino migrants, managed under the Office of OWWA. Although a significant number of respondents expressed their intention to avail of this facility (Appendix D24), 45% of the respondents who utilized this service in the past were critical of the process (Appendix D24A). They related several unpleasant experiences, such as slow processing of loan applications, loan officers were difficult to deal with, and officials demanded excessive requirements for loans. One member of the focus group claimed that when he applied for a Php 50,000 loan (equivalent to about NZ\$1,350.00) to top up his investment capital, the OWWA Office required the title of his property as collateral. This, he thought, was an excessive requirement not only because it put his property at risk but also the value of his property significantly exceeded the cost of the loan. These claims of migrants show that the business assistance re-integration program of the Government is not working for the migrants. This being the case, a re-evaluation of OWWA's processes is needed for the program to work efficiently.

Summary

This chapter has examined the various migration theories relating to international migration in terms of the empirical data presented in chapter five. The research has shown that migration is a natural reaction of individuals to take the opportunity to fill the supply for the demand of international labour thereby availing themselves of opportunities that the host country offers. The Filipino migrant workers took the challenge proffered in this labour market.

In conceptualising the thesis of this study, the theory put forward was that engaging in a form of economic activity is the process for which remittances of the migrants could be made sustainable because establishing a business is the logical way to generate a sustained income. Provided the business is managed appropriately, income would flow in and sustain the families' needs. However, the Filipino migrant workers' concept of sustainability differed from the premise of this study. The results indicated that migrant workers' priority is the investment in and development of human capacity in the form of providing good health and better education for their families. Investing in economic activity was not therefore their first priority.

The research outcome did not support the thesis in the sense that Filipino migrant workers' priorities are not geared toward investment in economic activity but rather an investment in human resource. Based on this result, there would likely be more highly educated and skilled people joining the labour force in the future because of the priority put on education and the potential availability of skilled labour force in the future. If the economy of the Philippines would not improve, more Filipinos would be encouraged to leave their country to work overseas. In which case, further research would be desirable to study the effect of remittances on the human resource development of Filipino migrant workers and their families.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

The discussion in this study revealed that people migrate internationally for different reasons, reasons which are induced by the individual's predilections, sensitivities and needs. People travel because of their interest to temporarily experience new places, to study in new environments, to live in a more secure area or to avail themselves of better employment opportunities. In understanding these trends, specifically the phenomenon of international labour migration, numerous writers conceived various theories on why people decide to venture to distant lands. One writer, Ravenstein (1889 cited in Lee, 1966:48), posited that people migrate because their overarching desire is to better themselves in material respects, that is, to obtain material wealth, to advance economically, socially or politically. However, other writers such as Lee (1966:49-51) inferred that in international labour migration, the workers' decision to migrate is stimulated by factors that are present in the country of origin (the push factors), factors that exist in the host country (the pull factors), some intervening conditions which are either persuasive or hindering, and the migrant's personal reasons. Lee (ibid) explained that the interplay of these factors, and their corresponding costs and benefits considered, would influence the decision whether to migrate. For example, if in the country of origin there existed economic and industrial underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty, lack of economic opportunities and social inequality, these push factors might drive the migrants to relocate abroad. If the host country offered incentives that were strongly persuasive in character such as better remuneration, tax breaks, circular migration and greater employment opportunities (Iredale, 2001:14), these pull factors might also induce the workers to migrate. Several migration theories emerged that relate mostly to economic and social reasons.

One economic theory of migration states that people migrate because the benefits of moving are greater than the benefits the migrants would receive if they decided to stay in their home country (Sjaastad, 1962), while another theory stated that the wage differential in the country of origin and the host country induces the migrants to move. The neo-classical economic theory is another means of explaining the migration phenomenon. This theory is concerned with the supply

and demand of labour which influences people to relocate in areas where there is a shortage of workers (Parnwell, 1993:73). However, Piore (1979) argued that the pull factors of the host country induce the migrants to move; not the push factors.

The social aspects of the theory of migration state that the decision to migrate is not a unitary decision of the migrant, but rather a collective household decision to increase the flow of income and minimize the financial risk facing the family (Massey et al, 1993; Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2004). This strategy is achieved by sending one member of the family overseas to work and remit money home primarily to meet the basic needs of the family and uplift their living standards. Social or economic, these theories persuade one way or another, the movement of labourers across geographical borders. Migration occurs when after seriously considering the costs, benefits and their personal reasons for moving, the migrant decides to shift to a new environment to work. These same influences play important roles in the Filipino migrants' decision to work overseas.

This research project was a study on the Philippines' international labour migration; conducted and considered to be important because of the Filipino overseas workers' economic contributions to the Philippine economy. Specific contributions are: a) capacity to keep the nation's economy afloat by sending foreign currency remittances back to the country, b) contribution to easing the unemployment and underemployment problems inside the nation, and c) contribution to resolving the host country's domestic labour shortage.

At the micro level, the migrants do receive economic benefits from labour migration in the form of better opportunities and improved levels of wages compared to what they would have received if they worked in their own country. However, statistics show that considerable numbers of returnee migrants revert back to their original state of subsistence living when all their savings have been exhausted because their only source of income is the income received abroad (Asian Migrants, 2005). Other returnee migrants decided to re-migrate and work overseas again for the reason that there exists very limited economic opportunities or employment prospects for them in the Philippines (Ibid; Sison, 2002). With limited economic and employment opportunities in the country, we might question how migrant workers will sustain the needs of their families when they return to

live in their own communities? Could they transform the income received abroad into new income-generating ventures to make their remittances sustainable?

Considering these economic realities affecting the Filipino migrant workers, this research maintained that engaging in an economic investment activity would make the migrants' remittances sustainable. Filipino overseas workers working in PNG were then selected to participate in a study to understand how Filipino workers address the economic problems that they would potentially face when they return to live in the Philippines. What hedging mechanisms did the migrants put in place to protect themselves against these kinds of eventualities? Did they engage in income-generating schemes to ensure a continued flow of revenue when they return to live in the Philippines? The study aimed to find the answer to the thesis question: "Do migrant workers transform part of their remittances into some form of an economic activity to make their economic benefits received abroad sustainable?"

In exploring the thesis question, the use of a questionnaire and focus group interviews were applied to gather the relevant information. The questionnaire and focus group discussions were planned and designed to gather not only the empirical data required but also to obtain corroborative responses from the respondents; to give strength to the results and reduce the possibility of errors that might affect the outcome of the analysis. The use of more than one method of inquiry, known as triangulation, was selected because the process intended to substantiate and support the answer obtained from each method of enquiry. This method was patterned from the navigational process of taking different bearings to locate the correct position of an object (Silverman, 1993:233). This is expected to give the same result when applied to research methods. Most importantly, in the design of the methodology, the casing of the issue, that is, the limiting of focus to that which is only necessary to the research (Ragin, 1992) was given considerable value. By casing the issue and focusing on finding the answer only to the problem at hand, it limits the chance of opening the issues into infinite possibilities in the search for truth.

The fieldwork was conducted in Port Moresby. The search for participants was arranged with an officer of the Philippine Embassy and with the officers of the

Filipino Association of PNG. Two waves of questionnaire survey were undertaken to get the desired number of respondents. The focus group discussion was also conducted in Port Moresby with the selected Filipino migrant workers. The minutes of the discussion were recorded and any Tagalog discussion transcribed by the author.

The questionnaire responses were summarized in tabulated form. Because the nature of the responses was in textual form, it was analysed, together with the result of the focus group discussions, qualitatively applying an inductive way of reasoning. The outcome of the research was deduced from the participants' responses to form a reliable conclusion.

7.1 The Filipino Migration Movement

With a vast number of Filipino workers overseas, the Philippine Government protected the interests of the migrants by creating legislation that safeguarded the migrants' rights. In 1974, labour migration became an official policy of the Philippine Government. This was done through the enactment of the Labour Code of the Philippines and the creation of government agencies that would handle the affairs of migration. Other legislation protecting the interests of the migrants were also enacted by the Philippine Government, hence the Philippines became renowned as a leader in advocating, regulating and promoting labour deployment abroad by establishing mechanisms that would protect the Filipino migrants overseas (Martin et al, 2004; IWRAW, 2005).

The state of the Philippine economy is characterized by its economic and industrial underdevelopment. Reflected in disappointing statistics are high rates of unemployment which currently sits at 7.7% (April 2005), high rates of underemployment (20.5%), high rates of poverty where 40% of the population was living below poverty line. However dismal the statistics may be, the Philippines' literacy rate is encouragingly high, recorded at 95% (www.unicef.org). With educated Filipinos unemployed or underemployed in their country, the search for employment takes them beyond the borders of the nation.

7.2 The Result of the Study

The study on the Filipino overseas workers in PNG revealed that the reasons for their labour movement were economic, that is, to earn more money, and social, to provide a better life for their families. Although aware of the effect of economic and industrial underdevelopment in the Philippines, such as the high rate of unemployment and deficiency in economic opportunities, these factors were not believed to contribute significantly to the migrants' decision to migrate. Rather, the pull factors from the host country were considered to be most significant in persuading them to take-up the employment available overseas. Though the migrant respondents in the study were all employed in the Philippines before migrating, the appeal of a higher wage differential in the host country, better opportunities and the demand for their services drove the professional and skilled migrants to work overseas. Migration was seen as a response to meet the demand for their services abroad. Because PNG was experiencing a domestic shortage of professional and skilled workers, PNG based companies arranged for employment agencies to recruit Filipino workers, particularly in the pharmaceutical sector, to address the temporary problem of domestic labour force shortage until PNG had built the capacity of their nationals.

The demand for services and the wage differential offered by PNG, the host country, were seen as the inducing factors influencing Filipino workers' decision to migrate to PNG. The research result showed that Filipino workers accumulate substantial earnings (2-10 times higher) in PNG compared to what they would receive working in the same or similar jobs in the Philippines. Although PNG, particularly Port Moresby, was noted as the world's "worst place to live" (BBC News, 2002) because of its severe security problems, Filipinos nevertheless continue to migrate because of the demand for their services, better opportunities and the prospect for increasing their earnings which could provide for their families a good level of education and improved standard of living. Other reasons Filipino migrants stated for staying in PNG was to build on their work experience and use PNG as a stepping-stone for transferring to USA, Canada or Europe in the future.

The study reflected that a majority of the Filipino migrants had control over the disbursement of their remittances at home. An arrangement of what items the

remittances would be expended on was made in consultation with their family. Such expenses related to meeting the basic needs of the family, for instance, food, shelter and education and providing some savings in the bank. These were to be prioritised before expending on other items such as renovation of the house or non-essential expenses. The uses of remittances, according to the majority of the migrant workers, were actually seen and observed by them when they went home for holiday breaks. There was no evidence to suggest that remittances were misused or misappropriated.

The economic realities of a lack of available employment, poor business opportunities, and tougher competition in the employment market were recognized by the Filipino migrants as challenges they needed to face upon their return to their home country. To meet these challenges, migrants recognized that some mechanisms were required that would generate some form of income which aimed to support the migrants and their families upon the migrants' return to their home communities.

This returns us to the thesis question for this study: "Do migrant workers transform part of their remittances into some form of economic activity to make their economic benefits received overseas sustainable?" The outcome of the research revealed that only 26% of the migrants had actually engaged in an economic activity, investing mostly in commercial rental properties that would generate a monthly income for the family. Although the majority of the Filipino migrant workers recognized the importance of engaging in an income-generating scheme, and most of them planned to engage in one in the future, they acknowledged that their first priority was not to engage in economic activity but rather to develop the human capacity of members of their family. This they did by providing better education and a good standard of living for their children or siblings. This priority was in keeping with their assumed responsibility to provide the best for the family – in education, social standing, and material things. The welfare and betterment of the family is considered first and foremost in Philippine society. Ensuring a good level of education, the migrants reasoned, would provide their children with better employment opportunities, translating into greater self sufficiency in the future. There is no doubt, this "bettering" of the family supports the theory of Raventein

(1889:II, 286) that the aim of migrants is to better themselves. That is, the migrants' lives and their families'.

The thesis of this research maintained that engaging in economic activity would make the economic benefits of the migrants sustainable. Since the empirical data gathered from the study proved otherwise, it is therefore deduced from the analysis of the observed data that the development of human capacity is the means by which migrants' remittances received overseas can be made sustainable.

The investment of the migrant workers in the education of their children or siblings would result in a continued expansion of a highly educated and skilled Philippine labour force in the future. This would strengthen the role of labour migration in the Philippine economy. Economist B. M. Villegas (Martin et al, 2004) predicted that considering the possibility that the Philippine economy will improve and the rates of poverty in the country will reduce, the Philippines would still be seeing a continued flow of Filipino labour migration internationally because of the high demand for their services. Migration, Villegas further predicted, would be a focus of the Philippine economy for the next one hundred years because of the presence of international labour demand and the availability of a supply of skilled Filipino workers.

Considering the prospect that labour migration will play a significant part in the Philippine economy in the next one hundred years, and considering as well the significant savings the migrants would make through working overseas, it is vital to consider and implement policies that would assist the returnee migrants in developing income-generating schemes in their own communities. The Philippine Government currently has a business assistance program for the returnee migrants. However, the study indicated that the program was not effectively assisting the migrants in their quest for developing new forms of income stream for their families. Attention should be directed to developing policies for the establishment of effective business advisory centres (that are patterned from New Zealand and Samoa). These centres would be supported by the government and assisted by commercial/agricultural/rural banks. These institutions would also help the migrants develop enterprises or small scale industries to generate income from. Research in areas concerning niche markets, microfinance for migrants living in

rural areas, business advisory assistance and capacity building in business management would assist the migrants in transforming part of their remittances into new forms of income stream.

Although the migrants' investment priority is building the capacity of their families to achieve a better standard of living, it is expected that the establishment of a proper structure for income-generating schemes will help and encourage migrant workers to invest in any preferred ventures at the time when they are financially ready to take on the challenge of a new economic undertaking.

Appendices

Appendix A: Philippine Migration Statistics

APPENDIX A1: DETAILED STOCK ESTIMATE OF OVERSEAS FILIPINOS				
As of December 2004				
REGION / COUNTRY	PERMANENT	TEMPORARY	IRREGULAR	TOTAL
WORLD TOTAL	3,187,586	3,599,257	1,296,972	8,083,815
AFRICA	318	58,369	17,141	75,828
EGYPT	54	2,620	1,420	4,094
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	0	2,569	150	2,719
LIBYA	75	5,440	485	6,000
NIGERIA	18	11,750	586	12,354
OTHERS / UNSPECIFIED	171	35,990	14,500	50,661
ASIA, East & South	91,901	1,005,609	443,343	1,540,853
BRUNEI	26	21,762	1,700	23,488
HONGKONG	404	194,241	2,700	197,345
JAPAN	83,303	238,522	31,428	353,253
KOREA (South)	4,850	33,285	9,015	47,150
MACAU	56	17,391	1,000	18,447
MALAYSIA	313	52,337	300,000	352,650
SINGAPORE	152	64,337	72,000	136,489
TAIWAN	2,037	154,135	4,500	160,672
OTHERS / UNSPECIFIED	760	229,599	21,000	251,359
ASIA, West	2,312	1,449,031	112,750	1,564,093
BAHRAIN	64	33,154	3,500	36,718
ISRAEL	104	14,051	23,000	37,155
JORDAN	108	5,885	7,000	12,993
KUWAIT	93	80,196	11,500	91,789
LEBANON	19	28,318	6,100	34,437
OMAN	20	18,941	1,500	20,461
QATAR	13	57,345	1,000	58,358
SAUDI ARABIA	243	976,134	18,000	994,377
UAE	405	185,562	20,000	205,967
OTHERS / UNSPECIFIED	1,243	49,445	21,150	71,838
EUROPE	174,387	506,997	143,035	824,419
AUSTRIA	22,017	1,956	2,000	25,973
BELGIUM	3,583	3,484	5,533	12,600
FRANCE	1,098	4,866	26,121	32,085
GERMANY	42,882	8,346	4,400	55,628
GREECE	88	17,058	8,000	25,146
ITALY	4,934	85,527	48,000	138,461
NETHERLANDS	10,421	2,920	2,000	15,341
SPAIN	16,332	6,960	2,000	25,292
SWITZERLAND	922	7,025	6,700	14,647
UNITED KINGDOM	52,500	56,341	7,481	116,322
OTHERS / UNSPECIFIED	19,610	312,514	30,800	362,924
AMERICAS / TRUST TERRITORIES	2,589,722	292,892	549,725	3,532,339
CANADA	369,225	32,766	2,975	404,966
UNITED STATES	2,271,933	101,249	350,000	2,723,182
CNMI	1,288	16,753	1,250	19,291
GUAM	45,968	1,800	500	48,268
OTHERS / UNSPECIFIED	1,308	140,324	195,000	336,632
OCEANIA	228,946	57,357	30,978	317,281
AUSTRALIA	211,664	930	2,900	215,494
NEW ZEALAND	17,182	307	120	17,609
PALAU	5	3,702	400	4,107
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	64	5,030	7,339	12,433
OTHERS / UNSPECIFIED	31	47,388	20,219	67,638
SEABASED WORKERS		229,002		229,002

Prepared by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas from CFO, DFA, POEA and other sources covering 194 countries / territories.

Permanent - Immigrants or legal permanent residents abroad whose stay do not depend on work contracts.

Temporary - Persons whose stay overseas is employment related, and who are expected to return at the end of their work contracts.

Irregular - Those not properly documented or without valid residence or work permits, or who are overstaying in a foreign country.

Source: POEA, 2005

**APPENDIX A2: DEPLOYED NEWLY HIRED
OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS BY GENDER
(1992-2003)**

Year	Female	Male	Ratio (%)	Total
			Female:Male	
1992	129,869	130,725	50:50	260,594
1993	138,242	117,955	54:46	256,197
1994	153,504	105,482	59:41	258,986
1995	124,822	89,335	58:42	214,157
1996	111,487	94,304	54:46	205,791
1997	123,399	97,842	56:44	221,241
1998	133,458	85,757	61:39	219,215
1999	151,840	86,420	64:36	238,260
2000	178,323	74,707	70:30	253,030
2001	186,018	72,186	72:28	258,204
2002	199,423	88,732	69:31	288,155

Source: POEA, 2005

**APPENDIX A3: DEPLOYED FILIPINO OVERSEAS
CONTRACT WORKERS BY CATEGORY
(1975-2002)**

Year	Land Based	Sea Based	Total
1975	12,501	23,534	36,035
1976	19,221	28,614	47,835
1977	36,676	33,699	70,375
1978	50,961	37,280	88,241
1979	92,519	44,818	137,337
1980	157,394	57,196	214,590
1981	210,936	55,307	266,243
1982	250,115	64,169	314,284
1983	380,263	53,944	434,207
1984	300,378	50,604	350,982
1985	320,494	52,290	372,784
1986	323,517	54,697	378,214
1987	382,229	67,042	449,271
1988	385,117	85,913	471,030
1989	355,346	103,280	458,626
1990	334,883	111,212	446,095
1991	489,260	125,759	615,019
1992	549,655	136,806	686,461
1993	550,872	145,758	696,630
1994	564,031	154,376	718,407
1995	488,173	165,401	653,574
1996	484,653	175,469	660,122
1997	559,227	188,469	747,696
1998	638,343	193,300	831,643
1999	640,331	196,689	837,020
2000	643,304	198,324	841,628
2001	662,648	204,951	867,599
2002	682,315	209,593	891,908

Source: Cabilao (1995:70) Years 1975-1984
POEA (2005) Years 1985-2002

Appendix B: Questionnaire

- 1) What gender are you? Male Female

- 2) Which age group do you belong?
 Between: 18-25 42-49
 26-33 50 years old and over
 34-41

- 3) What is your highest educational qualification?
 Incomplete High School Post Graduate Diploma
 High School graduate Masters Degree
 Vocational Studies graduate Doctoral Degree
 Incomplete College Other: _____
 Bachelors Degree

- 4) Have you in the past worked in another country as overseas worker before working in PNG?
 Yes No
 If Yes, please state which country you worked before: _____

- 5) How long have you been working overseas (years in PNG plus other countries you worked before)?
 Less than a year 11-20 years
 1-5 years 21 years and over
 6-10 years

- 6) Have you in the past or recently renewed your work contract ? Yes No

- 7) When you left to work overseas, what were then **two** of your **short term** reasons for working overseas? Please number 1 as the first (more important) reason and 2 the secondary reason.
 Gain work experience overseas Help in family household expenses
 Work, travel and leisure Pay medical bills
 Earn more money Save money to get married
 Send children to school Other: _____

- 8) Now that you are working as migrant worker, what are **three** of your **long term** reasons for working overseas? Please rank with number 1,2,3 where 1 is the most important reason.
 Professional advancement (gain skills and experience)
 Stepping-stone for going to US, Canada or Europe
 Improve family's quality of life
 Earn more money
 Personal independence
 Save sufficient money for retirement
 Build new family house
 Personal reason
 Other: _____

- 9) Before working as migrant worker in PNG, your job in the Philippines was:
 In the same profession as your work in PNG but with the same or higher remuneration (remuneration is salary plus benefits excluding housing)
 In the same profession as your work in PNG but with lower remuneration
 Different profession as your work in PNG but with the same or higher remuneration

- Different profession as your work in PNG but with lower remuneration
- Unemployed

- 10) Your total annual salary and benefits in PNG (not including housing benefit) when converted in pesos, compared to your total annual salary and benefits received when you were working in the Philippines is about:
- 2-5 times higher
 - 6-10 times higher
 - 11 and more times higher
 - The same
 - Lower
- 11) Do you send money or remittances at home (in the Philippines)? Yes No
- 12) How often do you send money or remittances back home in the Philippines?
- Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
 - Annually
 - Rarely
 - When I can afford
- 13) To whom do you send your money or remittances in the Philippines?
- Wife/Husband
 - Children
 - Mother/Father
 - Brother/Sister
 - Other: _____
- 14) When you send your money/remittances at home, who decides on how your money would be spent at home? Select one.
- I decide on how the money would be spent at home
 - My _____ decides on regular expenses (such as household and educational expenses) but advises me on any major items to pay
 - I have delegated authority to my _____ to spend the money as she/he finds necessary including major expenses
 - Me and my family have specific plans on how to spend my remittances at home
 - I am not regularly informed on how my family spend the money at home
 - Other: _____
- 15) If you are sending money or remittances at home, what do you believe are the things your money or remittances are spent for? Select and rank: 1,2,3... where 1 ranks the most important. Select as many as applicable.
- Household expenses
 - Educational expenses
 - Household appliances
 - Pay off debt
 - Travel, recreation and entertainment
 - Buy properties for rent
 - Communications equipment (cell phone/computer)
 - Bank Savings
 - Medical expenses
 - Buy family vehicle
 - Repair/renovation of house
 - Buy new family house and lot
 - Invest in business
 - Other: _____
- 16) During your visits home in the Philippines, have you **seen** the items/things which you believed your money or remittances were spent for? Yes No

If Yes, please give some examples of the items/things in No. 15 which you have seen and indicate whether they are useful/beneficial to you and your family in the short and long term. You can write at the back of the page if the space provided is not sufficient.

- 17) What could be your reasons for deciding not to go back so soon and work in the Philippines? Select and rank **two** items, 1 and 2 where 1 ranks as the first (more important) reason.
- Lack of employment opportunities in the Philippines.
 - Lack of business opportunities in the Philippines.
 - Tougher competition in the labour/employment market
 - Low salary and standard of living in the Philippines.
 - Honour and respectability to be an Overseas Filipino Worker
- Other: _____
- 18) What actions have you implemented now to ensure that upon your return to the Philippines, you continue to receive the same or similar level of income as what you are receiving now? Indicate as many as applicable.
- Gaining technical skills to get better employment in the Philippines.
 - Investing in money market and live on the interest on investment.
 - Having opened up a business or joint cooperative venture
 - Investing in properties for commercial/residential rentals
 - Maintaining Retirement Plan in the Philippines.
 - Have not implemented anything yet.
 - Personal reasons.
- Other: _____
- 19) Do you think it is important to engage in gainful economic activity, such as a business or investment, while you are working and earning money overseas? Yes No
- 20) Have you saved part of your money/remittances to engage in business ventures or investments in the Philippines? Yes No
- 21) If you answered No to number 20, what could be your reason/s? Please select and rank, 1,2,3..., where 1 is the most important reason. Select as many as applicable.
- Money/remittance is just sufficient to meet basic family needs (household and educational needs)
 - Do not have sufficient skills and knowledge about managing a business
 - Do not know which business or investments are profitable
 - Do not have the time for managing any business
 - Do not have the support of the family to engage in a business or investment
 - Not interested in any business or investment
- Other reason: _____
- 22) If you have not started any business or investment, do you have a plan to start one in the future? Yes No
- If Yes, what is your plan?

- 23) The Philippine Government's Bureau of Investment (BOI), through the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), has a business assistance program to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as part of the re-integration program for returning OFWs. Have you used this program?
 Yes No
- 24) Would you use the BOI/OWWA service to start up a business or other income generating scheme in the future? Yes No
- If No, please state your reason

- 25) If you have not started any investment or business in the Philippines yet, what kind of work would you do when you return to live in the Philippines?
- Tend the small family farm
 - Be self-employed and practice my profession
 - Retire and enjoy life
 - Bahala na.
- Other reason: _____
- 26) If you have not started any business or investment in the Philippines, how would you ensure the continued improvement of your family's quality of life?
- Give better education to my children
 - Save money in the bank
 - Bahala na
- Other: _____
- 27) What do you consider as your most important achievement since working as overseas migrant worker? Choose 1.
- Have given better education to my children or brothers and sisters
 - Improved my family's quality of life
 - Invested in business or investment ventures to ensure continued source of income
 - Saved sufficient money for my retirement
 - Built our new home
 - Paid our debts and other financial obligations
- Other: _____

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Appendix C: Minutes of the Focus Group Discussion

FOCUS GROUP MEETING AT HOLIDAY INN, SATURDAY, 25 JUNE 2005 AT 11:00 AM UNTIL 12:45 PM WITH JIM* AND MICHELLE*. ANOTHER PARTICIPANT, JOVY*, WAS NOT ABLE TO ATTEND BUT HAD SENT UP SOME ANSWER TO SOME QUESTIONS WHICH WERE INCLUDED HERE.

Jim is a migrant worker who re-migrated to PNG after working in Saudi Arabia for 12 years.

Michelle is a first time migrant worker who works in PNG for less than a year.

Jovy is a migrant worker working in PNG for more than 11 years with businesses in the Philippines.

Q1: Bakit kayo pumunta dito sa Papua New Guinea? (Why did you decide to migrate to PNG?)

Michelle: To earn money to support my family.

Jim: To earn money for my family. It is actually for economic reason and to gain work experience. It is very difficult to find a job in the Philippines because competition is high creating a lot of unemployed people.

Jovy: There are lots of unemployed people in the Philippines. If we have a good paying job overseas and our family is with us, why go back and take away another job which can be filled by another Filipino? We will just leave the jobs to them in the Philippines. We are working here to be able to invest in our country to create more jobs.

Q2: Ang pagmunta ninyo ba dito ay disisyon mo o disisyon ninyong magpapamilya? (Leaving to work overseas, is it your decision or the decision agreed upon by the whole family?)

Michelle: When I applied to an agency, I was only trying if I could get a job. When I was accepted, I informed my father. He gave me his blessing but my mother was not happy. She was scared because it would be the first time that I would be living away from the family. She was scared because I am a female and would be alone in a distant, unfamiliar place.

Jim: When the agency I applied for found a job for me in Riyadh as a mechanic, it was my decision to go but I consulted my wife about my decision after. She agreed without realizing the impact of my going away. I too did not realize how hard it would be to be alone. I always think about my family. Renewing my contract was a difficult decision in terms of family attachment.

Q3: Kung ang economiya ng Pilipinas ay umunlad at makapagbibigay sa inyo ng sapat na suweldo, hindi kasing taas ng hanap sa abroad pero comfortable at makapag-papaaral ng mga anak ninyo, babalik ba kayo sa Pilipinas? (Should the Philippine economy improve and could provide you with a salary, not as high as what you are earning abroad but sufficient enough to make you comfortable and afford good education for your children, would you go back home?)

Jim: I would go back to the Philippines and be with my family.

Michelle: I would also go back and be with my children.

Q4: Ano ang nararamdaman ninyo kung ang hinanapan ninyong pera ay pinadadala ninyo sa Pilipinas? (What do you feel when your hard earned money is sent back to the Philippines?)

Michelle: I am happy because I am providing for the needs of my children and my father and mother.

Jim: I am happy to provide for my family and pay my financial obligations. But I also made a point to save some money for myself to be spent for having a holiday with my family when I go home for a break.

Q5: Ano sa palagay ninyo ang epekto ng pagkakatayo ninyo sa inyong pamilya? (What do you think is the effect of your absence from your family?)

Michelle: I was very homesick because I had a different expectation of the place I was going to. When I heard about the security problems, I told my boss I wanted to go home but I was advised to give it a try and stay a bit longer. Then I joined the gym and do some sports to keep me busy. I am still here so far.

Jim: It has no effect on me because I focused on what I can provide for my family. Although I am always thinking about my family, I console myself by the fact that I am providing a better future to my children. I could hardly save because as my earnings go higher, the living standard of my family also increased. I also send my children to private school which cost a lot of money in terms of fees but they offer better education. The cost of education in the Philippines is becoming very expensive, so are the costs of commodities. If ever there was a salary increase approved by the government, the salary increase was not commensurate to the increase of basic commodities, making it very difficult to budget our earnings.

Michelle: My case is different. When I was in the Philippines, my children were studying in the private school because my parents were spending for them. When I came here in PNG, I told my parents that I will be the one to send my children to school so I transferred them to public school, which has cheaper school fees. The public school where they study has a good teaching standard so that they do not lose anything in terms of good standard of learning.

Q6: Ano sa palagay ninyo ang pinakamabuting gagawin para mapanatili ninyo ang magandang buhay dulot ng pagiging OFW? (What do you think is the best way to sustain the good standard of living brought about you being an OFW?)

Jim: To maintain the good standard of living, it is good to have a business. I am saving money to start a business. I had a business before, a workshop because I am a mechanic by profession, but because of personal reason, I closed the shop. When I left to work in Saudi Arabia, my wife looked after the workshop but managing it needed some skill and knowledge because it was a specialized field. My wife did not possess that skill and knowledge about running a workshop.

Michelle: I would go home and study for my masters. I already have a pharmacy, a 50%-50% share with my friend but when I return home, I would prefer to own the pharmacy 100%.

Jovy: We are working here to be able to invest in our country to create more jobs. In fact, we have already started small businesses and now run by our brother. Those [businesses] created around 10-12 jobs - small, but at least doing good to unemployed people. If overseas people [Filipino migrants] can do the same, we would have helped millions of Filipinos! And our country will become economically stronger!

I think if each Filipino overseas worker can create businesses in our country that would generate jobs, that would be a great help to our country. But I guess the other problem is, who is going to run the business that they would want to put up back home? We were just lucky that we have a brother who is committed to help us prosper our hard earned money. He is running our businesses now. We are monitoring the progress through constant sending of financial reports through the internet. It is good we have this email facility now where communication was made very convenient.

For other overseas Filipino workers, if only there is a committee or somebody trustworthy enough to be entrusted their hard earned savings, I am sure they [migrants] would be glad to invest. Others [migrants] sometimes can not even trust their own immediate families.

Q7: Ano ang masasabi ninyo sa OFW business re-integration program ng OWWA? Nakakatulong ba ito sa mga OFWs? (What can you say about OWWA's business re-integration program, is it helpful to the OFWs?)

Jim: The re-integration program for starting a business has lots of requirements. Once, my wife tried to borrow Php 50,000 but they (OWWA Office) required collateral such as the house and land title of our property. They also required lots of documents, and charges 14% interest too. Processing of applications was also very slow. Even if you apply in their provincial office (where applicants were lesser in number compared to the big cities), the waiting time was still very long. This Philippine OWWA program does not give support to the OFWs. We paid our dues but we did not get any support or benefit from them. Take for example the medical insurance. We paid for it but the insurance expired after one year, so even if we were still working overseas (because the contract was for three years), the medical insurance expired after a year. When there were OFW in distress, the money they paid for repatriation (going back home) were mostly from the contributions of the OFWs to help out Filipinos in distress. Repatriation costs were sometimes paid by the embassy but on most cases, money was raised through contributions from other OFWs.

Q8: Ano ang pinakamagandang pagbabago sa buhay ninyo dulot ng inyong pagiging migrante? (What is the most significant change in your life brought about by you being a migrant worker?)

Michelle: Better standard of living. Also, we are given special treatment in the community.

Jim: Better life to my family and a higher status in the community. In the Philippines, the OFWs and their families are respected and given due recognition in the community. For example they are given special seats in community activities. The children are given special treatment not only in the school but also among the extended families because their father or mother is working overseas.

* Surnames were not included to maintain confidentiality.

Appendix D: The Questionnaire Survey Result

Appendix D1: Gender Participation

Gender	No. of Participants	%
Male	15	44%
Female	19	56%
Total	34	100%

Appendix D2: Age Category of Participants

Age Group	No. of Participants	%
18-25	3	9%
26-33	14	41%
34-41	12	35%
42-49	5	15%
50 years and over	0	0%
Total	34	100%

Appendix D3: Highest Educational Qualification of Participants

Highest Educational Qualification	No. of Participants	%
Incomplete high school	0	0%
Vocational studies graduate	2	6%
Incomplete college	1	3%
Bachelors degree	30	88%
Post graduate diploma	0	0%
Masteral degree (incomplete)	1	3%
Doctoral degree	0	0%
Total	34	100%

Appendix D4: Labour Migration History of Participants

Labour Migration of Participants	No. of Participants	%
Papua New Guinea only	31	91%
Papua New Guinea and Taiwan	1	3%
Papua New Guinea and Saudi Arabia	2	6%
Total	34	100%

Appendix D5: Number of Years Working as Migrant Worker

Number of Years Working Overseas	No. of Participants	%
Less than a year	6	18%
1-5 years	15	46%
6-10 years	9	27%
11-20 years	3	9%
21 years and over	0	0%
Total	33	100%

Appendix D6: Have you in the past or recently renewed your work contract?

Renewal of Contract	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	23	70%
No	10	30%
Total	33	100%

Appendix D7: Migrants' Short Term Reasons for Working Overseas

Migrant Workers' Short Term Reasons for Working Overseas	Rank Points	%
Earn more money	20	38%
Help in family household expenses	13	25%
Gain work experience overseas	9	17%
Work, travel and leisure	4	8%
Send children to school	3	6%
Save money to get married	2	4%
Family reunification	1	2%
Pay medical bills	0	0%
Total	52	100%

Appendix D8: Migrants' long term reasons for working overseas?

Migrant Workers' Long Term Reasons for Working Overseas	Rank Points	%
Improve family's quality of life	20	33%
Professional advancement (gain skills and experience)	11	18%
Earn more money	11	18%
Stepping-stone for going to US, Canada or Europe	9	15%
Save sufficient money for retirement	5	7%
Build new family house	3	5%
Personal independence	1	2%
Personal reason	1	2%
Total	61	100%

Appendix D9: Before working as migrant worker in PNG, your job in the Philippines was:

Migrant Workers' Job and Remuneration in the Philippines	No. of Participants	%
In the same profession as the work in PNG but with the same or higher remuneration	9	26%
In the same profession as the work in PNG but with lower remuneration	16	47%
Different profession as the work in PNG but with the same or higher remuneration	2	6%
Different profession as the work in PNG but with lower remuneration	7	21%
Unemployed	0	0%
Total	34	100%

Appendix D10: Migrants' total annual remuneration (salary plus benefits excluding housing) in PNG compared to total annual remuneration received in the Philippines:

Comparative Annual Salary and Benefits in the Philippines vs PNG	No. of Participants	%
2-5 times higher in PNG	29	85%
6-10 times higher in PNG	3	9%
11 and more times higher in PNG	2	6%
The same	0	0%
Lower	0	0%
Total	34	100%

Appendix D11: Do you send money or remittances at home (in the Philippines)?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	34	100%
No	0	0%
Total	34	100%

Appendix D12: Frequency of Remittance to the Philippines

Frequency of Remittances	No. of Respondents	%
Weekly	0	0%
Monthly	26	76%
Quarterly	5	15%
Annually	0	0%
Rarely	1	3%
When I can afford	2	6%
Total	34	100%

Appendix D13: To whom do you send your money or remittances in the Philippines?

Beneficiaries of Remittances	No. of Respondents	%
Wife/Husband	7	18%
Children	1	2%
Mother/Father	22	52%
Brother/Sister	8	19%
Nephews/Nieces/Other Relations	2	5%
Fiance	1	2%
Personal Bank Account in the Phil.	1	2%
Total	42	100%

Appendix D14: The Person Deciding on How the Money is Spend at Home

Controller of Remittances	No. of Respondents	%
I decide on how the money would be spent at home	6	19%
My Mother decides on regular expenses (such as household and educational expenses) but advises me on any major items to pay.	3	9%
My Father decides on regular expenses (such as household and educational expenses) but advises me on any major items to pay.	1	3%
My Wife decides on regular expenses (such as household and educational expenses) but advises me on any major items to pay.	5	15%
My Fiance decides on regular expenses (such as household and educational expenses) but advises me on any major items to pay.	1	3%
I have delegated authority to my Mother to spend the money as she/he finds necessary including major expenses	5	15%
I have delegated authority to my Wife to spend the money as she/he finds necessary including major expenses	1	3%
I have delegated authority to my Sister to spend the money as she/he finds necessary including major expenses	1	3%
Me and my family have specific plans on how to spend my remittances at home	10	30%
I am not regularly informed on how my family spend the money at home	0	0%
Total	33	100%

Appendix D15: What do you believed are the things your money or remittances are spent for?

Kind of Expenses	Ranking	%
Household expenses	21	32%
Educational expenses	15	23%
Bank Savings	12	18%
Pay off debt	4	6%
Medical expenses	4	6%
Repair/renovation of house	4	6%
Invest in business	3	5%
Buy properties for rent	1	2%
Buy new family house and lot	1	2%
Buy family vehicle	0	0%
Communications equipment (cellphone/computer)	0	0%
Household appliances	0	0%
Travel, recreation and entertainment	0	0%
Total	65	100%

Appendix D16: Have you seen the items/things which you believed your money was spent for?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	22	73%
No	8	27%
Total	30	100%

Appendix D16A: If yes, please give examples of the things/items which you have seen

List of Expenditures seen by the migrant workers	No. of Respondents	%
Repair/renovation of the house was completed	4	13%
Sufficient savings in the bank	5	18%
Purchase of new property	4	13%
Purchase of new vehicle	1	3%
Businesses were set up and operational	2	7%
On going formal education of the family	5	18%
On going payment for insurance	1	3%
Niece's christening, birthday party	1	3%
Pay medical expenses of parent	1	3%
Expenditure for basic expenses at home	1	3%
Purchase of jewelries for the mother	1	3%
Trip to Singapore for the mother	1	3%
Have no idea what the remittances were spent for	1	3%
Purchase of rental property	1	3%
Purchase of household appliances	1	3%
Total	30	100%

Appendix D17: What could be your reasons for deciding not to go back so soon and work in the Philippines?

Reasons	Ranking	%
Lack of employment opportunities in the Philippines.	15	34%
Lack of business opportunities in the Philippines.	2	4%
Tougher competition in the labour/employment market	6	13%
Low salary and standard of living in the Philippines.	18	41%
Honour and respectability to be an Overseas Filipino Worker	1	2%
The husband is also working in PNG	1	2%
Not financially stable yet	2	4%
Total	45	100%

Appendix D18: What actions have you implemented now to ensure that upon your return in the Philippines, you continue to receive the same or similar level of income as you are receiving now?

Actions Implemented to Make Income Sustainable	No. of Respondents	%
Gaining technical skills to get better employment in the Philippines.	6	12%
Investing in money market and live on the interest on investment.	9	18%
Having opened up a business or joint cooperative venture	6	12%
Investing in properties for commercial/residential rentals	13	26%
Maintaining Retirement Plan in the Philippines.	5	10%
Have not implemented anything yet.	9	18%
Personal reasons.	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Appendix D19: Do you think it is important to engage in gainful economic activity, such as a business or investment, while you are working and earning money overseas?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	29	94%
No	2	6%
Total	31	100%

Appendix D20: Have you saved part of your money/remittances to engage in business or investment in the Philippines?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	21	66%
No	11	34%
Total	32	100%

Appendix D21: If you answered No to number 20, what could be your reasons?

Reasons	Ranking	%
Money/remittance is just sufficient to meet basic family needs (household and educational needs)	8	58%
Do not have sufficient skills and knowledge about managing a business	0	0%
Do not know which business or investments are profitable	3	21%
Do not have the time for managing any business	2	14%
Do not have the support of the family to engage in a business or investment	1	7%
Not interested in any business or investment	0	0%
Personal reasons.	0	0%
Total	14	100%

Appendix D22: If you have not started any business or investment, do you have a plan to start one in the future?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	28	90%
No	3	10%
Total	31	100%

Appendix D22A: If Yes, what is your plan?

Business Plan	No. of Respondents	%
To own a pharmacy	10	35%
Open up a small business enterprise	10	35%
Own a rental apartment	1	3%
I have already started a business	1	3%
Operate a car workshop or car wash business	1	3%
Open up a rice dealership business	1	3%
Transportation business	1	3%
Still saving money for the business	1	3%
I would invest in real estate	1	3%
No specific plan yet	2	9%
Total	29	100%

Appendix D23: The Philippine Government's Bureau of Investment, through the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) has a business assistance program to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), as part of the re-integration program for returning OFWs. Have you used this program?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	3	9%
No	30	91%
Total	33	100%

Appendix D24: Would you use the BOI/OWWA service to start up a business or other income generating scheme in the future?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	19	61%
No	12	39%
Total	31	100%

Appendix D24A: If No, what could be your reason?

Reasons	No. of Respondents	%
Would rather start business by my own	3	28%
The local officers are hard to deal with	1	9%
Lack of interest with the said government department	1	9%
To avoid hassles	1	9%
They ask too many requirements	1	9%
It is very hard to avail of their services/benefits	1	9%
My family already has a business plan	1	9%
Still saving money for the business	1	9%
I have no idea about business assistance program	1	9%
Total	11	100%

Appendix D25: If you have not started any business or investment in the Philippines, what kind of work would you do when you return to work in the Philippines?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Tend the small family farm	6	19%
Be self-employed and practice my profession	20	63%
Retire and enjoy life	1	3%
Bahala na.	2	6%
Apply for jobs or manage small business	2	6%
Study in higher education related to my profession	1	3%
Total	32	100%

Appendix D26: If you have not started any business or investment in the Philippines, how would you ensure the continued improvement of your family's quality of life?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Give better education to my children	12	35%
Save money in the bank	22	65%
Bahala na	0	0%
Total	34	100%

Appendix D27: What do you consider as your most important achievement since working as overseas migrant worker?

Responses	No. of Respondents	%
Have given better education to my children or brothers and sisters	7	18%
Improved my family's quality of life	18	45%
Invested in business or investment ventures to ensure continued source of income	4	10%
Saved sufficient money for my retirement	0	0%
Built our new home	5	12%
Paid our debts and other financial obligations	5	12%
Renovated parent's house	1	3%
Total	40	100%

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