



**CHANGING TIES, AMBIVALENT CONNECTIONS:**  
*Mobilities and Networks of Filipinos in  
London and New York Metropolitan Areas*

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Rizza Kaye C. Cases

*For mama,  
who dreamt of  
a better life  
in New York.*

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*Sa inyong lahat, ang aking taos-pusong pasasalamat!*

# Abstract

The role of social networks in creating and sustaining migration flows, as well as in the adjustment and settlement of migrants, has long been recognized in migration studies. However, cross-fertilization between migration research and network approaches is still uncommon. Utilizing a mixed-method network approach, this study contributes in furthering the understanding of how migrant networks operate. Migrant networks are conceptualized as embedded in dynamic and changing systems, and shown as evolving depending on various contexts and situations.

Examined are ego-centric networks of the 134 respondents (58 in London and 76 in New York) in three migration phases: before coming to London or New York; initial period of adjustment; and the current network as a result of the subsequent process of settlement in the place of destination (in total, 402 network maps). In particular, compared are three different occupational groups – nurses, domestics, and care workers. Conceptually dividing the migration process in three phases provided the opportunity to study network dynamics and networking practices, albeit retrospectively. Eliciting migrant networks was embedded within in-depth interviews using both electronic and paper-based network visualization.

The findings suggest contrasting network composition in two global cities and across the three occupational groups. In New York, familial ties play an almost exclusive role in facilitating and supporting the movement of Filipino migrants. In London, most of the research participants relied on former employers (in the case of domestic workers) or recruitment agencies (in the case of nurses and care workers in institutional facilities) to facilitate their move. These differences in pre-migration networks then shaped subsequent network formations, adjustments, and settlement experiences. Findings also illustrate that although networks have supportive influence on facilitation of the move and post-migration settlement, familial and co-ethnic ties can also be exploitative to the newly-arrived and undocumented migrants.

Situating the particular cases in macro-level context, the study explores how the narratives of attaining the good life through overseas work are interconnected to the need and demand for care labor in the US and the UK as well as the Philippine state-led marketization of high-quality workers as an export commodity.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction:

### *Contextualizing the Study of Migrant Networks*

#### Overview

*For me, as long as a Filipino has gone abroad, it does not matter where it is, it's like I feel happy because their lives will get better. That's my view. [. . .] Because that's [what happened to me]. I was able to leave the Philippines. I was able to work abroad. [. . .] So, I am happy for Filipinos who are able to leave the country, wherever they are in the world. [. . .] "Thanks to God, their lives will also get better."*

(Perla, 66 years old, part-time housekeeper, arrived in London in 1989)

*My son said, "[. . .] Come here." That's why I went here. [. . .] He said, "Mom, don't go home anymore <slightly laughs> as it might be difficult for you to come back [here]." So, that's why I said, "Alright." [. . .] I resigned from the bank [where I worked]. [. . .] I said, so that I can help them, in [taking care] of the kids. That's why I decided not to go home anymore.*

(Edith, 70 years old, former private caregiver, arrived in New Jersey in 2001)

*Then, when I was growing up, I came to know that with nursing, you would be able to leave the Philippines. [. . .] I wanted to leave so that I would be able to help [my family].*

(Rina, 40 years old, ward manager, arrived in south-east England in 1999; moved to London in 2001)

*Perla, Edith, and Rina* are three of the 134 Filipinos in London and New York metropolitan areas that I interviewed for this study. They are also part of the more than 10 million overseas Filipinos dispersed around the globe, in land and in seas, looking for a shot at a better life for themselves and their families. While economic prosperity is central to framing what better life means (as captured by Perla's statement), familial obligations also figured prominently both in the narratives of the research participants and in the national discourse concerning overseas work. One does not leave for one's self; the fruits of overseas labor (colloquially, "*katas ng abroad*") are for the whole family to share – as evinced in Rina's account. Going abroad could also mean reuniting with one's family, as in the case of Edith who did not aspire to work overseas. She had to sacrifice her relatively secured job as a manager of a family-owned bank to share the dream and life abroad of her only son.

But how did migration and overseas work become interwoven in the lives and consciousness of Filipinos? And how did the search for better life become almost synonymous to going abroad? What kinds of aspiration-forming structures shape the circulation and stickiness of such migration-related ideas and imaginaries? While it is often mentioned that a strong 'culture of migration' exists among Filipinos, there is also a need to unpack how such culture come about and how it remains 'strong.' But while the desire to migrate could be prevalent, it is also the case that only few (in relation to those who remain) realize such aspiration (Carling, 2002; Faist, 2000). The question then is not only what compelled migrants to migrate but what allowed them to do so.

The concept of migrant network is employed in this study to examine both the prevalence of the desire to migrate among Filipinos, and the opportunity structures that enabled them to realize such desire to go abroad.<sup>1</sup> Upon arrival and in their settlement overseas, migrants draw on their old and new connections to survive and adjust. Thus, this research project brings together the questions of why and how are the select few able to move, and what happened to those who are able to do so, using the lens of social network analysis in a comparative perspective. It is clear that social networks are crucial in facilitating the movement of potential migrants (Boyd, 1989; Massey et al., 1993; Poros, 2001, among others). Earlier works on ‘chain migration’ (MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964) and ‘auspices of migration’ (Tilly & Brown, 1967) have established the significance of networks – kinship, friendship, and employment-based relations – in channeling potential movers and creating, as well as sustaining, migration streams in particular places. Post-migration, networks also serve as potential resources both for the migrants settling in a new place (Choldin, 1973; Hareven, 1978) and for those they left behind – such as through the remittances that migrants provide (Philpott, 1968). In other words, migrant networks have a *selective/channeling* function prior migration and an *adaptive* function after migration (Gurak & Caces, 1992).

However, migrant networks do not simply exist as a given (Faist, 2000; Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008) nor the supposed benefits that could be derived from social relations are ever-present and available (Menjivar, 1997, 2000; Schapendonk, 2015). On the contrary, accessing networks and generating assistance from such ties require effort on the part of the migrants and the willingness of their connections to engage in *networking* and to provide social support (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014; Schapendonk, 2015). Therefore, instead of solely focusing on the assistance that migrants received at a particular point in the migration process, it is necessary to also consider (1) how they form and maintain ties; and (2) the kinds of relationships where support exchanges take place (Ryan, 2011). The attention on forming and sustaining ties also points to the dynamic nature of migrant networks. Networks may break down, be discontinued, or sustained; in the same way, relations formed could be abusive and exploitative, instead of supportive and beneficial. In some instances, it could be both. Support could also be withheld or could lead migrants to upward mobility.

In turn, stability and changes in migrant networks also rest on the changing needs and contexts where migrants and their social relations are located. This is to underscore the idea that networks do not exist in a vacuum but are rather embedded within a social environment. They are influenced and shaped by political and economic factors that are external to them, such as migration policies, labor market opportunities, or even global crises. At the same time, life course events and transitions could also alter one’s personal networks. The embeddedness of migrant networks in these contexts will be considered as an essential backdrop in the study.

Comparing Filipino migration to New York and London presents an opportunity to examine how historical ties as well as labor market demands and changing immigration policies shape contemporary migration streams and migrant networks in both cities. In order to highlight how contexts shape migration experiences and networking, I compare Filipinos in similar occupations (domestics, nurses, and care workers) in both sides of the Atlantic. Apart from geographical comparison, I also track how support networks evolve from before coming to London or New York to post-migration adjustments and further settlement. I show how, in New York, familial ties play an almost exclusive role in facilitating and supporting the movement of Filipino migrants given the emphasis of the 1965 US immigration law on family reunification and the long-standing relationship of the Philippines with its colonial master. This was not the case in London. While family members and relatives shaped the decisions of some to move to London instead of another destination, most of the research participants relied on former employers or recruitment agencies to enter London. These differences in pre-migration networks then shape subsequent network

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<sup>1</sup> The aspiration/ability model (Carling, 2002), which has been used to frame migrant networks as having aspiration-formation and migration-facilitating functions, is discussed in Chapter 5.

formations in each global city. Situating the particular cases in macro-level context, I also describe how despite the divergent migration histories of Filipinos in the US and the UK, the current trend is one of concentration of migrant Filipino workers in the care sector in both countries. I explore how this is predominantly driven both by the need and demand for care labor in the US and the UK as well as the Philippine state-led marketization of high-quality workers as an export commodity.

In this study, I elicited ego-centric networks through the aid of network mapping and visualization in three migration phases: before coming to London or New York; initial period of adjustment; and their current circumstances and subsequent process of settlement in the place of destination. This emphasizes not only the relational and processual nature of migration but also the dynamic and ambivalent dimensions of migrant networks.

## Filipino Migration in Focus

Moving out of the country is a persistent feature of the Filipino society and has become deeply entrenched in the lives of most Filipinos. The latest stock estimate of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas in 2013 shows that there are about 10.2 million Filipinos dispersed in 221 countries as permanent, temporary and irregular migrants, and sea-based workers.<sup>2</sup> This is around 10% of the country's population of almost 98.5 million in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Having relatives, friends, and acquaintances living and working abroad encourages potential migrants to aspire the same. Overseas work is thus seen as an effective means to attain a good life (Battistella & Asis, 2013).

Nationwide representative surveys conducted by the Pulse Asia from 2002 to 2008 show that around 25%<sup>4</sup> of adult Filipinos intend to migrate and live in another country if possible. The desire to leave the country is not limited to adults - Filipino children also expressed their aspiration to work and live abroad (Asis, 2006; Battistella & Asis, 2013; ECMI-CBCP/AOS-Manila, SMC, & OWWA, 2004). In a nationwide survey conducted in 2003 among Filipino children ages 10 to 12, almost half (47.3%) expressed their plan to work in another country someday. Aspiration to work overseas is higher among children of migrants (60.4%) compared to those who are not (47%). The United States is the top intended destination for almost half of the children surveyed (48.8%) and 30% of them are hoping to work abroad as doctors, nurses, or other related medical professionals (ECMI-CBCP/AOS-Manila, SMC, & OWWA, 2004).

The Philippines is considered as one of the largest labor exporters in the world (Asis, 2006; Guevarra, 2010; Rodriguez, 2010). However, this must be understood not just in terms of individuals wanting to leave the country and deciding to migrate. The enduring pattern of out-migration of Filipinos should also be viewed within the frame of the longstanding encouragement of the state in sending and deploying Filipinos abroad. Massive overseas deployment of Filipinos,

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<sup>2</sup> "Stock Estimates of Overseas Filipinos as of Dec 2013,"

<<http://www.cfo.gov.ph/downloads/statistics/stock-estimates.html>>, accessed 12 October 2017.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, custom data acquired via website. <<https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/>>, accessed 12 October 2017

<sup>4</sup> The survey covers the period of July 2002 to October 2008 with 20 data points with each data point representing the number of agreeing with the question: "*If it were only possible, I would migrate to another country and live there.*" On average about 25% of the respondents expressed their intention to migrate (peaking at 33% in October 2005). It should also be noted that, on average, around 24% of those surveyed were undecided (not ruling out the possibility of migrating, given the chance).

Data sources: Pulse Asia's July 2006 Nationwide Survey on Political Efficacy, Martial Rule, Hopelessness, and Intention to Migrate, and October 2008 Nationwide Survey on Hopelessness and Intention to Migrate, <<http://www.pulseasia.ph/databank/ulat-ng-bayan/>>, accessed 12 October 2017.

mostly males, started in 1970s to fill the need of countries in the Gulf region for workers. The Marcos government took advantage of this huge demand and began institutionalizing overseas employment with the enactment of the Labor Code of the Philippines in 1974. This subsequently ushered the creation of government agencies that would promote and facilitate international labor migration. But with the increasing demand for Filipino workers, private recruitment agencies were allowed to recruit and deploy workers abroad (*see* Asis, 2006; Battistella & Asis, 2013). Currently, government and recruitment agencies remain as important actors and continue to play a fundamental role in promoting, brokering, and facilitating international migration of Filipinos. Thus, the Philippines is not only one of the largest labor exporters in the world, it is also one of the most institutionalized.

While the Philippines is just one of the many nations supplying labor to the globe, it has the most institutionalized labor-export process, enabling it to supply a range of workers. Unlike other labor-exporting economies, which tend to focus on a particular workforce deployment – Indonesia and Sri Lanka have a large share of the market in domestic work; India dominates the information technology sector – the Philippines does not focus on one skill category. Filipinos work as teachers, nurses, engineers, cooks, janitors, factory workers, dancers, hotel personnel, and seafarers, to name just a few. With its labor-exporting economy, it responds quickly to address emerging labor shortages and creatively brokers Filipinos to fill them (Guevarra, 2010: 3).

Rodriguez (2010) thus refers to the Philippines as a ‘labor brokerage state,’<sup>5</sup> to describe the centrality of the Philippine state in facilitating, marketing, and managing the deployment of its people overseas. As such, its role cannot also be ignored in perpetuating and reproducing a ‘culture of migration’ among Filipinos. In this study, it can be seen how this labor-brokering process shapes the migration pathways and networks of migrant Filipinos.

## Significance of Migrant Networks

It is perhaps Charles Tilly (1990) who stated most compellingly the relevance of networks in expanding and sustaining the migration process (Kyle, 2000):

To put it simply: networks migrate: categories [individual attributes] stay put; and networks create new categories. By and large effective units of migration were (and are) neither individuals nor households but sets of people linked by acquaintance, kinship, and work experience who somehow incorporated American destinations into the mobility alternatives they considered when they reached critical decision points in their individual and collective lives (Tilly, 1990: 84).

While the level of importance accorded to social network in shaping migration projects and trajectories varies, its influence is difficult to ignore. According to Bashi (2007: 16), “scholars have suggested that migration is best studied as a process rather than an event.” Taking this view seriously means looking at migration not simply as geographical relocation, since migrants simultaneously exist both in their countries of origin and destination. Indeed, what makes migrant networks interesting is that their connections span across national boundaries as they maintain their ties with people they left behind while at the same time building new ties in the new place where they find themselves. Migration then is a continuous process of maintaining, building, transforming,

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<sup>5</sup> According to Rodriguez (2010: x), “labor brokerage is a neoliberal strategy that is comprised of institutional and discursive practices through which the Philippine state mobilizes its citizens and sends them abroad to work for employers throughout the world while generating a ‘profit’ from the remittances that migrants send back to their families and loved ones remaining in the Philippines.”

and even dissolving (Menjívar, 2000) ties and connections across national borders – rendering migrant networks as dynamic and changing. Thus, the concept of social network is a useful heuristic in trying to understand the transnational ties that migrants develop, sustain, and/or transform not only in taking the decision to migrate and making it happen but, also in their varied attempts at “home making” (Espiritu, 2003) in a foreign land. Migrant networks, then, contribute significantly in the reproduction and self-sustaining process of migration, which should be considered apart from the roles played by labor market demand and supply, or the state-led deployment of overseas workers:

Networks connect migrants and nonmigrants across time and space. Once begun, migration flows often become self-sustaining, reflecting the establishment of networks of information, assistance and obligations which develop between migrants in the host society and friends and relatives in the sending area. These networks link populations in origin and receiving countries and ensure that movements are not necessarily limited in time, unidirectional or permanent (Boyd, 1989: 641).

However, migrants not only maintain ties in the place of destination and country of origin. In certain instances, migrant networks also include connections in other (intermediate) countries. Aside from the expanse of the Filipino diaspora, migrants themselves could also follow multi-destination pathways and engage in onward or stepwise migration – creating ties in intermediate countries before moving to their next destination. Thus, migrant networks could be embedded in larger transnational field and spaces.

## Research Questions

Emphasizing the embeddedness of migrant networks in historical and structural contexts, and accounting for the dynamic and ambivalent nature of migrant networks, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. *Which kinds of ties facilitated the movement of nurses, domestics, and care workers to their places of destination? To what extent were their paths to places of destination similar and/or different?*

It has been noted that migrant networks have a channeling function that creates and sustains migration streams in particular places of destination. In this study, I compare the migration streams of Filipinos in New York and London based on their occupations by reconstructing their pre-migration networks. I examine which connections with particular actors enabled their geographical mobility and under which conditions can those facilitating connections be activated.

Given that certain relations to actors (individual or institutional) can encourage, enable, or even accelerate movement, this study also examines the kinds of resources that flow between ties, and how such resources are used to actually move out of the country. These resources can be material (such as the placement fee that has been borrowed from a relative), informational (for instance, an advice on which recruitment agency is accredited), and emotional (for example, assurance that left-behind children will be taken care of).

Additionally, in the context of Filipino international migration, state and non-state entities are considered to play pivotal roles in sending and placing Filipino workers overseas. In this sense, it is the combination of individual actors and a set of private and public agencies that make migration possible for Filipino migrants. This is to emphasize that the state (through its agencies and authorized private recruitment agencies) encourages out-migration by actively participating in the migration projects of Filipino migrants, in general, and Filipino nurses, domestics and care workers, in particular.

2. *Which kinds of ties serve as resources, and which act as constraints, as migrants adjust with the initial conditions they experience upon arrival in London / New York? How do 'old' and 'new' ties facilitate or impede their adjustments and settlement in the place of destination?*

Apart from efforts to sustain pre-existing connections, Filipino migrants also form new links in their new “home”. These new links can ease up their initial settlement and process of adjustment in the host society. This is especially crucial for newly arrived migrants who have yet to get used to in their new environment.

It is also important to note that the ties that have been developed and sustained can have both positive and negative outcomes at different points in time, as previously emphasized. How migrant networks function in contributing to migrants’ “success” can be seen in the ways migrants traverse a foreign place in their attempt to survive and attain social mobility – especially in their homeland and in the eyes of those they left behind.

3. *In which ways are Filipino nurses, domestics, and care workers in London and New York similar or different in terms of network formation, composition, and evolution? How do individual attributes, as well as socio-economic and policy contexts, shape the ways migrants form ties?*

While personal networks can have considerable impact on one's migration trajectory and experience, network formation can also be facilitated and influenced by the migrant's social environment and institutional space – providing opportunities or limiting options as to whom one can interact with. This research is an attempt to take into account such factors by comparing nurses, domestics, and care workers who migrated within the context of particular immigration policies, and who work in particular job sectors. In this sense, institutional actors can also shape the development of migrant networks.

The study also highlights the transnational feature of migrant networks. By sustaining their ties with those they left behind (for instance, through sending remittances), these networks continue to connect migrants to their families and friends back home. Migrants can also maintain or terminate their links to individuals and entities that facilitated their out-migration. These individuals and entities may be located both in their places of origin and destination, or in intermediary countries. On the other hand, the ties they form upon arrival could also be sustained or dissolved. What circumstances led them to continue or discontinue initial connections are explored in this study.

The interest in comparing the networks of nurses, domestics, and care workers lies in their different social and economic positions and the different circumstances that enable their movement to New York and London. Such comparisons include not only the composition and strength of their ties but, more importantly, how they form ties and utilize their networks to survive in a foreign place and to attain the future they imagine.

## Outline of the Dissertation

The manuscript is organized into eight chapters. This first chapter provides a brief introduction and overview of the research project and outlines the research questions. Chapter 2 reviews and expounds on the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of social network as applied in migration research. Relevant studies on migrant networks are also presented to illustrate how the concept of ‘network’ has been used and redefined to arrive at a more nuanced conceptualization of ‘migrant network.’ Particular attention is given to studies that focus on how networks change over time and to those that problematize the supposed benefits that network members derive from their connections.

Chapter 3 articulates the methodological framework of the study and outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analytical strategies employed. It elaborates on the comparative approach used in the study – specifically the details of comparing cities (spatial), migration phases (temporal), and occupational groups. In the light of methodological issues concerning the elicitation of network data – e.g. forgetting and heavy burden to the respondents, among others – particular strategies utilized are highlighted such as network mapping and visualization, and integrating the network maps (*sociograms*) in the participants’ narratives. Likewise, challenges encountered in the field are also discussed to further contextualize how the data were collected, and under what conditions and circumstances.

In Chapter 4, the contrasting migration histories of Filipinos in the US and the UK are presented. It is not surprising that the US is the top destination country for Filipino migrants given the Philippines’ colonial ties with the US. On the other hand, the Philippines has no such historical ties with the UK. It is therefore expected that the significant flow of Filipino migrants in the UK is relatively recent compared to that of the US, providing a contrast and the possibility of examining the influence of historical, colonial ties on migration process and migrant networks. At the same time, the chapter also describes how despite the divergent migration histories of Filipinos in the US and the UK, the current trend is one of concentration of migrant Filipino workers in the care sector in both countries. It explores how this is predominantly driven both by the need and demand for care labor in the US and the UK, as well as the Philippine state-led marketization of high-quality workers as an export commodity.

The focus of Chapter 5 is on the images associated to migration and overseas employment. The ensuing discussion links notions of attaining a ‘better life’ to the desirability of going abroad. In this way, migration aspiration is situated within the overall life aspirations of the respondents. Aside from associated economic gains from overseas work, non-economic dimensions that frame how migration is viewed by the respondents are also explored. In particular, given the centrality of familial obligations in the narratives of departure of most research participants, migration could also be seen as a form of sacrifice and, at times, could be enabling or constraining one’s freedom. Utilizing Paul’s (2011) concept of hierarchy of destinations, place-specific aspirations are also discussed given that places of destinations are also desired differently. Lastly, social networks are examined in this chapter as part of the aspiration-forming structure that reproduce and perpetuate a ‘culture of migration’ among Filipinos.

In the subsequent chapter (Chapter 6), migrant networks are then analyzed as opportunity structures that facilitate movements of the respondents to New York or London. Employing a revised version of Poros’ (2001) typology of migrant networks and Bashi’s (2007) hub-and-spoke model, the relevant interpersonal and organizational ties comprising the pre-migration networks of the research participants are presented. The chapter also re-traces the respondents’ routes and pathways to New York and London. Following Paul (2011), the limits of the traditional single-origin-single-destination model of migration pathway are demonstrated by discussing patterns of onward, stepwise, and circular migrations exhibited by the participants in reaching their current place of

destination. Such varied pathways are also shown to shape the pre-migration networks of migrants, and the modes in which they were able to enter the US or the UK. Both chapters (5 and 6) provide illustrations on how migrant networks are embedded in the thick confluence of motivations, culture of migration, historical antecedents, as well structural and policy contexts.

Further illustrations are presented in Chapter 7. Post-migration, the respondents had to adjust to their new environment and circumstances. In this phase of the migration process, the function of migrant networks becomes adaptive (Gurak & Caces, 1992). Newly-arrived migrants must generate support and assistance from old and new ties. In cases when support from pre-existing connections (usually familial ties) is inadequate or unavailable, newcomers had to look for alternative sources of assistance. Thus, network formation is also examined vis-à-vis the social spaces and settings in which the newly-arrived migrants found opportunities to meet, interact, and build new relations. Attention is also given to the forms of solidarity as well as contentions within these initial support networks, highlighting the co-existence of supportive, as well as tenuous and conflictive ties in migrant support networks.

In Chapter 8, continuities and discontinuities concerning how the respondents imagined their future are explored. The ‘what’ and the ‘where’ of imagined futures are typically articulated as a life of comfort and prosperity with their families back in the Philippines. This view of the future is consistent and, by and large, structures current actions and immediate plans. Migrants stay and defer their return because they are working toward what they deemed to be a successful homecoming. Whether such return will take place or not, what is important is that their future imaginaries provide meaning for their continued presence in a ‘foreign’ land – with all the difficulties and challenges that entail. These imagined futures can thus be considered as useful heuristics to make sense of the current circumstances and frame of mind of the research participants. Feelings of belongingness, satisfaction, and present dilemmas are then tackled in the later part of the chapter. Lastly, it is also important to account for possible changes in the composition of migrant networks given the concurrent shifts in the circumstances of the respondents and their relations. The chapter concludes with accounting for such changes given the roles of life course events and transitions in restructuring migrant networks. It also examines how immigration policy and migration pathways contributed to path-dependent formation of ties and relations. In addition, the persistence of transnational ties is discussed in the light of the participants’ view of the future (e.g. ‘successful return’).

Chapter 9 synthesizes and integrates the main points of the previous chapters, and highlights the contribution of the research project. The contrasting migration streams of Filipinos in the US and the UK is reiterated in relation to the country’s colonial past. Such contrast is a fundamental starting point in making sense of the differences in the networks of the respondents in New York and London. The preponderance of kinship ties is a consistent feature of the networks of most respondents in New York. Those in London, on the other hand, maintain and develop diverse types of interpersonal and institutional connections. However, in both cases, conflicts and tensions could also not be ignored – highlighting the ‘negative’ side of social capital. Recognizing the potential for social ties to not only provide support but also trouble is important so as to emphasize the embeddedness of networks and networking practices. Limitations of the study and future research directions are also outlined, particularly in further accounting for the changes in networks over time and in better understanding how networks ‘operate’.



# CHAPTER TWO

## Migrant Networks:

### *Conceptual and Theoretical Considerations*

#### **Introduction**

The role of social networks not only in sustaining migration flows but also in the adjustment and integration of migrants has been recognized in migration literature (Boyd, 1989; Gurak & Caces, 1992). However, cross-fertilization between migration research and network approaches (as a distinct field of study) is still uncommon and elusive (Bashi, 2007; Boyd, 1989). In this chapter, I present various strands of migration literature and relevant scholarship that employ the concept of network – mapping the terrain to illustrate how it has been used and examining their contributions in conceptualizing a more nuanced version of ‘migrant network.’ Building on earlier works that established the importance of kin, friends, and community in the migration process, I trace how subsequent scholars have refined the concept and expanded its dimensions to better explain the experiences of migrants regarding their social connections.

In addition, I situate network approaches within the relational perspective in sociology (Crossley, 2011; Emirbayer, 1997) to argue for the primacy of relations in understanding social life and processes – of which international migration is one field of study. I also review the basic terms and broader concepts in social network analysis that have become staple in contemporary research on migrant network (e.g. weak and strong ties), while exploring the potential for utilizing other concepts in understanding how these networks are structured and how they operate.

The rest of the chapter covers two general themes that correspond to the main limitations found in both network approaches and research on migrant networks – that is the tendency to view networks as static and beneficial for all network members. Inasmuch as migration is a dynamic process, networks are also evolving as policy contexts, opportunity structures, and migrants’ circumstances change. Additional ties might form while existing ones may be maintained or terminated over time. Overall, migrant networks can expand or contract, which can in turn shape settlement and integration patterns. Connections are also not limited to interpersonal ties but can include other relevant actors such institutions, organizations, or groups.

Furthermore, there is a widespread tendency to regard networks as (positive) social capital. Taking a critical stance, instead, social ties can be conceived not only as channels upon which aid and assistance flow but can also be conflictive and limiting. Likewise, it is necessary to ask which particular types of migrants benefit more from their networks and which ones are more vulnerable to exploitation. I present studies and relevant works of researchers that tackle one of these issues while noting which ones remain mainly unexplored in the literature.

The final section of this chapter concludes by synthesizing the gaps and issues from previous discussions and appropriates the concept of ‘migrant network’ in this present study.

## Situating the Concept of ‘Network’ in Migration Studies

Reviews and discussions on theories on migration, particularly those explaining labor migration flows, often juxtapose the so-called network approach to migration against the once prevailing push-and-pull model and neo-classical economics. Simply put, the ‘push factors’, which correspond to those economic, social, and political conditions of poorer sending countries, complement the ‘pull factors’ of the more economically advanced countries (Portes & Böröcz, 1989). In addition, according to neoclassical economics, workers from countries with low wages due to oversupply of labor are more likely to move to countries with higher wages due to labor scarcity (Massey et al., 1993). It is logical to expect that, as rational actors, individuals from poorer countries would decide to move to places where they can benefit and gain more. It is, therefore, not difficult to understand why such perspective would hold sway. We can readily observe that immigration generally flows from the Global South to the Global North. But while these explanations seem to be enticing as they are self-evident, they also missed out fundamental aspects of contemporary international migration.

As pointed out by Faist (2000) and Portes & Böröcz (1989), among other migration scholars, if individuals from poorer countries are expected to move out why is that few of them do while most of them remain? Why is it that not all countries participate equally and in the same intensity in international migration? For one, these conventional theories ignore the historical and colonial ties that foster connections, channel movement, and perpetuate such process. Indeed, “history is replete with instances in which an absolute wage advantage in economically expanding areas has meant nothing to the population of more isolated regions; when their labor has been required, it has to be coerced out of them” (Portes & Böröcz, 1989: 608). And even under postcolonial conditions, the foremost route that former colonies take is still the road to their former colonial power. But as Poros (2001, 2011) also noted, countries are linked not just through historical and colonial ties but also by the actual ties that people develop and foster out of the larger socio-historical conditions. Using the case of Gujarati Indian immigrants in London and New York, Poros (2001, 2011) illustrated the significance of examining various ties that channel particular types of migrants into specific places of destinations and particular occupational outcomes.

Responding to the limitations of neoclassical migration theories, Massey et al. (1993) underscored the significance of migrant networks in accounting for the self-perpetuating process of migration. Espousing a network approach in studying contemporary migration corresponds to the rejection of the notion of a rational individual deciding to migrate because it is an optimal choice. Instead, the focus is on the links migrants (or potential migrants) have that influence and shape their decision to move out of their country of origin as well as the social support they receive (or provide) in each phase of the migration process. They define migrant networks as sets of relations that bring together key actors in the migration process and that span beyond national borders:

Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community of origin. They increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration. Network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to foreign employment. Once the number of migrants reaches a critical threshold, the expansion of networks reduces the costs and risks of movement, which causes the probability of migration to rise, which causes additional movement, which further expands the networks, and so on. Over time migratory behavior spreads outward to encompass broader segments of the sending society (Massey et al., 1993: 448-449).

As Faist (2000) would argue, resources (e.g. obligations, reciprocity, and solidarity) are inherent in relations and are not easily moved from one place to another as they are embedded upon local contexts. But “once mechanisms such as migrant networks have evolved which make these resources more easily transferable across nation-state borders, chain migration develops in situations characterized by relatively high degrees of choice among potential migrants” (Faist, 2000: 1). What Poros (2001, 2011) exemplified in the case of Indian IT workers not grabbing the opportunity to work in Germany but instead choosing to work in the already established Indian networks of immigrants in the United States is the case of migrant networks opening the links to particular places of destination but at the same time making other routes relatively obscure and less desirable.

### *Networks and the Migration Process*

However, while the application of network thinking to migration research is primarily associated with Massey and his colleagues, references to ‘network’ can be traced even in the earlier works of migration scholars. For instance, MacDonald and MacDonald (1964) have stated their disagreement with what they considered as “crude economic ‘push-pull’ models” and put forward the concept of ‘chain migration’ in accounting for the concentration of Italian migrants – from the same hometowns in Southern Italy – in specific northern cities in the United States and in particular occupational niches (‘chain occupations’). Chain migration is defined as “that movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants” (MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964: 82). In the study of MacDonalds, such relationships are rooted in familism and patronage prevalent in the home country.

Tilly & Brown (1967: 142) presented a parallel idea in their concept of ‘auspices of migration,’ which refers to the “social structures which establish relationships between the migrant and the receiving community before he moves.” While MacDonald & MacDonald (1964) highlighted the significance of hometown ties in understanding migration streams, Tilly & Brown (1967) focused on kinship, friendship, and employment-related networks during and after migration. They found that in their study of migrants in an industrial city of Wilmington in Delaware, kinfolks are the generally important source of help in the migration process – by providing information, encouragement, and material aid. The eminent role of kinship networks in migration is also exemplified in the research of Choldin (1973) on the immigrants in Chicago and in the study of Hareven (1978) on French-Canadian textile workers who migrated in the industrial town of Manchester, New Hampshire. In both cases, relatives not only make the movement possible but also aid in the process of settlement and integration.

In the review of Gurak & Caces (1992) on research on migrant networks, they categorized these functions of networks into *adaptation* and *selection* or *channeling* – corresponding to the overarching role played by social networks throughout the migration process. The selective function of networks supports the observation of Faist (2000) and Portes & Böröcz (1989), among others, that while migration proves to be an enduring and stable process over time, it is also undeniable that only few (in relation to those who remain immobile) embark upon this journey.

By serving as linking and resource transmission mechanisms, migrant networks exert a powerful influence over the selection of who migrates and when. The lacunae of networks and the selectivity of a migration flow are observed in the process of deciding whether to migrate (Gurak & Caces, 1992: 155).

In the article of MacDonald & MacDonald (1964), they also mentioned that they observed what they called ‘broken chain migration’ among Southern Italians who migrated to Australia. In such instances, the established migrant in Australia may restrict information and aid only selected individuals with whom they have obligations – such as close relatives and friends – and ignoring most of their fellow-townfolk. In addition, the presence of existing networks in specific destinations further shapes migration streams by channeling potential migrants from the same place of origin to the destinations where prior ties and links exist. Upon arrival, the function of these pre-existing networks becomes adaptive for the new immigrants. Gurak and Caces (1992) refer to this adaptive function both as an adjustment to the conditions that newly arrived migrants found themselves into and as a long-term integration in institutions of the host society. They, however, noted that most migration research centered on the short-term support that migrants derive from their networks. This includes initial accommodation, monetary assistance, emotional support, survival strategies, and job leads (Gurak & Caces, 1992: 153). Furthermore, migrant network literature often underscores the significance of kin-based, friendship-based, and community-based ties in providing information or even linking newly arrived migrants in certain employment. This emphasis on job finding support that networks lend to its members – especially the newcomers – can be seen both in earlier and more recent works of migration scholars. For instance, Hareven (1978) explored the hiring and placement of French-Canadian textile workers in a factory in New Hampshire through their kin working in that factory; MacDonald & MacDonald (1964), as previously mentioned, talked about the process of ‘chain occupation’ among Italians in the United States; and Caces (1986-87) observed that while networks are important for finding jobs among newly arrived Filipinos in Hawaii, these are occupations where immigrant workers are concentrated. Examples of more recent works are those of: Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) on the social networks of Mexican immigrant women employed as domestic workers in San Francisco Bay area; Cranford (2005) on Mexican and Central American undocumented immigrants working in the Los Angeles janitorial industry; and Ryan (2008) on kin-based migration of Irish nurses to England. In this sense, the channeling function of migrant networks is also evident in the creation of occupational niches as well as in studies concerning ethnic enclaves and ethnic economies.

### ***Migrant Networks and Transnational Practices***

Apart from the crucial functions of networks in facilitating the movement of potential migrants and serving as sources of assistance for migrants settling in a new place (e.g. finding a job or a place to stay), what makes migrant networks interesting is that they span across national boundaries. Migrants maintain their ties with people they left behind (e.g. by sending remittances) while at the same time building new ties in the new place where they find themselves (Lubbers et al., 2010; Ryan & D’Angelo, 2018). In this way, networks connect and link places of origin and destination areas not only in terms of chain migration but also through the enduring ties that migrants maintain in their hometowns and countries of origin. Extant research on the transnational character of migrant networks can be traced even before ‘transnationalism’ has become staple in migration studies – despite not being labelled as such. In his study of remittance obligations of Monserratians in Britain, Philpott (1968: 465) contends that “the most promising direction lies in the pursuit of the migrants themselves, in the study of the networks of relations in which they are involved in their overseas environment and of the relations which they maintain with their home societies.” However, the direction of assistance might not be always from the immigrant to the kin they left behind. Hareven (1978), for instance, discussed how immigrant workers in Manchester, New Hampshire maintained their contacts with their kin in Quebec, Canada especially in times of crises. In times of sickness and old age, she found that these immigrants would often rely on their kin back home (*see* also Boccagni, 2015; Mazzucato, 2011).

More recent research on transnational networks and engagements encompass larger civic participation of immigrants in both sending and receiving societies as mediated by migrant organizations and hometown associations as well as transnational activities carried out by individual migrants. Strunk (2014), in his research on Bolivian migrants in Washington D.C. metropolitan area, emphasized the role of hometown associations not only in the development efforts in the country of origin but also in fostering civic participation and identity formation for subsequent generations of Bolivians in Washington D.C. Rusinovic (2008), on the other hand, examined economic transnational activities (e.g. doing business in the country of origin) of both first- and second-generation immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands – which exemplifies how immigrants also benefit from maintaining links in their homelands and continuous participation in transnational practices. These works on migrant networks exemplify that the concept of social network is a useful heuristic in trying to understand the transnational ties that migrants develop, sustain, and/or transform not only in taking the decision to migrate and making it happen but also in their varied attempts at “home making” (Espiritu, 2003) in a foreign land.

Indeed, it is easier to think about transnationalism in terms of networks – such that links and connections are maintained and fostered in the place of origin while forming new ties in the host society. While debates exist on which form transnationalism takes and which transnational practices to study (e.g. civic engagement in public spaces vs. transnational household management), it is recognized that when people migrate, this does not necessarily entails cutting of ties with their homeland. Moreover, maintaining and nurturing transnational ties is not incompatible with adaptation and incorporation in the host society. As Portes (2001: 183) puts it, it is more useful to think of “transnationalism as one form of economic, political, and cultural adaptation that co-exists with other, more traditional forms”.

However, the extent to which migrants participate in transnational practices and activities varies. How do we then make sense of these variations? Itzigsohn & Saucedo (2002), Landolt (2001), and Portes (2003), among others, emphasized the contexts of exit and reception. Portes (2003), for instance, mentions that those who are from urban areas and escaping violence at home tend to not get involved in transnational activities. Those who experience hostile reception and are discriminated in host society are more likely to engage in transnational practices. Itzigsohn & Saucedo (2002) also highlighted the role of greater economic resources in engaging at transnational linkages. Indeed, economic resources as much as emotional attachment can impact the extent to which migrants participate in transnational activities and shape the contour of such involvement.

It is also important to consider what types of support and resources flow in transnational ties that migrants create and maintain. While sending remittances and goods to households and communities as well as engagement in transnational business enterprises are well documented, it is also interesting to examine what sort of support migrants get from these transnational ties and how migrants are affected, positively and negatively, in nurturing such linkages. How can we simultaneously explore the concepts of transnationalism, adaptation, and integration in the lived experiences not only of migrants from different national origins but also migrants from different socio-economic backgrounds?

### *Social Capital and Social Support Networks*

In sociology, social capital is oftentimes traced from the seminal works of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam. According to Portes (1998: 3), “Bourdieu’s analysis is arguably the most theoretically refined among those that introduced the terms in contemporary sociological discourse.” Bourdieu (1986: 248) defined social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition – or in other words, to a membership in a group.” Simply put, in Bourdieu’s conceptualization, resources can be accessed by the virtue of one’s social relations or social networks.

Interest in relations lies in the idea that the ties that exist between nodes (actors, groups, or other entities) facilitate exchange of material and nonmaterial resources, and therefore provide necessary support. Halman & Luijkx (2006) contended that to belong, engage, and be connected to a network is a precondition if one must accumulate social capital and eventually appropriate it as a resource. As Li & Wu (2010: 372) stated, “social networks are regarded as one source of social capital” and social capital amounts to “the resources embedded in one’s social networks... that can be accessed or mobilized through ties in the networks.” Looking then into the formation and structure of social networks, and content of social ties is important, as it is through these that “one may borrow or capture others’ resources” (Li & Wu, 2010: 372).

This instrumental analysis of social capital has been extended by other researchers. Utilizing a microlevel analysis and focusing on the housing mobility and social capital of African-American and Latino adolescents in Yonkers, New York, Briggs (1998) distinguished two dimensions of social capital given the resources that can be derived from one’s networks – *social support* and *social leverage*. Following Briggs (1998), the ethnographic study of Dominguez & Watkins (2003) on low-income African-American and Latin American mothers in Boston, Massachusetts examined the resources drawn for relations and connections as either contributing to their survival strategies or to their social mobility. Their research revealed that social support networks (mostly based on familial and kinship ties) may impede access to leverage networks (typically friendship and institutional ties) because of obligations and familial conflicts that can limit chances of upward mobility. This leverage function of social capital is related to the assertion of Nan Lin (1999: 467) that social capital is important in status attainment – that is, the “process by which individuals mobilize and invest resources for returns in socioeconomic standings.” The ability to improve one’s social standing is significant in the case of migrants, especially as a minority or disadvantaged group in host societies. As Lin (2000) suggested, in order for those in the lower rung of social hierarchy to improve their status, they need to look and foster connections beyond their own social group. The study of Dominguez & Watkins (2003) shows that such actions require the necessary opportunity structures and enabling contexts to succeed.

Another influential figure in the development and popularization of the concept of social capital is Robert Putnam. Schuller, Baron, & Field (2000) argued that Putnam’s work on social capital is currently the most cited and has gained wider reach in different fields and public discourse. Putnam (1995: 664–665) defines social capital as “features of social life – networks, norms, and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives.” This conceptualization is rooted in solidarity and civic engagement and the emphasis is on the shared benefits that can be derived from the community’s ‘supply’ of social capital. He further differentiates two kinds of social capital: *bonding* and *bridging*. Bonding social capital reinforces homogeneity as it refers to the connections between people who are like each other while bridging capital refers to ties across heterogeneous groups (Schuller et al., 2000: 10). It should be emphasized, as Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara (2008) noted, that Putnam (2007) later on explained that bonding and bridging types of social capital are not incompatible with each other such that it is possible to foster both kinds of ties. However, Ryan et al. (2008: 676) also argued that the works

of Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1990) on social capital have limited applicability in studying migrants since they focused more on “local associations, communities and neighborhoods.” It is rather naïve to assume that social support is readily accessible from migrants’ ethnic communities. Distrust, apart from solidarity, could also characterize migrant communities. Moreover, the changing needs and circumstances of migrants call for a more dynamic conceptualization of migrant networks temporally and spatially as migrants may utilize social ties in various locations and under different conditions. “Thus, rather than employing a generalized notion of social capital and assuming equivalence with social networks, it may be more helpful to distinguish between the different types and levels of social support and resources that networks provide” (Ryan et al., 2008: 677). This is not to say that the focus should only be on interpersonal ties. Following the work of Poros (2001, 2011), attention on organizational, interpersonal, and composite ties that migrants develop and maintain over time could help us better understand the dynamic strategies and practices of networking employed by migrants.

The dynamic nature of networks as well as its exploitative and negative features will be discussed toward the end of this chapter. The subsequent section will first review the development of social networks as an analytical tool and a distinct field of study. As Bashi (2007: 278–279) noted:

A wide gulf separates formal network analysts (in the main distinguished by the methodology they employ to map network patterns) and migration theorists (a group different from the former in prioritizing the search for empirical clues to the operation of network processes in various migration-related settings)... Theoretical, empirical, and methodological differences between the research produced by social network analysts and that of migration scholars who study immigrant social networks remain, and such differences have evolved to the degree that the two areas of scholarship rarely engage one another.

The next section attempts to close this gap between migration studies and the network approaches that have been developed in social science, and utilize the concepts from such approaches to further understand how migrant networks are structured and how they actually operate.

## **Taking on a Network Approach: Theoretical Underpinnings**

Because of the lack of engagement between network analysis and migration research, developments and refinements in the field of network analysis are hardly applied in migration studies (Boyd, 1989; Bashi, 2007). Furthermore, utilizing the concept of network as an analytical tool rather than as a metaphor and taking advantage of the methods developed in network sciences to better measure migrant networks are scarcely explored options by migration scholars. But as Knox, Savage, & Harvey (2006: 114) asserted, even “network ideas are remarkably poorly networked among themselves, with very little dialogue between different traditions of network thinking.” In this section, I follow the discussion of Knox and her colleagues on the application of the network approach in the field of sociology – as embodied in social network analysis (SNA). However limited, I also highlight the remarkable works of migration researchers who incorporate analytical concepts and methods from various network approaches.

### ***Adopting a Relational Perspective: Structuralist Foundation of Social Network Analysis***

In making a case for what should be the focus of sociology as a discipline, Wellman & Berkowitz (1988) put forward the need to adopt a structural way of thinking. They were primarily responding to the tendency of sociologists to focus on individuals and their attributes (and treat individual units independently from each other) instead of accounting for concrete social structure. Hence, despite the recognition that what distinguishes sociology from other disciplines is the view “that enduring patterns in the relationships among the elementary parts of the social system constrain individual behavior” (Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988: 2), this has not been translated into actual sociological practice. In this case, *social structure* is simply implied from the aggregates of social actors sharing similar characteristics and behaving in the same manner. For Wellman & Berkowitz (1988: 15), this paradigm shift means seeing “relations as the basic units of social structure and groupings of similarly situated actors as a result.” As an alternative view, it gives emphasis on structured social relationships and its starting point is networks rather than attributes, categories, or groups.

As Crossley (2011: 2) stated, while actors are the ones interacting and forming relations, they do not do so as “self-contained, self-sufficient atoms” but always as “agents-in-relation” – acting and reacting as embedded actors within the web of relations and networks. Moreover, as actors participate in the ongoing interactions, structures emerge, are established, and, in turn, enable or constrain the actors and their subsequent actions. Therefore, according to Crossley (2011:1), “the most appropriate analytic unit for the scientific study of social life is the network of social relations and interactions between actors (both human and corporate).”

This resonates with Boyd (1989) in her discussion of the saliency of personal networks in international migration. She emphasized that migration is a social product – wherein individual motivations to migrate interact with economic, social, and political contexts – as well as a contingent, context-specific process:

Whether migration occurs or not, and what shapes its direction, composition and persistence is conditioned by historically generated social, political and economic structures of both sending and receiving societies. These structures are channeled through social relationships and social roles which impact on individuals and groups. (Boyd, 1989: 642).

This primacy given to *relations* is most reminiscent of Simmelian sociology. Simmel, according to Emirbayer (1997: 288), is “the classical sociologist most deeply committed to relational theorizing.” Erikson (2013: 224) referred to him as being “widely considered to be a founding father of the social network tradition.” This apparent relational stance can be traced in Simmel’s theoretical orientation towards the defining feature of society, which is the mode of patterned interactions among individuals:

Society is to be viewed neither as a corporate entity distinct from and exerting constraints upon individuals nor as an aggregation of corporate entities such as classes and elites nor as an epiphenomenon reducible to the motives and acts of individuals, but rather as the modality of interaction among individuals – the general process and particular processes of *Vergesellschaftung*<sup>6</sup>... (Levine et al., 1976: 825).

Interaction, on the other hand, is viewed as a kind of exchange among individuals and characterized by “reciprocity of effect”. In this sense, interaction links social actors to one another. Taking this view, it is then reasonable to think of society as more than the sum (or aggregate) of individuals, their attributes, and their behaviors but as enduring patterns of interactions linking one individual

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<sup>6</sup> According to Levine et al. (1976), translated as societalization, sociation, and association.



to another and thus being bounded together through social relationships. Analyzing these ties that exist among social actors is the central concern of those employing a network approach.

### Broader Conceptual Definitions

In addition to its relational orientation, social network analysis is based on the assumptions that (1) interacting units are interdependent (as opposed to independent) from each other; (2) resources, both material and non-material, are course through the links that connect these individuals; (3) belonging to a network both enables and constrains actions; and (4) structures are the enduring patterns of social relationships among individuals (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). Structures are constituted by regularized and patterned interactions and the network approach “operationalizes structures in terms of linkages among units” (Wasserman and Faust, 1994: 6). Thus, in social network analysis, the unit of analysis is not the individual per se but the entire set of actors and their connections to each other. Hence, while those measures of the characteristics of social actors or “nodes” (compositional variables) can be included in analyzing network data, this is just secondary<sup>7</sup> to structural variables, which measure the ties between two actors and are the foundation of network analysis. This exemplifies the significance of relations over attributes as practiced within a network approach.

The ties that connect two actors (or nodes) can be classified based on their similarities, social relations, interactions, and flows of information, beliefs, resources, etc. (see Figure 2.1). This typology (developed by Borgatti et al., 2009) shows the range of ties studied in social network analysis.

Similarities			Social Relations				Interactions	Flows
Location	Membership	Attribute	Kinship	Other role	Affective	Cognitive	e.g., Sex with	e.g., Information
e.g., Same spatial and temporal space	e.g., Same clubs Same events etc.	e.g., Same gender Same attitude etc.	Mother of Sibling of	Friend of Boss of Student of Competitor of	Likes Hates etc.	Knows Knows about Sees as happy etc.	Talked to Advice to Helped Harmed etc.	Beliefs Personnel Resources etc.

**Figure 2.1.** Typology of Ties Studied in Social Network Analysis  
\*Adapted from Borgatti et al. (2009: 894)

A social network can be defined as “a set of nodes (people, organizations or other social entities) connected by a set of relationships, such as friendship, affiliation or information exchange” (Li & Wu, 2010: 371). Studying social networks can either take the form of a sociocentric (‘complete’) network or an egocentric (‘personal’) network (Lubbers, Molina, & McCarty, 2007). In a complete network, one has all the list of all set of actors and all of them can be theoretically linked to each other (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). This means that a whole network study requires boundaries to be clearly specified and defined (i.e. a relatively ‘closed’ network). A personal network, on the other hand, “consists of a focal actor, termed *ego*, as set of alters who have ties to ego, and measurements on the ties among these alters” (Wasserman & Faust, 1994: 42). The distinction between ‘whole networks’ and ‘egocentric networks’ is important as each requires different ways of conceptualization, measurement, and analysis. In migration research, this distinction is often ignored. Migration scholars tend to utilize terms such *migration network*, *migrant network*, or

<sup>7</sup> However, qualitative approaches to social network analysis also emphasize the importance of examining the content and meanings of ties and social relations. For instance, Ryan & Mulholland (2014) contend that there is a need to focus both on the structure and content of networks to have a better understanding of the processes and characteristics of network formation, maintenance, and evolution.

*immigrant network* without explicitly discussing which form of network they are studying and what are the implications of such a choice. An exception to this tendency is the work of Elrick & Ciobanu (2009) where they differentiate between *migrant network* – corresponding to egocentric/ personal networks of migrants – and *migration network*, which is the aggregation of these migrant networks. While Elrick & Ciobanu (2009) focus on how migration networks adapt to changing (and more restrictive) migration policies, the research of Williams (2006) on how refugees in the United Kingdom access help and support through their networks is explicitly based on egocentric network analysis. These studies illustrate two different modes of networks and levels of analysis. While migration (or sociocentric) networks are concerned about the (bounded) community or the group as a whole, migrant (or egocentric) networks are focused on the individuals (in this case, refugees) and their relations. As Wasserman & Faust (1999: 42) noted, “ego-centric approach is usually used in studying social support as the “term ‘social support’ has been used to refer to social relationships that aid the health or well-being of an individual.” This is exemplified in the above-mentioned study of Williams (2006).

Through the work of Mark Granovetter, another set of concepts that has become influential in social network analysis and other fields of study that are utilizing network approach is that of *strong* and *weak ties*. Granovetter (1973, 1983), focusing on the *strength* of interpersonal ties, differentiated among strong, weak and absent ties and argued for the importance of weak ties. According to Granovetter (1973: 1361), “the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie.” The tendency for those with only strong ties is to be bounded and isolated within their own cliques. Granovetter (1973, 1983) asserted that weak ties (acquaintances) play an important role because they tend to act as bridge to access information and knowledge not confined and outside one’s closely knit cliques. The assertion that weak ties can be more beneficial – most notably for upward mobility – runs counter to the well-established research on the role of familial, kinship, and friendship ties in the migration process. This ‘strength of weak ties theory’ (SWT) is also related to Burt’s (1992, 2000) concept of *structural holes*, which also shows that an individual acting as broker or bridge between two tightly-knit groups can be in a more advantageous position as he or she has access to novel or different kinds of information.

On the other hand, McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Brashears (2006: 354) suggested that those people whom we are strongly connected with are not just important in terms of the instrumental and expressive support they provide but also in the way “they influence us directly through their interactions with us and indirectly by shaping the kinds of people we become.” Relevant to this is the process of social influence (or contagion mechanism), which suggests that through persistent interaction, we tend to adopt the attitudes and behaviors of others. As Lubbers et al. (2007: 722) discussed, personal networks can be considered in between the macro-structural conditions and micro-level processes as “the negotiation between the labels imposed by the dominant institutions in society and the practical situations of everyday life takes place within personal networks.” Also, socialization or the transmission of values, attitudes, and norms occurs through the ties one has and the enduring interactions within one’s network.

However, Ryan & Mulholland (2014) – applying Uzzi’s (1999) concept of *network complementarity* – proposed that instead of focusing on the oversimplified binary between strong and weak ties, attention should be directed on how migrants (or actors, in general) combine weak and strong ties to access resources depending on their needs. These needs can change depending on the circumstances that migrants encounter before, during, and after moving to destination areas. The next section expands on the processual nature of migration and the evolution of networks, given the shifting opportunity structures for migrants and would-be migrants.

## Conceptualizing the Dynamic Nature of International Migration and Network Evolution

As previously emphasized, migration should be examined “as a process rather than an event” (Bashi, 2007: 16) and such movements involve more than just a geographical relocation. In this section, the processual nature of migration is given considerable attention and explored vis-à-vis the evolution of migrant networks in the context of migrants’ changing needs and circumstances. Networks, inasmuch as they influence individual outcomes, are also shaped by structural and policy contexts of both areas of origins and destinations. Therefore, the embeddedness of migrant networks in various contexts is also highlighted.

### *Different Paths to Destination Areas*

Extensive research on migrant networks generally focuses on the *chain migration model* and kinship-based networks. The idea, as has been stated elsewhere in this chapter, is for pioneer migrants to selectively recruit would-be migrants from their hometowns – oftentimes, family members and relatives. In turn, these recruits would also help for other prospective migrants to reach specific destination areas where their kin or fellow townsmen have settled – thereby creating ‘chains.’ As what has been demonstrated, chain migration has a long history and is most influential in understanding the clustering of migrants in certain places of destinations – i.e. as observed in the emergence of “Little Italies” and Chinatowns. But based on her study on Black Caribbean migrants in New York and London, Bashi (2007) proposed that the better way of examining migrant networks is through the “*hubs and spokes*” model. In this type of network, pioneer individuals (hubs) in the country of destination repeatedly and continuously facilitate the movement of a group of Black Caribbean migrants (spokes), thereby creating an image of a wheel (Figure 2.2) with the “hub” in the center and several “spokes” radiating from it instead of a pair (dyad) forming a chain (Figure 2.3).

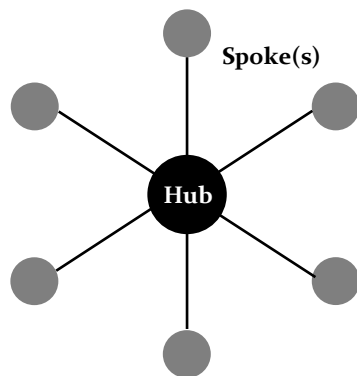


Figure 2.2. Hub-and-Spokes Model

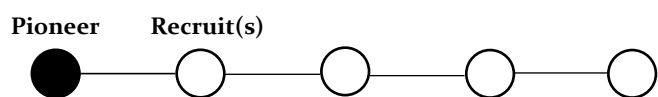


Figure 2.3. Chain Migration Model

DaVanzo (1983: 552), however, claims that such models of one-step migration assume that “the person has a single opportunity to decide to migrate or not, and to select a destination” though studies in demography have found that “most moves are not people’s first moves, but rather are repeat moves—either onward to new locations or back to places where they lived before (return moves).” One type of two- or multi-step migration that has gained prominence not only in academic literature but also in policymaking agenda is *circular migration*. Conceptualized as a temporary form of migration, it refers to the recurrent movement of (seasonal) migrants – usually for work – between their place of origin and destination areas and involves at least more than one back-and-forth journey (Hugo, 2013). This kind of movement is exemplified in the research of Parreñas

(2010) on Filipina entertainment workers in Japan and the Polish migrants in the UK (Drinkwater & Garapich, 2015; Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee, 2017).

In addition, there are also cases wherein subsequent movements are not back-and-forth but can be rather described as ‘onward’. *Onward migration* is also a sequential or multi-step movement in multiple areas of destinations (Kelly, 2013; Paul, 2015; Takenaka, 2007). Takenaka (2007) refers to it as secondary migration, two-step migration, or re-migration. The idea of movement as a step-by-step process dates way back to Ravenstein’s (1885) *The Laws of Migration* where he discussed internal movements within the United Kingdom. Ravenstein’s concept, however, has been extended to international migration by scholars such as Kelly (2013) who studied the onward migration of Iranians from Sweden to London, and Paul (2011, 2015) who developed the concept of stepwise migration – a sub-category of onward migration – through her research on Filipina domestic workers. In stepwise migration, migrants do not only move from more than one destination but they do so with a hierarchy of destinations in mind and with the intent of moving to a higher tier country in that hierarchy – hoping to eventually end up in their preferred destination.

Accounting for these varied patterns of migration in examining migrant networks is one way of contextualizing the ties that migrants form and sustain as they move from one destination to another, decide to stay and settle in host societies, or opt to return to their country of origin. In this manner, taking into account diverse migration pathways and models allows us to go beyond the dichotomy of sending and receiving societies and to consider that migrant networks might span various geographical locations or that migrants utilize different networks depending on their migration trajectories. Before reviewing relevant scholarship on how (migrant) networks evolve across space and time and given changing circumstances, the next section illustrates the significance of structural and policy contexts in shaping both migration patterns and migrant networks.

### ***Impact of Changing Policy Contexts***

Paul (2011) anchored her conceptualization of the stepwise model in the increasingly restrictive immigration policies of ‘Western’ (desirable) countries. Hence, migrants who lack the necessary resources are unable to move directly to these countries and instead need to accumulate economic, social, and human capital in intermediate destinations. In the case of circular migration of Polish migrants in the UK, the European Union enlargement of 2004 not only increased the migration flows from Eastern and Central European countries but also ushered in more temporary and unpredictable migration trajectories given the freedom of movement and employment (Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee, 2017).

The diverse effects of stricter immigration policies on social networks of migrants can be illustrated in the study of van Meeteren & Pereira (2016) on the contrasting role of networks of Brazilian migrants in Portugal and the Netherlands and in Collyer’s research on the different utilization of social networks of Algerian asylum-seekers in France and in the UK. Emphasizing the necessary examination of the ways in which migrant networks are shaped by context of reception, van Meeteren & Pereira (2016: 49) argue that:

the configurations and role of social networks may differ in relation to the context of destination, namely because of the different structural constraints migrants are exposed to in different settings, including immigration regimes or economic opportunities.... It is therefore important to investigate how the influence of social networks changes in relation to different contextual factors, such as immigration regimes, economic opportunities, language, historical connections or previous migration links.

Their findings indicate that the more stringent immigration regime in the Netherlands pushes Brazilian migrants to depend on their ‘traditional migrant networks’ (defined as sets of interpersonal ties; primarily friends, acquaintances, and family members) compared to those in Portugal who rely more on the assistance of institutions.<sup>8</sup> For instance, in terms of regularizing their immigration status, Brazilians in the Netherlands are found to rely on previous migrants in arranging their documents while those in Portugal are assisted by their employers in obtaining legal status. Also, because of the controlled and strict housing regulation in the Netherlands, undocumented migrants have to depend largely on the support of their social networks and rarely on institutions and strangers.

Findings from Collyer’s (2005) study qualify the effect of stringent immigration policies by demonstrating that while the social networks of Algerian asylum seekers in France remain relevant in the migration process, the types of support they get from these networks have changed as opportunities in new destination area (Britain) become more promising and feasible for some of these Algerians. Post entry restrictions in France – such as withdrawal of state support and prohibition to seek employment while applying for asylum coupled with lengthy processing time – force these migrants to depend for extended periods of time on their support network. As undocumented migrants are unable to reciprocate and are therefore seen as a burden, family and friends become less willing to help during pre-migration and settlement:

Migration restrictions have made it more difficult for migrants to join their family and, if they have done so at the cost of remaining undocumented, restrictions have meant that they are a greater burden on family or friends and are more likely to be rejected by them. Policy has effectively devalued the social capital of new migrants by increasing the burden that they impose on social networks. This may cut ties between new migrants and communities of compatriots and force migrants to look to other destinations. The rationale that social capital lowers the cost of migration does not apply if social networks can no longer be relied upon for support. This appears to be the case for increasing numbers of undocumented migrants (Collyer, 2005: 706).

While France remains the preferred destination of most Algerian asylum seekers, as Collyer (2005) noted, most Algerians in the UK have ties in France but veer away from them as unfavorable policies put too much pressure on families and friends (strong ties) to provide indefinite support and assistance on would-be migrants. Those who moved to London rely on weaker ties such as mosques and those from other Arab groups to traverse and survive in an unfamiliar city. Hence, while potential resources are still available in France, accessing such resources have become untenable because of tighter immigration controls. Therefore, “social networks have not disappeared but must simply be managed in different ways in order not to exhaust the resources available” (Collyer, 2005: 715).

Indeed, immigration and labor recruitment policies of destination countries have shaped migration patterns and migrant networks. For instance, as Boyd (1989) elucidates, policies that emphasize family reunification and sponsorship foster a kin-based chain migration model as in the case of the United States. In this case, a favorable immigration policy encourages a more familial-based network in the country of destination. Likewise, labor shortages in certain sectors of the labor market not only attract particular migrants but also bring in governments and their agencies, as well as private recruitment agencies as relevant nodes in the pre-migration networks of prospective

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<sup>8</sup> An alternative (and a more expanded) conceptualization of migrant networks that includes both interpersonal and institutional ties (e.g. Poros, 2001, 2011) is discussed in the later part of this chapter.

migrant workers. Extant research on the role of various social ties beyond kin-based networks and interpersonal connections is discussed toward the end of this section.

### *Conceptualizing Dynamic Migrant Networks*

How stable are migrant networks? To what extent can social ties be maintained or changed not only across geographical space but also over different time periods? I trace the relevant studies in social network analysis and migration studies that deal with how networks form and evolve spatio-temporally and in various phases of the migration process. As Bourdieu (1985: 249) maintained, “the existence of a network of connections is not a natural given, or even a social given.” Social networks must then be developed by investing on building and maintaining social relationships that actors can utilize. In the same vein, Gurak & Caces (1992: 152) also describe migrant networks as “not spontaneous and ephemeral. They evolve over time and with the nurturing of relationships.” Gurak & Caces (1992) further add that since networks are embedded in dynamic and changing systems, migrant networks must be examined as evolving depending on various contexts and situations.

Drawing on the broader field of social network analysis, it is recognized that networks and relationships are not static (Lubbers et al., 2010; Mollenhorst, Volker, & Flap, 2014) and analyses have increasingly taken this dynamic nature of networks into account (Lubbers et al., 2010). Feld, Suitor, & Hoegh (2007) provide a typology to describe changes in network over time by examining whether changes happen in individual ties or in the entire personal network (level of analysis) and the corresponding characteristics of such changes (see Table 2.1).

<i>Type of change</i>	<i>Existence of ties</i>	<i>Nature of ties that exist</i>
<i>Level of analysis</i>		
A tie	1) which ties come and go	2) how characteristics of ties change
A personal network	3) expansion and contraction of networks	4) change in the overall characteristics of networks

**Table 2.1.** Types of Changes in Networks

\*Adapted from Feld et al. (2007: 211)

Focusing on ties, researchers can study those connections that persist and those that are discontinued, as well as the changing characteristics of continued relationships – e.g. level of closeness, frequency of interactions, form and amount of support given. Considering the entire ego network, we can examine changes in network size or the shifts in the overall composition of ties. While Feld et al. (2007) state that research on changes in personal networks require longitudinal data on both ties and contexts where ties are embedded, a more sustained discussion on the significance of contexts in analyzing changes in networks has been carried out by Mollenhorst et al. (2014). Utilizing two waves of survey data on core discussion networks (confidants) and support networks of people in the Netherlands, they found that while network size remains stable, composition of ties have changed – i.e. respondents listed different people with whom they discussed important matters and/or those they ask for help in doing jobs in their homes in the second wave of the survey. Mollenhorst et al. (2014) emphasized the significance of social contexts – or spaces where network members can meet – on why such changes occur. Their findings indicate that discontinued relationships are mostly those from work places while relationships that have been developed through other friends or in the neighborhood are more stable. The lack of meeting opportunities (e.g. no longer sharing the same context, physical distance from each other, lower frequency of interaction) is shown as an important factor on why relationships are discontinued,

especially those outside the familial or kinship ties. Mollenhorst et al. (2014) also concluded that social contexts influence the persistence or dissolution of relationships rather than life events – such as changes in employment or place of residence. This is in contrast with the research of Bidart & Lavenu (2005), which examined the evolution of the networks of young people in France using three waves of longitudinal survey data and found that changes and transitions in the lives of these young people (e.g. from school to labor market, migration, and having their own family) have considerable impact on the changes in their networks. Bidart & Lavenu (2005) also situate these life events within structural contexts – e.g. one’s socio-economic status – which shape opportunities and constraints in forming ties. It is important to note that Mollenhorst et al. (2014) and Bidart & Lavenu (2005) have different types of study participants who have different needs and, more importantly, have used different name generators to elicit alters/ ties. More thorough examination of the intersections of social context, life events, and changes in social networks is therefore warranted.

More relevant to migration research is Chelphi-den Hamer’s (2008) study on the role of support networks of West Africans in the Netherlands in different phases of the migration process – from pre-migration to arrival and further integration. Within the context of strict immigration policy, the study found that at each phase, migrants can have access to various sources of support which may not be available for them in another point in time. However, resources are scarce and support can only be extended for a limited period. Interestingly, while strong and kin-based networks are usually the primary source of assistance during the pre-migration phase (e.g. financing the trip), weak ties – in the form of individuals, groups, or institutions - become more significant once they arrived. Those who migrated earlier assist the newcomers in the early phase of settlement. During difficult times, churches and associations provide short-term support for survival. Furthermore, those whose journeys were supported by relatives are not expected to reimburse financially but usually helped other members of the family in moving out of their country of origin – but the destination is not necessarily where they are currently located. This finding extends the concept of chain migration, illustrating that the process need not be restricted in one place.

Another conceptualization of the dynamic nature of migrant networks is the application of ‘practice approach’ to social networks – shifting the focus from ‘network’ to ‘networking’ practices (Schapendonk, 2015). Illustrating this networking approach by using the cases of sub-Saharan migrants to Europe, Schapendonk (2015) deviates from the static conception of network (i.e. ‘networks as a given’) and the deterministic claim that support and benefits automatically flow from these networks. The findings show that “the power of networking depends on the performance and timing of connectivity” (Schapendonk, 2015: 818). Ryan & Mulholland (2014), in their study of the networking strategies of highly-skilled French migrants in London, also show that forming and maintaining social ties requires time and effort on the part of the migrants and their connections. “Networking relies on a mix of opportunities and shared interests as well as particular levels of skill and self-confidence” (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014: 164) – pointing to the intersections of structure and agency in the practice of networking, as also noted by Schapendonk (2015).

Lastly, there are also studies that explore more dynamic descriptions of ties that usually associated with family ties” – to explore the settlement and integration experiences of different immigrant groups in Houston and New York. These family-like relationships such as that of godparents have socialization and social control functions, as well as instrumental and emotional go beyond kinship-based, friendship-based, and community-based networks. Drawing from anthropology, Ebaugh & Curry (2000: 189) utilize the concept of ‘fictive kin’ – “a relationship, based not on blood or marriage but rather on religious rituals or close friendship ties, that replicates many of the rights and obligations functions.”

It can be recalled that Massey et al. (1993: 448) specifically refer to migrant networks as “sets of interpersonal ties” based on “ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community of origin.” Krissman

(2005) pointed the limitation of the concept of migrant network as defined by Massey and his colleagues, resulting in the exclusion of all actors in accounting for ways on how migrant networks develop and operate: “In sum, various actors (i.e. employers and sundry recruitment agents, including those working for the state) and their relationships within international migration networks are not represented in the Massey model” (Krissman, 2005: 14).

Another scholarship that extend the concept of migrant networks to include all relevant actors is that of Poros (2001, 2011). In her study on Gujarati Indian migration to New York and London, Poros (2001: 246–247) combined interpersonal and organizational ties of migrants in developing typologies of migration trajectories: (a) solitaries, or those without prior ties in destination area; (b) chains, or those who migrated through interpersonal ties; (c) recruits – primarily professionals, students, and low-skilled laborers – or those have organizational ties that enable their mobility; and (d) trusties, or those who have composite ties – which are interpersonal ties intersecting with organizational ties – in a close-knit, multiplex networks.

According to Poros (2001: 245), it is necessary to treat organizational ties as distinct since “they refer to the mediating structure of the organization, where colleagues, co-workers, supervisors, and even friends, family, and acquaintances relate to each other.” However, it should also be noted that organizations are not only sites of interactions but can also be linked to migrants as an entity. Poros (2001, 2011) also discussed the ambiguity of using labels such as ‘friend,’ ‘neighbor,’ ‘relative,’ or ‘colleague’ as this doesn’t allow us to differentiate the context of such relations (e.g. friend from work and childhood friend). In addition, there is also the concept of *multiplex tie*, which connect the same person to another through various relations. For example, a college friend can also be colleague and at the same time a housemate. This kind of ties are usually stronger and more intense. Whether such ties can provide more resources or have more potential for exploitation is another question to ask. The next section considers the possibility that migrant networks can be abusive and fragmentary. I also account for studies that explore differential functions of social networks for different types of migrants – in terms of gender, occupations, length of stay, social status, and legal status.

## **Exploitative and ‘Negative’ Networks: Accounting for Inequalities and Ambivalences**

Overwhelmingly, migrant networks (and social networks, in general) are conceived as largely beneficial to its members. The intimate connections between social capital and social network partly support and reinforce this view. In this section, Portes’ (1998) concept of negative social capital is first introduced to account for what can be considered as ‘downsides of social capital.’ The literature on exploitative and fragmentary dimensions of migrant networks is then considered. This is followed by the presentation of studies that consider the negative functions and consequences of having certain ties alongside the positive benefits they confer to selected types of migrants.

### ***Negative Social Capital***

Social capital, as it has been deployed in various fields of study, is predominantly treated as a catch-all term for everything good about being embedded in webs of social relationships. The often-celebrated effects of social capital have been problematized by Alejandro Portes, who engaged in sustained explications on what could be the negative and unintended consequences of social capital and the costs of belonging to social networks (see Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes, 1998; Portes & Landolt, 2000; Portes, 2014). He outlined four potential negative effects of social capital: (a) “exclusion of outsiders”; (b) “excess claims on group members”; (c) “restrictions on individual freedom”; and (d) “downward leveling norms” (Portes, 1998: 15). It is not surprising that as



opportunities are monopolized within the group and benefits are restricted only for members, those who do not belong are denied of access to resources. The last three negative effects, on the other hand, pertain to limitations posed by being a member of a particular group. Strict enforcement of norms may compel group members to comply with undue expectations – such as being obliged to constantly provide support and assistance, constraining what one can or cannot do, and preventing individual success or mobility – to the detriment of these members.

Most of these undesirable effects of social capital are the costs of achieving solidarity, group cohesion, and maintenance of normative order. As Cranford (2005: 394) puts it, “conceptualizing a negative side of social capital was an important first step” in addressing the shortcomings of employing the concept of social capital “as the positive outcome of networks and other social structures.”

However, there are also cases when networks break down or weakened, and therefore fail to provide for the expected support and assistance to its members. It is also possible for networks to be conflictive and fragmented such that they are unable to generate positive social capital. In other words, it is also necessary to move beyond the emphasis on solidarity and cohesion by giving adequate attention to the existence of conflicts and tensions within networks. In the next part, these issues are explored within the literature on migrant networks.

### ***Conflictive and Exploitative Migrant Networks***

Veering away from the traditional research on migrant networks that tend to assume the positive effects of social relationships on migrants, Menjivar (1995, 1997, 2000) asserts that an unfavorable context of reception impedes the ability of networks in providing the expected assistance, especially in times of need. As Menjivar (1997: 105) stresses, “assistance need not be great. What was key was that it was ongoing; my informants could obtain it at crucial times and count on it when in need.” In her research on Salvadoran newcomers in San Francisco, Menjivar (1997) found that while some newly arrived Salvadorans were able to rely on the continued support from their kin upon arrival, others found themselves unable to depend on their kin-based networks – despite facilitating their movement to the United States. Hence, continuity and stability cannot be assumed as inherent features of migrant networks. Social, political, and economic configurations in destination areas can render the social networks of migrants as ineffective and conflictive. Utter poverty and severe scarcity of resources against the backdrop of tighter immigration policies, economic recession, tighter local labor market, and an impoverished community create an environment for the kinship networks of Salvadoran migrants to weaken and have led to their fragmentation. As Menjivar (1997: 120) concludes:

My findings warn against the notion that a common background, constant contact, and a shared migration experience automatically reproduce solid kinship-based networks or represent stable aid to newcomers. Extreme poverty and scarcity arising from a historically-specific confluence of factors upset the flow of material assistance and hinder sharing among kin-related immigrants, effectively debasing these ties’ potential for support. Thus, supportive networks should not be taken as an attribute of an immigrant group itself, but as processes contingent upon the physical and material location within which they unfold.

This strain of scholarship adds another dimension on the previous discussions on the evolving and dynamic character of social networks. Migrant networks not only change or evolve over time, across space, and in different phases of the migration process because of the contexts in which they are embedded but may do so in situations riddled with tensions and conflicts (e.g. lack of capacity to reciprocate for the newly arrived migrants, overburdened families in the destination area, and

unfulfilled expectation on both sides) that can lead to the dissolution of ties or disintegration of the network.

Reviewing research on the social networks of low-income families in the United States, including that of Menjivar (2000), Offer (2012) also points out that actors in impoverished condition are bereft of the ability to participate in reciprocal exchange of support that leads to the breakdown of social networks as members. The fragmentation of social networks is examined through the processes of being excluded or voluntarily withdrawing from networks. Given that those who are most in need of aid are the ones being prevented or disengaging from social networks (as they cannot fulfill the norm of reciprocity), Offer (2012) proposes that the necessary assistance for these groups should be channeled through institutions and organizations. Hence, organizational ties become not only important for social mobility but also in survival strategies.

On the other side of Atlantic, the works of Morosanu (2013), and Gill & Bialski (2011) on the friendship networks of Eastern European migrants in the UK provide additional illustrations on conflictive networks of migrants. Exploring the transnational engagements of young Romanians in London, Morosanu (2013) notes that despite a relatively favorable context for cross-border movements within the European Union, young Romanians in London experience difficulties in maintaining and fostering ties in the sending area. However, discontinuity with their pre-migration ties in the home country did not translate in the formation of new friendship ties in the destination country. Morosanu (2013) observes that these young Romanians that she interviewed in London generally have a negative view of their home country and of fellow Romanians in London. “Failed encounters, experiences of exploitation and Romanians’ stigmatised image abroad contributed to the development of mistrust and the avoidance of nominal co-ethnics” (Morosanu, 2013: 365). They instead refer to their ‘soul friends’ back home – friendships that are *not* borne out of common ethnic background but out of continuous social interaction over time and relationships that ‘have come a long way’ – when asked about their ideal social relationships.

Gill & Bialski (2011) also found that Polish migrants in the United Kingdom tend to view their co-ethnics in a negative light as mistrust and suspicions abound in their communities. But while Poles with higher socio-economic status can avoid dealing with their co-ethnics, those who with lower socio-economic status could not. Unlike in Poland, migrants of lower status have no choice but to associate with their co-ethnics despite not wanting to do so. “Networks... are created out of necessity, not out of affinity as they are in Poland” (Gill & Bialski, 2011: 247). Hence, while these migrants rapidly form relationships once they arrived in the UK, these kinds of relationships are more practical – ties that lack trust and connections that they eventually want to terminate and escape once they have the necessary capital to do so. According to Gill & Bialski (2011: 248), this “may cause significant tension within migrant communities as co-ethnic ties are exploited in the short term and then rejected.”

The potential for migrant networks to be exploitative, apart from being fragmented and conflictive, is discussed extensively in the works Cranford (2005) and Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994). Both authors show how re-organization – specifically sub-contracting arrangements – in job sectors that rely on migrant labor coupled with unfavorable contexts may contribute in forming and perpetuating ‘networks of exploitation’ instead of mutually beneficial relationships. In Cranford’s study (2005) of the janitorial sector in Los Angeles, building owners circumscribed labor laws by giving job contracts to non-union companies, which in turn employ supervisors who recruit undocumented Latino and Latina workers from their networks, usually kin-based. In order to win or keep contracts from building owners, supervisors devise ways of extracting more working hours from recruited workers without just compensation – keeping the costs low and competitive. Therefore, regardless of whether undocumented migrants entered their jobs using strong or weak ties, in the end, they are all subjected to the same harsh working conditions and abusive relationships reproduced by their own kin who are also their supervisors. But as Cranford (2005) concludes, it is the building owners

who ultimately benefit from this decentralized sub-contracting arrangement – gaining from the cheap labor that has been extracted from the workers while avoiding the legal responsibility as employers and, at the same time, having the option to drop a company and contract another. In this situation, the positions of workers and supervisors are both precarious. Hence, “ties to family and friends became networks of exploitation not because individual supervisors got ahead by exploiting individual workers” but because the sub-contracting arrangement only benefitted the employers (Cranford, 2005: 395).

In her research on the domestic work sector involving Mexican migrant workers in the San Francisco Bay area, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) also illustrates how migrant networks can be abusive within certain contexts. The shift in the way domestic work has been organized has allowed veteran domestics to sub-contract newcomers who are badly in need of job. While this shift from stay-in domestic work (worker lives with her employers) to ‘day work’ (worker is paid an hourly wage rate and resides separately from her employers) to ‘job work’ (workers typically accumulate several houses to clean once or twice a month) means greater flexibility and better working conditions, it also encourages the proliferation of exploitative relationships between and among domestic workers. In this informal sub-contracting arrangement, the newly arrived migrant ‘helps’ and serves as an ‘apprentice’ of the veteran domestic in cleaning houses – a way of learning the ropes of the job and breaking into the domestic work sector. While this arrangement is crucial for newcomers in finding jobs and in surviving in a new city, they are paid considerably less and at the mercy of the veteran domestic workers given the asymmetrical relationship between the two. This can also create a cycle of exploitation such that newcomers will also sub-contract other novice workers when they already gained experience and established themselves by having their own contacts of employers.

As the various literature discussed in this section demonstrates, networks can provide support and assistance, material and otherwise, while being abusive and conflictive at the same time. As Menjivar (2000) argues, there is a tendency to overemphasize the positive impact of migrant networks without paying attention to their potential negative effect such as constraining and controlling migrants’ behavior. Moreover, “largely absent from portrayals of immigrant social networks is the potential for tension or even dissolution in these ties, which reinforces images of immigrant ties as excessively cohesive...” (Menjivar, 2000: 33). It is therefore important to bear in mind that just as migrant communities can be both characterized by solidarity and distrust, migrant ties can provide social support resources but can also spell trouble. As Bashi (2007: 22) contends, despite the recognition by scholars of the importance of networks in understanding international migration, “we know very little about how networks actually operate.... how it forms, functions, is maintained, and doles out benefits and sometimes trouble to its members.” Indeed, accounting for both positive and negative impacts of migrant networks could deepen our understanding on how such networks actually operate and function and how migrants form and forge various ties in different phases of the migration process. The last part of this section adds to a more nuanced account of migrant networks as it examines how the characteristics of migrants also shape their ability to access resources from their networks.

### *Differential and Unequal Access to Resources*

Previous discussions show why it is crucial to conceptualize ‘migrant networks’ not just as invaluable sources of assistance and help (social capital) but also as sites of conflict and abuse – a point Charles Tilly (1990: 92) has compellingly established:

Networks brought into being by immigration serve to create and perpetuate inequality. Lest anyone think that solidarity and mutual aid have nothing but gratifying results, we should recognize two things: (1) members of immigrant groups often exploited one another as they would not have dared to exploit the native-born and, (2) every inclusion also constitutes an exclusion.

Continuing in this direction, the last part of this section takes a closer look at the term ‘migrants’ and scrutinizes how differences between and among them shape their ability to access resources and vulnerability to exploitation from their connections. Given that the most disadvantaged are the ones who are shut off from accessing resources from networks (as they cannot fulfil the norm of reciprocity) and are most exposed from the negative effects of conflictive and exploitative webs of social relations (vulnerability), there is a need to explore how benefits and harm are unequally distributed for different groups of migrants in terms of socio-economic status, gender, and legal status.

For instance, in the previously cited work of Gill & Bialski (2011), they found that Poles with higher socio-economic status can afford not to associate and interact with what they deem as undesirable co-ethnics in the UK while those with lower socio-economic status, though they share the same sentiments, have no choice but to maintain ties with them as long as it is necessary. This result underlines the differentiated manner of network formation for migrants with different socio-economic background offering another dimension in conceptualizing a more dynamic concept of migrant network. In the same vein, Gold (2001) observes that communities of Israelis in London and Los Angeles are also highly segmented along social divisions that continue to exist from sending to receiving societies (e.g. socio-economic position prior and after migration). As middle-class Israeli migrants in London and Los Angeles keep among themselves, the lower classes also avoid being affiliated with the higher classes so as not to experience discrimination. As a consequence of these strong divisions within the ethnic community, “access to coethnic networks remains limited. Often, those networks capable of delivering the greatest status, the best business contacts, the most intense social ties, or other desirable resources were exclusionary and difficult to join” (Gold, 2001: 70-71). Apart from unequal opportunities in fostering rewarding networks, it is not surprising that studies examining the networks of low-skilled and lower status migrants have highlighted that they are also most susceptible to abuse and exploitation. Such studies have looked into the kinds of connections that these migrants happened to make (e.g. Cranford, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994) as well as to the considerable difficulties that they experienced in converting their networks for survival to social leverage networks (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003) compared to their highly-skilled and better positioned counterparts who have more complementary networks (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014).

Another significant social division to consider is that of gender. The need to ‘bring in’ gender in the analysis of migrant networks has been recommended by Boyd (1989) – noting the tendency of existing research to be ‘gender blind’ in studying how networks operate. In her study of the Maya community in Houston, Hagan (1998) observes that the social networks of undocumented migrants can change over time and that such transformations have significant influence in the long-term integration of these migrants. By examining how these network changes along gender lines, Hagan (1998) found that as men and women are channeled into two distinct job sectors, they form and develop different networks. Maya men are generally employed in a supermarket chain while Maya

women work in private households as domestics. This process of clustering in particular occupational niches, which is distinctly gendered, provide men with greater freedom and benefit from co-ethnic and non-ethnic ties they forge from work, neighborhood, and communities. The women, on the other hand, who are employed in private households as live-in workers have very limited opportunity to develop an extensive network from diverse types of ties and are isolated from their larger community. The effect of this has been pronounced as they differed in taking advantage of a legalization program to regularize their status in the United States. Maya men, largely because of their connections and embeddedness in their communities, were able to gain information and help in producing necessary documentation to apply for legalization. The opposite was the case for women, whose ties to their communities had weakened and whose networks became limited as they were restricted in their employers' place. Their unequal relationship with their employers (who may not have the incentive to help these women to gain legal status) and interactions with other undocumented women working as domestic workers (who may not have the necessary information they need) proved to be disadvantageous to Maya women. But as Hagan (1998) cautioned, changes in migrant networks might not always be beneficial only for men and detrimental for women. More favorable contexts and network development can be expected to have more positive outcomes for men and women.

Finally, fragmentation and cleavages in migrant networks can also be observed along legal status as what Roggeveen & van Meeteren (2013) observes among Brazilians in the Netherlands. They found that there are basically two streams of Brazilian migration in the Netherlands – 'regular' and 'irregular' migration. In this study, the researchers found that 'regular' and 'irregular' Brazilian migrants hardly interact with one another and tend to maintain separate networks. In the same vein as for Poles (Gill & Bialski, 2011) and Romanians (Morosanu, 2013) in the UK, 'regular' Brazilian migrants in Amsterdam tend to view undocumented Brazilians negatively and consciously avoid associating with them by staying away from spaces where they are usually seen hanging out. But while particular social divisions can be highlighted in a given case, it is important to note that these divisions interact with each other and are experienced simultaneously. For instance, undocumented Brazilians in the study of Roggeveen & van Meeteren (2013) are often lower educated and from lower class families compared to legal migrants. Hence, irregular, low-skilled, low-educated women from lower socio-economic background are clearly in a more disadvantaged position. How they are able to access or fail to access resources from their networks and to what extent are their webs of social relations beneficial, exploitative, or conflictive are important questions to pursue and consider. In this sense, examining migrant networks as sources of social support and mobility and, at the same time, as instruments of social reproduction of inequality can contribute in enriching the concept of 'migrant network' as it is deployed in migration research.

## Appropriating ‘Migrant Network’: Towards a Conceptual Synthesis

In this chapter, I have reviewed and examined how the concept of social network has been employed in migration studies. While existing scholarship tends to be disjointed, and lack of dialogue between social network analysis and migration research impedes sharing of learnings and developments, drawing on the findings and gaps from the previously discussed literature can sharpen the concept of ‘migrant network’ as a heuristic device and as an analytical tool. I focus on four aspects that delineate the ways in which ‘migrant network’ has been used in this research project. I will then elaborate more on these aspects in Chapters 5 (pre-migration networks), 6 (support networks during adjustment and settlement period), and 7 (changes in migrant networks).

*Diverse Ties.* The overwhelming attention on family-based networks and interpersonal ties in studying migration process and in framing ‘migrant networks’ can overlook other ties that, in certain circumstances, are crucial in geographical mobility, survival, and integration in host societies. Following Poros (2001, 2011), I look into both interpersonal and organizational ties that are deemed important by migrants in their migration projects and trajectories vis-à-vis the specific assistance and resources that flow in such ties in various points in time. Apart from individuals and institutions, relevant ties can also take the form of groups or ‘clusters’ of individuals (e.g. housemates, churchmates, and colleagues), which migrants refer to and considered as single entities. This has implication, for example, in the way network size is measured. That is, simply counting the number of nodes irrespective of the types and composition of the networks can be misleading. Having a large network then does not mean that one has more support compared to those who have smaller networks. For instance, networks can have multiplex ties such that alters can play different roles and fulfil varied functions – potentially making up for the smaller network size. It can also be the case that a particular actor in one’s network is strategically positioned to provide support and assistance.

*Network Evolution and Migration Phases.* Relevant ties are examined within three phases of the migration process – pre-migration, arrival, and further settlement (which represent the current support network of migrants) corresponding to the dynamic and evolving nature of networks as needs, circumstances, and contexts where migrants are embedded change over time. In this manner, supportive social relations that persist and wither way can be traced and those ties that were once supportive and then turned conflictive or exploitative can be accounted for.

*Ambivalences and Inequalities.* As has been emphasized in this chapter, networks can be conceived as supportive, strained, and abusive. Hence, negative ties are considered as part of migrant networks, especially in instances when help had been extended but at a great cost. Concepts of ‘support’ and ‘help’ are therefore problematized to demonstrate that delineating what is ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ might not be clear-cut and simple. In addition, differences in access to resources are taken into account by examining the networks of migrants from three different occupational groups with varying degree of prestige and skill level.

*Methods.* I draw on the developments in social network analysis, particularly in qualitative and mixed methods approaches, in measuring and collecting personal network data – moving beyond employing network as a metaphor to network as an analytical device. Particularities are elaborated in the subsequent chapter – providing a detailed discussion on methodological considerations and issues that permeate the application of the concept of social networks in migration research.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Researching Migrant Networks: *Methodological Considerations*

### **Introduction**

Since this study has been framed using the overarching concept of ‘migrant network’, a comprehensive discussion on how to employ social network analysis in studying migration experiences is warranted. However, such discussion entails elaboration on the specific steps taken from conceptualization, to actual data collection, and to subsequent analysis of the data collected. In other words, it is necessary to flesh out what and why conceptual and methodological choices are made and how are they carried out in every stage of the research.

This chapter discusses how this research has been organized and outlines the research process in detail. The first part elaborates on the comparative approach in studying migration. To take migration as a focal point of the study requires one to consider various dimensions and complexities. People move across space and over a period of time – bringing their past resources and experiences into their new place of settlement. In that process, they are changed while, at the same time, also contribute in shaping their new environment. It is also argued that apart from spatio-temporal comparison, occupational prestige and legal status are valuable dimensions to consider in comparing migrant networks.

The chapter also accounts for the importance of combining methods in collecting and analyzing network and non-network data. In the light of methodological issues concerning the elicitation of network data – e.g. forgetting and heavy burden to the respondents – particular strategies utilized are highlighted such as network mapping and visualization and integrating the network maps (*sociograms*) in the participants’ narratives.

In the remainder of the chapter, issues and challenges encountered in the field are laid down and decisions made are specified. After all, any research is a social enterprise – subject to available resources and limited by various constraints. Such resources and constraints are made explicit in order to contextualize how the data came about. In this case, the social network approach has been extended and fieldwork is viewed as a site of ‘networking’ to account for how the fieldwork has transpired, why particular respondents are recruited, and why certain strategies didn’t work. Finally, the chapter concludes with extending the challenge of combining methods from data collection to analysis. Qualitative structural analysis (QSA) is introduced as an approach that offers to do justice for the potential of both network maps and narratives in enhancing our understanding of migration experiences.

## **Comparative Migration Research: 'Why,' 'What,' and 'How' to Compare?**

Smelser (2003: 644) asserts that any social science analysis is comparative such that “all social science involves accounting for variation among human beings and social arrangements.” In migration studies, Foner (2005) and Bloemraad (2013), among others, echo the same view stating that there’s an implicit comparison in any study about migrants. But while comparison is seen as inevitable in social science in general, and migration research in particular, it is also assumed that espousing a comparative perspective has the potential to bring about something novel or to challenge what is often seen as seemingly natural. “Through comparison we can de-center what is taken for granted in a particular time or place after we learn that something was not always so, or that it is different elsewhere, or for other people” (Bloemraad, 2013: 29). Indeed, considering more than one case can prevent the drawback of hasty claims of commonalities or uniqueness. In the case of studying migrants, comparison “enables us to see what is unique to a specific situation and what is more general to the migration experience” (Foner, 2005: 3). For instance, comparing two migrant groups allows us to examine to what extent are the experiences of one group similar and different from the other. Comparisons of migration in different places and in different time periods make it possible to ascertain whether what is happening here and now are that unique to what happened in the past and in other contexts.

Despite such obvious advantages of adopting a comparative approach in studying migration experiences, it should also be noted that it does not come free. Including additional dimension or category – such as another migrant group or another geographical location – means devoting additional time and resources in collecting and analyzing more complex data (Bloemraad, 2013). It is therefore sensible to aim for both complexity and brevity. In this sense, comparison is not only made explicit but is also problematized: Why focus on only one migrant group? Why compare these two cities? What do we gain by examining migrant networks in each migration phase? And why take into account variations between and among occupations? These questions are seriously considered and greatly shaped the direction of the main research questions. In the subsequent section, these different dimensions of comparison are discussed.

### ***Comparing Cities: London and New York Metropolitan Areas***

There are several reasons why this research focuses on cities instead of other geographic divisions such as cross-national comparison. For one, there is an increasing recognition that there is a great deal of variation within a country when it comes to accounting for the experiences of immigrants (Bloemraad, 2013). It is hardly surprising that immigrants in the metropolitan areas of New York would lead very different lives compared to those in small, rural towns elsewhere in the country. But even between Los Angeles and New York metropolitan areas, it is expected that considerable variations would exist (Foner, Rath, Duyvendak, & van Reekum, 2014). Thus, even though immigration policies are instituted through the nation-states, how such policies interact with specificities of the local social fabric – e.g. ethnic and racial relations, ethnic diversity in the labor market, and history of migration flows in a particular city – can provide different pictures.

In this research project, the interest lies in the cosmopolitan, ‘global city’ (Sassen, 1991) – not as a representative of the entire country but as a distinct entity to be studied. While global cities are important hubs in a globalized world and profoundly linked, embedded, and integrated within the global economy, they are also in need of cheap labor. As Robinson (2009:16) puts it: “a global city’s ‘glamour,’ observes Sassen, is often supported by large populations of immigrant workers who perform the blue-collar, industrial, low-wage, menial – in short, the “dirty work” – of the global



economy.” Global cities can therefore be typified as having, in the words of Bloemraad (2013: 34), “migrant-attracting labor market structures.” In this sense, London and New York are ideal comparative cases, not only because they are the quintessential global cities – most central in the affairs of global economy – but also because they are the foremost immigrant cities, attracting diverse groups and types of migrants.<sup>9</sup> New York and London, as (super)diverse cities (*see* Foner, 2001, 2005, 2013; Vertovec, 2007), are not only composed of various ethnic groups, but also of heterogeneous group of Filipinos (in terms of socio-economic and occupational background) residing and working in both cities. In addition, while there had been significant contributions from studies on American cities (Bloemraad, 2013), transatlantic comparisons are nonetheless scant (Foner et al., 2014).

At the heart of the comparison between London and New York is the focus on the networks of Filipino immigrants. In order to highlight how contexts shape migration experiences and networking, I compare Filipinos in similar occupations in both sides of the Atlantic. Doing so shifts the focus not on whether one migrant group is similar or different from each other but what sort of variations can we observe by looking into the same migrant group in two different contexts.<sup>10</sup> This is to underscore the idea that networks do not exist in a vacuum but are rather embedded within a social environment. They are influenced and shaped by political and socio-economic factors that are external to them, such as local labor market opportunities, racial and ethnic relations, migration policies, or even global crises. The embeddedness of migrant networks in these contexts is considered as an essential backdrop in the study.

### ***Comparing Migration Phases: Approximating for Changes in Networks***

The previous section clarified the spatial component of the comparative approach adopted in this research, suggesting that comparing one migrant group in two global cities can contribute in accounting for the impact of sending, receiving, as well as intermediate countries in the lived experiences of migrants and their networking strategies. However, temporal comparison is quite tricky, despite its apparent significance –especially since migration by nature is processual and dynamic. Putting ‘time’ and ‘change’ in the picture can be done in various ways. One can compare contemporary migration patterns from those that happened in the past. For instance, Foner (2000, 2005) offers an in-depth analysis of contemporary immigrants in New York compared to the mostly

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<sup>9</sup> In Chapter 6 where varied migration pathways have been discussed, it is shown that the respondents who moved to New York or London from other states or cities were consistent in their reasons: more jobs (especially during periods of recession in the US) and higher pay, as well as better public transportation system. In the case of New York, respondents who are undocumented also felt that it is ‘undocumented friendly city.’ As Foner (2013: 251) noted: “New York City and State have, by and large, remained much more immigrant friendly, and have supported inclusionary rights.”

<sup>10</sup> The discussed similarities of New York and London (e.g. attracting diverse groups of migrants and both low-skilled and high-skilled workers) could be contrasted to the different historical relations of the Philippines to the US and the UK and the different immigration policies of both countries (discussed in Chapter 4). In short, selecting London and New York allowed me to study the networks of Filipinos in similar occupations in two different migration systems. This roughly follows the ‘Most Similar Systems Design’ (MSSD) typically used in comparative political research, wherein the cases that are selected are “as similar as possible, except with regard to the phenomenon, the effects of which we are interested in assessing. The reason for choosing systems that are similar is the ambition to keep constant as many extraneous variables as possible” (Anckar, 2008: 389). In this study, London and New York are similar on a range of characteristics, but different in terms of the variables of interest – immigration policies and relations to the Philippines. On the individual level, the occupations of the respondents are similar but they are located into two different migration systems. It is assumed that such differences would shape the networks of Filipinos in varied ways.

European immigrants in the city a century ago. But ‘time’ can also be conceptualized by focusing on changes taking place in the lives of immigrants as opposed to changes occurring within a particular place. One can examine changes in the life course or particular points in the lives of immigrants (e.g. retirement and old age). Comparing first and second generation (or even third generation) of immigrants is another way of comparing across time.

In this study, temporal change is conceived in terms of ‘migration phases’ (re-)constructed from the narratives of the research participants and the concurrent changes in their networks as they move from one place to another. In this way, it complements the previously discussed spatial dimension of comparison. Essentially, what we are comparing are the changes in the networks of Filipinos in London and New York metropolitan areas in three phases of migration projects and trajectories. The first phase (‘pre-migration’) results into the decision and execution of the actual migration. It starts with considering whether migration to New York or London is a desirable and feasible option.<sup>11</sup> The study addresses the extent to which migrants’ personal network connections shaped and facilitated their mobility. The second phase (‘initial adjustment’) then ‘begins’ with the arrival in the place of destination and involves initial conditions in which migrants find themselves. Some of the crucial initial resources that migrants may or may not possess are their networks and capabilities to mobilize support in the early stages of their life in the host country to limit risk exposure and maximize opportunities. Such initial ties may have great influence not only on the ease with which migrants are able to follow their original, mostly work-related plans, but also on their subsequent settlement efforts and successes. The research examines how the early conditions in which the migrants found themselves, and especially the available newly formed or ‘inherited’ networks affect migration trajectories and the outcomes of their settlement in the host society. The last phase concerns the current circumstances that migrants are in. It looks into the present conditions that they are facing – whether they are satisfied in their lives and what are their present concerns vis-à-vis their current personal and support networks. The focus of this part is not only upward mobility and economic success but also one’s feeling of belongingness in the host society, cognizant of the relevant ties (e.g. co-ethnic, familial, transnational, or weak ties) that facilitated such form of integration. Capturing ‘change over time’ through these ‘migration phases’ (as re-constructed from the biographies of the participants) highlights the dynamic nature of both migration and migrant networks. In addition, respondents are also asked about their future plans (e.g. return migration, aspirations, and possible upward mobility) in order to further understand not only their migration projects and trajectories but also how migrants construct their ‘sense of self’ in relation to how they see themselves in the future.

### ***Comparing Occupations: Accounting for Variations and Heterogeneity within a Migrant Group***

It has been previously mentioned that focusing on one migrant group in two different cities emphasizes the contexts of sending, receiving, as well as intermediate countries in shaping migrants’ experiences and the embeddedness of their networks. However, another advantage of focusing on one group is the opportunity to do away with treating migrant group as a homogeneous category and national origin as a ‘natural’ way of categorizing migrants. As Bloemraad (2013: 33) argues:

Individual immigrants can be grouped into analytical ‘cases’ by various characteristics other than national origin, such as by social class, gender, generation, legal status, or other socially relevant categories. For example, rather than comparing two national origin groups as proxies for

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<sup>11</sup> Or, in the case of domestic workers who ran away from their former employers, whether escaping and staying without papers is worth the risk.

high- or low-skilled migrants, perhaps a direct class-based comparison with less regard to migrant origins is preferable.

This research draws attention to such categorizations beyond national origin by comparing three occupational groups of Filipinos in London and New York. Doing so not only provides an in-depth understanding of Filipino migration in global cities, but also acknowledges that there are variations within an ethnic group that shape different migration projects and trajectories, as well as network formation and maintenance. People moving from one place to another do not just start on clean slate when they arrive in their destination. They carry with them the capital – economic, cultural, and social – they have from their place of origin. Whether those capital will be devalued or can really work to their advantage is another question to ask. The point, however, is that even within a migrant group, we can expect these divisions to influence their lives in the host society – apart from other circumstances they would find themselves upon their arrival and throughout their stay.

It has been previously discussed that as global cities, London and New York depend on migrant workers to fulfil ‘menial’ jobs. However, Filipinos in London and New York are not only employed in low-skilled occupations but also have considerable presence as professionals and highly-skilled workers. This is another reason that makes London and New York suitable as comparative cases in this study. In terms of Filipino professionals, what usually stand out are the health and social care workers, particularly nurses. Both the US and the UK have practiced active recruitment of internationally-educated registered nurses due to staff shortages (Matsuno, 2009). Apart from nurses, domestic work are also prominent occupation of Filipinos in both London and New York. In the beginning of this study, it was designed in such a way that both high-skilled (nurses) and low-skilled (domestics) occupations are considered. But the realities of fieldwork and data collection came into play and provided a chance to see whether these categorizations are the most fitting. In between nurses and domestic workers, there are care workers who could be nurses in the Philippines but are just awaiting to pass the exam or to finish the processing of their certification allowing them to practice as registered nurses in London or New York. There are also former domestic workers who underwent some training and certification or simply gained the experience to become caregivers or nursing aides. Some of them are employed in hospitals as nursing aides or assistants, while others are in nursing or residential homes as care support workers. There also caregivers working and/or living in their employers’ residences. Despite the different work settings, they all perform almost the same tasks – primarily personal care (e.g. feeding, bathing, or dressing). These observations prompted the inclusion of care workers as additional occupational group in the study since it also falls within the care sector.

Generally, those employed in the care sector – whether nurses, caregivers, or domestics – are women. However, since there is a strong demand for these particular workers in both London and New York, men – especially newly arrived men – could end up working in these occupations. For undocumented Filipino men, those who does not have qualifications, or those whose qualifications are not recognized, it might be easier to take up domestic work or caregiving in order to earn money for themselves and for their families. Other men might also have been recruited specifically to fulfil these jobs. With the ‘boom’ of the demand for nurses in ‘desired’ destinations (e.g. the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK), what was seen as a female profession has become increasingly attractive also for men given that becoming a nurse has been deemed as a ticket for working abroad. Hence, to a certain degree, there is also a need to account for differences between men and women employed within the same occupation.

Lastly, it is also crucial to account for ‘legal status’ in comparing Filipinos in London and New York, particularly those doing domestic work (and to a certain extent, domiciliary caregiving work). It is apparent that resources and constraints for mobility and networking also vary for those having ‘legal papers’ and those who are considered ‘undocumented.’

## How to Compare Migrant Networks?: Mixed Methods Design and Social Network Research

The previous section discusses what dimensions are taken into consideration in comparing migrant networks and put forward the reasons why such comparisons are essential in contributing to a deeper understanding of migration trajectories and migrant networks. This part moves the discussion forward by asking what particular instruments and strategies were employed to collect both network and non-network data and to facilitate engagement in sustained and multifaceted comparisons. The strategies for data collection and analysis utilized in this study fall within the context of ‘mixed methods social network research’ (Dominguez & Hollstein, 2014). Hence, a brief discussion on the advantages and challenges in using mixed methods design as applied in social network research is presented below before outlining the data collection instruments used to generate network and non-network data.

As Hollstein (2014: 3) puts it, “the combined application of different methods goes back a long time without being explicitly referred to as a mixed method design.” Combining methods is regarded as an effective way of complementing the strengths and counteracting the limitations of quantitative and qualitative research. On the other hand, social network analysis (SNA) as an approach developed from both quantitative and qualitative research inquiries (Edwards, 2010). However, recent developments in the field are mostly concentrated in what can be considered as ‘quantitative’ side of the approach (Crossley, 2010). Indeed, from sociometry (Moreno, 1934) and graph theory to the current advancements in the application of statistical methods coupled with expansion of usage of software packages for network data processing and simulation, there is a tendency for the qualitative roots of the social network analysis to be overlooked. Hence, while it is not unusual that the more formalistic and mathematical approaches have become the central feature of social network analysis, it must be noted that “much of the foundational work in social network analysis was done by ethnographers associated with Manchester school, doing field work and using qualitative and mixed methods” (Carrington, 2014: 57). While there are critics calling and advocating for more space for qualitative approach in doing social network analysis (*see* Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994), Belloti (2016) contends that “formal social network analysis has always underlined the importance of using complementary methods” (para. 2.1). The point to be taken here is that social network analysis not only utilized both quantitative and qualitative techniques but also regard combining methods as a worthwhile endeavor (Crossley, 2010). As Edwards (2010: 4) put it:

The issue of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to SNA is of particular interest in the wider context of debates over mixing methods in the social sciences. This is because some network analysts have argued not only that it is desirable to combine quantitative and qualitative methods, but that SNA represents a specific opportunity to mix methods because of its dual interest in both the ‘structure’ or ‘form’ of social relations (i.e. the ‘outsider’ view of the network), and the interactional ‘processes’ which generate these structures, and have to be understood by exploring the ‘content’ and perception of the network (i.e. the ‘insider’ view of the network).

There are varied ways, however, of designing and implementing a mixed methods social network research.<sup>12</sup> To delineate what mixed methods are (as applied in social network research), Hollstein (2014: 11) outlines three conditions that must be fulfilled: (1) It must utilize both quantitative and qualitative data; (2) It should employ both quantitative and qualitative analytical strategies; and

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<sup>12</sup> For a detailed discussion of possible mixed methods research designs, *see* Hollstein (2014).

(3) Quantitative and qualitative data or analytical strategies must be integrated, either during collecting, analyzing, or interpreting the data.

Bellotti (2016: para. 2.7) suggests, however, that “such definition could also be relaxed and extended to any type of methodological mix, where the combined methods can be various tools without necessarily mixing the qualitative with the quantitative.” Ryan & D’Angelo (2018) and Tubaro, Ryan, & D’Angelo (2016) also share the same view, particularly focusing on combining visual tools with interviews to systematically capture ties (network structure) as well as to examine the meanings attach to those ties (network content). Whether these studies should be considered as ‘mixed methods,’ as Bellotti (2016) suggested, or should be classified instead as ‘multimethods’ (Hesse-Biber, 2010: 3) is subject to contention. Yet, there is another way of looking at this argument. Carrington (2014: 35) asserts that:

While research on social networks may use quantitative or qualitative or mixed methods, social network analysis itself is fundamentally neither quantitative nor qualitative, nor a combination of the two. Rather, it is structural. That is to say, the basic interest of social network analysis is to understand social structure, by studying social networks.

Thus, social network analysis goes beyond the traditional quantitative-qualitative divide as its focus lies on structured and patterned relationships – which, as Carrington (2014: 35) claims, are “neither a quantity or a quality.” However, in studying social networks, researchers either utilize the more formalistic and mathematical network approach<sup>13</sup> or those approaches that give more attention to network content and meaning making. This study follows the latter. It also adopts the expanded definition of ‘mixed methods’ as proposed by Bellotti (2016), Tubaro et al., (2016), and Ryan & D’Angelo (2018) – that is combining network mapping and visualization with in-depth interview.

The significance of network visualization is discussed in the subsequent section. It also presents the particular strategies employed in collecting data. These strategies are discussed within the context of issues concerning recall and respondent burden. This is followed by outlining the instruments used in data collection – e.g. interview guide, sociogram/network chart, and a brief socio-demographic questionnaire. The succeeding part deals with a brief account of the field work while the last section concludes by expounding on analytical strategies adopted.

### ***Integrating Network Visualization and In-depth Interviewing***

Visualization can be considered as part and parcel of network studies; Moreno’s sociogram and graph theory is a testament to that. In social sciences, however, utilizing network visualization for data collection is still not that widespread (Molina, Maya-Jariego, & McCarty, 2014; Tubaro et al., 2016). Even in social network analysis, in general, visualizations often happen only after the data has been collected (Hogan, Carrasco, & Wellman, 2007: 116–117):

Visual depictions of relations among individuals have been an attraction of social network analysis for many years. Even when network researchers use matrix-based techniques for analyzing clusters, blocks, and so on (Faust and Wasserman 1992), they often visualize network structures through diagrams... Yet, for most analyses, these diagrams only appear in the lab long after data collection is complete. The lack of visual depiction of networks at the data-gathering stage obscures data

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<sup>13</sup> Carrington (2014) also argues that ‘mathematical’ should not be equated to ‘quantitative.’ (see Radcliffe-Brown, 1957: 69; White, 1963: 79 for further discussion).

collection, because neither researchers nor respondents can see concrete representations of what they are discussing.

The importance of visualization while collecting data becomes apparent in the case of eliciting personal networks. Problems and challenges concerning elicitation of personal network data have been well acknowledged. For instance, researchers noted that collecting personal network data entails a heavy burden to the respondent (Golinelli et al.; 2010; McCarty, Killworth, & Rennell, 2007). Asking compositional (alter characteristics) and structural (alter-to-alter ties) questions to the respondent involves considerable time and effort. More crucial is that the respondents may not be able to accurately recall relevant alters (Wellman, 2007) hence, it is rather important “to develop tools that aid the memory of the individual as much as possible” (Bidart and Charbonneau, 2011: 276). Network visualization is one of such tools that can help in memory recall and ease respondent burden (Bellotti, 2016; Hogan et al., 2007; McCarty et al., 2007; Molina et al., 2014; Tubaro et al., 2016).

But it is also the case that employing visuals during data collection takes varied forms. In this study, visualization is used in conjunction with in-depth interview. Furthermore, network mapping happens within (and not after) the interview.<sup>14</sup> This follows the studies conducted by Hogan et al. (2007) and Ryan et al., (2014), among others. The main advantage of embedding network maps within the interview process is that participants’ narratives (that come out of the in-depth interview) help in ‘setting the stage’ for network mapping. Since the migrant networks are tied with each migration phase, talking about that phase before eliciting the network facilitates the process of taking the respondents back at that point in time (before coming to London/New York or when they just arrived in the city) and, therefore, sensitizes them for the subsequent network visualization task. In this way, they are already mentioning the relevant alters (either people, group of people, organization) as they narrate how they are able to get to London/New York, what kind of lives were they leading upon arrival, and what were the challenges and difficulties that they encountered. Those relevant actors that they mentioned were also the ones they would usually list in the network maps. In those instances that they would not list someone that they mentioned before, they were then asked and prompted whether they will consider including those actors in the map (e.g. “You mentioned X introduced you to the recruitment agency, would you also include him here as well?”). In most instances, the participants would apologize for forgetting but there are also cases wherein the participant would refuse to include that person (e.g. “No, I don’t think he is important.”). Any moment in the interview process, the respondent can go back and revise any of their map (pre-migration, initial settlement, and current network). When asked about those who are able to help them in specific instances (social support questions) such as accompanying them to the hospital, asking for advice, or borrowing money, they are also able to remember people or groups of people that are relevant for their current network map. Given these, visualization and embedding enhance the ease of recall of relevant ties in migrant networks. This is essential as the project involves retrospection as a way of reconstructing changes in migrant networks. While memory ‘decays’ over time, those events that are deemed important (‘saliency of events’) to the respondents are likely to be accurately and easily recalled (van der Vaart & Glasner, 2011; as applied to retrospective migration histories, *see* Carling, 2012 and Smith & Thomas, 2003). In this study, it can also be argued that moving from one place to another and the ensuing period of adjustment are salient events that can be easily remembered as compared to any other events in the lives of immigrants, given that these ‘moves’ taken by the participants require relocation to the other side of the globe.

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<sup>14</sup> There are studies that utilize network visualisation during data collection but employ the visual tool after listing the names of the members of the network (i.e. not in real-time). For instance, Bellotti (2016), in her study of friendship networks of people from Milan, first ask for the lists of those people that respondents considered as friends, used those lists as sources of information for the in-depth interview, and then asking the respondents to draw their networks at the end of the interview.

For instance, older respondents and those who moved to London/New York several decades ago (compared to newly arrived ones) were still able to vividly narrate how they ended up in these cities and their situations when they just arrived. Furthermore, those who arrived in the same time period corroborate each other's narratives – that is, in their descriptions of how they are able to enter the US or the UK, and what was the kind of environment that they encountered when they arrived. At the same time, these narratives can also be substantiated given the specific immigration policy as a backdrop. The richness of the descriptions from these in-depth interviews coupled with visualization tool, therefore, provided a setting and an opportunity in better elicitation of relevant ties in particular migrant networks. While eliciting these networks by embedding them within migrants' narratives does not entirely eliminate the problem of forgetting, I argue that doing so enhance the ease of recall of relevant ties thereby providing a better understanding of migrant networks.

## Data Collection Instruments

As previously discussed, this project extends the traditional name generator in collecting personal networks of Filipinos in London and New York through network visualization (network map/ sociogram). This section outlines the tools and instruments used during the field work and data collection phase: (1) short socio-demographic questionnaire; (2) network maps/ sociogram; and (3) interview guide.

It is important to note that participants are asked if they would assent to be interviewed and for the interview to be recorded after the research was explained.<sup>15</sup> Instead of written informed consent, I asked the participants if I could record their assent instead.<sup>16</sup> Interviews are also simultaneously conducted in both English and Tagalog to approximate normal conversation and to make the respondents as comfortable as possible.

### *Socio-Demographic Questionnaire*

After explaining the study to the research participants, a short respondent sheet was filled out by asking the participants for the following information:

1. *Respondent's characteristics*: Year of birth; civil status; birth order; religion; educational attainment; current occupation(s); length of stay in NYC/London; length of stay in the US
2. *Characteristics of respondent's current partner*: Age; current location; current/last occupation(s); educational attainment; religious affiliation
3. *Characteristics of respondent's children, parents, and siblings*: Age; civil status; current location; current/last occupation(s); educational attainment; religious affiliation

Asking these data at the onset simplified the subsequent interview and network mapping for both the respondent and the interviewee.

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<sup>15</sup> For the copy of the informed consent form, refer to [Appendix 3.1](#) (p. 266). Each participant received this form.

<sup>16</sup> Recording the consent instead of asking the participants to sign a form is a decision based on previous experiences of interviewing Filipinos. There was already a great deal of doubt with regard to being interviewed and being asked about one's personal life (especially for undocumented migrants), asking them to affix their signature is deemed to be too invasive and will not foster rapport and trust building.

### *Interview Guide*

The interview guide (*see Appendix 3.2*, pp. 267–273 – English version) was developed during my first month of stay in London – the first leg of the field work. It was a product of conversations with Filipinos I met, observations while going around the city, and, most importantly, of sharing a house with three Filipino couples.

It is comprehensive and covers most of the aspects of their lives in the place of destination and their engagement with ties in the Philippines and elsewhere in the world. Since the idea is to try to make the interview as conversational as possible and to build rapport, it starts with asking the respondents how they are doing and how are their families (*kamustahan*). This is followed by the following topics:

1. Biographical background: childhood; growing up years; schooling and working experiences; initial thoughts/ ideas on working overseas
2. Migration experiences and relevant networks:
  - Pre-London/NYC: Experience(s) of working in other countries; reasons for moving in London/NYC; process of moving to London/NYC; expectations; corresponding network
  - Initial Years: Experiences upon arrival; challenges and adjustments; initial needs; corresponding network
  - Current situation: Description of their life now; corresponding network
3. Social Support questions: e.g. house work; child care; hospital visit; borrow money; advice; place to stay; and work opportunities
4. Life satisfaction and integration: Satisfaction with current job and income; present concerns; feeling of belongingness; voting participation; Filipino and non-Filipino friendships; participation in Filipino community
5. Household and community situation: Experience in the current place of residence and neighborhood; thoughts on moving to another place of residence
6. Immigration status and future plans: Plan/reason for applying for citizenship and dual-citizenship; plan to return to the Philippines; other plans for the future
7. Life chances and social position: Perceived inequality in the US/UK and the Philippines; self-positioning; prospect for social mobility
8. Connections to ‘homeland’: Ties (or lack of) in the Philippines; locating one’s ‘home’
9. Relations towards Filipinos: Thoughts and experiences on interacting with co-ethnics
10. Relations towards others: Thoughts on diversity and racism
11. Reactions concerning particular situations: Relationships with Filipinos and non-Filipinos

Participants are also encouraged to talk about their situation and experiences at work, especially as male or female workers. They are asked about whether expectations and treatment are similar (or different) for both sexes and whether it is easier for men or for women to find a job similar to theirs and any other job in London or New York. They are also asked for feedbacks concerning their experience with the interview and if they want to say anything else.

Most interviews follow the flow of topics listed above but there were also instances wherein the respondents’ story telling would alter this order. Also, some interviews were accomplished in several meetings, depending on the availability of the respondents.

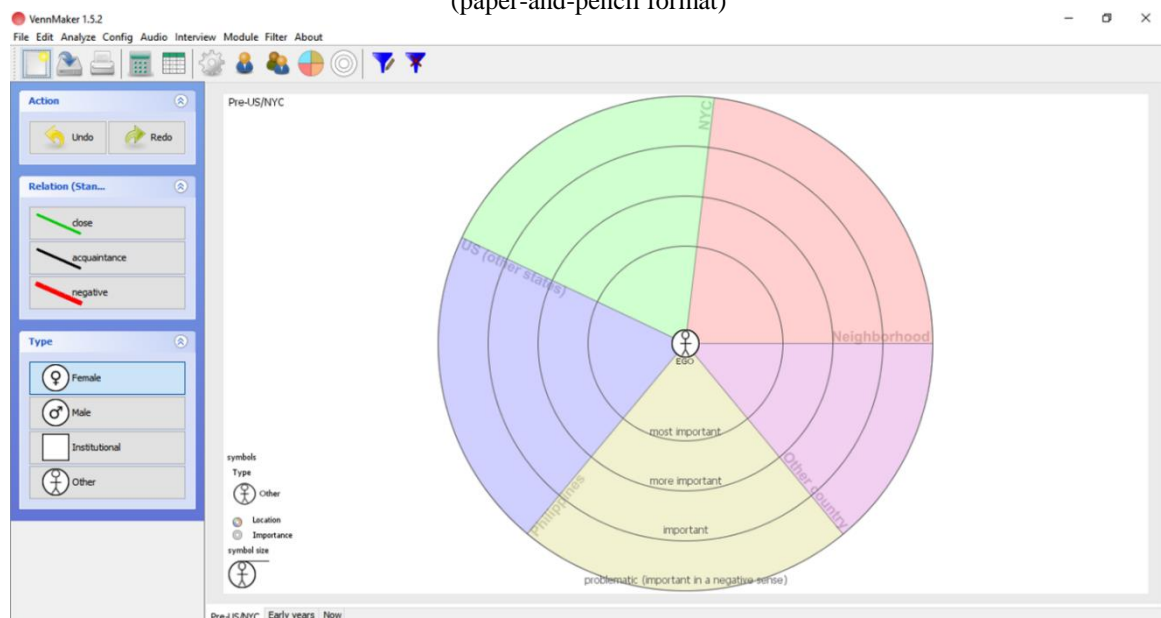


### Network Maps

As previously discussed, network mapping and visualization, as an extension of the traditional name generator, were integrated in the in-depth interview. The particular sociogram (*see* Figures 3.1 & 3.2) is composed of four concentric circles with the respondent represented as a dot in the middle. Each circle represents level of importance – the nearer the circle to the middle, the more important it is for the respondent. The last circle, however, are for problematic ties – those who are important but in a negative way. The last circle was added, instead of utilizing the space outside the diagram, in order to encourage the participants to also think about those actors who made an impact but in a negative sense. Among others, these are the recruitment agencies who facilitated their move but also swindled them, former employers who took them to London but exploited them, or relatives, acquaintances, or friends who helped them in some ways when they arrived but also took advantage of them. The diagram is also divided in terms of geographic location: neighborhood, London or New York, UK (outside London)/other US states, Philippines, and other countries.



**Figure 3.1.** Network Maps for London and New York  
(paper-and-pencil format)



**Figure 3.2.** Network Maps for New York  
(digitized format, VennMaker)

The network map was first explained to the participants and they were given the following instructions:

*Imagine yourself as the dot in the middle of the circles, kindly place these people around you depending on how important they are in your decision to move to NYC/US. The closest they are to you, the more important they are. You can place those who you consider as important in a negative sense (problematic). Kindly place them also depending on where they are currently located.*

For each migration phase, the following name-generating questions are used:

- ‘Pre- London/NYC’: Looking back, I will now ask you who influenced you the most, both positively and negatively, in your decision to move to NYC? Who helped you or facilitated your move? Whom will you consider instrumental? These can be your family members, your friends, colleagues, acquaintances, or even agencies or organizations.
- ‘Initial Adjustment’: At that time, who are the people and/or organizations that you know or have come to know whom you consider important and made a great impact in your life then (positively and negatively)? Prompt: These could be those who helped you with housing, job, papers/documents, showed you around, taught you the things you needed to know, gave you emotional and material support.
- ‘Further Settlement’: Whom do you consider important and influential in your life now?

Respondents are also asked the following information concerning the people/organizations they named: (1) age; (2) gender; (3) educational attainment; (4) occupation; (5) religion; (6) relationship with the respondent; (7) still in contact/frequency of contact; and (8) why they are important. Respondents are also asked if those they listed know each other (alter-to-alter ties).

The network diagrams are both in paper-and-pencil and digitized formats. While there are studies that advocate for the traditional paper diagrams (e.g. Hogan et al., 2007; Ryan et al., 2014) and those that utilized the digitized format (e.g. Tubaro et al., 2014), I chose to employ both formats depending on the interview situation. There were interviews done in park benches or cafes, and there are those in homes and work places. In the same manner, there are respondents who are comfortable with the digitized version and there are those who feel that it is threatening. There were also Skype interviews that require the digitized version of the sociogram.

### **Notes on Eliciting ‘Supportive’ and ‘Problematic’ Ties**

The network maps were designed to generate both supportive and problematic ties, mitigating the possibility of omitting ‘disappointing’ connections. Aside from emphasizing that they could list both ‘supportive’ and ‘problematic’ ties as the network maps were introduced during the interviews, the concentric circles were also labelled accordingly to include both types of ties (*see* Figures 3.1 and 3.2). I also found that since positive and negative experiences are both emotionally charged, supportive and problematic ties in particular phase of the migration process were relatively recalled with ease. As discussed, embedding the network maps within the interviews allowed the simultaneous evaluation of the generated networks vis-à-vis the narratives of the respondents.

In addition, the networks maps were also divided into different locations (New York/London, other places in the US or the UK, intermediate countries, and the Philippines) to also encourage and invite participants to think of ties in various places.

Lastly, the notion of ‘importance’ was not given a particular definition and not delineated. Since migrants are in different circumstances, it was left open for them to qualify what ‘important’ means, given each migration phase. This means that the respondents decided which support they received

(or did not receive) were relevant in relation to their perceived needs. Participants were then asked why the ties they listed were important, specifying not only the support and assistance they generated from these ties but also the quality of their relations and connections. As Ryan & Mulholland (2014: 152) suggested, “there is a need to understand the content of ties in terms of not only the flow of resources but also of the nature of the interpersonal relationships and relative social location of the actors involved.” It is also for this reason that the network maps were embedded within the in-depth interviews – so that both the interviewer and interviewees could also have the space to discuss and expound on meanings of ties, apart from support generated from them.

## **Gaining Entry to the Field and Collecting Data: Issues, Challenges, and Strategies**

The first part of the field work and data collection was conducted in London from last week of March to third week of September 2015; the New York part of the fieldwork was from October 2015 to mid-April 2016. The field sites are expanded to Greater London Urban Area and New York metropolitan area. In the case of London, participants are located (working and/or residing) in Greater London and in a town northwest of London (in east of England).<sup>17</sup> In New York, the areas covered are the five boroughs (Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Bronx, and Staten Island) as well as areas on the other side of the Hudson River, facing Manhattan.<sup>18</sup>

In total, there were 134 completed interviews; 58 completed interviews in London – 20 nurses, 20 domestics, and 18 care workers, and 76 completed interviews in New York – 27 nurses, 26 domestics, and 23 care workers. There were also three 1.5 generation Filipino nurses interviewed in New York. Interviews in London, on the average, lasted for 2 ½ hours. The longest interview was 4 hours and 12 minutes and the shortest was an hour and 14 minutes. The average interview duration in New York was 1 hour and 21 minutes; the longest was 3 hours and the shortest was 38 minutes.

Most interviews were conducted face-to-face. In New York, however, there were requests for interviews to be conducted through Facetime or Skype. While scheduling adjustments were made, there were still 4 interviews that were done via Skype as it was the most convenient for those respondents. Skype allows the computer screen to be shared thus, network mapping and visualization still became possible even for interviews conducted virtually. As previously mentioned, interviews took place in different settings – homes or friend’s homes, cafes/restaurants, workplaces (hospitals or employer’s residence), churches, malls, and own business establishments. Also, while there were some photos taken during the interviews, they were not included as part of the data in this study since they are taken as personal photos and the respondents did not assent for these photos to be included in the study.

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<sup>17</sup> Though this town is technically outside the administrative region of Greater London (32 boroughs and the City of London), it is still within the Greater London Urban Area and connected to Central London by the London Underground. One respondent – a nurse – works/resides here and I decided to include her since this provides an opportunity to also account for conditions that shape the decision of some nurses NOT to move to Central London.

<sup>18</sup> In the case of New York, Filipinos have considerable presence in Hudson and Bergen counties, as well as in other parts of Northern portion of New Jersey. Jersey City, for instance, has a thriving Filipino community, reminiscent of Queens. Most of the participants living in these areas are working in New York, while others tried working in New York in the past. For these reasons, I expanded the field site to include these areas.

### ***Participant Selection and Recruitment: 'Unintended' Ethnography and Participant Observation***

Getting into an interview situation is only half of the story since fieldwork and data collection begin with building contacts and possible respondents. As a Filipino doing research on Filipinos, this situation does provide certain advantages but it does not also guarantee that possible respondents would assent and commit to the interview. For one, doing fieldwork in cities like London and New York compounded the problem of building contacts – the sheer size of the cities and the particular fast-paced lifestyle were barriers that any researcher must contend with. People – whether I know them or not – simply have very limited time. Some were doing double or even triple jobs, hopping from one place to another and trying to maximize their time to earn money. Nurses on 12 (or more) hour shift and night shifts are not uncommon.

The London part of the fieldwork was tricky because I didn't know anyone in the beginning. Finding possible research participants started from scratch. But sharing a house with three Filipino couples helped a lot, not only in developing the interview guide but also in providing initial contacts as possible respondents. Two of them were also interviewed as domestic and care worker (Figure 3.3; DW-12 & CA-15). Figure 3.3 shows the referrals from my former housemates – mostly their friends, churchmates, and former co-workers. The Philippine Embassy in London also extended assistance as they are also connected to Filipino organizations (refer to Figure 3.4). In particular, the welfare officer contacted several people she knows and asked them if they can be interviewed and if they can refer other Filipinos they know. Another friend working as a nurse outside of London at that time also referred me to other nurses she knows who already moved to London (Figure 3.6.). As shown, most of the respondents were referred by a Filipino priest in London. He provided me with the most contacts not only because he knows a lot of Filipinos but also because he is very much influential among Filipino Catholics (Figure 3.5). Towards the end of the fieldwork, while interviewing a staff of a migrant organization, I was able to meet the only male domestic worker in my sample and he then introduced me to his churchmate who is a nurse (Figure 3.7). My contacts also expanded by participating in the activities of Filipino groups and organizations – such as masses, cultural events, and other religious activities. The elaborate and combined network maps of interview referrals (*see* p. 43) shows that networks do matter even in conducting fieldwork and doing fieldwork can also be viewed as networking. Existing ties do not only provide possible contacts; they also lend their trustworthiness such that possible participants are able to trust the researcher. This becomes more crucial in the case of undocumented migrants.

Fieldwork in New York is different from London in a way that I need not start from scratch since I have relatives and acquaintances in and around the city. Though it was also difficult to convince possible respondents for an interview, successful referrals were mostly made by relatives and family friends. I did of course participate in the activities of Filipino community – especially church-based ones (just like in London) but contact building and interview referrals in New York reflect the general feature of most migrant networks there – that is composing of predominantly familial and kinship ties. So that while field work in both cities can be both characterized as active networking, the kinds of relationships that facilitate such networking differ. In this sense, how the research participants were recruited and the kind of referral network that came out of it also reflected the fundamental difference in the networks of Filipinos in London compared to those in New York as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. In other words, as a Filipino researcher, my networks in both cities are similar to the typical characteristics of the respondents' networks in London and New York.

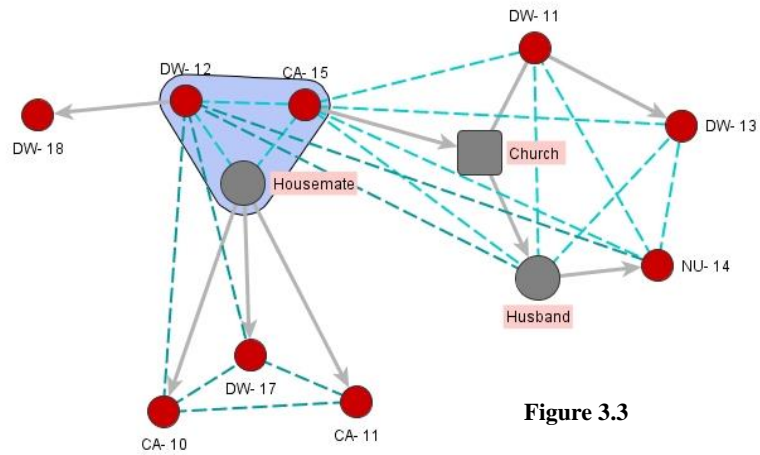


Figure 3.3

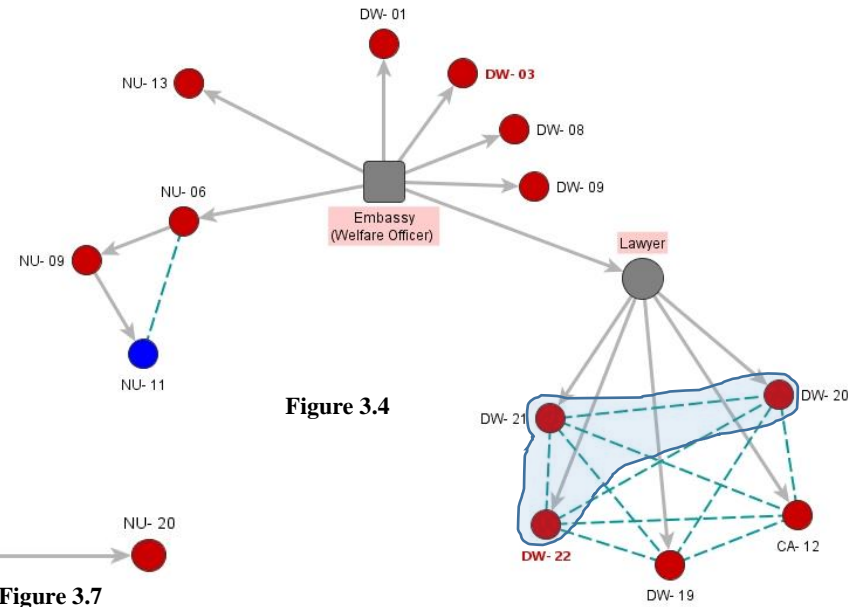


Figure 3.4

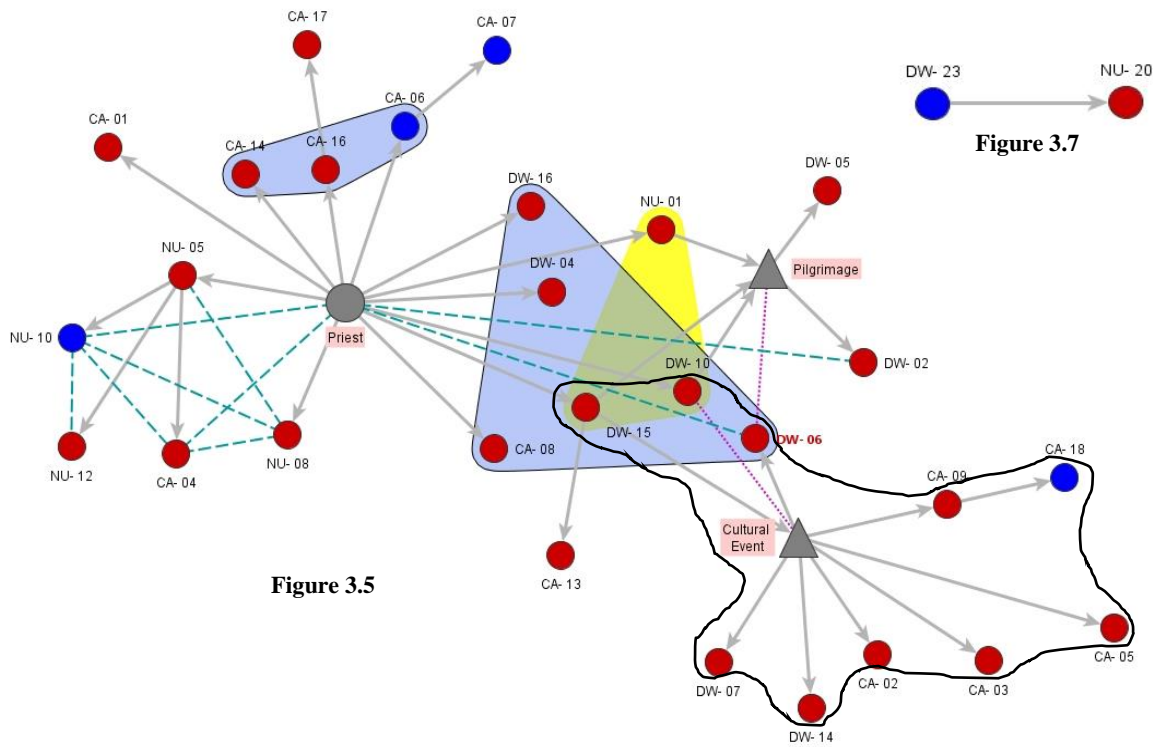


Figure 3.5

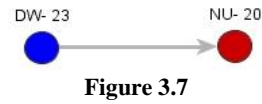


Figure 3.7

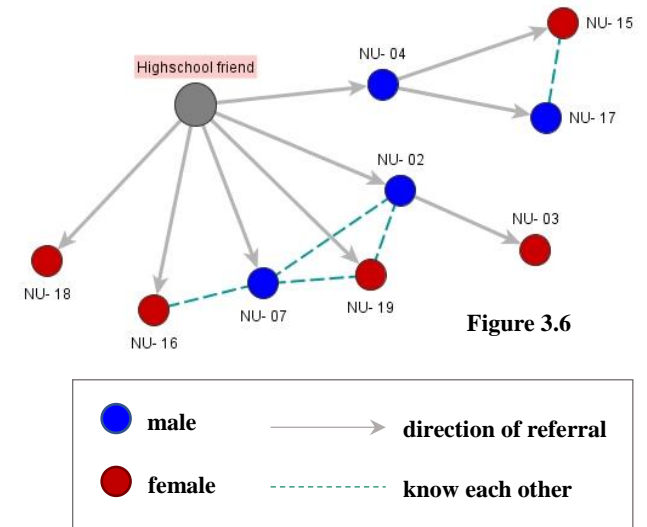
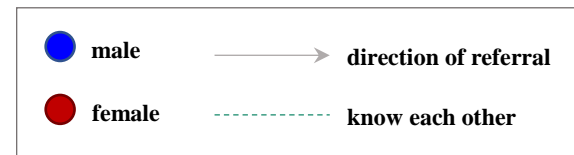


Figure 3.6



Mapping Interview Referrals (London Fieldwork)

Note: The 3 respondents whose ID numbers are in red are unfinished interviews

## Analyzing Data: Extending the Embeddedness of Network Maps in Narratives

The idea of integrating network mapping and visualization in conducting in-depth interviews is not just to improve the quality of data collected, but to also seriously take into account both the structure and content of migrant networks. This corresponds to devising a way that “do justice, or continue to do justice, to the structural approach of network research, but at the same time involve the (meaning-laden) constitution of social structures in their analysis” (Herz, Peters, & Truschkat, 2015: para. 4). In this sense, information derived from both the network maps and the participants’ narratives should inform each other. As a tool, network maps can provide information on both network structure and network content. The maps can be converted into matrices that can then be analyzed using formal, standardized methods. On the other hand, network maps (together with the narratives) can also be analyzed qualitatively as demonstrated by the method Qualitative Structural Analysis (QSA), which was put forward by Herz et al. (2015) and adopted by Altissimo (2016).

Following QSA, both network maps and narratives were analyzed, and the analyses from both were then combined. In analyzing network maps, Herz et al. (2015) outlined in detail the different questions derived from concepts used in formal network analysis. These include the “network’s density, the embeddedness of actors and the types and properties of the ties” (Altissimo, 2016; para. 6.1). For this study, each network map was examined – noting the following in detail: the clusters and groupings, the positioning of the alters in terms of importance, geographical location of the alters, predominance of particular alter attributes, the predominance of particular ties, and multiplex relations.

Parts of the transcripts that correspond to migration phases and social support were analyzed independently of the network maps (which differs slightly from QSA and more similar to the strategy of Altissimo, 2016). Passages are coded using MAXQDA 12 and based on the meanings and significance of the relationships, and from which context(s) these relationships emerged. The analyses of the network maps and participants’ narratives were then combined to have a better understanding of the structure and content of migrant networks. Doing so also provided an opportunity to examine the ways in which the network maps and the narratives converge, diverge, or complement each other with regard to the “network in general, about ego, the alters in ego’s life, the connections in the network, and their roles and meanings to ego” (Altissimo, 2016: para. 10.1).

The rest of the transcripts relevant to the research questions were also coded (again, through MAXQDA 12) – first, by open coding and according to the main topics of the interview guide. The topics and sub-topics were then re-ordered and clustered with the aim of generating themes and ‘sensitizing concepts’<sup>19</sup> (Blumer, 1954) based on the research questions. After deciding on the themes and concepts to expound, I re-visited the transcripts to recode appropriate text segments. I repeated this process while writing each chapter in the light of emerging themes, demonstrating that this was indeed an iterative process.

In addition to these procedures, network maps were also converted to numerical format – in order to get a summary of the kind of ties (network composition) listed and the corresponding support generated from these ties. Integrating such measures with the combined analyses of the network maps and interviews not only provided rich information concerning migrant networks but also

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<sup>19</sup> According to Herbert Blumer (1954: 7), *sensitizing concepts* “gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look. [ . . . ] They lack precise reference and have no bench marks which allow a clean-cut identification of a specific instance and of its content. Instead, they rest on a general sense of what is relevant.”

allowed systematic analysis of how networks change over time – e.g. formation and dissolution as well as persistence of ties, and shifts in importance and relevance.

Lastly, I treated the concepts I utilized from extant literature as sensitizing concepts (or heuristic devices), recognizing that while part of the analytical strategy is deductive (i.e. examining convergence and divergence from the previous findings), it is at the same time partly inductive (i.e. incorporating the respondents' sense-making, and researcher's interpretation of such meanings, as well as attempts at recognizing patterns emerging in cases of divergencies from previous findings).<sup>20</sup>

## Profile of the Respondents

Table 3.1 summarizes the general characteristics of the interviewees in this study, and provides an overview of the similarities and differences between the samples in two cities.<sup>21</sup>

It can be observed that the profile of nurse respondents greatly diverged from those of domestics and care workers. Most of these differences are to be expected. For instance, given that nurses are employed formally, there is a set retirement age that must be followed. Hence, on average, nurse respondents are younger compared to domestics and private caregivers who could continue to work in the informal economy even after reaching the formal age of retirement. Nurses are better educated and less likely to be married. They were more likely to arrive at the place of destination with working permits and have less complicated route to getting American or British citizenship. Even among those who entered with tourist or student visas, it was relatively easier for them to regularize their status after getting their license to practice as nurses.

Comparing the two samples of nurse respondents, it can be seen that nurses in London had more homogenous pathways to the UK in terms of their entry visa (work permit) compared to their counterparts in New York. Those in New York also migrated to the US through family reunification and tourist visas. Nurses in the US could also opt to finish an associate degree instead of a bachelor's degree, as well as take the licensure exam for LPN (licensed practical nurses) instead of the examination for RN (registered nurse). More nurses in New York also arrived earlier compared to those in London. This owes to the more recent recruitment of foreign-educated nurses in the UK (discussed in Chapter 4). Furthermore, almost three-fourths of the nurse respondents in London arrived during the period of active recruitment (1999 – 2005; Buchan, 2008). In terms of work setting, more nurses in New York reported to be working or have worked in care facilities compared to those in London.

Among the domestic worker respondents, the most prominent difference between those in New York and London is their educational attainment. More domestics in New York have at least bachelor's degree compared to their counterparts in London. As discussed in Chapter 5, domestics in London are the typical overseas Filipino (contract) workers who were mostly employed in the Middle East or Asia before their employers took them to the UK. Thus, these domestic workers mostly arrived with overseas domestic worker (ODW) visas, escaped their employers, became undocumented before regularizing their status under a concession scheme (Mullally & Murphy, 2014). The two domestic workers in London who arrived in the UK in 1976 had general work

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<sup>20</sup> This is most apparent in utilizing and revising Poros' typology in the analysis of pre-migration networks (see Chapter 6).

<sup>21</sup> Research participants have been given fictive names to anonymize them and protect their identity. See [Appendix 3.3](#) (pp. 274–279) for the complete list of the respondents by occupation (with their fictive names, age, and year of arrival).

permits since the ODW visa was put in place in 2002 (Mullally & Murphy, 2014). On the other hand, domestics in New York typically entered the US with tourist visas, eventually overstayed, and became undocumented.

Domestics in both cities typically work as nannies and housekeepers. Five of the domestic respondents in London were living with their employers (compared to two in New York; another two were staying with the elderly as part-time caregivers). Those in New York had more diverse jobs aside from housekeeping or caring for children (e.g. medical assistant, office or store clerk, cook, and private caregivers). It is also important to note that the oldest domestic respondent in each city has already retired from employment at that time of the interview.

Finally, those employed (or formerly employed) as care workers are also the most diverse type of respondents. In New York, while majority worked in private settings (either full-time or part-time), caregiving job is understood as temporary as they were simultaneously pursuing their own career (as a nurse, an accountant, or an artist). Seven (out of the 23) respondents in New York formerly worked as caregivers before finding other jobs.

Care workers in London can be divided into three types: (1) those who arrived under the overseas domestic worker visa scheme (i.e. former domestics who accompanied their former employers) and moved exclusively into caregiving jobs (in private or institutional setting); (2) those who were recruited as senior carers to work in care facilities; and (3) those who arrived as student visa holders (and continued to have the legal right to remain in the UK). Two respondents were not included into these three categories: one was sponsored by his spouse and the other overstayed her tourist visa (and remained as undocumented). One of the oldest care worker respondent in London has retired formally but mentioned that she was planning to look for a part-time caregiving job. Compared to their counterparts in New York, care workers in London were more likely to remain in caregiving jobs rather than being employed in other types of work.

In the subsequent chapter, I provide more detailed account on Filipino migration in the US and the UK – a necessary context to understand the observed similarities and differences discussed in this section. Particular attention is also given to discussing care work – how engaging in this type of work is economically rewarding (through overseas employment) while, at the same time, deemed to be demeaning (particularly those doing domestic and caregiving jobs).



**Table 3.1.** Profile of the London and New York Respondents

	Nurses		Domestics		Care Workers	
	London (n=20)	NYC (n=27)	London (n= 20)	NYC (n=26)	London (n=18)	NYC (n=23)
Age (mean/SD*/range)	40 (8.6) 25 – 58	40 (10.2) 26 – 58	52 (12.9) 33 – 87	50 (10.2) 30 – 67	47 (8.6) 37 – 63	46 (15.2) 25 – 71
% Females	70	85	95	100	83	65
% Ever Married	60	70	85	88	83	70
% Bachelor's degree (at least)	100	93 <sup>a</sup>	35	65	83	74
<b>Type of entry visa</b>						
Tourist	1	6	3	20	1	14
Student	1	-	2	-	4	1
Work	17	12	2	4	7	2
ODW visa <sup>b</sup>	-	-	13	-	5	-
Family	1	9	-	2	1	6
<b>Current immigration status</b>						
Citizen	14	18	4	3	12	8
Resident	4	7	5	3	2	6
Work	2	2	-	1	2	2
ODW visa	-	-	5	-	-	-
Student	-	-	-	-	1	1
Undocumented	-	-	6	19	1	6
<b>Years of stay (mean/SD)</b>						
	11 (4.2)	15 (9.1) <sup>c</sup>	12 (11.8)	10 (4.2)	11 (5.8)	10 (9.6)
<b>Year of Arrival (US/UK, range)</b>	1999 –2014	1989 –2015	1976 –2014	1996 –2011	1990 –2012	1971 –2015
1970s	-	-	2	-	-	1
1980s	-	3	1	-	-	-
1990s	1	9 <sup>d</sup>	3	3	3	3
2000–2005	13	6	2	9	4	4
2006–2010	4	4	6	12	11	11
2011–2015	2	5	6	2	-	4

\* SD means standard deviation; <sup>a</sup> Two respondents finished Associate Degree in Nursing, instead of Bachelor's degree;

<sup>b</sup> ODW visa means overseas domestic worker visa; <sup>c</sup> Includes the three 1.5 generation participants in the computation.

Excluding these 3 participants, the average year of stay is 14 (SD=8.9); <sup>d</sup> Three 1.5 generation respondents arrived during this decade.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Filipino Migrations in the US and the UK:

*Divergent Histories, Commodified Care, and the Continuing Search for the 'Good Life'*

#### Introduction

Migration is a social product as well as a contingent, context-specific process – wherein individual motivations to migrate interact with relational, structural, and historical contexts. As Boyd (1989: 642) explains, where and how migration takes place “is conditioned by historically generated social, political and economic structures of both sending and receiving societies” and such “structures are channeled through social relationships and social roles which impact on individuals and groups.” In the case of the present study, this process becomes more complex as receiving societies encompass varied types of destinations in the context of onward and stepwise migration (Paul, 2011, 2015).

In this chapter, I discuss the historical and contemporary background in which the stories on leaving one’s home and creating one’s place in a foreign land – narratives that are examined in the subsequent chapters – are embedded. I describe how despite the divergent migration histories of Filipinos in the US and the UK, the current trend is one of concentration of migrant Filipino workers in the care sector in both countries. I explore how this is predominantly driven both by the need and demand for care labor in the US and the UK as well as the Philippine state-led marketization of high-quality workers as an export commodity.

The chapter also expounds on how the phenomenon of actively constructed branding of Filipinos as ‘more than the usual’ workers (that builds on the supposed Filipino traits of being naturally caring and hardworking) facilitates the dream to migrate for some but at the same time brings about a stigma of being identified with lowly and poorly recognized job of doing ‘care work’ (Guevarra, 2014). This happens not only for the individuals who moved to work abroad but also for those who stayed in the country that has become known for exporting mostly low-skilled labor (Aguilar, 2003).

In the last part, I present various forms of reconciling and dealing with such stigma through strategies such as distancing oneself from fellow Filipinos, upgrading and professionalizing one’s work, and actively distinguishing oneself from those who share the same type of occupation. Despite ‘contradictory class mobility’ (Parreñas, 2001, 2015) of being more financially secured while feeling degraded for doing low-status work, these strategies allow Filipino migrants to imagine their trajectories and migration projects as successful or at least having the potential to be successful – with ‘success’ being primarily oriented towards one’s country of origin. In this way, migration ceases to be just a means for achieving the good life and becomes the embodiment of the good life itself.

## Contrasting Migration Histories

It is hardly surprising that there is relatively more developed scholarship on Filipino Americans or Filipino migrations in the United States given the long-standing (albeit ambivalent) connections between the two countries.<sup>22</sup> My intent in this section is not to provide an exhaustive and detailed historical account of the Philippine-US relations nor attempt to develop one for the Philippines and the UK. Rather, my objective is to offer a compelling backdrop upon which Filipino migrations to New York and London can be contextualized and located – given the old and enduring ties of the Philippines to its former colonial master, the United States, and the relatively new streams of Filipino migration to the United Kingdom. As what the subsequent sections and chapters show, these historical antecedents should be examined in conjunction with labor market demands and changing immigration policies of destination areas, expanding migration networks, and both calculative and unplanned actions of migrants themselves. It is in these intersections that we can best understand the migration projects, trajectories, and lived experiences of overseas Filipinos.

### *Filipinos in the United States: 'Returning to the Empire'*<sup>23</sup>

The necessity for any research on Filipino migrants in the United States to critically engage with the Philippine colonial roots is perhaps best articulated by Yen Le Espiritu (2003:1) in her work on Filipino Americans in San Diego, California and their home making practices:

The relationship between the Philippines and the United States has its origins in a *history of conquest, occupation, and exploitation*. A study of Filipino migration to the United States must begin with this history. Without starting here, we risk reducing Filipino migration to just another immigrant stream [emphasis mine].

Indeed, American colonialism and the Philippines as a post-colonial society profoundly shape the unabated waves of Filipino migrations to the United States. But the Philippine colonial past and American imperialist expansion have been obscured and oftentimes side-lined in discussing continuous movements of Filipinos in various parts of the US. This tendency can be seen, for example, in the literature that treat Filipinos as new immigrants or those that focus on post-1965 migration streams. In this sense, by lumping Filipinos together with other Asians and celebrating the supposed ease of the more affluent post-1965 immigrants to 'integrate' in American society, we risk obliterating the experiences of outright discrimination and brutal treatment of pre-war and pre-1965 Filipinos as farm workers in Hawaii, 'stoop laborers' in California, and cannery workers in Alaska. These rather uncomfortable histories have to be retold and the current state of affairs must be situated in this inconvenient past.

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<sup>22</sup> I am comparing the depth and breadth of research and available materials on Filipinos in the US to Filipinos as a migrant group in any country in the world. There are, however, scholars who lament the scant scholarship on Filipino Americans and Filipino migrants in the US compared to other immigrant groups. Yen Le Espiritu (1994), Lisa Lowe (2006), and Antonio Tiongson, Jr. (2006) characterize this condition as that of forgetting and invisibility. Filipinos are deemed as 'forgotten Asian Americans' (Cordova, 1983) and are oftentimes invisible despite their considerable numbers in the US due to the "historical amnesia of the U.S. colonization of the Philippines and to the general self-erasure of U.S. Imperialism" (Espiritu, 1994: 250).

<sup>23</sup> Lisa Lowe (2006), in her foreword for the book *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*, argues that migration of former (or still) colonial subjects to the US should be viewed as their 'return' to the 'imperial center.'

After the annexation of the Philippines in 1899, Filipinos became US nationals<sup>24</sup> – which means that they can enter and re-enter the United States without being subjected to restrictions and quotas but cannot be granted US citizenship rights. With the passage of successive exclusionary laws barring Asians from entering the US, Filipinos became the readily available source of cheap labor given their ambiguous status as US nationals. In Hawaii, Filipino men were recruited to work in sugar plantations as farm laborers. The recruitment policy was geared towards hiring of single (or those who were prepared to leave their families), physically able, and lower educated Filipino men as they were deemed to be docile and willing to endure the difficult work in the fields (Liu, Ong, & Rosenstein, 1991; Espiritu, 1995). Indeed, the work was back-breaking and accommodation provided to the workers was not adequate (Sterngass, 2007). However, given the depressed economic situations in the parts of the Philippines where the contract workers were recruited (Espiritu, 2003; Vergara, Jr., 2009) and the successful image exuded by workers who came back from Hawaii (Espiritu, 1995), recruitment efforts had been met with eagerness by mid-1920s (Espiritu, 1995; Sterngass, 2007). “Between 1909 and 1946 – the years of most active recruitment of plantation workers – the Hawaiian Sugar Planter’s Association (HSPA) brought a total of 125,917 Filipinos to Hawaii” (Caces, 1985: 60; cited from Dorita, 1954:131). Of this group, the majority stayed in Hawaii while others either went back to the Philippines (40,000) or moved to the US mainland (19,000), particularly in California (Liu et al., 1991: 490; cited from Melendy, 1981:37). It was not until the changes brought by the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act that Filipinos who settled in Hawaii were able to get their families and relatives under the family reunification program (Caces, 1985). Given that Filipinos comprised 14.5% of the total Hawaiian population in the 2010 Census (U.S. Census Bureau), one can say that these earlier migration streams and the subsequent chain migrations have contributed considerably in the substantial numbers of Filipinos in the islands.

In the West Coast, the same kind of Filipino workers – predominantly men – were recruited to work in agricultural farms. Unlike their counterparts in Hawaii, they did not stay in one place but move where labor was needed (Espiritu, 1995). However, working and living conditions were the same – grueling, harsh, and exploitative – as Filipinos worked as ‘stoop laborers’ in America’s agricultural sector. Likewise, Filipinos – mostly students<sup>25</sup> working part-time to earn extra money – also worked in the canning factories in Alaska where their labor were vital but exploited (Sterngass, 2007; Espiritu, 1995). On the other hand, Filipinos in the metropolitan areas of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle, and San Francisco found work in the service sector doing menial jobs (Espiritu, 1995). Owing to their ambiguous status as neither aliens nor citizens, Filipino in the US at that time did not have the rights and benefits accorded to US citizens, and as such, were mostly vulnerable and unprotected. It did not help that they were seen by locals as competition – for jobs and women, and such negative views<sup>26</sup> had intensified as the US entered the period of Great Recession. Incidents of beatings and violent mobs to drive away Filipinos had been documented mostly in California, in

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<sup>24</sup> The ‘US national’ status ended with the passing of the Philippine Independence Act (also known as the Tydings-McDuffie Act) in 1934.

<sup>25</sup> The first ‘batch’ of students to study in the US were called *pensionados* or those under government scholarship program (pension). These students were mostly from prominent families in the Philippines and after their studies, they returned to the Philippines to occupy important positions in the government (Liu et al., 1991). There were also non-sponsored students who came to the US. These students were the ones who were looking for opportunities to earn money to survive in the US (Espiritu, 2003: 101).

<sup>26</sup> It must be noted that Filipinos were already constructed as savages and inferior in order to justify the US occupation of the country. For instance, in the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair, Filipino natives, along with other people from around the world, were ‘exhibited’ to show the Americans their ‘inferiority’ and ‘primitiveness.’ The exhibit was “designed to demonstrate Filipino racial inferiority and inability of political self-rule” (Espiritu, 2003: 58) thereby, needing American benevolence.

addition to not being allowed to enter hotels, restaurants, and other establishments bearing the sign “Positively No Filipinos Allowed” as well as exclusion from owning properties, better employment opportunities, and forming families (Espiritu, 2003; Tiongson, 2006; Sterngass, 2007). Yen Le Espiritu (2003) and Lisa Lowe (2006), however, refer to such racialized experiences of Filipinos (and other minority groups) as *differential inclusion*:

The process whereby a group of people is deemed integral to the nation’s economy, culture, identity, and power—but integral only or precisely because of their designated subordinate standing.... Thus the inclusion of Filipinos has been possible, even desirable, only when it is coupled with the exploitation of their bodies, land, and resources, the denial of equal socioeconomic opportunities, and the categorization of them as subpersons of a different and inferior moral status (Espiritu, 2003: 47).

In this sense, with the American colonization of the Philippines, the Filipinos involuntarily became part of the United States and, since their cheap labor were (still are) needed by the American economy, their presence were rendered as necessary but such presence must remain at the fringes of the American society. With the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act (or the so-called Philippine Independence Act) in 1934, which stipulated the granting of independence after a transition period of ten years, Filipinos were reclassified as ‘aliens’ and subjected to immigration quota of 50 people per year – ending “almost 40 years of open Filipino immigration to the United States” (Sterngass, 2007: 52). From the boom in the Filipino migration to the US in 1920s – which saw around 45,000 Filipinos moving to the West Coast and an increase of more than 30,000 Filipinos in California by the 1930s (compared to 5 in 1910), the numbers dwindled (Espiritu, 1995: 9; Espiritu, 2003: 27; Sterngass, 2007: 43; Vergara, Jr., 2009: 10). Exclusion had indeed come full circle.

Exemptions were, however, made for Filipinos enlisting in the US armed forces. The outbreak of World War II prompted the then President Roosevelt to allow Filipinos to serve in the US Army.<sup>27</sup> With the amendment of the 1940 Nationality Act in 1942, Filipinos who served in the US armed forces were allowed to be naturalized and be given citizenship rights. In 1946, naturalization rights had been extended to Filipinos in the United States. These extensions of citizenship rights finally allowed Filipinos living in the US to bring their families and relatives – creating what Liu et al. (1991) considered as one particular chain of Filipino migration in the United States. The other chains would be those who came after the 1965 Immigration Act.

The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 facilitated not only the renewed but intensified migration of Filipinos to the United States. With the abolition of the national-origin quotas that greatly limited migration from Asia<sup>28</sup>, the 1965 immigration law brought about changes, both intentional and unintentional, that continuously shape immigration from the Global South. The emphasis placed on family reunification (that is for US citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their family members) and desired occupational characteristics (which means prioritizing individuals in particular professions that are deemed needed in the US) dramatically increased migration from Asia and, more particularly, from the Philippines. As previously mentioned, these preferences created two migration chains – the continuity of chain migration started by pre-1965

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<sup>27</sup> It is important to note however that the Philippines hosted US military bases until 1991 when the Philippine Senate voted to end nearly a century of US military presence in the country by not renewing the lease of US Naval Base in Subic Bay. These “U.S. bases served as recruiting stations for the U.S. Navy. Filipinos were the only foreign nationals who were allowed to enlist in the U.S. armed forces; and the Navy was the only military branch they could join” (Espiritu, 2003: 28).

<sup>28</sup> For Filipinos, the shift from 100 people to 20,000 people per year was substantial (Sterngass, 2007: 62).

Filipino immigrants who were able to naturalize and get their families, and the occupational-based migration composed of highly educated and trained professionals:

More than 62 percent of the Filipinos arriving between 1966 and 1970 came to join other family members. Three quarters of these immigrants were relatives of U.S. citizens; i.e., Filipinos who had arrived before 1960.... Occupational immigrants accounted for nearly 50 percent of all people entering under the preference system and about one third of all Filipinos admitted into the United States during these ten years. The overwhelming majority of these immigrants came through the third preference as professionals and other highly trained individuals (Liu et al., 1991: 495, 501).

Both Liu et al. (1991) and Espiritu (2003) point to these two distinct groups of Filipino immigrants to the United States, underlining heterogeneity and class diversity among Filipinos in the US. And since occupational immigrants can file application for themselves or through an employer, “social ties to the pre-1965 Filipinos were minimal” (Liu et al., 1991: 501). These occupational immigrants would also later on use the family reunification provision as tighter controls for hiring professionals from overseas were instituted.

But while the 1965 immigration law greatly shaped contemporary Filipino migration to the United States, it would be rather too simplistic and parochial to ignore “the military, business, and cultural ties forged between the Philippines and the United States during the ninety-plus years of (neo)colonial rule” (Espiritu, 2003: 31). Such lingering presence creates not only an intimate connection between the two countries but also a pervasive Americanization of Filipinos’ way of life in their homeland – from lifestyle to consumption to their hopes and aspirations. As E. San Juan, Jr. (1991:117) puts it, “so long before the Filipino immigrant, tourist or visitor sets foot on the U.S. continent, she—her body and sensibility—has been prepared by the thoroughly Americanized culture of the homeland.” With most of the country's institutions – political, economic, and educational – patterned after the American system, the institutional legacy and ideological influence continue to live on as most apparent with the persistence of “American dream” among Filipinos. Thus, while Vergara, Jr. (2009) questions what he deems to be the oversubscription to the ‘colonial’ and ‘postcolonial’ in explaining Filipino migration to the United States, I argue that it is a necessary backdrop. The empire – in its past and present forms – is palpably felt by Filipinos in their daily lives whether they are inside or outside of it. Hence, following Espiritu, any account on Filipino immigration in the US must start not when they reach the American shores but in their very homes – where the infatuation with the American dream begins. This point is exemplified in the development of nursing in the Philippines and Filipino nurse migration, as discussed in the later part of this chapter, as well as in the subsequent chapter where motivations and desire to migrate are examined in the context of the prevailing ‘culture of migration’ among Filipinos.

### *Filipinos in the United Kingdom: A Relatively ‘New’ Destination*

In as much as colonialism and post-colonial link have fostered an intimate connection between the Philippines and the United States, the absence of such links in the context of the Philippines-United Kingdom relation meant less visibility for Filipinos as a migrant group in the UK. As generally outside of the British empire, Filipino presence in the United Kingdom is less apparent and more recent compared to, for example, those from the Indian subcontinent (primarily from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka) or other British colonies in Asia such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, or Singapore. This can be seen, for instance, in the lumping of Filipinos in the ‘Other Asian’ category in national census and population surveys while Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Chinese are distinct and separate groups (*see* Figures 4.1 and 4.2, in comparison with the US census). Hence, ‘Asian’ is more commonly associated with these migrant groups (Llangco, 2013: 169). Furthermore, with the European enlargement, research and surveys of foreign-born population in the UK have also become focused in tracking migrations from other EU countries.

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

**8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?**

No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

Yes, Puerto Rican

Yes, Cuban

Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.*

**9. What is Person 1's race? Mark  one or more boxes.**

White

Black, African Am., or Negro

American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.*

Asian Indian     Japanese     Native Hawaiian

Chinese     Korean     Guamanian or Chamorro

Filipino     Vietnamese     Samoan

Other Asian — *Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.*

Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.*

Some other race — *Print race.*

**Figure 4.1.** 2010 US Census Question on Race and Ethnicity  
*Source: Pew Research Center (Cohn, 2015)*

**16** What is your ethnic group?

→ Choose one section from A to E, then tick one box to best describe your ethnic group or background

**A White**

English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background, write in

**B Mixed/multiple ethnic groups**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

**C Asian/Asian British**

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

**D Black/African/Caribbean/Black British**

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

**E Other ethnic group**

Arab

Any other ethnic group, write in

**Figure 4.2.** 2011 Census in England & Wales Ethnic Group Question  
*Source: Office for National Statistics (2015)*

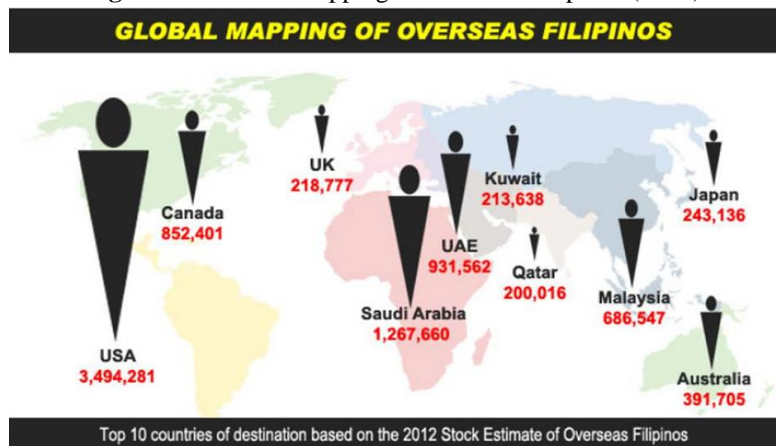
It is therefore understandable why Filipinos in the United Kingdom do not figure prominently – in national agenda, in academic research, or even on the side of the sending country, the Philippines. For instance, Ong (2009: 165) noted in his research that the Filipinos he interviewed in London also talked about such invisibility of Filipinos in the UK even in Philippine media and politics:

Filipinos in the UK are rarely seen and talked about in both British and Philippine media, they say. They note that there have been dozens and dozens of films and news documentaries about Filipino migrants in the United States, Hong Kong, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, and so on. However, Filipinos in the UK have been rather invisible. Even media outlets have been slow to respond to the demand of Filipino migrants in

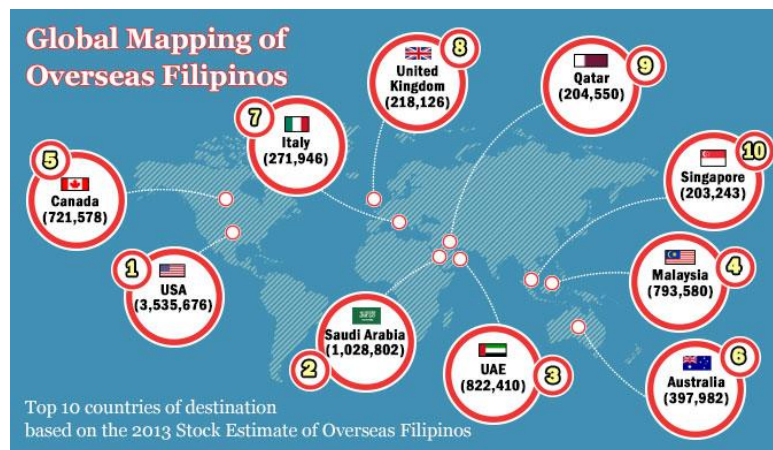
the UK for more targeted content... In addition, there has also been little attention from political leaders to the situation of UK-based Filipinos.

This lack of considerable presence can be attributed to the total number of Filipinos in the UK – which significantly has grown only in the last two decades. In the 2011 UK Census, it has been noted that 64% of the 123,000 Philippine-born residents arrived between 2001–2009 (ONS). This can also be seen in the stock estimates of overseas Filipinos (*see* Figures 4.3 and 4.4), which compare the estimated number of Filipinos in the UK, the US, and other top destination areas. In addition, while the number of Filipinos in the UK has dramatically increased in recent years as statistics from the Philippines and UK have shown, this number is still relatively smaller compared to the earlier and larger migrant streams from other countries.

**Figure 4.3.** Global Mapping of Overseas Filipinos (2012)\*



**Figure 4.4.** Global Mapping of Overseas Filipinos (2013)\*



\*Adapted from the official website of the Commission on Overseas Filipinos

On the other hand, with such increase in the past decades, Filipino-born population in the UK became the largest (in 2012) and second to the largest (in 2013) in Europe. It remains to be seen whether this increase will be sustained in the coming years given that the UK immigration policy has become tighter and more restrictive. But while this is the case, Filipinos working in specific occupations in the UK has gained prominence and visibility as their labor is still needed and crucial for the functioning of the country. I am particularly referring to Filipino nurses, care workers, and domestics who became the present ‘face’ of Filipino workers in most countries of destination. Before discussing overseas Filipino workers in the context of the global demand for migrant care labor, I first provide a more detailed profile of Filipinos in the US and the UK, in general, and New York and London, in particular.



### General Profile of Filipinos in the US and the UK: A Comparison

After providing a historical overview and background on Filipino migrations in the US and the UK, it is also useful to look into the characteristics of current stock of Filipino migrants in both countries so as to better appreciate the similarities and differences between the two migration streams. For one, Filipinos in the US and the UK, based on the estimates<sup>29</sup> of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (see Figures 4.5 and 4.6), can be mostly classified as permanent migrants compared to the more temporary and contractual nature of stay of Filipinos in the Middle East and other Asian countries. This trend can be expected given that the US and UK immigration laws provide legal pathways toward permanent resident status and naturalization.

Figure 4.5. Estimated Number of Filipinos in the UK, 1997-2013

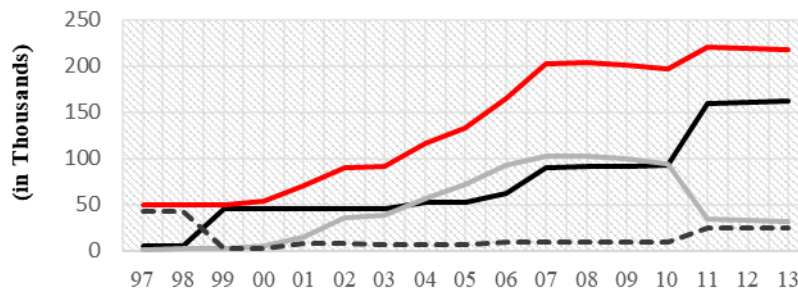
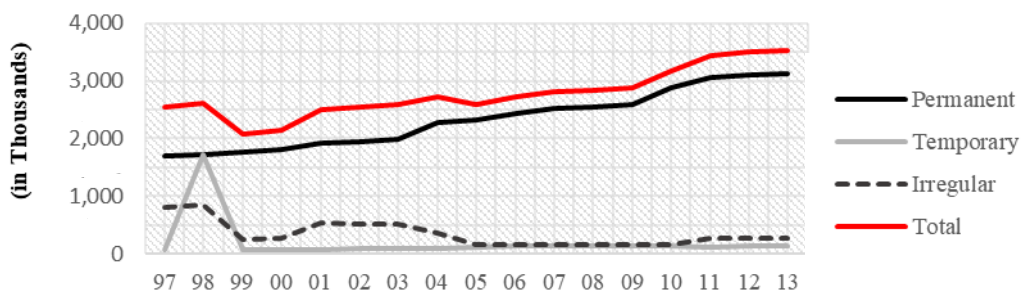


Figure 4.6. Estimated Number of Filipinos in the US, 1997-2013



Data Source: Pooled CFO Stock Estimates of Overseas Filipinos, 1997-2013

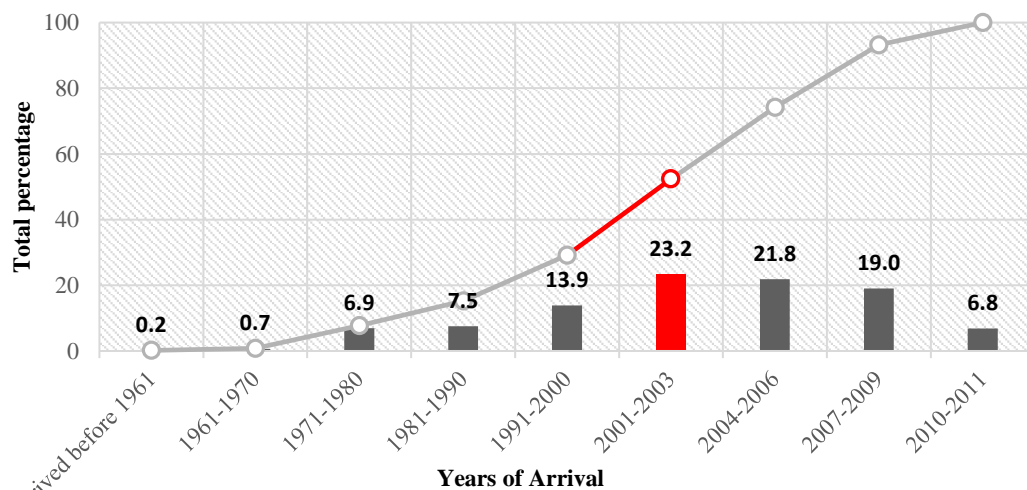
Based on the CFO estimates, there were about 3.5 million Filipinos in the US and over 200,000 Filipinos in the UK in 2013. Ascertaining the exact and accurate number of Filipinos overseas and in each country of destination is a difficult, if not an impossible, undertaking. Migrants can be highly mobile and, given the fluidity of their movements, documenting and counting them can be problematic. For instance, the Philippine government has statistics on deployed Filipino workers given their contracts in particular countries. However, subsequent movements of these Filipino workers after leaving the country might no longer be captured and reported – that is, if they did not finish their contract and did not return to the Philippines. In addition, while Philippine embassies and consulates are also keeping count of the number of overseas Filipinos, they might not be able to include those migrants who want to remain ‘invisible’ owing to their legal status. Thus, at best, we can have estimates as indications and approximations of migration streams of Filipinos in different countries.

<sup>29</sup> As these are estimates, figures from the Commission on Overseas Filipinos are not without issues. Some of these issues on accuracy are discussed in the text. For further discussion on this matter, see, for example, Asis (2008).

Countries of destination also have their own means of documenting their foreign-born population. But, as discussed in the case of Filipinos in the UK, this depends on how and who they count, as well as on the extent of information available on a particular group. In general, the US Census Bureau and UK Office for National Statistics provide more conservative figures compared to that of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO). In the latest estimate of the foreign-born population, it has been reported that there were over 1.9 million Filipinos residing in the US in 2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates). For the same year, it has been estimated that there were 149,000 UK residents<sup>30</sup> born in the Philippines.

Looking at the historical and pooled data on the changing Filipino population in two countries, the contrast between two migration streams becomes apparent. Figure 4.7 shows the arrival of Filipinos in England and Wales in the last decades by indicating the proportion of the Filipino population in 2011 that arrived in a particular period. Here we can see that of the 122,625<sup>31</sup> Filipinos in 2011, almost 3/4 arrived after 2000.

**Figure 4.7.** Timeline of Arrival of Filipinos in England and Wales



Data Source:  
Census 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

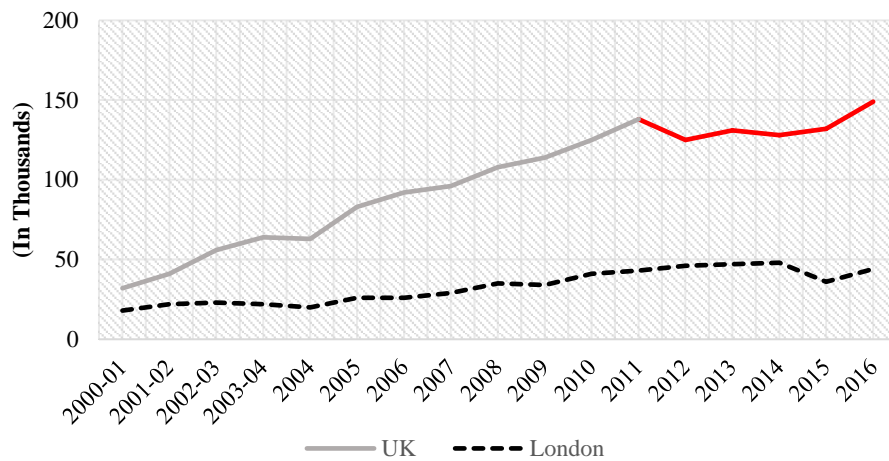
Compared to those in the US (*see* Figure 4.9), these Filipinos in the other side of the Atlantic can be classified as recently-arrived migrants. Considering the profile and narratives of the research participants in this study, widespread nurse (and to a certain extent, support care workers) recruitment could have contributed to the acceleration and intensification of Filipino migration in the UK after the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, subsequent tightening of immigration laws tapered the continuous growth of the Filipino population in the UK in recent years as seen in Figure 4.8,<sup>32</sup> where fluctuations can be observed after 2011.

<sup>30</sup> UK usual residents refer to those who have been residing in the UK for 12 months or more and include those who have been residing in the UK for less than 12 months but intend to stay for a total of 12 months or more.

<sup>31</sup> Philippine-born residents of England and Wales comprised 94.5% of the total Filipino population in the UK in the 2011 census.

<sup>32</sup> Pooled data from “Population by country of birth and nationality underlying datasets” based on the Annual Population Survey. Data for the first four waves were collected from Mar 2000–Feb 2001, Mar 2001–Feb 2002, Mar 2002–Feb 2003, and Mar 2003–Feb 2004. From 2004, data were collected from Jan to Dec of a given year. It is important to note that APS excludes some residents in communal establishments such as nursing homes, boarding houses, and prisons, although it covers those in student residence halls and NHS accommodation. This is one of the differences between the census and APS population estimates.

**Figure 4.8.** Estimates of Filipino-Born UK Residents, 2000-2016



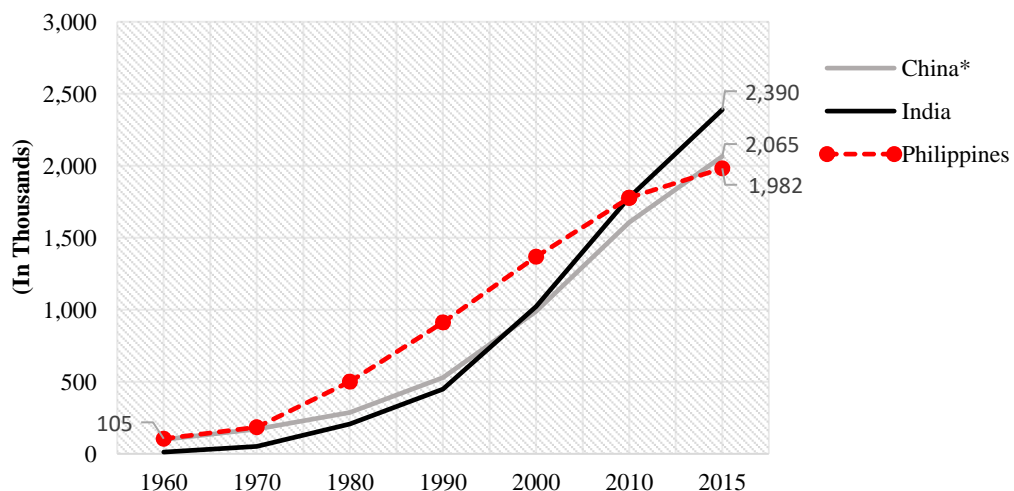
Note: Pooled data from the Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics (ONS)

In the case of the US, it can be seen in Figure 4.9 that Filipinos already have considerable presence in the country even before 2000, though it’s population growth had been overtaken by immigrants from India and China in the past 15 years. However, Filipinos has been consistently in the top ten foreign-born groups in the US since 1980 (and in the top five from 1990). In 1980, the Philippines was the only Asian country in the top ten countries of birth of the US foreign-born population. In 1990 and 2000, it is second to Mexico as the largest immigrant group in the US. The historical ties discussed in the previous section shaped the past and continuing presence of Filipinos in the US. As McNamara and Batalova (2015: para. 5) noted:

While the number of Filipino immigrants has risen alongside other Asian groups since 1965, their unique historical experience as former nationals, close historic ties to the U.S. military, and prevalence in health-care professions sets Filipino immigrants apart from the other top five immigrant groups: Mexicans, Indians, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

On the other hand, Filipino population in the UK has yet to reach the top ten foreign-born groups in the country. It was only in 2005 when the Philippines entered the top 20 countries of origin of the UK foreign-born population. In the latest estimates (2016), it was on the top 16, accounting for 1.6% of the total non-UK born resident population.

**Figure 4.9.** U.S. Foreign-Born Population by Selected Countries, 1960-2015



In terms of dispersion across the country, Filipinos in the UK are concentrated in London while those in the US have notable settlements in several states. In 2011, 34% of the total Filipino population in the UK were located in London. However, the almost 130,000 Philippine-born UK residents in 2011 only accounted for minor segment of the UK's total population. In the US, the highest concentration of Filipinos can be found in California, accounting for 44% of the total Filipino population in the US. For states like New York, despite the considerable number of Filipinos, they accounted for only 2% of the total immigrant population. In New York City, the borough of Queens – one of the most ethnically diverse place in the US – is home to considerable number of Filipino migrants, comprising 2.7% of the borough's foreign-born population (Lobo & Salvo, 2013).

Looking closely on Filipinos in New York City, the proportion of Philippine-born residents (in relation to the total and foreign-born populations) closely resembled that of London. In the 2011 UK Census, there were about 44,000 Filipinos in London, accounting for 1.5% of the city's immigrant population. Comparing with the figures from the 2011 American Community Survey, the almost 51,000 Filipinos in New York City accounted for only 1.7% of the city's foreign-born population. What is important to note here is the diversity of both cities in terms of the composition of their immigrant population. As global cities, London and New York attract varied types of migrant groups as exemplified by the extensive works of Nancy Foner on New York as 'an immigrant city' and captured by Steven Vertovec's concept of super-diversity in Britain, most especially in London.

But while New York and London are comparable in this respect, the larger national contexts differ given that Filipino migration streams in the US and the UK have divergent historical roots, as previously discussed. In this sense, comparing New York and London can yield interesting insights owing to these similarities and differences.

It is also useful to situate Filipino immigrants in New York City within the wider Filipino diaspora in the US and the general American population. Table 4.1 summarizes and compares the selected characteristics of Filipinos in New York and in the US, as well as those of the native and foreign-born populations using the ACS 2011-2013 estimates. We can see that Filipinos in New York were disproportionately female, even when compared to the total Philippine-born population in the US. The median age was also higher, especially in comparison to the US native and foreign-born populations. Filipinos were also more likely to be naturalized US citizens compared to the general foreign-born population. Their median household income was also considerably higher. Interestingly, the median earnings of female Filipinos in New York were substantially higher compared to that of Filipino men in the city. That was not the case, not only for the native and foreign-born populations, but also for the overall Philippine-born population in the US. The average household and family sizes of Filipinos in New York were also smaller, more closely resembling the native population than the general Philippine-born and foreign-born populations.

Most Filipinos in New York were also highly educated, not only in relation to the native and foreign-born populations but also compared to the Philippine-born population in the US. In terms of the kind of work, Filipinos were mostly concentrated in management, business, science, and arts occupations, but more so for Filipinos in New York with more than half of Philippine-born population in New York reported to be working in this particular occupational category.

To some degree, considerable proportion of Filipinos were also found in service occupations, similar to the foreign-born population.<sup>33</sup> Filipinos were also reported to be concentrated in educational services, and health care and social assistance industry more than the native and foreign-born populations. Furthermore, almost half of the Philippine-born population in New York were found in this industry, higher than the proportion of the general Filipino population in the US in 2013.

**Table 4.1.** Selected Characteristics of PH-Born and US Population, 2011-2013

	PH-BORN		U.S. POPULATION	
	NYC	US	Native	Foreign
Total population (in thousands)	53	1,847	272,944	40,918
<i>Male (%)</i>	38.40%	40.20%	49.30%	48.90%
<i>Female (%)</i>	61.60%	59.80%	50.70%	51.10%
Median age (yrs)	49.9	48.1	35.9	42.6
Bachelor's degree or higher	66.30%	48.90%	29.40%	27.90%
Naturalized US citizen	62.90%	66.40%	-	45.80%
Average household size	2.88	3.51	2.52	3.39
Average family size	3.5	3.89	3.13	3.86
Occupation (selected categories)				
<i>Management, business, science, and arts</i>	54.5%	42.6%	37.5%	29.4%
<i>Service</i>	21.9%	22.8%	16.9%	25.2%
<i>Sales and office</i>	17.1%	21.7%	25.8%	17.3%
Industry (selected category)				
<i>Educational services, and health care and social assistance</i>	49.0%	39.9%	24.0%	18.9%
Median household income (dollars)	85,277	81,871	52,910	47,753
Median earnings (dollars) full-time, year-round workers:				
<i>Male</i>	52,691	46,330	50,692	36,922
<i>Female</i>	61,035	45,354	39,232	32,381

*Data Source:* US Census Bureau, 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

Despite the lack of extensive data on Filipinos comparable to that of the US, McKay (2016: 27) noted that Filipino migrants in the UK “are typically nurses, domestic workers, housekeepers, nannies, care facility staff, and private caregivers, though highly skilled professionals work as engineers, managers, and academics.” Thus, in both global cities, Filipino migrants tend to be employed, whether formally or informally, in the care sector – as nurses, domestics, and care workers. The next section looks more closely on these occupational categories, in particular the need and demand of both the United States and the United Kingdom for nurses, care workers, and domestic workers.

<sup>33</sup> Registered nurses are classified under the management, business, science, and arts occupational category while healthcare support occupations such as nursing assistants and healthcare support workers as well as domestic workers (childcare workers, maids and housekeeping cleaners, and personal care workers) are categorized under the service occupations (*see* American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2013 Code List, <[https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech\\_docs/code\\_lists/2013\\_ACS\\_Code\\_Lists.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/code_lists/2013_ACS_Code_Lists.pdf)>, accessed 19 September 2017).

## Migrant Labor and the Demand for ‘Care’

The migration history of Filipinos in the US, as previously discussed, demonstrates how migrant labor had been utilized primarily for the American interests within the context of colonialism. In the post-colonial world, one can say that nothing much has changed. The movement of peoples from the Global South to the Global North has not only continued but has intensified in contemporary times. The case of the Philippines illustrates how an export-oriented economic policy has translated not only into the production of goods for overseas demands but also into the reproduction of ‘exportable’ people (Choy, 2000). What perhaps changed radically in recent times is the increasingly feminization of labor for export. Compared to the earlier migration of predominantly Filipino (single) men to the United States in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the typical migrant from the Philippines today is a woman who has left her family and her traditional ‘domestic duties’ to take up the same duties – though of another woman from the First World. In the words of Shutes and Anderson (2014: 1):

In the global North, international migrants have increasingly supplemented the unpaid or low-paid care labour provided by non-migrant women – as domestic workers, nannies, care assistants and nurses – in the private sphere of the home and in publicly and privately funded care services.

This phenomenon has been captured and expounded through the concepts of ‘global care chain’ and ‘international division of reproductive labor.’ Arlie Hochschild (2000) developed the concept of ‘global care chain’ based on the work of Rhacel Parreñas on Filipino domestic workers in Los Angeles and Rome (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015) – rephrasing Parreñas’ concepts of ‘international division of labor’ or ‘international transfer of caregiving’ (Parreñas, 2012). Global care chain refers to “a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring” (Hochschild, 2000: 131). Such ‘care chain’ connects seemingly unrelated care jobs being performed in different areas or countries by various care workers. For instance, a domestic worker from a rural area in the Philippines moves to the capital, Manila, to care for the children of a mother who migrated to New York or London to take care of the children of another woman so that she herself can do paid work outside the home. Parreñas (2000: 561) refers to this as “the three-tier transfer of reproductive labor among women in sending and receiving countries of migration” which means that “migrant Filipina domestic workers hire poorer women in the Philippines to perform the reproductive labor that they are performing for wealthier women in receiving nation.” These concepts have been extended and further developed by other scholars like Nicola Yeates (2011, 2012) who broadened the theoretical scope of the concept (FitzGerald Murphy, 2014) and include care provided in institutional settings such as hospitals, men who perform care work, as well racial and ethnic inequalities (Parreñas, 2012).

This section looks closely at how care work is configured in the United States and the United Kingdom and how Filipino nurses, care workers, and domestics – both men and women – have been linked in global care chain and have become involved in this international division of reproductive labor.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> There is a rich literature that discusses and critically examines the concepts of care labour/care work and reproductive labour/social reproduction – their differences, convergence and divergence, as well as the advantages of using one over the other (for example, *see* Kofman, 2012; Kofman and Raghuram, 2015; Parreñas, 2012). Cognizant of the insights from the works on social reproduction, I primarily discuss ‘care’ and ‘care work’ in this chapter to emphasise how overseas Filipino nurses, domestics, and care workers are commodified as ‘naturally caring’ and how they distance and embrace this characterisation to distinguish themselves and assert their status over others.

***‘A Ticket to Migrate’:  
The Recruitment of Filipino Nurses in the United States and United Kingdom***

“*Nurses are in demand*” – a statement that sums up why most of my respondents took up nursing in the first place. While such statement is a personal account of why individuals got into the nursing profession, it also alludes to the structural forces and relational factors that frame such decision. It is useful to begin with the migration of Filipino nurses as it runs parallel to the previously discussed relationship between Filipino immigration and US colonialism.

In her book *Empire of Care*, Catherine Ceniza Choy (2003) situates the institutionalization of the nursing profession in the Philippines within the context of American colonial rule. The first nursing school in the country was established in 1907 by the American colonial government, with white American women training would-be Filipino nurses. As Choy argues, while the imposition of Western medicine to prevent diseases through the establishment of nursing education may seem to represent the humanitarian face of the empire, it also functioned as a rationale for the presence of the colonial power that gave birth to it. The characterization of Filipinos as suffering from poor health because they lack the basic knowledge about hygiene and sanitation, which in turn is due to their “primitive customs” (Choy, 2003; citing Dock, 1912) corresponded to the larger image of Filipino that had been propagated – that of a savage, primitive, and inferior group of people needing necessary guidance and intervention. It is also interesting to note that with the creation of the nursing profession in the Philippines in the early twentieth century, American nurses first migrated in the country and Filipino nurses first became racialized in such complicated context – even before they leave the Philippine shores.

Filipino student nurses were also sent to the United States for further studies, making nursing very appealing to most Filipinos. While the earlier sponsorship of American individuals and organizations as well as the *pensionado* program of the colonial government did send Filipino nurses to the United States to study and contribute to the professionalization of nursing in the Philippines, the 1948 Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) made overseas education and training available to larger numbers of Filipino nurses – making “that dream of going abroad into a dream come true” (Choy, 2003:57). Furthermore, though the earlier years of the EVP primarily attracted nurses from Scandinavian countries and United Kingdom, the majority of the participants in the later years were Filipino nurses (Brush, 1993; Choy, 2003). “Between 1956 and 1973, more than 12,000 Filipino nurses entered the United States through the EVP” (Brush, 2010: 1574; citing Alinea and Senador, 1973). Brush (1993) and Choy (2003) also noted that while the original objectives of the program were ‘cultural exchange’ and enhancement of knowledge and skills, it inadvertently enabled American hospitals to fill in their nursing staff shortage at a lower cost. The program allowed hospitals to circumvent the pre-1965 immigration restrictions and became an avenue for the abuse and exploitation of foreign nurses – from working the same or even longer hours with lower compensation to undesirable working hours to lack of actual lectures and trainings (Brush, 1993; Brush, 2010; Choy, 2003). Despite these not-so-rosy realities that Filipino nurses encountered upon reaching the United States, most Filipino nurses still aspired (and continue to do so) to go to the United States. Increasingly, those exchange nurses who returned to the Philippines mostly aimed to go back to the U.S. while others found a way to extend their stay or remain there permanently (Choy, 2003).

It is important to stress at this point that the overwhelming number of Filipino nurses who seek employment outside of the country is not something new. The prestige attached to ‘going to the United States’ has been ingrained early in the consciousness of Filipinos. Filipino nurses are just but one illustration of this. The images of success and ‘good life’ that one can gain when you go abroad (particularly in the U.S.) are images that have been perpetually reproduced. As Choy (2003) contends, it is more than economic consideration that compels Filipino nurses to go abroad. While

Filipino nurses experience exploitation and discrimination in American hospitals, the ‘gain’ of being able to earn considerably more compared to what they can earn in the Philippines, and to be able to afford and consume goods and leisure that are not available for them (and their families) before, override these negative experiences. Therefore, the frame of reference is one’s socioeconomic mobility in the Philippines and not one’s racialized and discriminated position overseas. This condition has been studied among migrants employed in low-status jobs as captured by Parreñas’ (2001, 2015) concept of ‘contradictory class mobility’ to refer to the experience of Filipino domestic workers of being downgraded with the kind of job they do but, at the same time, earning more compared to their previous (professional) work in the Philippines. In the same vein, the work of Kelly (2012) on Filipino migration in Canada also points out to the importance of ‘transnational frame of reference’ in understanding the experience of ‘deprofessionalization and deskilling’ in destination country as migrants evaluate and re-evaluate their class positions in different contexts. Beyond the experience of Filipinos overseas, the work of Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (1995) on Latino adolescents in the US suggests that the first-generation immigrants use the notion of ‘dual frame of reference’ as they compare their dire condition in the country of origin and the perceived opportunities they have in the US. In this sense, they are able to bear the hardships they are experiencing in the destination country. Another illustration is Nieswand’s (2011) ‘transnational status paradox of migration.’ Using his research on Ghanians migrants, Nieswand (2011: 150) examines forms of status inconsistency as migrants’ “status gain in the country of origin relies on a simultaneous loss of status in the receiving country” – echoing the findings of authors previously mentioned. However, such condition – as Choy (2003) illustrates – is also experienced by highly-skilled migrant workers as they adopt the same ‘dual frame of reference’ in order to cope with difficulties in a foreign land.

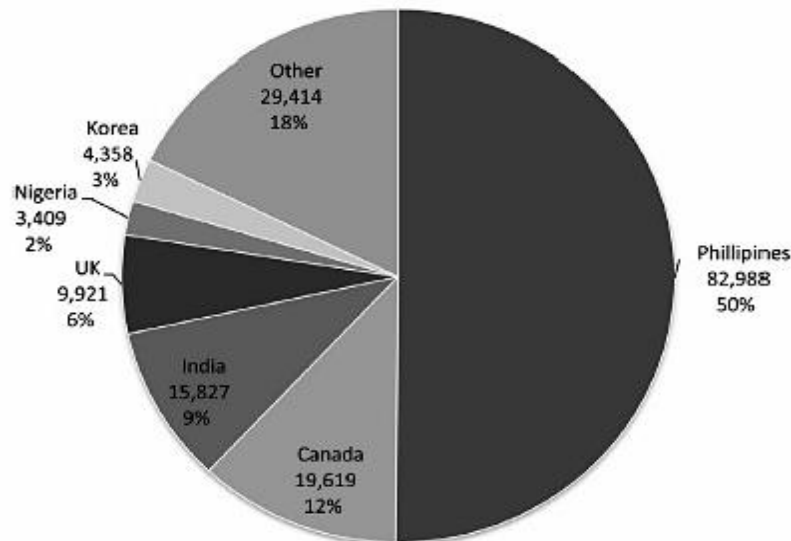
By ending the national origins quotas, the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act was instrumental in dramatically increasing the number of Filipino nurses in the United States. For instance, “by 1967, the Philippines became the world’s top sending country of nurses to the United States, ending decades of numerical domination by European and North American countries” (Choy, 2000: 127). However, as the previous discussion has shown, the mass migration of Filipino nurses (together with other highly skilled Filipino professionals) in the post-1965 period should be seen as a continuation and expansion of the already institutionalized practice of sending Philippine-educated nurses to the United States. As Choy’s *Empire of Care* has emphasized, it is a practice that includes various actors and participants – the Filipino nurses themselves, American hospitals, recruitment and travel agencies, as well as the governments of both the United States and the Philippines – operating within historical, social, economic, and cultural contexts. In the case of the Philippines, an Americanized nursing education and profession and the deeply ingrained ‘culture of migration’ and ‘American dream’ coupled with a government that adopted an export-oriented economy<sup>35</sup> since the 1970s (and has remained committed to it) intersect with the high demand for foreign health workers – not only in the Global North but also in countries in the Middle East and Asia – and have set the stage for the unabated exodus of Filipino nurses. Despite tighter restrictions to control the recruitment of foreign workers, the Philippines continue to send its nurses overseas.

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<sup>35</sup> The rhetoric of nationalism regarding the international migration of Filipino nurses (and of overseas Filipinos, in general) has also changed parallel to the adoption of an export-oriented economy during the Marcos administration. From the ‘expectation’ that nurses working overseas must come back to contribute to ‘nation-building,’ the attention has then shifted to the remittances of overseas Filipinos’ being their primary contribution to the country (Choy, 2000; 2003). This shift can also be viewed as the larger transformation of the ‘duty to one’s country’ from physical co-presence to virtual co-presence as overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are labelled as ‘modern day heroes’ for keeping the country’s economy afloat through their remittances (*see*, for example, Encinas-Franco, 2013; Rodriguez, 2010).



For the United States, more restrictive policies brought about by the 9/11 terrorist attacks<sup>36</sup> coupled with backlogs in visa processing and economic downturn contributed to such declines (Masselink & Jones, 2014). But while it is no longer that easy for Filipino nurses to work in the United States compared in the past, the Philippines continue to be the primary source of foreign educated nurses in the U.S. (see Figure 4.10).



**Figure 4.10.** Countries of Origin of Internationally Educated RNs in the United States, 2008  
*Adapted from Spetz et al. (2014: 10)*

However, as the process to enter the United States has become more difficult, lengthy, and costly – causing slowdown in hiring and placement<sup>37</sup> – other countries started (or expanded) their active recruitment of Filipino nurses. One of these more recent, non-traditional destinations of Filipino nurses is the United Kingdom (Lorenzo, Galvez-Tan, Icamina, & Javier, 2007). Despite the absence of significant historical ties, Filipino nurses emerged as one of the most significant non-EEA overseas trained nurses (refer to Table 4.2; Bach, 2007).

“The UK was highly active in the international recruitment of health professionals from 1999 until 2005” due to the expansion of the National Health Service (NHS) under the New Labour government (Buchan, 2008: 51). The country had to look for new sources of foreign nurses not only to meet the need for NHS staff but also because of the decline in the number of nurses recruited from its ‘traditional sources’ – the former British colonies (Buchan, 2008). For instance, Ireland also became an active recruiter of foreign nurses (Kingma, 2007; Yeates, 2008) and it has become ethically and politically challenging for the UK to actively recruit nurses from African and Caribbean countries (Bach, 2007; Buchan, 2008). Interestingly, while the Philippines does experience nursing shortage (Ball, 2004; Lorenzo et al., 2007), it is not included in the list covered by the Code of Practice, which determines countries where foreign nurses can be actively and, at the same time, ‘ethically’ recruited:

<sup>36</sup> Choy (2003: 186), however, discussed that as early as 1989, the Immigration Nursing Relief Act had already “attempted to institutionalize the end of U.S. hospitals’ recruitment of foreign-trained nurses.”

<sup>37</sup> It must be noted that Filipino nurses could have also used other strategies to enter the United States – such through the family reunification provision or using tourist visa as some of my respondents have narrated.

This code required NHS employers not to actively recruit from developing countries unless there is a government-to-government agreement that this is acceptable. The list was determined on the basis of level of economic development, and covers more than 150 countries. A request can be made by the government of the source developing country that they wish to be removed from the list. Such working agreements exist with only three developing countries—China, India, and the Philippines—all others being effectively designated as ‘no-go’ areas for active NHS recruitment (Buchan, 2008: 52).

Looking at the “production and domestic demand patterns, the Philippines has a net surplus of registered nurses” but this does not take into account that out of the 58% of those who are working as nurses in 2003, almost 85% are working overseas<sup>38</sup> (Lorenzo et al., 2007: 1409). But given its request to not be included in the list of countries where active recruitment is prohibited, the Philippines signed bilateral agreements with the United Kingdom to facilitate the hiring of Filipino nurses. These agreements, signed in 2002, were however terminated and not renewed in 2006 (Makulec, 2014). Like in the United States, the number of recruited Filipino nurses in the UK has also declined given the changes in the country’s immigration and international recruitment policies. Buchan (2008), Bach (2010), and Makulec (2014) note that the recruitment of foreign nurses was largely seen as a short-term fix for the NHS staffing shortages, which had been met as the number of locally trained nurses has increased in addition to nurses from EU countries. At the same time, restrictive policies<sup>39</sup> have made it more difficult and more expensive for non-EU nurses to enter, work, and even remain in the UK (Bach, 2010; Makulec, 2014). As Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show, the share of overseas-trained nurses in the UK has declined in recent years after the active recruitment in the early 2000s.

However, even with these increased restrictions to work in the US and the UK, recruitment continues albeit in lower numbers. Filipino nurses can also utilize other channels to enter and work in the US and the UK as exemplified by the narratives of some nurses in this study. Also, as Choy (2003) and Bach (2010) suggest, it is likely that both countries will again actively recruit and make concessions given intensive shortages. For their part, Filipino nurses will continue to look for ways to achieve a ‘better life’ for them and their families as domestic conditions remain precarious and unfavorable. One of such ways that has been continuously promising and enticing is overseas work. The pursuit of attaining ‘better life’ through overseas employment will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 8.

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<sup>38</sup> As Lorenzo et al., (2007) also noted, this picture does not even include the great disparity between urban and rural areas in the country – with rural and remote areas being in dire need of nurses and other health professionals.

<sup>39</sup> Makulec (2014: 21) lists these policies as follows: “First, in 2005 the NMC instigated a much tougher (and costlier) programme for overseas nurses intending to practise in the United Kingdom – the Overseas Nurses Programme (ONP). Second, in 2006 the main entry clinical grades in the NHS were removed from the Home Office shortage occupation list. Third, in 2007 the NMC then also raised the English language test requirements. Fourth, in 2008 the UK immigration policy changed, with the introduction of a points-based work permit system, making international recruitment a more difficult option for employers. More recently, there has been further toughening of immigration policy. In May 2010, the UK government announced their intention to review the immigration system to ensure that net migration reduced between 2010 and 2015 to the levels previously seen in the 1990s.”

Overseas-Trained (Non-European Economic Area) Nurses Registered Per Annum in the UK 1998–2005							
Country	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
India	30	96	289	994	1,830	3,073	3,690
Philippines	52	1,052	3,396	7,235	5,593	4,338	2,521
Australia	1,335	1,209	1,046	1,342	920	1,326	981
South Africa <sup>a</sup>	599	1,460	1,086	2,114	1,368	1,689	933
Nigeria <sup>a</sup>	179	208	347	432	509	511	466
West Indies <sup>a</sup>	221	425	261	248	208	397	352
Zimbabwe <sup>a</sup>	52	221	382	473	485	391	311
New Zealand	527	461	393	443	282	348	289
Ghana <sup>a</sup>	40	74	140	195	251	354	272
Pakistan <sup>a</sup>	3	13	44	207	172	140	205
Zambia <sup>a</sup>	15	40	88	183	133	169	162
USA	139	168	147	122	88	141	105
Mauritius <sup>a</sup>	6	15	41	62	59	95	102
Kenya <sup>a</sup>	19	29	50	155	152	146	99
Botswana <sup>a</sup>	4	–	87	100	39	90	91
Canada	196	130	89	79	52	89	88
Nepal <sup>a</sup>					21	43	73
Swaziland <sup>a</sup>						81	69
China <sup>a</sup>							60
Malawi <sup>a</sup>	1	15	45	75	57	64	52
Others						637	556
Total	3,621	5,945	8,403	15,064	12,730	14,122	11,477

<sup>a</sup> Indicates countries from which active recruitment by the NHS is prohibited (see discussion).  
*Note:* Listed by most numerous country applicants in 2004–2005.

**Table 4.2.** Overseas-Trained Nurses Registered Per Annum in the UK, 1998-2005  
*Adapted from Bach (2007: 391)*

**Table 4.3.** Source Countries for Admissions to the NMC Register, 1999–2012

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
UK, total (%)	72.6	65.5	61.4	47.4	57.4	56.2	61.2	66.9	77.2	83.8	89.7	88.9	83.6	81.8
EU, total (%)	7.1	6.7	5.2	3.6	2.5	3	3.7	5.6	5.4	7.2	7.0	8.5	11.5	13.3
Overseas, total (%)	20.3	27.8	33.4	49.1	40.1	40.8	35.1	27.6	17.4	8.9	3.3	2.6	4.9	4.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.1	9.6	9.0	12.3	9.6	10.5	8.0	4.6	2.2	1.5	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.2
South Africa	3.4	6.8	4.3	6.9	4.3	4.9	2.9	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Nigeria	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
Zimbabwe	0.3	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ghana	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Australia	7.5	5.6	4.2	4.4	2.9	3.8	3.0	2.4	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.8
Philippines	0.3	4.9	13.5	23.6	17.6	12.5	7.7	4.9	2.4	1.0	0.4	0.6	2.0	1.5
New Zealand	2.9	2.2	1.6	1.4	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
Caribbean	1.2	2.0	1.0	0.8	0.7	1.1	1.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
India	0.2	0.4	1.1	3.2	5.8	8.9	11.3	11.3	8.8	3.9	0.9	0.3	1.0	1.7
Other countries	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.3	2.7	2.9	3.1	3.0	2.7	1.3	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.5
Overseas (%)	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Sub-Saharan Africa	25.3	34.7	27	25.2	24.0	25.8	22.9	16.3	12.7	16.8	16.6	9.7	2.6	3.9
South Africa	16.5	24.6	12.9	14	10.7	12	8.1	4.4	0.8	1.4	2.0	2.6	1.0	0.7
Nigeria	4.9	3.5	4.1	2.9	4.0	3.6	4.1	4.4	5.3	6.7	6.7	3.0	0.4	1.6
Zimbabwe	1.4	3.7	4.5	3.1	3.8	2.8	2.7	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.2	1.2	0.3	0.4
Ghana	1.1	1.2	1.7	1.3	2.0	2.5	2.4	1.8	1.4	1.6	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.6
Australia	36.9	20.3	12.4	8.9	7.2	9.4	8.5	8.7	6.2	11.3	19.6	28.0	20.5	16.3
Philippines	1.4	17.7	40.4	48	43.9	30.7	22	17.9	13.9	10.8	11.4	23.5	41.7	30.2
New Zealand	14.6	7.8	4.7	2.9	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.5	1.5	2.7	5.7	9.2	5.2	4.7
Caribbean	6.1	7.1	3.1	1.6	1.6	2.8	3.1	2.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.4
India	0.8	1.6	3.4	6.6	14.4	21.8	32.2	41.2	50.4	44.2	28.3	12.3	20.1	33.9
Other countries	14.9	10.8	8.9	6.7	6.6	7.1	8.9	11.1	15.2	14.1	18.2	16.8	9.7	10.6

Source: NMC data, various years.

Adapted from England & Henry (2013: 565)

***Exporting ‘High-Quality’ Workers:  
Filipino Overseas Domestic Workers as the Country’s Pride and Shame***

Nursing and domestic work are so much alike yet, at the same time, so much different. Both are traditionally ascribed as ‘women’s work’ – and in the Global North, have become synonymous to ‘migrant women’s work’ (see, for example, Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Yeates, 2010; Kofman & Raghuram, 2015). But since nursing has been professionalized and institutionalized in contemporary times, it is also difficult to classify nurses and domestic workers in one and the same category. Indeed, nursing job carries more prestige and status than domestic work as nurses are considered as skilled or highly-skilled workers who merit higher wages compared to domestic workers. A closer look, however, into the lives of Filipino migrant women (and men) in this study show how these conventional divisions between skilled and semi-skilled, formal and informal care, and public (institutional) and private (domestic) spheres of care work can conceal intimate connections and tensions between the two, especially in the contexts of restructuring of care provision and arrangements, and the general devaluation of care work. This theme will be explored in Chapter 8 as how research participants viewed their work and social position in both place of destination and home country.

In the previous discussion, it has been shown how the nursing profession in the Philippines has gained not only popularity but also prestige as it became a passport for Filipino nurses to go to United States. Such is the demand for nurses abroad that cases of Filipino doctors and other medical professionals taking up nursing as a second course are not isolated. And while recruitment for countries like the United States and United Kingdom has slowed down, it remains a viable way to gain work overseas. Domestic work, while less desirable, is another means to do so. However, improving one’s social status (at least, in the Philippines) from working overseas is not so straightforward in the case of migrant domestic workers given the stigma attached to doing ‘dirty,’ ‘lowly,’ and ‘servile’ domestic work (Bosmans et al., 2016). It is in the domain of domestic work where clear-cut hierarchies and distinctions are very much apparent – class, gender, and in the case of migrant workers, race and ethnicity.

Historically in the Philippines, within the context of feudalistic relationship in *haciendas*, the daughters of farmers enter servitude in the household of the *hacendero* (landlord) usually to pay incurred debts (Barber and Bryan, 2014). While this might continue in the provinces where the hacienda system still exists, the more common practice is for affluent and middle-class families to hire stay-in ‘domestic help’<sup>40</sup> – usually women from rural areas (occasionally, also men) to perform various kinds of household chores and/or child care. But as Barber and Bryan (2014: 37) note, “it was becoming much more difficult for middle-class women to recruit working-class women willing to work as *ya yas* [nannies]... Increased opportunities for overseas migration were blamed for this labor shortage.” Domestic workers (or ‘household service workers’) comprises the largest occupational group among the deployed land-based overseas Filipino workers. New hires totaled more than 190,000<sup>41</sup> in 2015, which is around 38% of the total new hires in that year. This does not include ‘rehires’ or those who returned to the same employers. The volume of deployed Filipino domestic workers overseas and domestic work carrying the label of a ‘shameful’ and ‘demeaning

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<sup>40</sup> In Tagalog, ‘domestic help/ helper’ is commonly translated as “*katulong*” – where “*tulong*” means help – but has a derogatory connotation. A more ‘polite’ term is “*kasambahay*” – literally means companion in the house (“*bahay*” means house).

<sup>41</sup> While these figures are informative, it is worthwhile to mention that official statistics gives us a picture of those who left the country with existing contracts that have been processed by the POEA. This means that those who left with tourist visas or any other visa and ended up working overseas are not included.

job’ creates ambivalence – not only for the migrant domestic workers themselves, but also for their country, those that have been left behind, and Filipino professionals overseas.

For instance, according to Constable (2007: 42), “domestic work, which at one time had few if any racial connotations in Hong Kong, had by the 1980s become so associated with Filipinas that the term *banmui* (“Philippine girl”) was used interchangeably with ‘maid’ or ‘servant.’” Such association was so prevalent and commonplace that in 1986, a ‘Filipino domestic helper’ doll was sold in Hong Kong. “Each doll wore a black and white uniform, and each carried his or her own miniature ‘Philippine passport’ . . . Besides passports, the dolls also carried miniature employment contracts” (Constable, 2000: 232). More than a decade later, in 1998, a Greek dictionary defined ‘Filipineza’ not only as a woman from the Philippines but also as a domestic worker from the Philippines (de Guzman, 2004; Fresnoza-Flot, 2012; Piper & Roces, 2003). While the Philippine government protested both as ‘insults’ to the country’s honor, it also devised ways of improving the image of the Filipina – as the extension of the image of the country. And since it cannot do away with sending more domestic workers abroad, it made efforts towards the professionalization of domestic workers, such as the *Supermaid* training program, to raise the value of Filipino workers in the global market (Guevarra, 2014):

In order not to acquire an image of a “country of domestic workers” that would be considered an insult to the “national identity” of the Philippines, the government has started to concentrate on the improvement of Filipino migrants’ qualifications.... These reforms specifically intended to professionalize paid domestic work by developing the skills and competences (linguistic, technical, etc.) of migrant Filipinas before their departure.... To complete these reforms, the government introduced a new term to refer to migrant domestic workers – the Household Service Workers. This terminology aims to favor the emergence of a new Filipino domestic worker figure as a skilled worker trained to take charge of household chores at her employer’s home abroad (Fresnoza-Flot, 2012: 103-104).

Guevarra (2014) calls such strategy ‘racial branding,’ which attempts to market Filipino workers as ‘more than the usual’<sup>42</sup> (care) worker – nurses who are not only technically competent but also compassionate; domestic workers who are not only (naturally) caring but can also tutor your kids, impeccably clean your houses, and properly respond to emergencies and accidents.

Regardless of whether these efforts improve the image of domestic work or not, the association of the Philippines as the ‘country of domestic workers’ does not sit well with the Filipino elites. “These comfortable classes feel demeaned that the Philippines has gained a worldwide reputation as a provider of low-status workers, a status that by association debases them as well because of shared nationality” (Aguilar, 2003: 140; citing Aguilar, 1996; Tadiar, 2002). Similar with the local elites, Filipino professionals abroad also experience shame and humiliation with the prevalent image of Filipino as low-status worker in countries with significant population of Filipino domestic workers, such as Singapore and Hong Kong (Amrith, 2010). Hence, these Filipino professionals find ways of distancing and distinguishing themselves and their work as different (Aguilar, 2003; Amrith, 2010). In this sense, class divisions are maintained and reproduced even overseas, “resulting in the fragmentation of overseas Filipino communities” (Aguilar, 2003: 151). For Filipino domestic workers, one way of managing the stigma associated with their work is to also assert distinction – this time, from domestic workers of other races and nationalities. Invoking hierarchy of wages and employers’ preferences where they are at the top, Filipino domestics in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia (Aguilar, 2003), as well as in Italy and the United States (Parreñas, 2015) are able to

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<sup>42</sup> ‘More than the usual’ was part of the title/slogan of the promotional campaign of the Philippines’ Department of Tourism (“Wow Philippines: More than the Usual”).

cushion the ‘humiliation’ of doing domestic work – especially for highly-educated domestic workers who had to confront downward mobility in destination areas. But what is often not explored are further distinctions among Filipino domestic workers themselves (i.e. social class membership in the Philippines) and where they are located (i.e. hierarchy among destination areas; Paul, 2011; 2015).

Compared to the ‘traditional’ destinations of migrant domestic workers (e.g. Hong Kong, Singapore, or countries in the Middle East), United States and United Kingdom do not figure prominently in the official statistics concerning Filipino domestic workers.<sup>43</sup> As Parreñas (2015: 3) notes, “with no migration recruitment program, the United States has never been an official destination for Filipino migrant laborers seeking domestic work, but it has been reached by those migrating with a tourist or immigrant visa.” The same can be said of the United Kingdom where migrant domestic workers are allowed to enter the country when they are accompanied by their employers<sup>44</sup> (through the domestic worker visa) or as au pairs (Anderson, 2014). What needs to be stressed, as Parreñas explained, is that Filipinos can enter the US or the UK not as domestic workers (officially) but can later on work as such. Hence, there is also a need to explore the intersections of perceived prestige of a particular destination (the United States and, to a certain extent, also United Kingdom), class membership in the country of origin, and working in low-status occupations such as domestic work. I will go back to this point towards the end of this chapter.

### ***‘More Than Just Caregiving’: Ambiguities among Filipino Care Workers Overseas***

The porous line that divides nurses and domestic workers becomes more contentious in the context of long term care for the elderly and the disabled. It is also in this context where distinctions become more crucial in differentiating oneself from ‘others’ of perceived subordinate status while, at the same time, strategies for upward occupational mobility from those at the bottom become more achievable.

As it has become more difficult and costly for registered nurses from the Philippines to enter the United States and other preferred destinations, it is also becoming more common for these nurses to either accept being downgraded as auxiliary medical workers or as live-in caregivers (sometimes, even as domestic workers). Such downward occupational mobility is usually endured while in the process of trying to become staff nurses in their desired countries of destinations. The studies of Huang, Yeoh, & Toyota (2012) and Amrith (2010) show that Filipino nurses in Singapore end up doing the ‘dirty’ and ‘degrading’ job of caring for the elderly as they engage in what Twigg (2000) calls *bodywork* within care work. Because they are the direct care providers, care workers – whether

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<sup>43</sup> This does not mean that there is no considerable presence of Filipino domestic workers in the US or in the UK. They do not figure prominently in the compendium of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) statistics given that there is no official and mass deployment of Filipino domestic workers in the US or the UK compared to the traditional destination countries of migrant domestic workers (*see* the deployment statistics from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration <<http://www.poea.gov.ph/ofwstat/ofwstat.html>>, accessed 16 October 2017).

<sup>44</sup> In the United States, migrant live-in domestic workers can enter the country legally using one of these three visa schemes depending on the kind of employers who will bring them to the U.S.: “A-3 visas to work for ambassadors, diplomats, consular officers, public ministers, and their families; G-5 visas to work for officers and employees of international organizations or of foreign missions to international organizations and their families; and B-1 visas to accompany U.S. citizens who reside abroad but are visiting the United States or assigned to the United States temporarily for no more than four years, or foreign nations with non-immigrant status in the United States” (Human Rights Watch, 2001: 4).

in institutional or domestic settings – are also in direct contact with the body of the elderly, which marks them as belonging to the lowest rung of the hierarchy:

Medical practice is presented in such a way as to limit involvement in the body, and professional status is marked out in terms of distance from the bodily. [. . .] Though bodywork is at the heart of nursing, it has an uncertain status. Nursing is organised hierarchically so that, *as staff progress, they move away from the basic bodywork of bedpans and sponge baths towards high-tech, skilled interventions* [italics mine]; progressing from dirty work on bodies to clean work on machines (Twigg, 2000: 390)

Hence, much of what is ‘dirty’ and ‘demeaning’ about care work centers on dealing with the body – especially its wastes and dirt. Whereas being a staff nurse allows one to lay claim on technical and medical know-how (e.g. inserting I.V.), “care of the elderly often involves dealing with bodily effusions and excrement, and the hands-on intimate care that comes with cleaning elderly bodies” (Huang et al., 2012: 199). In this sense, being downgraded pertains to losing one’s image of being a professional as nurses perform care work that they feel does not reflect their level of education, skill, and training. They need to reconcile why they have to do such a demeaning job when they had spent time, money, and effort to be a registered nurse. They cope with such contradiction by looking at their situation as foregoing ‘being a nurse’ for the moment so that they ‘can become a nurse’ in the United States (or somewhere more desirable) in the future. They can also of course look at their situation as being able to earn more in a foreign country (despite the degrading status of a caregiver or a domestic worker) to attain a better socio-economic status in the Philippines – a point previously discussed in the case of Filipino nurses and domestic workers.

Apart from bodywork, the proximity of doing care work with domestic work is another dimension that makes caregiving degrading (e.g. cooking, mopping the floor, or washing the dishes). This is further compounded when nurses are not only downgraded as care workers but when domestic workers *upgrade* to do care work. “The distinctions between a registered nurse and a caregiver are blurred; a nurse, when cleaning an elderly patient, is doing work proximate to what some domestic workers do in private homes” (Amrith, 2010: 417). Looking after an elderly might be informally part of the job of a domestic worker. However, it could also be the case that domestics take up certificate courses so that they can move to formal care work either in institutional or non-institutional set-up.

However, while there are considerable discussions on increasing demand for direct care workers in developed countries given the changes in the demographic structure (i.e. ageing population) and care provision patterns (i.e. from unpaid to paid care), Spencer, Martin, Bourgeault, & O’Shea (2010) observe that it has become more difficult for migrant care workers to move into such countries. In their multi-country study that includes the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, and Canada, they found that while there is a continuous demand for direct care workers, the immigration policies of these countries (except for Canada) have instead moved towards instituting more restrictions instead of “liberalizing admission for workers in eldercare” (Spencer et al., 2010: 17) which mirrors the overall trend of tighter immigration controls in most countries in the Global North. Based on their report, it is useful to note that the Philippines figured as one of the largest (foreign-born) providers of elderly care in all countries and in both professional and direct social care (*see* Table 4.4) though, as Spencer et al. (2010: 28) note, “the proportion of Filipinas is much larger in professional care occupations.” Their findings on the perceptions of care recipients and employers about migrant care workers also corroborate studies in other countries that characterize Filipino care workers as ‘very caring’ and ‘compassionate’ compared to other migrant or local care workers. What is interesting is how employers attribute such characteristic as second nature to Filipinos (i.e. being *naturally* caring) because it is in the ‘culture’ of Filipinos to care for their elderly, as explained by a home care employer in rural New York:



Because of the traditional belief that children take care of their elderly emotionally and financially and continuing generations of family take care of each other, nurture, and support each other, Filipino caregivers stand out as far as elderly care is concerned (Martin et al., 2009: 65; Spencer et al., 2010: 53).

But while being *naturally* caring is a plus point for Filipino care workers, it is also a bane when they are valued solely in terms of their ‘caring nature’ and not in conjunction with ‘skills’ and ‘professionalism’ as Amrith’s (2010) study of Filipino medical care workers in Singapore has shown.<sup>45</sup>

Country	Direct/Social Care Workers	Nurses/Professional Care Workers
Canada	Philippines Other Asian countries Sub-Saharan Africa	Philippines The Caribbean Europe Latin America
Ireland	Poland Philippines Nigeria	India Philippines
United Kingdom	Philippines Poland Nigeria Zimbabwe	India Philippines Sub-Saharan Africa
United States	The Caribbean Mexico Philippines	The Caribbean Philippines Sub-Saharan Africa

**Table 4.4.** Areas of Origin of Large Shares of the Eldercare Workforce  
*Adapted from Spencer et al. (2010: 29)*

Finally, I have said that it is within the context of care work that boundaries are most porous and contentious when it comes to distinguishing oneself from others deemed as belonging to lower status. Distinctions can also be found in different sites where care is being provided and, in relation to that, the different job titles given to almost the same kind of tasks that they are expected to perform – only in different settings. Care workers in domiciliary setting are categorized as ‘low-skilled’ while care being provided in institutional spaces is seen as more formalized and professionalized. In the UK, those working in hospitals are called *health care assistants* (HCAs). In the US, there are several job titles and corresponding certifications for direct care providers – e.g. certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and home health aides (HHAs). These various forms of creating distinctions in relation to care work point to ambiguities in boundaries and how such boundaries are constantly being challenged and negotiated. As Amrith (2010: 421) puts it, “social and class distinction is most hard won when one’s positioning in society is not so different from the positions from whom one is distancing oneself.”

<sup>45</sup> This is however different when Filipinos themselves invoke the Filipino culture of ‘caring’ for one’s family or even the compassion and kindness they show to strangers – which Amrith (2010: 412) refers to as ethics of care – “of how one ought to treat strangers, neighbours and family in the everyday *rather than* [emphasis mine] an ethic that is exclusively or innately linked to Filipino migrant labour...”

## Recapitulation: The Making of a Racialized Labor, the Gender Question, and ‘Contradictory Class Mobility’

This chapter starts by tracing the Philippine colonial past and linking the early streams of Filipino and male-dominated labor migration to the more recent creation of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as one of the most exportable labor in the world. To go back to the colonial past is necessary not out of mere sentimentality but in order to illustrate that the processes of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion mark migrant labor from the beginning as, first and foremost, colonized subjects. In the post-colonial and globalized world, the cases of Filipino nurses, domestics, and care workers show how migrant (care) labor continue to be ‘differentially included’ – needed and unwanted at the same time – in the Global North. While Filipino nurses and care workers are generally praised for their hard work and caring nature, they can also be discriminated in the workplace by having lower pay, being assigned to unfavorable shifts, or being the first to be blamed or suspected in case something has gone wrong (*see* Choy, 2003). As migrant workers, the state can also decide that they are not wanted anymore in the country – i.e. by instituting new immigration policies that do not only make it difficult for new entrants to come but also make it harder for those who have temporary work permits to apply for permanent residency as in the case of changes in the immigration policy of the UK in 2006 (*see* Bach, 2010). In this way, Filipino nurses (and other migrant nurses) as well as care workers are desired for a limited time only and seen as disposable when there is no longer a (perceived) need for them or one of the first ones to be targeted when it is perceived that there are ‘too many migrants’ in the country.

Another form of differential inclusion is the case of migrant domestic workers who accompany their employers in the US or the UK. The domestic worker visa in the UK ties migrant domestic workers with their employers<sup>46</sup> and, in the current system,<sup>47</sup> does not allow them to settle permanently in the country. The exclusionary practices are harsher for irregular migrants (who often work as live-in domestic workers or domiciliary care-workers) – not only because they are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation but precisely because they have the most limited recourse for protection given the legal impediments due to the irregularity of their status.

However, it is not only in discriminatory and exclusionary practices that migrant labor (in this case Filipino labor) are racialized and gendered. Even when their labor is desired and welcomed, seemingly positive ascriptions (e.g. naturally caring, compassionate, and hardworking) attached to Filipina nurses, care workers, and domestics are accorded because they are women and Filipinos – making them suitable (and they are marketed as such) in doing care work. What happens then when (Filipino) men become nurses, care workers, and domestics overseas? Parreñas (2012) argues that while men are employed to do reproductive labor, they hardly do care work or they mostly provide ‘non-nurturant reproductive labor’ (citing Duffy, 2007: 323) and emphasize the masculine aspects of the work. While Parreñas (2012: 272) does acknowledge that we must “account for the challenges that men face when they do atypical gender work,” she contends we must also consider how gender intersects with ethno-racial identifications given that men of color are the ones mostly engaged in such kind of work. I would argue that apart from focusing on the difficulties that men (of color) face when they are employed in predominantly women’s occupations, it is equally important to inquire how they position themselves in relation to the gendered stereotypes associated in doing care work. Rather than outright rejection of perceived femininity of being caring and

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<sup>46</sup> They are allowed to change employers within their first six months in the UK and if they are found to be victims of slavery and human trafficking (confirmed by a letter from UK Visas and Immigration), they can stay in the UK for up to 2 years.

<sup>47</sup> Previously, those who applied for a domestic worker visa (on or before April 5, 2012) were allowed to apply for indefinite leave to remain (permanent residency) after 5 years and can bring their partner and children under 18 years old to the UK.

compassionate, these traits can be seen as part of one's national identity (i.e. 'Filipinos are caring and compassionate people') or one's sexuality. Being male (or female) is but one of the multiple identities and subjectivities that migrant workers have to contend and construct.

As previously discussed, much of the shame associated with care work – especially domestic work and domiciliary elder care – is that it is low-status (feminized) labor. However, Filipinos continue to aspire and decide to migrate given the promise of a better life associated with going abroad – regardless of what kind of work one does. Parreñas (2015: 117) refers to this kind of dislocation that migrants face as *contradictory class mobility* – the “simultaneous experience of upward and downward mobility in migration or, more specifically, their decline in occupational status and increase in financial status.” Similarly, the concepts of ‘transnational frame of reference’ (Kelly, 2012), ‘dual frame of reference’ (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995), and ‘transnational status paradox of migration’ (Nieswand, 2011) capture the same condition in different contexts. While these researchers specifically refer to low-status occupations, the previous discussions illustrate that Filipino nurses who had to ‘downgrade’ to being care workers or nursing aides overseas also experience dissonance and resentment – as they earn more relative to what they are earning in the Philippines but feel degraded at the same time by doing work that does not match their level of education and skill or even their social class in the Philippines. It is therefore important to examine the ways in which Filipinos doing care work overseas resolve such contradictions as part of their overall strategies to negotiate their present position and imagined futures in both sending and receiving contexts (*see* Chapter 8). What is clear though is that international migration (preferably in the U.S.) continues to be seen not only as a way in attaining ‘the good life’ but embodiment of the good life itself for most Filipinos. How they are able to do so within the context of increasingly restrictive immigration policies is discussed in the subsequent chapters.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Becoming a Migrant:<sup>48</sup>

### *Sharing the Dream, Aspiring to Leave*

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter outlines the history of Filipino migration in the context of the country's colonial experience. Particular attention is also given to the demand of the countries from the Global North, specifically the US and the UK, for migrant care labor and how migrant labor is both desired and excluded in these countries of destination. In this chapter, the focus shifts on understanding the imaginaries surrounding going abroad and overseas work from the perspective of the research participants. I examine narratives of departure – what motivated (or compelled) geographical mobility – and explore how these accounts intersect with the historical and colonial narratives of the Philippines as a nation, and the shifting migration regimes and labor market demands in places of destination.

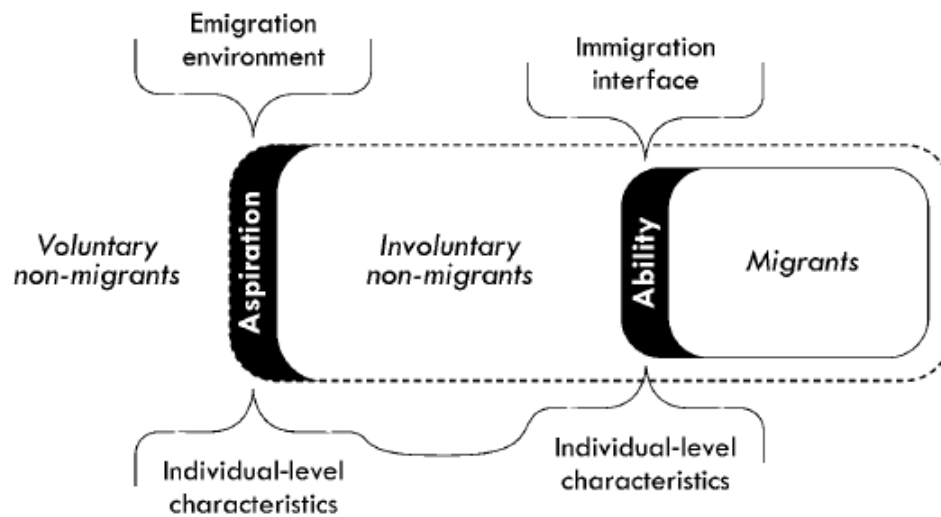
I take a closer look on the motivations to migrate by examining how images of good life associated with moving abroad are articulated, and how the described images of greener pastures overseas are fostered and perpetuated by a strong 'culture of migration.' Undeniably, most of the articulated motivations are economic – from survival strategy to social mobility – but even the most rational and calculated decisions are still embedded within relations of meanings and shared values. In other words, migration is seen as a socially and culturally acceptable (or even preferred) way of pursuing and achieving a 'better life.' Indeed, in some accounts, the connection between geographic and economic mobilities is so intimate and entrenched in one's consciousness that overseas work becomes the primary goal (instead of being seen as a means). This chapter explores how such intimate connections between geographic and economic mobilities are distilled in the imaginaries of the respondents. I specifically focus on how the global circulation of ideas, goods, and people – combined with the country's colonial past and post-colonial realities – contribute to the enduring images that make migration desirable. Thus, rather than simply treating the existence of 'culture of migration' as a given, I argue that it is necessary to unpack how it is being formed, nurtured, and sustained, and how it relates to individual aspirations.

The attention to migration aspirations provides a wider discursive space to describe why people migrate instead of solely identifying what allowed them to do so. This two-step approach has been introduced by Carling (2002; *see also* Carling & Schewel, 2018; de Haas, 2014) using the aspiration/ability model<sup>49</sup> (*see* Figure 5.1) in studying mobility (as well as immobility). Meanings attached to 'going abroad' (e.g. as a sacrifice, an adventure, or a risk) and what one hopes to achieve through migration (e.g. economic mobility in home country, better working environment, or better living conditions overseas) are undoubtedly based on the larger discourse surrounding migration in one's context (or in Carling's term, the 'emigration environment'). This chapter presents such meanings and images from the perspective of Filipino migrants who – though coming from the same country of origin – also come from different life circumstances based, for instance, on their socio-economic status and familial obligations.

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<sup>48</sup> Azaola's (2012) study on the aspirations of rural youths in Mexico has a similar title.

<sup>49</sup> I utilize the 'aspiration' side of the framework in this chapter, while focusing on the 'ability' part in the subsequent chapter through the concept of migrant networks.



**Figure 5.1.** The Aspiration/Ability Model  
\*Adapted from Carling (2002: 12)

The distinction between aspiration and ability also highlights the significance of perceptions and feelings in relation to complementary, meaningful actions. As de Haas (2014: 28) puts it, migration will only take place “if people *perceive* that their aspirations cannot be fulfilled locally and they *believe* that better opportunities exist elsewhere” (emphasis added). Indeed, such perception and belief become even more compelling as they are shared by their families and home communities.

Likewise, while all of the respondents I interviewed for this study have experienced migration, understanding their associated imageries to life overseas and what they hoped to achieve when they were still non-migrants could also offer a way to appreciate and interpret their practices, engagements, and imagined futures pre- and post-migration. In addition, migrants and non-migrants alike could also perceive and attach meanings to different places of destinations (Thompson, 2017; Timmerman, Hemmerchts, & De Clerck, 2014), which could create hierarchy of (preferred) destinations (Paul, 2011, 2015, 2017). Thus, the question is not only why people migrate but also where they would want to go – indicating that there are general migration aspirations as well as place-specific ones. In this chapter, I also present ‘geographic imaginations’ of the interviewees that capture how desired destinations are perceived and the concurrent expectations that come with those images.

Finally, I examine a possible interface between aspiration and ability through the concept of social networks. While the personal networks of (potential) migrants are usually considered as part of opportunity structures that enable and propel geographic mobility (the focus of the next chapter), I conceptualize networks in this chapter as enabling the formation and perpetuation of migration aspirations and imaginaries surrounding overseas work and life abroad (i.e. as aspiration-forming structures). Here it can be clearly seen how the intersections of local realities and global processes could condition individual thoughts, desires, and prospective actions. Through interpersonal ties and relevant institutional actors, which connect the country of origin and various places of destination, the respondents were able to think about possibilities outside their own country and build their own migration projects.

## Migration and Attaining a ‘Better Life’

Before leaving the Philippines, the Filipinos I interviewed in London and New York had different life circumstances, familial obligations, and views concerning migration. Some of them had thought of migrating as far as they can remember. Others never thought of it until the opportunity (as they put it) presented itself. Still a few others were opposed to the idea and did not have any migration aspiration to speak of – at least prior to their departure. But all of them have left; all hoping to get to somewhere better and achieve something bigger. However, it is also important to note that migrant journeys should be conceived not only as a one-time move, as they can involve more than one destination. Such moves could take various forms – onward, circular, or stepwise (discuss in detail in Chapter 6). Thus, the aspirations and imaginaries of would-be migrants can also change over time and as they move from one place to another (*see* Chapter 8).

For this section, I expound on participants’ accounts of departure by examining their initial imaginations of what lies beyond ‘home,’ the meanings and values they attach to geographic mobility, and what they hoped to achieve by embarking on these (initial) journeys. While most aspire to attain ‘better’ lives by moving and working overseas, what constitutes a ‘better life’ outside one’s country of origin must be examined. I look into economic and non-economic dimensions of migration aspirations and articulated migration projects of the respondents while considering their descriptions of their situations prior to migration. This, in turn, provides the baseline to which subsequent discussions on their future imaginaries post-migration (in Chapter 8) can be compared. I suggest that apart from their evaluations of better options and possibilities elsewhere (compared to those in their home country), it is also necessary to consider perceived needs and obligations as these factors shape not only migration projects but also the overall meaning of geographic mobility for the respondents before and after their journeys.

### ***Migration and improved social standing: “I also want to... build a beautiful house”***

Beautiful houses surrounded Patricia in the *barangay* where she grew up. She wanted to give her family the same. As these houses were testaments to the benefits of her neighbors’ overseas work, she wanted to follow the same path. Going abroad has always been in her mind. In contrast, Lydia did not think of leaving the country – initially. Both dentists, she and her husband were running their own clinic and living a relatively comfortable life. But Lydia, who never dreamt of going abroad, saw their second-hand car, the investments she wanted to make, and the relatives she wanted to help send to university. She went back to school and took up nursing as a preparation for an eventual overseas job.

The belief that migration would bring economic gains is central to most narratives of departure. This view is not only expressed in terms of getting higher salaries but also in concrete material objects associated with socially and culturally defined meaning of what ‘good life’ is made of. As the accounts of Patricia and Lydia highlighted, their dream of a better life is embodied in building a beautiful house, owning a new car, or investing in businesses that could potentially be a source of a more stable (or additional) income for the family. It is also through these ‘projects’<sup>50</sup> (and the additional ones they make along the way) that the respondents are able to gauge their success, satisfaction, and the fulfillment of their lifelong dreams. In particular, building or renovating a house of their own (or their parents) remained to be one of the most salient features of respondents’ narratives as they talked about what they want to achieve, why they left, and even why they continue to stay outside of their home country and away from their families. Unsurprisingly, the house is

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<sup>50</sup> Respondents typically used the term ‘projects’ to refer to their on-going and future investments and purchases in the home country.

considered as an embodiment of migrants' success (but also sacrifices) in the eyes of their families and communities that they left behind (Aguilar, 2009; Faier, 2012). As what Kuuire, Arku, Luginaah, Buzzelli & Abada (2016) found in their study of Ghanaian immigrants in Canada, migrants are sometimes willing to sacrifice enjoying the 'fruits of their labor' in the place of destination, and even scrimp on basic necessities, in order to finish constructing their houses in their home country. Such sacrifices underline the significance of transnational houses for migrants:

Failure to own a house in Ghana means their migration dreams have not been fulfilled. For some who did not yet own a house in Ghana, this was a source of "stress" and "embarrassment". It is important to note that participants recognized the importance of homeownership in Canada. However, they were more concerned about homeownership in Ghana. As succinctly put by a participant in FGD3 "... but who in Ghana cares whether you own a house here or not?" (Kuuire, 2016: 461).

Hence, these housing projects – as conspicuous as they are – are markers of social mobility as perceived by migrants and non-migrants alike (Boccagni, 2014; Erdal, 2011; Horst, 2011; McKay, 2006). In an ethnographic study in a village south of Manila, Aguilar (2009: 106) discussed how the 'diasporic houses' built through remittances validate the social standing of the migrants and their families:

The house is an objectification of upward social mobility and a memorial to overseas work. Although non-migrant residents in the community may never know the contradictions of migrant labour, nonetheless they have a sense that the migrant's house is possible only because of human exertion in a process of labour production... Still, there is a separation that is both spatial and temporal. The house is built not in the site and field of labour but in that of consumption and status halfway around the world. The house is not oriented to the past, where toiling belongs, but to the present and the future, where the enjoyment of things belongs.

Thus, these houses and other similar 'investments' are both measures of improved social standing in the home country, while, at the same time, being tangible representations of the ideal life that one can have through migration.<sup>51</sup> As aspiring migrants, going abroad then is perceived as a viable means to fulfill these 'projects,' which are seen as highly unattainable by staying in one's country.

Two interrelated points could be established at this stage. First, the wish to migrate (*migration aspiration*) may arise by evaluating perceived available means in attaining such life aspirations in the place of origin and possible destinations. As defined by de Haas (2014: 23), "migration aspirations are a function of people's general life aspirations and perceived spatial opportunity structures." Second, migration aspiration is rooted in general life aspirations that are embedded in socio-cultural contexts (i.e. what 'good life' means). What this entails is that we cannot separate migration aspiration from the constellations of goals, desires, and hopes of a would-be migrant – which are, as Appadurai (2004) argued, undeniably cultural:

Aspirations form parts of wider ethical and metaphysical ideas which derive from larger cultural norms. Aspirations are never simply individual (as the language of wants and choices inclines us to think). They are always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life. [...] Aspirations to the good life are part of some sort of system of ideas . . . which locates them in a larger map of local ideas and beliefs about: life and death, the nature of worldly possessions, the significance of

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<sup>51</sup> In Chapter 8, I will return to this idea of 'good life' in post-migration context and in light of respondents' future orientations given their present status and circumstances in the place of destination.

material assets over social relations, the relative illusion of social permanence for a society (Appadurai, 2004: 67– 68).

In an increasingly consumerist society, aspirations toward a good life are mostly anchored on the acquisition of material goods and services. In the case of the Philippines, the additional layer of a colonial past creates a particular hierarchy of desirable things – where imported goods are the most sought-after. Migration then provides an alternative means to increase the capacity to consume highly-valued products (Aguilar, 1999), not only because of the increase in the purchasing power, but also by being able to ‘bring home’ (personally or through *balikbayan* boxes) items from abroad (‘imported’). Taken together, these goods, items, and desired purchases constitute the tangible form of a ‘good life’ – which migrants exude, as exemplified by how Liezel described all the good things she saw in her cousin who went to work in Saudi Arabia:

*Of course, for us, once someone went abroad, first is [their] house improves, and the support to their family. When they come back, they bring a lot of chocolates <laughs>. [. . .] That’s what I was [thinking], perhaps it’s really good to go abroad. And then mostly from what I saw, when they go abroad, their lives, of course, improved [‘*umaangat ang buhay*’<sup>52</sup>]. [. . .] Because my cousin went abroad, and their lives somehow improved. I said, I also want the same so that I can lift us out of poverty, to have our own house, buy a lot, or put-up a business. Just like that. Just simple things.*

(Liezel, 42 years old, care worker in a residential home, arrived in east of England in 2002, moved to London in 2004)

Beyond consumption and the material representations of good life, however, there is another salient life aspiration connected to the wish to emigrate that – while rooted in the desire to improve social standing – is less tangible, but not necessarily less conspicuous. I am talking about the goal to send one’s children (and other relatives) to ‘good’ school and get the best education one can have in the country (Tacoli, 1996). Such is the case of Charlene and her husband who overstayed their US tourist visa to finance the college education of her four children. As Charlene put it, “*Of course, you want all the best for your children.*” But the best and most prestigious universities in the country are also the most expensive; sending her children to one was beyond their means. So, for Charlene and her husband, overseas work served as a way to give their children the best education one can get in the country. Similarly, those who aspire to have doctors, lawyers, or other healthcare professionals in the family (considered as high-status occupations) are also confronted with the significant (and often unaffordable) cost of tuition fees and other school-related expenses. For instance, Anita, a domestic worker in London, vividly recalled when her kid told her that he wanted to be a farmer instead of a doctor because he knew that they (his parents) could not provide for his education. While education, in general, is viewed as a ticket to a better life, current economic conditions in the Philippines make it difficult even for average salaried workers to send their children to school. But remittances will do.

In general, migration is framed as a means to an end – a viable option to ‘get ahead in life’ and attain a desired future, which are perceived to be less likely to happen if one stays. However, as noted in the previous chapter, geographical relocation could become so intertwined with the images of economic gains, social mobility, and prestige that it becomes an aspiration by and in itself.

Finally, as migrants started off in different positions in the social hierarchy, social mobility also means differently depending on one’s social location. While there are those who were dreaming of having their own house and lot, others were aiming to recover lost status (e.g. due to bankruptcy or

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<sup>52</sup> ‘*Umaangat ang buhay*,’ could also be translated as becoming upwardly mobile.



failed business ventures) or attempting to climb higher in the social ladder (e.g. by sending kids to prestigious schools). Thus, a comfortable and better life is also imagined differently as a function of one's socio-economic status. This difference becomes more apparent in the subsequent section.

***Migration for survival:  
"I have nine mouths to feed."***

For some, the necessity of overseas work is more acute – almost bordering to a matter of survival. When Perla lost her husband, he also left her with nine mouths to feed – their children and her husband's children from his first wife. At first, Perla never considered working overseas as a solution. She didn't know how and never knew anyone who can lead her way. In the course of arranging the pension of her husband in Manila, she met a stranger who informed her that there was a direct hiring to Dubai. That was in 1986 – when she immediately left for Dubai. Like most domestics I've met in London, Perla was brought to the UK by her employers. Like the others, she also ran away and escaped. In narratives like that of Perla, the demarcation between choosing to leave or choosing to stay becomes irrelevant. When an opportunity to earn came, she took it because for people like her, there was no luxury to choose – there was simply a need.

For those who shared that they never dreamt nor aspire to 'go abroad,'<sup>53</sup> they generally explained their migration as arising from necessity and a corresponding opportunity that presented itself when they were in need. These needs often accompany particular life circumstances that put would-be migrants into precarious, difficult, and uncertain situations. Death and sickness in the family (especially of the breadwinner), marital dissolution, and debt are some of the cited reasons of what prompted them to leave. While these reasons might be varied, the unifying thread in the narratives is the perception of migration as an opportunity and viable (at times, sole) solution to a pressing problem. Thus, there are those who decided (or were obligated) to leave, with or without prior dream to emigrate, given the intersection of perceived need and possibility in their horizons. The question to ask then is how do such possibilities arise? How does migration become a valid option and considered as the (best) solution? As Carling (2002: 37) noted, "in this case, ability occurs without being preceded by aspiration, but even so, the emigration environment could induce the person to migrate." I take into account this inducing effect of the emigration environment (primarily through 'culture of migration') in the latter part of this chapter, as well as the notion of ability and resources in realizing migration aspiration or acting on perceived necessity to work overseas (in the next chapter on migrant networks). What needs to be emphasized at this point, however, is that the wish to migrate (or the necessity of it) could emerge at different points in the lives of individuals given their changing needs, circumstances, and experiences.

A more fundamental point, however, rests on the very concept of need and choice. Framing migration as a necessity requires a critical discussion of agency and 'voluntariness' of such action. Indeed, none of the respondents experienced extreme condition of insecurity in the home country that necessitates them to flee, in need of protection. Instead, what they are all searching for is a chance for a better life. But is their mobility entirely voluntary? While types of migration are often classified into discrete categories (in this case, forced vs. voluntary migration) in both academic and public discussions, most migration scholars have recognized that migration experiences fall within a continuum rather a dichotomy (Bartram, 2015; Castles, De Haas, & Miller, 2014; Erdal & Oeppen, 2018; Richmond, 1993). Elements of choice and constraints can simultaneously be observed in varying degrees and even in the most extreme cases, rendering the either-or categorization untenable. As Bartram (2015: 440) cautioned, citing Turton (2003):

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<sup>53</sup> Meaning to work overseas. As others clarified, they want to see other places and go on a vacation outside of the country, but not to actually work abroad.

For empirical application, one must resist the temptation to identify instances as *either* voluntary or forced: most instances of migration that appear to be voluntary are also shaped by constraints (the limitations of available options, including the ability to gain entry somewhere), and forced migration can involve elements of agency that are already well understood—for example, where to go, given that one must leave.

For those respondents who viewed their migration as a necessity, the pressure to leave (while otherwise preferring to stay, had they had a choice) is palpable. For Filipino migrants in this study, being stuck between a rock and a hard place is mostly observed among parents (particularly, mothers) who did not want to leave their children behind, but found themselves with very little to no alternative in sustaining their families. Like Perla, Evelyn (also a domestic worker in London who previously worked in Taiwan and Hong Kong) provided a vivid description of her family's situation that compelled her to migrate when she vowed never to return to overseas work and leave her children again:

*I said, 'no matter what happens, I do not want to leave again.' But . . . at that time, he [her husband] was still looking for a job. [. . .] So, there was this instance that we really experienced . . . not even having one grain of rice to eat. [. . .] So, it was like we were able to live only out of our resourcefulness ('diskarte') like, 'stay there, I will find [something to eat].' Because I have a lot of friends. [. . .] When it comes to your children, you will do anything just to be able to have something to feed them. So, I would go out . . . at 7 o'clock in the morning, they were still sleeping and I was also hiding from our landlord [because] we were not able to pay the rent for 3 months, 4 months. Even if you were awake, you would pretend to be sleeping, something like that. So that you would not be caught and be shamed. And then, until about one week, we did not have anything to eat. I already went to all of my friends for help. There was no extra job. And then, [that was when] I decided to go to Hong Kong.*

(Evelyn, 48 years old, nanny/housekeeper, arrived in London in 2014)

Undeniably, Evelyn was in a dire and desperate situation, with very limited choice to keep her family afloat. In this sense, the degree of 'voluntariness' (and forcedness) in her case challenges the conventional notion of equating economic or labor migration as 'voluntary.' Despite her saying that she decided to leave, one cannot also ignore that such decision hinges on the lack of alternatives. Discussing the slippery concept 'voluntariness' in the process of migration, researchers have utilized the notion of reasonable 'alternatives' in staying as a way of examining how voluntary is the decision to migrate (Bartram, 2015; Erdal & Oeppen, 2018; Ottonelli & Torresi, 2013).

Consequently, a starting point for understanding volition in migration is the range and quality of alternatives available to potential migrants if they just stay where they are. In other words, to what extent will they be able to enjoy a reasonable quality of life without migrating? We might consider the migration less voluntary when the answer is 'not at all' rather than 'to some extent' (Erdal & Oeppen, 2018: 985).

While 'reasonable' and 'good enough' alternatives are indeed subjective and may vary from one society to another, it is still possible to compare the available alternatives between and among migrants and assess the range of possibilities they think they have. In the case of this study, the differences between those who primarily view their migration as a form of social mobility (discussed in the previous section), and those who see it as a necessity also point out to the range of options tied to socio-economic status and capital that the migrants possessed.

Migration could also be described as forced in instances when the existing alternatives are ‘reasonably rejected.’ This notion of ‘rejected alternatives’ (not only the lack of options or limited choices) compels individuals to leave given that staying meant accepting a life that violates their dignity and basic human rights (Bartram, 2015). In certain conditions, this violation is obvious – as in the cases of Perla and Evelyn. However, there are also those whose situations may have been less grave, but are otherwise precarious. For instance, Carlo, who used to work in an institution for children with special needs in the Philippines, described this situation that pushed him to consider working overseas. Despite having a stable job, Carlo thought of the risk of getting sick and the consequent lack of safety net against it, as well as the uncertain future he was facing at that time:

*You work and work only for your everyday needs. I fell ill but there was no hospitalization [benefit]. Yes, I had Medicare but it only covered the costs partly. [ . . . ] The money you saved for several years would be gone in an instant. So, you will think, “What will happen?” At that time, I wasn’t married yet. What will happen if I will have a family of my own?*

(Carlo, 40 years old, assistant care manager in a residential home, arrived in London in 2007)

He then left for London when a UK-based company directly recruited support care workers for residential homes – even though he enjoyed his job in the Philippines. While having the option to stay and remain in the same job (which in the beginning was sufficient), Carlo found it necessary to work overseas after realizing that he could not afford to get sick nor have his own family with the salary that he was receiving. Indeed, one can say that such rejection of the available (but unacceptable) options at home country requires a great deal of agency on the part of the would-be migrant. However, the decision was also borne out of the precarity of one’s condition – and as a way of avoiding possible destitution in the future.

Underlying these discussions on the concept of ‘voluntariness’ and ‘forcedness’ of migration decisions and processes, I argue that the issues of development, postcolonial realities, and global divisions of labor cannot be divorced from the migration of people from the global South. As expounded in Chapter 4, labor extracted from the colonial subjects has been historically wanted and excluded at the same time. In the postcolonial context, migrant workers continue to provide cheap labor in the global North and intermediate countries, while being differentially included and excluded. On the side of sending countries like the Philippines, exportable workers are continuously being reproduced (Choy, 2000) and emigration has been utilized as an effective development tool (Skeldon, 2008). Promoting and facilitating overseas employment has been the agenda and practice of the Philippine government since 1970s. Since then, the remittances sent by Filipinos all over the world have increased continuously over the years, keeping the Philippine economy afloat (Guevarra, 2010). Thus, the view that migration is a necessity (and in situation of dire need, the only available option) is articulated by Filipino would-be migrants and, through its policy and practice, by the Philippine government. One can then ask whether the perceived lack of (reasonable) alternatives is structurally induced and politically encouraged in a country that has become dependent and reliant on exporting its citizens. In the next section, I expand on this point further by examining the migration aspirations of Filipino nurses and other health workers vis-à-vis the state-led marketization and deployment of Filipino overseas workers.

***Migration and professional wellbeing:  
“Nothing good can happen to me [there].”***

In a hospital in Queens, I had my first series of interviews with Filipino nurses for the New York leg of my fieldwork. I was told that it would be better to stay overnight so that I could interview more prospective respondents during their break. Upon entering the unit, I felt transported back home. Almost everyone was a Filipino. I had a chat with a Filipino doctor, got introduced to other Filipino health workers, and interviewed seven Filipino nurses. The visibility and concentration of Filipino migrant workers in the medical and health care profession has been noted and elaborated in the previous chapter through censuses and statistical data. Nevertheless, to witness such scale first-hand and up-close is quite staggering; one is left to wonder what brought such numbers to New York or London (or, in general, outside of their country).

While the nurses I interviewed did describe their migration as a necessity or a means of social mobility, they also described the unfortunate condition of nursing practice in the Philippines as the main reason for considering and pursuing overseas work. Almost all participants who are nurses or have finished a nursing degree in the Philippines have explicitly talked about the state of nursing profession in the country. Among the issues they particularly mentioned were the difficulty of finding a permanent post or even entering your first job, not getting paid for the first months of being a ‘volunteer’ nurse or receiving pittance called allowance, and once they become a regular staff, some are paid lower than minimum wage earner (see also Ronquillo, Boschma, Wong, & Quiney, 2011). The kind of frustration arising from such state of affairs is expressed openly by Michael:

*It was clear to me that if I will be working as a nurse, and especially if only in the Philippines, nothing good can happen to me. Because to be honest, the salary in our country is just minimum. Sometimes, those working in fast food chains earn more compared to those nurses working in private hospitals. So there, it was really difficult. When I was working [there], I don't know if you will believe it, my salary back then was only 5,000 pesos [less than \$100] monthly.*

(Michael, 29 years old, charge nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in London in 2011)

From the perspective of the nurses I interviewed, the amount of money, time, and effort to get a nursing degree and pass the licensure exam do not commensurate to the rather gloomy prospects in the country. As Mia, another nurse in London, put it: “*I think it's not really worthwhile to work in our country.*” The interviewees were not only referring to the low pay per se, but more on how nurses are generally treated and valued. In other words, it is about not getting what they think they deserve – i.e. the status and respect they expect to receive as professionals – expressed in terms of poor working conditions and not having a decent salary.

As mentioned, it is not uncommon for nurses to be forced to render their service for free in order to get a work experience. Some respondents also shared that they were put-off and discouraged by the entrenched nepotism and patronage governing the hiring and placement process in hospitals. For instance, Melissa, also a nurse in London, pointed out the practice of having to know someone in the hospital, especially in government hospitals (where salary is higher compared to private ones; see Perrin, Hagopian, Sales, & Huang, 2007), in order to get hired. However, a newly licensed nurse needs to have a hospital experience whether one intends to go abroad or not – which is mostly the case of the former rather than the latter. And if one wants to go abroad, this situation has a deterring

effect and poses as a big hurdle – at least temporarily, for some. In periods of supposed<sup>54</sup> oversupply of nurses – when there are too many of them wanting to go abroad – there is also a surge in the need for experience in local hospitals. Hospitals in the Philippines, on the other hand, are aware that most nurses would not stay for too long as they are just after completing the required minimum years of experience to qualify to work overseas. Hence, even if these hospitals would ask for payment before accepting volunteer nurses,<sup>55</sup> those who are desperate to get experience would do so. To understand these rather irrational and exploitative practices, one must look at the historical background of nursing profession in the country (discussed in Chapter 4) and the long-standing policy of the Philippine government in encouraging and facilitating overseas work. True to its roots, the nursing profession in the Philippines is geared towards filling the demands of other countries apart from its own. In particular, nursing education has been structured for overseas demands rather than domestic needs (Masselink & Lee, 2010; Ortiga, 2014). From the accounts of the respondents, hospitals in the country are also oriented (and adjusted) into the institutionalized practice and trajectory of training nurses for overseas employment.

Within these structural and historical forces, migration aspirations of Filipino nurses are nurtured and sustained – with the promise of a good life overseas and the lack of hope in one’s country. For most of the nurses I interviewed, enrolling and finishing a nursing degree is almost synonymous to working overseas and, in the case of those who went or trying to go to the US, UK, Canada, or Australia, it is more of a permanent move rather than a temporary one. Julia, a newly arrived nurse in New York who had previously worked in the Middle East for five years, explained that even those who did not have any intention to go abroad could not resist the offer. She had colleagues who stayed in the Philippines for 20 years and did not intend to work abroad because they have children. However, these colleagues were eventually enticed to try overseas work because the offers were just tempting, especially in comparison to what they were getting in the Philippines. But Julia also talked about a different kind of motivation. She initially had a strong sense of duty to serve the country. She felt that she had to leave not only for higher salary but also to be able to do her job as a nurse properly. I am quoting her at length to show that the motivation to work overseas goes beyond the financial consideration, even if higher salary constitutes most of the participants’ narratives of departure.

*When I was still studying nursing, [. . .] I want to serve the humanity, the Filipino people, it’s like my notion [. . .] because I wanted to be a nurse in my heart not because of the money. [. . .] The reason why nurses in the Philippines leave to work overseas [. . .] aside from financial reason or money is you want to sharpen your skills as a nurse. [...] Yes, you will go to another country because there – due to the health care insurance in the Philippines, we are not able to give everything to the patient. You will also pity them because they don’t have the money to buy medicines. [. . .] You cannot also do your job as a nurse. What can you actually give them, if they cannot afford to buy medicines? The government does not provide for that. So, those are your frustrations when you are a nurse in the Philippines. [. . .] Because they are only giving the basic, the basic nursing care. When you’re in another country, they give everything. Do you know that everything is free? If a patient comes, whether he has an insurance or not, you will treat him. So, all the supplies and instruments are for free. So, you can really do [your job]. [. . .] You know the cool*

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<sup>54</sup> See the previous chapter’s discussion on the supposed net surplus of Filipinos nurses – which fails to note that most of these nurses are working outside of the country.

<sup>55</sup> On top of not being paid as they work as volunteers, these nurses also pay the hospitals to allow them to work and get the required experience in order to apply for overseas work.

*thing here, at the end of the day, the patient can go home because he is alive, like that. [ . . . ] He will thank you. You know the reason that – even though the nurses are tired, it’s okay. At the end of the day, if your patient gets discharged [and] can go home... well, [ . . . ] you’re happy. So, if you’re [ . . . ] in the Philippines, you don’t have [the means] – you cannot [do that]. You will pity your patients.*

(Julia, 33 years old, registered nurse in a hospital in Manhattan, arrived in New York in 2015)

The duty to serve one’s country is also present in the narratives of other participants who were teachers, social worker, and soldier in the Philippines before they migrated as domestic workers in London. They love their profession but they could not feed their families with that love and sense of duty. Unlike the nurses, however, leaving the country for them also means leaving behind their identity as teacher, social worker, and soldier. In London and New York, they have joined thousands of others to serve. This time, they are rendering their service for another country. But some will argue that even miles away, they continue to give back through the remittances they send to their families. Even their own government has alluded to that, even hailing them as modern-day heroes of the country (*‘bagong bayani’*), and may even prefer this kind of ‘service’ to the country than their physical presence (Encinas-Franco, 2013; Rodriguez, 2010). Perhaps, the duty to serve one’s country has just taken a new form, at least in the eyes of some. In the next section, I explore these various forms of duty by examining the frame of migration as a form of sacrifice and a moral act.

***Migration as a sacrifice and a moral act:  
“To take care of my children and... my mother.”***

To a certain extent, much of what has already been discussed concerning the meanings attached to migration and discourses surrounding the wish to emigrate is about economic security and social mobility. However, these articulated aspirations could be better understood if situated within the premise of familial obligations, duty, and sacrifice. As Asis (1994: 18) noted: “In the Philippines, family concerns pervade most migration decisions and outcomes. Among Filipinos, migration is rarely conceived of or undertaken as an individual endeavor. Studies consistently show that migrants seek overseas employment primarily to help their families.” Thus, when it comes to migration and overseas work, “the personal is also the family” and “migrating for the sake of the family runs through the script of migrants, men and women alike” (Asis, 2002: 74). These scripts have permeated not only the lives and interactions of migrants, their families, and local communities, while being also reproduced in mass media. Films,<sup>56</sup> television shows, or newspaper articles are replete with images of self-sacrificing image of migrant mother, daughter, or wife.

Looking closely at the narratives of the respondents, whether migration is expressed as a necessity, for professional advancement, or for better social standing, these aspirations are deeply rooted in the normative expectations surrounding the (idealized) notion of being a parent, a child, or a spouse (see also Asis, 2002; Katigbak, 2015). Consider the case of Joanna, a stay-in caregiver in north London, who had to take the place of her husband when he was denied of a UK tourist visa. Joanna shared that she got entangled with the debt incurred by her mother-in-law when she signed as a guarantor. With the bank running after them, she decided to go abroad to pay the debt, painfully leaving her kids behind.

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<sup>56</sup> For example, the Filipino films *Anak* (The Child; released in 2000) and *Caregiver* (released in 2008) portray the sacrifices of mothers working overseas to provide for a better life and future to their families, especially to their children.

Framing migration as a form of sacrifice for the interest and well-being of one's family transforms it from an economic strategy into a moral act, entangled in webs of relations and obligations. The pursuit of a good life through overseas work for most respondent meant securing a better future and improving the status of social standing of the family. The beautiful houses built and the investments made are regarded as not only a way of maintaining one's presence in the community and homeland (Aguilar, 2009), but also as a hope of returning one day to enjoy the fruits of one's labor together with one's loved ones. Whether this comes to fruition or realized at the end of a migrant's sojourn is another question. The point, however, is that, in the beginning of their journeys, most would-be migrants were hoping that their sacrifices would lead to the betterment of their family's situation and that they would be able to all share and partake in the success of their migration projects. When this image is disrupted, the idea of migrating for the 'common good' could also be put into question. For instance, when physical care and presence are pitted against providing economic security and sustenance, sacrifice can turn into abandonment, guilt, and regret. This is often depicted as the adverse effects of the absence of mother, father, or both parents on their left-behind children (Parreñas, 2001, 2015; cf. Asis, 1994, 2006<sup>57</sup>), and the breakdown of families because of infidelity on either or both sides of the migrant and non-migrant spouses. Amelia, for instance, openly expressed her regret over leaving her eldest son to her parents:

*But it's all a regret. It is not good [to leave your child]. [. . .] There is... more percentage that they will have some wounds. It's like their personality is not stable while growing up. Especially if you leave them while they are still young.... Probably because he [her son] also doesn't have a father... and then he was brought up by my parents who spoiled him.... I thought it was okay – with all the material things, celebration of birthdays . . . But it's not [enough]. What they really need is your presence. That even though you are struggling, you're still together.*

(Amelia, 58 years old, senior staff nurse, arrived in London in 2002)

The choice, of course, is not that simple. As the section on survival and necessity shows, would-be migrants could be in a situation that they have to provide the most basic needs for their children (and for their families in general), and migration is seen as the only option left – at least at that particular point in time. What this suggests is that the discourse on migration as a sacrifice is not without tensions and ambivalences (Bikova, 2015; Katigbak, 2015; Ryan, 2004; McKay, 2016). Migrants could also re-evaluate the meaning of their decision to migrate in light of their current circumstances, and the discrepancies between their expected outcomes and present realities. Take for example the following account of Pamela, a former caregiver in New York, concerning how the death of her mother<sup>58</sup> not only challenged her self-image as a caring and dutiful daughter, but also the very reason why she left and stayed overseas.

<sup>57</sup> While negative impacts of the absence of one or both migrant parents on the left-behind children have been noted, Asis, (1994: 22) also asserted that “contrary to popular perceptions, data in some communities where a substantial number of both parents are out of the country do not show the children of migrants to be more delinquent or problematic than those raised by their own parents.”

<sup>58</sup> Because of her undocumented status, Pamela was not able to go home when her mother got sick and when she eventually died.

*It's like I have gone really crazy at that time when my mother died because what I wanted to do in my life is to take care of my children and to take care of my mother. But I said, why didn't I see that when I was leaving the Philippines? Like, you are looking for a lot of things [in your life], not realizing that that is the only thing [caring for her mother and children] that will make your life [worthwhile].*

(Pamela, 46 years old, former caregiver, currently co-managing a Filipino store, arrived in California in 2009, moved to New York in 2010)

Fulfilling one's familial duty and obligations is often not that straightforward in most contexts and circumstances. However, migration brings additional layers of contradictions given the distance and often long-term separation (Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding, 2006; Baldassar & Merla, 2014). Finding the 'acceptable' means of providing support is as crucial as which type of support (and to what extent) the migrant should give (McKay, 2007). Migrants continuously negotiate such boundaries and justify the morality of their actions and decisions in front of themselves and those they left-behind (Katigbak, 2015). I return to this point in Chapters 7 and 8 as I continue to examine how these tensions and contradictions surrounding moral obligations unravel post-migration. In the next section, I further explore the intersections of obligation and freedom in understanding the meanings attached to geographical mobility and migration aspirations.

### ***Migration as both constraining and enabling: "I just followed."***

In the previous discussion on voluntariness and forcedness of migration decision-making, I particularly looked into the economic needs and precarious conditions of migrants and their families as well as the historical and structural contexts that shape the contemporary labor migration of Filipinos. In this section, I delve further into the theme of freedom and unfreedom that is constructed within the web of relations and obligations, particularly within familial and kinship ties.

While it could be the case that those who migrated 'for the sake of the family' did so out of moral obligations and sense of duty, it could still be classified as involving certain degree of agency and choice. However, there are also respondents whose migrations were clearly not of their own volition. Indeed, having the choice and deciding to leave or stay bears little consequence in situations of children following their parents and families in places of destination. There are those who were petitioned way before they were able to understand what it meant. For those like them, there was not simply a choice. There was only one path to follow and they were just waiting for it to happen – whether it's the approval of the petition or their parents' own timeline. When I asked Sophia, a nurse in New York, whether it was her dream to go abroad, she simply replied: "No. [. . .] *Actually, I really don't know what I wanted. I just followed. I didn't do anything that I really liked. It was just like whatever I was asked to do, I finished it. Just like that.*" It was Sophia's mother who had the American dream. It wasn't a dream she shared, yet such dream shaped her own life trajectory and those of her siblings. Taking up nursing as a preparation for going abroad was also something that her mother insisted on:

*Sophia: I didn't want to become a nurse. [. . .] I wanted to take law instead.*

*Rizza: And you took up nursing because?*

*Sophia: I was told to do so. [. . .] When my older sister took up nursing, I knew that I would be the next. That's it.*

*Rizza: But when you were already studying nursing, were you able to enjoy it? Or you really didn't like it?*



*Sophia: No. Since I knew that I would be taking up nursing when I was in high school, . . . I didn't study that much. I lost my drive. But I didn't want to fail. So, I still studied [just for the sake of passing]. [. . .] I didn't [really] like it [nursing]. It wasn't something that I wanted.*

(Sophia, 28 years old, staff nurse in 2 nursing homes,  
arrived in New York in 2009)

Widespread belief in the marketability of nurses abroad makes nursing a viable career choice of parents for their children (Ronquillo et al., 2011). While there are instances when the choice of the parents does not run in conflict with the desire of the children, there are also those like Sophia who felt the imposition and lack of freedom to decide for themselves. This becomes more apparent when we consider who finance the education and who has the “final say” in the family. While parents may force their children to take up a particular course (nursing, in this case) because of their own migration aspiration, there are also cases in which the relatives abroad have the sole authority to decide over this matter because of the remittances that they are sending back home. For instance, April's relatives in the US offered to pay her college education, if she would take up nursing:

*My uncle, who is a nurse practitioner . . . the husband of my aunt, said, “Oh take up nursing. I would pay for your tuition.” Because I didn't have CAP [educational plan]. [. . .] I wanted for someone to pay for my tuition fee. So, what will you choose [if you're in that position]? Someone paying for your tuition fee or none? Right?*

(April, 32 years old, registered nurse in a hospital in Long  
Island, arrived in New York in 2012)

These narratives show how migration (or steps leading to it) can be pursued primarily by choices made by others. Their accounts also provide a glimpse on the dynamics of transnational families, particularly on how obligations are managed and negotiated. The expectations surrounding support and assistance within the family could be constraining, not only for the migrants sending remittances (an issue I will go back to in Chapter 8), but also for those receiving help (*see* also McKay, 2016). In terms of migration projects, would-be migrants could also be following strongly enforced norms of reciprocity – i.e. as current recipients of monetary support from relatives abroad, they are expected to eventually migrate in order to support other family members and ‘lighten the burden’ of those currently overseas. As Rosalia, a registered nurse in New York, put it:

*Because my other relatives [in the US], they are better-off . . . Then they were helping us. They were our ‘support’<sup>59</sup> . . . So, we have to also help [the family] when it is already our turn. We should be the one helping [by then].*

(Rosalia, 52 years old, registered nurse in a hospital in  
Queens, arrived in New York in 1989)

In this sense, the wish to emigrate could also stem from the morally-sanctioned obligations to reciprocate. While this may come across as something natural and unquestioned, it is also the case that such obligation restricts life choices, particularly the choice of one's profession and career trajectory. The insistence of migrant relatives and parents to invest on education that would secure an overseas employment (i.e. courses that are ‘in demand’ abroad) also means that children have

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<sup>59</sup> Particularly, it was Rosalia's aunt, a wife of a US veteran, who was supporting their education by providing assistance with their school allowances. Her father insisted that she should take nursing so that she can also go to the US like her cousin.

very little space to form their own desires and aspirations – whether they feel such limitations or not.

However, migration could also bring other forms of freedom and agency inasmuch as it constrains choices. For instance, while Sophia felt that she didn't have a voice and that she simply followed the decision of her parents, she also shared that she has actually more freedom now that she is in New York as her father used to be so strict when they were in the Philippines. Ethel, a licensed practical nurses (LPN) in New York, talked about not being able to plan one's future because anytime their petition could be approved and they must leave. She mentioned that the uncertainty surrounding the exact time frame of their emigration prevented her from taking her studies seriously knowing that she would leave everything behind anyway. Yet, like Sophia, Ethel also had a new-found freedom in New York – away from the prying eyes of people around her (*see also Bikova, 2015; Ryan, 2004*).

*Actually, going to the Philippines sometimes is okay. But here, it's like you have more freedom. Because in the Philippines, there are a lot of eyes looking at you. [ . . . ] Like, you should do this and that. If you make a mistake, it's a mistake for life. Here, it's like okay, it's up to you.*

(Ethel, 33 years old, licensed practical nurse in a nursing home, arrived in New York in 2001)

In general, as a woman, going abroad can also mean having a certain leverage to direct one's life outside of the traditional roles imposed on women (Hirsh, 1999; Kandel & Massey, 2002). As Asis (2002: 91) suggests from her study on Filipina migrants who returned to Philippines:

Women have a great deal more agency in the decision-making process than has been generally recognized. As economic actors, women considered migration as a means to address the economic vulnerability of their families. If personal considerations did not seem to figure as much in their motivations for migration, it is because personal and family aspirations are intertwined. Whatever their starting point, in the end, most women claim that migration has had positive impacts on their personal lives.

In my research, this is more palpable for women from earlier generations who experienced more constraints and unfreedom. Going abroad allowed them a certain independence from their husbands and their families (Hirsh, 2000; Kandel & Massey, 2002).<sup>60</sup> For one, they started earning their own money – more money than anyone else in their families (*see also Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Pessar, 1999*). They were still expected to be 'good mothers' and 'good wives' but being in a better economic position allowed them to bargain and renegotiate the lines that used to be non-negotiable (Asis, 2002; Tacoli, 1999). Such experiences exemplify that both freedom and unfreedom can co-exist in the participants' narratives of departure and that the desire to leave one's home is embedded in relations and institutions of the past and present – both constraining and enabling. In the next part of this chapter, I look more closely at these relations and institutions as channels through which migration aspirations are formed and perpetuated.

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<sup>60</sup> In the case of men whose wives are not only pioneer migrants but also are employed in higher-status occupation such as in nursing profession (George, 2005; Adhikari, 2013) or when sponsored husbands are channeled into feminized labor such as domestic work (Gallo, 2006), gender relations in the family are re-configured and masculinities are re-framed to accommodate role reversals and regain or reconstruct one's identity.

## Reproducing Desires: Connecting ‘Culture of Migration’ and Migrant Networks

The first part of this chapter has mapped out the different meanings attached to going abroad, the varied ways of articulating migration aspirations, and the discourses surrounding overseas employment. It is important to note that these meanings and discourses do overlap with each other in both the accounts of the respondents and in public discussion. The prevalence of such discourses pervading national consciousness is a testament to how much migration has permeated the lives of Filipinos. The pervasiveness of positive images attached to and derived from international migration is often explained through the concept of “culture of migration.”<sup>61</sup> To put it briefly, large-scale emigration of people from a particular area introduces non-migrants to the benefits that overseas work brings as they “observe migrants to whom they are socially connected and seek to emulate their migratory behavior” (Kandel & Massey, 2002: 983). In this study, however, the presence of a ‘strong’ migration culture does not always refer to the image of Filipinos raring and eager to work overseas. Such culture is strong among Filipinos also because even when they initially did not dream of going abroad, they still found themselves doing so. That working overseas becomes an option when a perceived need arises indicates how well entrenched the image of ‘migrating for a better life’ is in the lives and consciousness of Filipinos. But where does this image of a good life being intricately connected to migration come from? How is this image being perpetuated?

The new shoes your neighbor had because her mother was working in Hong Kong, the big houses of your neighbors working in Japan, the chocolates and perfume your relatives in the US sent you, the postcards, the photos of snow, and don’t they look different when they visit the Philippines? They seem whiter and their faces are smoother. These are the images that most of the participants mentioned when they were explaining why they dreamt of going abroad at some point in their lives. While most research on *balikbayan* (migrant returning for a visit or for resettlement) and *balikbayan boxes* (the ubiquitous boxes filled with ‘imported’ goods from abroad) highlight the transnational connections and engagements between home and country of destination (Blanc, 1996; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992; Kivisto, 2001; Maas, 2008; Parreñas, 2010), I argue that they also fuel the perpetuation of a culture of migration as they create enticing images of the ‘good life’ abroad for those left-behind (Galam, 2015).

As Ali (2007: 39) put it, “migration is a learned social behaviour; people learn to migrate, and they learn to desire to migrate.” He further defined ‘culture of migration’ as “those ideas, practices and cultural artefacts that reinforce the celebration of migration and migrants,” which “includes beliefs, desire, symbols, myths, education, celebrations of migration in various media, and material goods” (Ali, 2007: 39). In turn, such culture is being transmitted and reproduced primarily through social networks (Kandel & Massey, 2002). Networks act as channels through which material goods, consumption patterns and lifestyles, as well as migration aspirations could be transmitted as migrants engage in transnational activities and non-migrants bear witness to their ‘successful’ lives.

For Jerry, a manager of a residential home in London, the material things that he saw were far from simple. Most of Jerry’s uncles and cousins are seamen and he shared that his cousins had fine and impressive things – as they are ‘imported.’ Since these markers of what ‘going abroad’ means are

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<sup>61</sup> The concept of ‘culture of migration’ has been extensively applied in understanding the massive migration of Mexicans to the United States (see Kandel & Massey, 2002), and, to a certain extent, other types of migration streams – e.g. from Hyderabad, India to US and Saudi Arabia (Ali, 2007); from the Polynesian island of Niue to New Zealand (Connell, 2008); from Ilocos, Philippines to Hawaii (Galam, 2015); from Morocco to Western Europe (Heering, van der Erf, & van Wissen, 2004); from rural Romania to Western Europe (Horvath, 2008); and from Turkey to Europe (Timmerman, Hemmerchts, & De Clerck, 2014).

tangible and visually appealing, they are deeply etched in one's memories. Hence, one respondent remembered the new shoes and dress of their neighbor when she was a kid while others recalled chocolates. Big houses and new cars are, of course, enticing. However, small and seemingly mundane personal things also shape imaginations toward overseas work and sustain its appeal to most Filipinos. These tangible markers are also embedded in relationships that make them more potent as they become part and parcel of interactions and exchanges. In this sense, aspirations are shaped and reproduced by the images that travel from overseas through return visits, photos (more recently posted in social media platforms), and (in place of the migrant's presence) 'imported goods' that embody the smell, taste, and look of life overseas. As Chua (2014: 135) explained:

migration has made for an expanding circulation of ideas, goods, money, and people, shifting the aspirational horizons of those able to move, as well as those who cannot. Through mass-media images, stories recounted among friends and neighbors, and public displays of wealth by returning migrants, young people see and hear of success among those able to gain social opportunity and wealth through migration overseas.

Another interesting account concerning the desirability of migration is that of physical attributes and how one is transformed physically by going abroad. Consider Lilia's statement:

*My uncle . . . whenever he comes back to visit ['nagbabalikbayan'] brought a lot of pasalubong.<sup>62</sup> I saw that he had a smooth complexion and these [gesturing to parts of the body such as elbows] are all white. And he was just in Okinawa, Japan!*

(Lilia, 57 years old, stay-in nanny/housekeeper,  
arrived in New Jersey in 2002)

In this sense, one does not only enhance her status by being able to afford highly-prized goods but also looks *good*. These changes associated with physical attributes (becoming whiter and having smoother complexion) contribute effectively in creating and reproducing the desirability of going abroad. Migration also holds an aesthetic appeal. "Like when you say 'abroad,' it's like you feel it is [something] beautiful," Bernadette, a part-time caregiver in New York, remarked.

Thus, prior to their own migration, *interpersonal ties* – primarily, relatives and acquaintances abroad – are the foremost link of the respondents to the outside world and provide the concrete images of the otherwise intangible possibilities of 'good life' that migration and overseas work could offer. In addition to interpersonal ties, *institutional actors*<sup>63</sup> – e.g. government agencies, migration industry, and mass media – also cultivate the 'culture of migration' among Filipinos. With the personal remittances amounting to US\$31.3 billion in 2017 and accounting for 10% of the country's GDP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, 2018)<sup>64</sup>, it is not surprising that it is in the interest of the Philippine government to promote and encourage overseas migration. In turn, given that the Philippine government has been actively promoting and facilitating the deployment of migrant Filipino workers, the state also contributes in fostering certain ideas about overseas employment – from disseminating information with regard to what sort of jobs are 'in demand' abroad and which countries are in need of foreign workers to hailing overseas Filipino workers as 'modern day heroes' (*bagong bayani*). In this sense, overseas employment has become institutionalized as a legitimate

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<sup>62</sup> These are the gifts or souvenir items that Filipinos who travelled to other places bring back home.

<sup>63</sup> Following Poros (2011), I conceptualize migrant networks as including both interpersonal ties and institutional actors.

<sup>64</sup> Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. (15 Feb 2018). Personal Remittances Exceed 4.0 Percent Growth Projection for 2017; Full-Year Level Reaches US\$31.3 Billion. [Media Releases]. Retrieve from <<http://www.bsp.gov.ph/publications/media.asp?id=4615&yr=2018>>, accessed 29 May 2018.

and recognized option for survival and means for achieving a better future. Migration-related *government agencies* such as the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) could also be viewed as a part of the extensive networks of ‘migrant institutions’<sup>65</sup> that facilitate, regulate, and control the movement and deployment of would-be migrants abroad (Goss & Lindquist, 1995). As Masselink & Lee (2010: 167–168; citing Goss & Lindquist, 1995) put it:

Migrant institutions (e.g., government agencies, recruitment agencies) seek to control the migration process for their own political and financial gain, and their activities in turn create institutional rules and resources that determine the material and ideological conditions of access to migration opportunities.

Migrant institutions also connect the origin and destination countries by serving as intermediaries – brokering the recruitment and deployment of migrant labor (*see*, for example, Harvey, Groutsis, & van den Broek, 2018). The development and expansion of migrant institutions paint a complex picture of international labor migration, wherein “the labor-scarce economies do not merely create the opportunity for overseas labor to which individual workers respond. Both private capital and the state are engaged in the active recruitment of labor to fulfill their labor needs” (Goss & Linquist, 1995: 337).

In the Philippines, the prominence and visibility of *recruitment and placement agencies* also serve as vehicles in promoting the viability and attractiveness of labor migration. These for-profit organizations act as opportunity structures while also profiting in the large-scale deployment of overseas workers. It is therefore in the commercial interests of these organizations and agencies to expand international labor migration. In addition, *educational and training institutions* also participate in the promotion of overseas work by explicitly linking education program to migration opportunities. This is most apparent, for example, among nursing schools (as well as training institutions offering caregiving or nursing aide programs), which generally advertise and promote their ‘edge’ in producing “globally competitive” and “world-class” nursing graduates (*see* Figures 5.2 to 5.5; Masselink & Lee, 2010; Ortega, 2014).

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<sup>65</sup> I use ‘migration institution’ as a more encompassing term (compared to a more specific ‘migration industry’) given the significance of government agencies in encouraging and promoting overseas employment in the Philippine context (Guevarra, 2010; Rodriguez, 2010).

## Bachelor of Science in NURSING

Bachelor of Science in Nursing is the flagship program of Manila Tytana Colleges. Offered since 1975, the four-year course has produced **successful healthcare professionals with international careers** in some of the world's most prestigious healthcare institutions.

The curriculum provides comprehensive theoretical and practical instruction, designed to train students to competently deliver professional healthcare services.

In addition to encouraging academic excellence, emphasis is also placed on the development of core values. Aside from undergoing actual clinical training in various affiliate hospitals and at the **Manila Doctors Hospital**, base hospital of MTC, students are also immersed in community work. As a result, graduates of the Manila Tytana Colleges are equipped with the skills and knowledge to practice and profession, and the values to excel and stand out.



Figure 5.2. Description of BS Nursing program<sup>66</sup>  
(Manila Tytana Colleges)



Figure 5.3. International Nursing Program Website<sup>67</sup>  
(Arellano University)

<sup>66</sup> Source: Academics. (n.d.). *Manila Tytana Colleges*.

Retrieved from <<http://www.mtc.edu.ph/2012/con2.php#con>>, accessed 29 May 2018.

<sup>67</sup> Source: About us. (n.d.). *Arellano University International Nursing Program*.

Retrieved from <<https://www.arellano.edu.ph/international/inp>>, accessed 29 May 2018.



**About the program**  
**BS in Nursing**

OUR LADY OF FATIMA UNIVERSITY  
College of Nursing

This program is available in:

- Valenzuela
- Quezon City
- Antipolo

**Brochure**

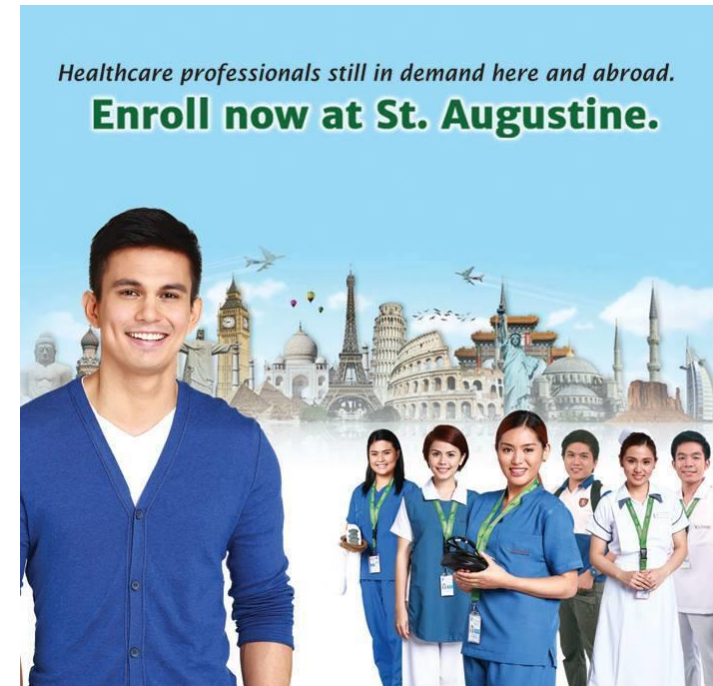
**Curriculum**

OLFU's College of Nursing was the first BSN program to be accredited Level IV in the National Capital Region by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA).

The College's curriculum integrates the following:

1. Review programs for examinations necessary for employment in the US: TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), CGFNS (Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools) and NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses);
2. Extensive training in nursing informatics
3. Quality research activities exposure to students
4. Foreign language training

**Figure 5.4.** Description of Nursing Program <sup>68</sup>  
(Our Lady of Fatima University)



Healthcare professionals still in demand here and abroad.  
**Enroll now at St. Augustine.**

**Figure 5.5.** Nursing School Promotional Material <sup>69</sup>  
(St. Augustine School of Nursing)

<sup>68</sup> Source: About the program BS in Nursing. *Our Lady of Fatima University College of Nursing*. Retrieved from <https://www.fatima.edu.ph/program/College%20of%20Nursing/BS%20in%20Nursing/3>, accessed 29 May 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Source: St. Augustine School of Nursing. (2014 June 20). Caregivers, Practical Nurses, and Nursing Aides are also in-demand abroad. And with St. Augustine's curriculum, you are definitely ready for the global workplace. Become a globally competitive healthcare professional. Enroll today. [Facebook update]. Photo caption: The demand for professionals in the healthcare industry is still high. You can be one of these in-demand professionals someday. St. Augustine will help you become a globally competitive healthcare professional. Enroll today. Retrieve from <https://www.facebook.com/saintaugustineph/photos/a.352332428214134.83534.349660455147998/601521736628534/?type=3&theater>, accessed 29 May 2018. St. Augustine School of Nursing Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/saintaugustineph/>

Promotional materials produced by the migrant institutions discussed above (Philippine government, recruitment and placement agencies, and educational institutions) are distributed through various forms of mass media. This ensures widespread reach of such messages. For instance, David did not finish his nursing degree but he was enticed to take it in college together with his high school classmates since the demand for nurses abroad was constantly featured in the newspapers.

*Yes, when I was in high school, it's like everyone – nursing was in boom then. Every time you read the newspapers, 'Nurses wanted abroad. Canada. US.' My friend said, "Hey, let's just take nursing so that we can go abroad." It was like that it is what also entered my mind – that I also want to go abroad. [ . . . ] It's like peer pressure. Every time you go to the library, they were reading and announcing, "Oh, look, let's just take nursing." So, most of my [high school] batchmates are nurses and they are all scattered [ . . . ] all over the world.*

(David, 45 years old, health care assistant in an NHS hospital,  
arrived in London in 2008)

James, a staff nurse in north London, also shared a similar narrative. He narrated how he was exposed to advertisements in television about hiring in different countries and had friends and acquaintances who already left to work overseas. He said that he was encouraged and since everyone seems to be leaving, he felt as if he was getting left behind. With the ubiquity of the Internet and social media, migrant institutions have new avenues to encourage and promote overseas employment and circulate the possibility of doing so. Take for example the Facebook page of a recruitment agency (ASC Global Recruitment) where photos and testimonials of 'successful' nurse applicants to the UK, as well as information about the offered job and application process were posted (Figures 5.6 to 5.9). This platform also allows the recruitment agencies to engage with potential applicants and provide additional information when needed.

Apart from the benefits that successful applicants can 'enjoy' (e.g. salary converted into Philippine peso), places of destination are also central in advertising and promoting overseas employment. In the case of nursing schools (Figures 5.3 and 5.4), getting to highly desirable destinations (such as the US) is presented to be realizable or within reach (e.g. partnership with universities in the US and Australia; integration of 'review programs for examinations necessary for employment in the US' in the curriculum). As with the recruitment agency, going to the UK is described as a 'dream turned into a reality' (Figures 5.6 and 5.8). Thus, aside from the desire to migrate, the desire of *where* to migrate is also being transmitted and perpetuated as part of the 'culture of migration.' In the last part of this chapter, I examine place-specific aspirations and desirability of destinations.





**Figure 5.6.** Recruitment Agency Promotional Material (Testimonial of a Nurse Applicant in the UK)



**Figure 5.7.** Recruitment Agency Promotional Material (Details of Current Recruitment and Job Offer)

<sup>70</sup> Source: ASC Global Recruitment. (28 March 2018). BE A NURSE IN THE UK! Here's what our nurses say about ASC and to our client for this month, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Retrieve from <https://www.facebook.com/ascglobalrecruitment/photos/a.172575356848.118200.172536756848/10155766603196849/?type=3&theater>, accessed 29 May 2018.

<sup>71</sup> Source: ASC Global Recruitment. (29 March 2018). Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is back with more great opportunities, to make your dreams of living in the UK a reality! Retrieve from <https://www.facebook.com/ascglobalrecruitment/photos/a.172575356848.118200.172536756848/10155770669966849/?type=3&theater>, accessed 29 May 2018.



Figure 5.8. Recruitment Agency Promotional Material (Arrival of Newly-Hired Nurses in the UK) <sup>72</sup>



Figure 5.9. Recruitment Agency Promotional Material (Featured in a Local Newspaper in the UK) <sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup> ASC Global Recruitment. (10 April 2018). Congratulations to OUR NURSES WHO JUST ARRIVED IN LONDON! Retrieve from <https://www.facebook.com/ascglobalrecruitment/photos/pcb.10155807278311849/10155807275076849/?type=3&theater> <<https://www.facebook.com/ascglobalrecruitment/photos/pcb.10155807278311849/10155807275096849/?type=3&theater>>, accessed 29 May 2018.

<sup>73</sup> ASC Global Recruitment. (12 April 2018). ASC Global Recruitment, the country's leading healthcare agency for nurses to the United Kingdom has been featured on the Waltham Forest Guardian, a local paper sold every Thursday in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. Retrieve from <https://www.facebook.com/ascglobalrecruitment/photos/a.172575356848.118200.172536756848/10155812409641849/?type=3&theater>, accessed 29 May 2018.

## Geographical Imaginations, Place-Specific Aspirations, and Hierarchy of Destinations

While the concept of ‘culture of migration’ provides an effective framework to study migration aspiration and decision-making, Thompson (2017: 77) argues that “to fully comprehend migration decision-making it is necessary to take note of the impacts of culture and place and to understand not only *why* people aspire to move, but *where* they aspire to move to.” Similarly, one way of conceptualizing migration aspiration according to Carling & Schewel (2018: 953) is to view it as a ‘comparison of *places*’:

The value of living in a specific place depends on the characteristics of that place, modified by the individual’s needs and preferences. [. . .] Potential destinations are an important part of the emigration environment, though they are present through the locally existing ideas and meanings attached to these places. This is true not only of specific locations elsewhere, but also of the more elusive deictic places such as ‘here’, ‘there’ and ‘abroad’.

Thus, expounding on the definition of migration aspiration, evaluating opportunities ‘here’ and ‘there’ involves imaginaries concerning places – e.g. America as a paradise (where anything is possible), and the Philippines as a place of hopelessness, poverty, and stagnation.<sup>74</sup> The role of such place-specific imaginaries also goes beyond the migration aspiration and decision-making; they continue to evolve post-migration and are intertwined with migrants’ imagined futures (Chapter 8; see Vigh, 2009). To take into account the importance of place in examining migration aspiration and decision-making, Thompson (2017: 79) proposed to utilize the concept of geographic imaginations. Such a concept could be defined as follows:

the mental images we hold of different places and of the people living there (Riaño and Baghdadi 2007). They are imaginations of landscapes and climates, perceptions of cultural qualities and understandings of economic, social and political characteristics of places. Geographical imaginations include understandings of places we directly experience, and those we have never been to. Often, these imaginations are relational; unknown places are imaginatively compared with known ones. While geographical imaginations are generally oversimplifications, they are important in making place accessible and understandable (Chang and Lim 2004).

An important takeaway from this definition is the idea that people can “inhabit” places they have never been to through the images they make about these foreign places. Koikkalainen & Kyle (2016) introduced the concept of *cognitive migration* to refer to this process of ‘mental time travel’ of potential migrants who are imagining a possible future of themselves in a particular place of destination even before the actual move. In this sense, would-be migrants do not only form expectations of what overseas employment and going abroad could bring (i.e. the better life preciously discussed in the first part of this chapter), but such expectations are also tied to how places of destination are imagined. Consider the following account of Melanie, a stay-in caregiver in north London, who imagined how good life must have been in the places where migrants in her village were working:

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<sup>74</sup> In his study of Cape Verdean migration, Carling (2009: 136) noted a similar contrast between the imaginations surrounding the place of origin and destination: “In Cape Verde, the notion of home as barren and impoverished has traditionally been counterpoised to the image of *stranjer* as a “paradise” where the ones who work hard can get everything they want.”

*Rizza: But your dream destination really was?*

*Melanie: Here [London] and America. [...] Because first and foremost, the high value of their money. We have relatives who seemed to have very good lives in London. Because when they returned for a visit, they were very famous [in our village]. Their houses, and of course it's a village, a barrio only, so everyone knows everyone else. They were really looked up to – “Oh they're from America. Their houses are really beautiful.” Like that. You can really see that [they are admired]. [Rizza: These are your relatives?] My relatives who are here, which at that time we were not really close. But when someone would say, “Oh, those from London arrived.” Like that. Then, you can also hear those who are working in Italy have big houses! [I thought] “Oh, it is nice there.” Although my job in the Philippines was good, but then my house is small. It's like I was [yearning] for something more because you can really see. Like with my income in the Philippines, I couldn't [afford that]. Although it was just enough. But – at that time, my colleagues were also going to Canada, Australia... America, they were there already. Even my best friend at work was already in America. It seemed like it was really beautiful abroad.*

(Melanie, 50 years old, live-in care worker, arrived in London in 2008)

As in the discussion on culture of migration, would-be migrants infer from the perceived good life that relatives and acquaintances abroad have, and imagine that the places where they migrated must have been better compared to their home country. As Melanie would discover when she finally moved to London, her relatives were actually having a hard time surviving – so much so that they did not have much capacity to help her during the initial years of her stay. Imaginations concerning the homeland could shift from a place lacking opportunity to a place of refuge; re-evaluating the Philippines in a more favorable light when the place of destination did not live up to their (mythical) expectations – i.e. a literal paradise (*see* also Carling & Åkesson, 2009 on how destination countries acquired and imbued with almost mythical qualities; Vigh, 2009 on how these qualities are somehow shattered post-migration).

However, as Paul (2011, 2015) contends, not all destinations are desired equally. There exists a hierarchy of destination countries, particularly in relation to the multi-stage (or *stepwise*) migration of aspiring migrants. In her study of the destination preferences of Filipino domestic workers, Paul (2017: 177) constructed a typology of these destination countries based on how high or low they are in the migrants' personal hierarchy (*see* also Figure 5.10 for the visualization of the hierarchy of destinations):

Among the Filipino domestic workers I interviewed, the typical destination hierarchy they professed had Western countries positioned at the very top, followed by Asian countries in the middle, and Middle Eastern countries at the very bottom. Within each of these tiers in their destination hierarchy, my interviews with Filipino domestic workers revealed further subdivisions. Within the category of Western nations, for instance, North American countries (specifically, Canada and the United States) tended to enjoy a higher ranking than European countries. Within Asia, East Asian markets like Hong Kong and Taiwan ranked higher than Southeast Asian countries like Singapore and Malaysia, and even within this latter sub-category, Singapore was uniformly ranked higher than Malaysia. Within the Middle East category, the UAE (and other so-called “open countries”) took top billing compared to Saudi Arabia and war-torn countries in the region like Iraq.

My study among ‘low-skilled’ (domestic workers and stay-in caregivers) and ‘high-skilled’ Filipino workers (particularly nurses) in London and New York roughly follows Mary Anju Paul’s findings concerning the destination hierarchy among Filipino domestic workers in Canada, Singapore, and Hong Kong. In the remaining part of this chapter, I discuss the imaginations surrounding the ‘dream’ and ‘intermediate’ destinations, and the articulated rationale on why such preferences were put forward by the respondents.



**Figure 5.10.** The Common Destination Hierarchy for Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers  
\*Adapted from Paul (2015: 441)

### ***Dream Destinations: North America and Europe***

It is not surprising that among the respondents who explicitly expressed their preference, the United States was named as the most desired destination. America, for most Filipinos, is both familiar and elusive. As discussed in Chapter 4, the almost 50 years of American colonial rule has a profound and lasting impact on the state of affairs in the Philippines. Not only are the Philippine institutions patterned after the American system, the American cultural exports to the country are well-entrenched in the consciousness of Filipinos – from music and movies to fast food chains and clothing. The long history of migration of Filipinos to the United States, where the largest Filipino diaspora is located, also creates another layer of familiarity that sustains and perpetuate the so-called American dream – the belief that the US is a land of endless possibilities. For one, Filipinos in the US – as in those in other places overseas – maintain connections to their homeland, and (as discussed in the section on culture of migration), also serve as agents and channels through which goods and ideas are circulated.

*When I finished college, I said to myself, “it seems that it is nice to go abroad.” But my dream then is America. “I want to go to America,” I said. [Rizza: Why [America]? Who gave you that kind of idea?] Because we have relatives in America and those things that you were able to watch, those things.*

(Leah, 53 years old, nanny/housekeeper, arrived in South East England in 2007 as a care worker in care home, moved to London in 2010)

*What I really wanted then is [to go to] America. But then, I said, it seems like it’s impossible [to go to] America. How? Who will get [petition for] me? We have relatives there but they said that it was not that easy to*

*sponsor. Of course, the expenses [involved], you know, as if someone will spend and shoulder the cost for you. [Rizza: But why America?] Because of my relatives were saying, "it's beautiful here." It's like here [London] as well when it comes to salary. The place is beautiful, like that. Just beautiful, that's what they were saying. We really know people and have relative there. [...] The sibling of my father is there. Then the husband of my aunt, they are also there. So, there. Then they were saying, "Oh... in America it's like this. Life is good there. Then, you will become pretty because of the climate unlike in the Philippines, there are always typhoons." [laughs] Right, it's like that?*

(Sara, 42 years old, part-time housekeeper, arrived in London in 2014)

The accounts of Leah and Sara point out not only to the importance of relatives in fostering place-specific aspirations (in this case, the US), but also to the influence of mass media (in the case of Leah) and the elusiveness of America for most aspiring migrants without the necessary capital to get there (as in the account of Sara). Echoing similar findings, Paul (2017: 166) also noted the pervasiveness of the American dream and the high desirability of the US as a dream destination among Filipinos, despite the recognition that the chance of getting there is close to nil. As this author writes:

Likewise, the mythology of the American Dream, especially as it is portrayed in film and television, plays a heavy role in that country's position at the top of many Filipino migrants' destination hierarchies, even though they know the odds of being able to gain entry into the United States are near impossible. Setting aside migrant domestic workers I talked with in Canada and the United States, most other Filipino interviewees only spoke in glowing terms about their former colonial master. This is in line with the entrenched history of Philippine migration to the United States . . . , the cultural ties between the two countries, and the continued valorization of the United States as a place where the potential for upward mobility is very strong.

Indeed, getting to the American soil has become more difficult and costly for Filipinos over the years. For those who have familial ties in the US, the sponsorship takes years to get approved, while securing a non-immigrant tourist visa has become almost impossible for but a few who have the necessary resources to prove that they will not overstay their visa.<sup>75</sup> It can then be argued that as getting to the US becomes more difficult and exclusive to selected few, the more prestigious it has become in the hierarchy of destinations. Thus, most aspiring migrant could either give up and look for alternative destinations, or continue to strategically get to the US by first migrating to intermediate countries hoping to acquire the necessary capital to finally get to their desired destination (i.e. stepwise migration; *see* Paul, 2011,2015, 2017).

In recent years, Canada has become another top tier destination, and as Paul (2017) observed, acquired mythical qualities similar to that of the US – where potential migrants are not only ensured

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<sup>75</sup> According to the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the US Department of State, "the required presumption under U.S. law is that every visitor visa applicant is an intending immigrant until they demonstrate otherwise. Therefore, applicants for visitor visas must overcome this presumption by demonstrating: that the purpose of their trip is to enter the United States temporarily for business or pleasure; that they plan to remain for a specific, limited period; evidence of funds to cover expenses in the United States; that they have a residence outside the United States as well as other binding ties that will ensure their departure from the United States at the end of the visit." Retrieved from [https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/VisaFlyer\\_B1B2%20March%202015.pdf](https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/VisaFlyer_B1B2%20March%202015.pdf), accessed 24 September 2017.

of higher salary and standard of living, but also an opportunity to get citizenship rights and be reunited with their families. Likewise, the desire to migrate to Canada is also fostered by the positive feedbacks of acquaintances and relatives who successfully moved there. For instance, Patricia, an undocumented domestic worker in London, expressed her incessant desire to move to Canada citing that she has friends from Taiwan who already settled there. Like them, she believed that she would be able to find a 'proper' work with legal papers and contract in Canada. For Filipino domestic workers (like Patricia) and live-in caregivers who first worked in intermediary countries (like Israel), information with regard to where to move next and which destination could offer better opportunities are found through the ties and connections that they developed in these countries (Paul, 2011). This suggests that place-specific aspirations (or aspirations in general) could also be formed or altered as migrants are exposed to other (emigration) environments apart from their country of origin. Notable in this study are Hong Kong (for domestic workers) and Israel (for caregivers).

*Rizza: When you were deciding to work overseas, were you already targeting to go to London or Canada?*

*Geraldine: No, that was not on mind [then]. [. . .] Just Hong Kong since my cousins went there before. Then I was just thinking to go to Hong Kong and work, get paid, and have something to send to my family. But when I was already in Hong Kong, everyone there was [talking about going to] Russia or Canada. So, I said, maybe I can also apply to where they were aspiring [to go] because of the [higher] salary, right?*

(Geraldine, 40 years old, housekeeper, arrived in London in 2009)

In addition, the migration industry (e.g. recruitment and placement agencies) within and outside the Philippines could also shape preferences with the way they market and promote possible destinations for would-be migrants. These agencies, in turn, are also responding to opportunities created by immigration policies of destination countries. For example, the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) of Canada, which was established in 1992 (and officially ended in 2014), allowed migrant workers under the program to apply for permanent residency after 24 months. Such provision was enticing for aspiring migrants given the prospects for citizenship and family reunification.<sup>76</sup> However, the application to Canada was also costly (as described by respondents who aspired to move there) and cases of recruitment agency absconding and swindling applicants were not unheard of.

*Majority of my friends [in Taiwan] went to Canada. But then, they were not really supporting their families. Like, they were just sending money occasionally. Their money is theirs. But for me, I did not have the money to apply [to Canada]. 300 NT [New Taiwan Dollar]. 300,000. How much is that in pesos? [. . .] Then, what do you call this, I was sending money all the time so I did not have savings. I did have savings but . . . I was reserving that money for my return trip to Taiwan, because you would still need to pay placement fee.*

(Patricia, 33 years old, nanny/housekeeper/part-time cashier, arrived in London in 2014)

*Before my [student visa] ended, there was an agent here whom I found with my friends. They were applying to Canada because Canadian immigration policy is better [compared to UK]. We were supposed to apply the certificate that we finished here [in the UK] but then I became*

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<sup>76</sup> Critically examining the LCP, Bonifacio (2015) calls it 'servitude for promissory citizenship.'

*a victim of that recruiter, who is even a Filipino. [Rizza: Illegal?] Not really illegal [the recruitment agency itself] but their process [was dubious]. It took them a long time to release the result of the application. I was waiting . . . until I found out that I was denied and they didn't inform me. I even paid in full and they didn't refund me.*

(Carol, 45 years old, housekeeper, arrived in London in 2007)

It should be noted that while Canada as a desired destination is prominent in the narratives of most interviewees in London, it was hardly mentioned by the respondents in New York.<sup>77</sup> In addition, while there are those in London who completely gave up on their aspiration to move to Canada after settling in the UK, others are still considering the possibility of doing so.<sup>78</sup> Thus, London (as how the respondents refer to it as a place of destination) is seen as a 'stepping stone' to either get to the US or Canada. As indicated in Chapter 4, the number of Filipinos in the UK has accelerated only in recent years (*see* Figures 4.7 & 4.8, pp. 58–59). Being a relatively non-traditional destination for Filipinos, the UK is less prominent and less known compared to its North American counterparts.

*In the Philippines, London is a bit obscure for us back then. At that time. Either what you know about London is the royal family, the queen, Buckingham, but the way of life here, we don't [normally] see. 'Cause we mostly see US programs in television. That's why.*

(Edward, 39 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in London in 2001)

However, with the start of massive recruitment of nurses (and to some extent, support care workers), the UK increasingly gained more visibility among aspiring Filipino migrants as information about hiring opportunities circulated. Recruitment and placement agencies also marketed the UK as a desirable destination – after all, it is a country in the 'West' and the exchange rate of British pounds to Philippine pesos was (still is) very enticing. Entering the UK through student visas also gained popularity for some time as these agencies took advantage of the (previous) eligibility of student visa holders to work up to 20 hours per week (later reduced to 10 hours and then ineligibility from doing paid work for non-university level students). Nevertheless, similar to other Western countries, the UK has increasingly tightened its immigration policy in the past years – making it more difficult for most Filipino (generally non-EU) would-be migrants to enter the UK.

While the dream and most preferred destinations in the West become ever more out of reach for those without the necessary capital, realizing one's migration aspiration becomes (initially) restricted to the so-called intermediate countries. Thus, for these aspiring migrants, their first step away from home is more likely to be in neighboring Asian countries or in the (perceived) riskier countries in the Middle East.

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<sup>77</sup> On rare cases, Canada came out as an option for those considering onward migration in the US because of their undocumented status in the US and/or their children or spouse are in Canada or were about to move to Canada.

<sup>78</sup> I will discuss this more in detail in Chapter 8 as respondents shared how they imagine their future and the prospects for onward migration.



### *Intermediate Countries: Asia and the Middle East*

In light of the works of Paul (2011) on hierarchy of destination and stepwise international migration, the aspiration/ability model could also be extended to place-specific migration aspirations. Not only potential migrants have the wish to emigrate and are able (or unable) to actually do so, they also have preferences when it comes to where they want to go and they may or may not be able to get to their preferred destinations – at least in the initial part of their possible multi-step journeys. In turn, the ability to reach one’s dream destination (as in the general realization of one’s migration aspiration) depends on the migrants’ capital – which pertains to, in the ‘Bourdieuian’ sense, economic, cultural, and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986).<sup>79</sup> As Paul (2011) discussed, those who do not have the necessary ‘migrant capital’ to move directly to their preferred destination may opt to go to intermediate countries and acquire the lacking resources before proceeding to their next (more preferable) destination. Similar to Paul’s respondents, the Filipino migrants I interviewed refer to such destinations as their ‘stepping stones’:

*Israel was just my stepping stone. [ . . . ] Because my agent in the Philippines told me, “It’s only your stepping stone.” [ . . . ] Because I was targeting either Canada or US, even just a carer. But it’s difficult, she told me. “It would be difficult to go directly [to US or Canada]. So, if you want, go to Israel first. And then from Israel, a lot are hiring medical graduates there going to Canada or US,” she said.*

(Donna, 39 years old, care support worker in a residential home, arrived in London in 2004)

For respondents like Donna, countries like Israel are seen as temporary stopovers in their journey to the West. The global mapping of overseas Filipinos in 2012 and 2013 (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4, p. 56) show that the top ten countries of destinations of Filipinos abroad can be classified between the ‘dream’ destinations in the West (which belongs to the top-tier of the hierarchy) and intermediate countries in Asia and the Middle East (lower rung of the hierarchy). In 2013, next to the US, the largest Filipino diasporas are in Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. In contrast to the US, Filipinos in the Middle East are categorized as ‘temporary migrants’ and are previously referred to as the overseas contract workers (OCWs) given the contractual nature of their overseas employment. Thus, migrant-receiving countries in Asia and the Middle East are ‘temporary’ destinations in a sense that they do not generally allow migrant workers to become permanent residents and naturalized citizens (see Biao, 2007; Paul, 2011). Therefore, while preferred destinations have restrictive immigration policies that make it difficult for ‘capital-constrained’ (Paul, 2015) migrants to enter, intermediate destinations though easier to access also have ‘restrictive’ immigration policies in terms of pathways to permanent residency and naturalization. For instance, Liezel, a support care worker in London, described Israel as “just a stepping stone” because she “doesn’t have a future [there].” Based on the information and feedbacks of her friend who was the first one (from their batch in Israel) to move to the UK, she compared her chances of attaining a better life:

*She said, “Life is good here.” It’s good because you can be a British citizen in five years. I said, “Oh that’s good,” because in Israel, you have no future, you don’t really have any chance [to become a citizen], even if you stay there for ten years or more ten years, there is no chance.*

(Liezel, 42 years old, care worker in a residential home, arrived in east of England in 2002, moved to London in 2004)

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<sup>79</sup> In the next chapter, I look closely into these forms of capital – more particularly on the types of resources that migrants are able to mobilize through their networks.

This perceived lack of future expressed as having no access to permanent residency and/or citizenship rights is also intimately tied to family reunification. Given the centrality of family in the respondents' narratives of departure and the discourse surrounding migration aspiration, it is not surprising that these intermediate destinations would rank low in the hierarchy as migrant workers (especially those with children) 'could not see their future' (i.e. reunited with their families) in these countries.

*Because in Saudi, you can't get your family. [. . .] That's why there was really a need to . . . find, for me to find [a way] to be with them. Then timing, London opened [for nurses], you can bring your family. So, grab the opportunity again. [. . .] Because in Saudi, you cannot bring your children, you cannot bring your spouse. [Rizza: But other than that?] Other than that? [Rizza: You didn't like anything else there?] Nothing else [. . .] Because we had good salary there as well. [. . .] But you should be with your family and you should also have a future, like here, your children have a chance to get here, to study [here].*

(Marissa, 58 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in London in 2002)

The narrative of Marissa resonates with undocumented Filipinos I interviewed in New York and London who either see themselves returning in the Philippines or moving to another destination (e.g. Canada), which they perceived as having more favorable immigration policy, to be with their families.

With regards to differences in salary between desired and intermediate destinations, the accounts of the interviewees are more nuanced and ambivalent. While there are Filipino nurses I interviewed who explicitly mentioned higher salary as one of the reasons for their desire to move to high-tier destinations, there are also those like Marissa<sup>80</sup> who did not consider salary as a factor in her onward migration. For domestic workers and care workers, while salary is considerably higher in London and New York (or in other countries in the West), they also shared how some aspects of 'quality of life' are better in intermediate countries or even in the Philippines – a sentiment that are also echoed by some nurse respondents. Apart from London and New York being more expensive to live in, comforts, amenities, and lifestyle could prove to be disappointing in the two global cities compared to their experiences in Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Middle East.

It is also worth discussing the stereotypes and reputation surrounding intermediate countries that make them unattractive and less desirable for would-be Filipino migrants. With salary and wages aside, respondents who expressed their or their families' hesitation to go to the Middle East cited the widespread news about physical and sexual abuses suffered by Filipino migrant workers in those countries. Thus, these destinations have become notoriously perceived as dangerous places to be in, particularly for women (Paul 2011, 2017).<sup>81</sup> However, based on the accounts of Filipino nurses and domestics who worked in the Middle East, there are also differences when it comes to security, protection, and benefits accorded to nurses compared to domestic workers. While there might be concerns about one's safety initially, Filipino nurses who worked in the Middle East evaluated their experience as generally positive. The domestic workers I interviewed, on the other hand, talked about the verbal and, to a certain extent, physical abuses they experienced from their Middle Eastern

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<sup>80</sup> Marissa stayed in Saudi Arabia for 17 years prior to moving to London. Thus, it could be that she had better salary (compared to newly-hired nurses) because of her long years in service.

<sup>81</sup> There are also male respondents who talked about their hesitation to go to the Middle East because of this reputation. One respondent who identified himself as gay particularly talked about his fear of being raped if he were in the Middle East.

employers. As Paul (2011) highlighted, there are also important differences between ‘open’ (e.g. UAE) and ‘closed’ (Saudi Arabia) countries in the Middle East. ‘Open’ countries allow greater freedoms compared to the strict enforcement of religious beliefs and practices in Saudi Arabia. Despite the negative reputation, both high-skilled and low-skilled Filipino migrant workers still opt to try their luck in what they deemed to be ‘dangerous and risky’ destinations as these are the easiest way out of the home country and gateways to the migrants’ dream destinations.

It is also possible for ‘destination reputation’ (Harvey et al., 2018) to arise from the type of migrant work and particular migration stream that such place attracts. Such condition becomes apparent considering Japan and the reputation that it acquired as a destination of Filipina entertainers. Some respondents mentioned that they were prevented by their fathers from going there because of the stigma attached to those returning from overseas work in that country – regardless of whether they are entertainers or not.

*In our barangay, they [usually] go to Japan. When I graduated from college, I told my father, “My father, I will also go to Japan.” Because our neighbor said, if I want to go to Japan. Then my [father] said, “[If that’s the case] let’s just eat salt if we have nothing else to eat [magdildil na lang tayo ng asin; meaning to be so poor you have nothing left to eat but salt],” that’s what he said. [. . .] Yeah, he got angry. [Though] not everyone working in Japan is like that [a prostitute]. But then he said no, because even though they were not able to go to school – and he said, not all the people in our place would understand. Then he said, if I could not find work, then [it’s better for us] to just eat salt if we have nothing else to eat [magdildil na lang ng asin]. That’s what he said. He said, “Don’t ever go to Japan.” Then, no. Then when I told them I would go abroad to work, they thought I did that – to go to Japan. They didn’t want to let me go. I said, “No, I will go to Taiwan.” And that it is a company. I told them that my company recommended me.*

(Patricia, 33 years old, nanny/housekeeper/part-time cashier, arrived in London in 2014)

*When I was younger, I was a cultural dancer. They were sending dancers to Japan, right? Then my father did not want me to go abroad. I left the cultural dance [group]. It was not that kind of cultural dance [entertainers, implicitly prostitutes] that sends cultural dancers abroad. You know those who are dancing folk dances? [Rizza: Yes.] It was like that. [Rizza: Your father didn’t like it?] He didn’t like that I would go to Japan because when you’re there in Japan already, you’re a Japayuki [a derogatory term referring to Filipina entertainers who work in Japan, which implies prostitution] right? [. . .] He did not like us to go. He did not like us to go abroad. He said that he can feed us anyway. We were fine [financially] back then.*

(Anita, 59 years old, domestic worker, arrived in London in 1994)

In this sense, Japan also acquired the same stigma given to Filipino entertainers as a destination. It is automatically regarded as a place where *Japayuki* [implied as prostitutes] would go. In recent years, Japan also opened its market for Filipino caregivers and nurses (Lopez, 2012; Piquero-Ballescás, 2009) and, at the same time, the streams of Filipina entertainers going to Japan have declined (Parreñas, 2010). It will remain to be seen whether the negative reputation that Japan acquired would change (from the origin country perspective) with the diversification of the types of Filipino migrant workers that it attracts. This points out to possible changes in the hierarchy of destinations and how places are imagined and valued by migrants and non-migrants alike.

## Summing Up, Moving Forward: Aspirations, Places, and Ability

In this chapter, I have specifically examined the meanings attach to geographical mobility, which are framed primarily on the hope of attaining a better life. In this way, migration aspiration becomes part of one's life aspirations as 'going abroad' is seen as a viable means to secure a better future – when such means are perceived to be lacking or unavailable in one's home country. Unsurprisingly, respondents articulated their motivations to migrate largely in economic terms – from wanting to improve their social standing to out of dire need for survival. But while economic mobility has been central in most migration projects, migration aspirations (and aspirations, in general) cannot be divorced from the socio-cultural contexts from which they emerge. Ideas surrounding what 'good life' means and the legitimate means of successfully reaching that goal are tied to wider cultural norms and recognized by the larger community where one belongs. Similarly, as Carling & Schewel (2018: 953) noted, "people's notion of migration will often be based on a 'migration project', a socially constructed entity that embodies particular expectations." Therefore, while expressed as individual's 'wants' or 'desires,' (migration) aspirations are undeniably social (Appadurai, 2004).

In the case of most Filipino respondents in this study, the motivation to go abroad is intimately connected to the welfare of the family, indicating that migration is hardly seen and undertaken as an individual endeavor. Even for those who were looking for better opportunities to practice their (nursing) profession overseas, familial obligations are still central to their narratives of departure and the emphasis on 'helping the family' through overseas work is commonly stated. Hence, social and economic mobility is not only tied to the imagined futures of the participants but also of their families (Aguilar, 1999; Asis, 1994, 2002). In this sense, migration is transformed from just an economic strategy into a moral act given that it is construed as a sacrifice and another way of 'caring' for one's family. However, conceiving migration as a moral act is not without tensions and ambivalences. Inasmuch as overseas work provides for the material needs of loved ones, it can also run in conflict with other obligations – e.g. not being able to be physically present and care for one's children or ailing parents. In this way, the image of migration as a sacrifice could turn into regret and resentment even from the perspective of migrants themselves. In short, by viewing migration beyond economic terms and within the realms of morality, it is also evaluated beyond material gains and through the prism of moral obligations.

It is also through the discourse of duty and familial obligations that migration could be also mean both gaining and undermining one's freedom. Children following their parents and families usually have little to no say in their relocation so as the wives who are petitioned by their husbands. Because of necessity, parents could be forced to leave their children behind or children may feel obligated to choose a career path perceived as suited for overseas work. On the other hand, being in a different place could also weaken the traditional roles expected from women and having the capacity to earn more can also allow them to renegotiate these previously imposed expectations (Adhikari, 2013; Asis, 2002; George, 2005). In this sense, freedom and unfreedom can co-exist (Fernandez, 2014; Mahdavi, 2016) in the participants' narratives of departure rendering their accounts more complex and multidimensional.

The meanings surrounding overseas migration are also tied to imaginations concerning places. For one, migration aspiration could be understood "as comparison of places" (Carling & Schewel, 2018: 953) given that it arises out of evaluating opportunity structures in the places of origin and destination (de Haas, 2014). However, places of destination are also evaluated and desired differently. It is apparent in the participants' narratives of departure that there exists a hierarchy among countries of destination (Paul, 2011, 2015, 2017). In this hierarchy, the United States is considered as the most desirable destination by most respondents. In the previous chapter, I have discussed this in relation to the country's colonial ties with the US and the widespread belief in the American dream in post-colonial Philippines. However, as immigration policies in the countries in

the Global North have become more restrictive, those who lack the necessary migrant capital tend to go to more accessible countries in Asia and the Middle East – i.e. intermediate countries, despite the negative images attached to these places.

There is then the question on how all these images and meanings related to desirability of destinations (as well as those linking migration to ‘good life’) are reproduced and perpetuated in a particular ‘emigration environment.’ The concept of ‘culture of migration’ has been utilized to explore the diffusion of ideas and values concerning overseas migration and employment. It is often mentioned that there exists a strong culture of migration among Filipinos (Asis, 2006). It has been shown that this is apparent not only in the narratives of those who dreamt of going abroad but also in instances when migrating was never in the plan but became incorporated in the life trajectories of individuals and families. There is a strong culture of migration primarily because images of ‘successful *balikbayan*’ and ‘*fruits of their overseas work*’ are highly visible and are sustained in one’s consciousness as they become part of exchanges and interactions between and among family members, friends, acquaintances, or even strangers. Participants’ narratives also reveal that such images are conspicuously manufactured in various forms of media. On a much larger scale, the Philippine government has been central in encouraging and promoting overseas work – as Rodriguez (2010) would call it, ‘a labor brokerage state.’ The enterprise of deploying Filipino workers overseas requires a system of institutional actors that would manage and facilitate the process apart from government agency. Most prominent among these actors are recruitment and placement agencies, as well as educational and training institutions, which also promote and advertise overseas work and particular places of destinations in different avenues and media – most recently through the Internet and social media. These institutional actors also serve as intermediaries and brokers that connect would-be migrants to employers in destination areas. Together with relatives and acquaintances abroad, they become channels through which the global circulation of ideas, goods, and possibilities takes place.

These interpersonal ties and institutional actors could then be conceptualized as part of migrant networks that shape and nurture migration aspiration (and place-specific ones), given that the “aspiration to migrate is transmitted across generations and between people through social networks” (Kandel & Massey, 2002: 981). Garip & Asad (2015, 2016) refer to this effect of migrant network as ‘*normative influence*’<sup>82</sup> (and ‘social learning’; refer to the footnote on social facilitation<sup>82</sup>). These particular functions are not commonly explored in extant research since much attention is given to the resources and assistance derived from networks – or what is called ‘*social facilitation*’<sup>83</sup> (see Garip & Asad, 2016; Van Mol, Snel, Hemmerechts, & Timmerman, 2017 as exceptions). However, as this chapter shows, migrant networks are effective in fostering and perpetuating the desire to migrate and where to migrate.

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<sup>82</sup> Garip & Asad (2016: 1169) “adopt an exhaustive typology suggested by DiMaggio and Garip (2012) and consider three mechanisms—social facilitation, normative influence, and network externalities—by which social ties shape migration decisions.” They define *normative influence* as present when “when network peers offer social rewards or impose sanctions to encourage or discourage migration” (Garip & Asad, 2016: 1168).

<sup>83</sup> In the typology of DiMaggio and Garip (2012), *social facilitation* is composed of two mechanisms: *social learning* (“occurs when individuals infer the value of a practice of uncertain efficacy and/or limited observability from peers who engage in it”) and *peer assistance* (“at work when individuals receive direct assistance in the acquisition of a complex practice”) (Garip & Asad, 2016: 1188). I argue that in the case of formation and perpetuation of migration aspirations, both social learning and normative influence are at work given that aspiring migrants could learn how to migrate by observing successful migrants before them (Ali, 2007) and could also be encouraged or impelled to move by their interpersonal ties and/or institutional actors given the prevailing culture of migration in the community.

In the next chapter, the focus shifts on the ‘ability’ part of the aspiration/ability model (Carling, 2002) and tackles the social facilitation mechanism of migrant networks in examining how migrants realize their migration aspiration. While the ability dimension of the model pertains to both the macro- (*immigration interface*<sup>84</sup>) and micro- (*individual characteristics*) levels of analysis (Carling, 2002: 13; *see* Figure 5.1, p. 77), I suggest that examining migrant networks as opportunity structures provide a better framing of how migrants were able to realize their desire to migrate – as shown in the subsequent discussions.

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<sup>84</sup> Carling & Schewel (2018: 947) defined immigration interface as composing of “a range of possible modes of migrating, either in compliance with or defiance of the various migration regulations, such as legal labour migration, family reunification, asylum migration and visa overstaying. Each mode is associated with a different set of barriers and requirements, reflected in person-to-person variation in the ability to migrate.”

# CHAPTER SIX

## The Ties that Facilitated the Move(s): *Migration Pathways and Pre-migration Networks*

### Introduction

The aspiration/ability model (Carling, 2002) provides the analytical framework to examine both the meaning-making and migrant capital involved in the migration process. As a two-step approach, it distinguishes between “the evaluation of migration as a potential course of action and the realisation of actual mobility or immobility at a given moment” (Carling & Schewel, 2018: 947). The previous chapter has been dedicated to examining the first part of the conceptual model – migration aspiration. As a conceptual tool, the notion of aspiration offers a broader understanding of the meanings and normative expectations surrounding migration and how they relate to the larger ‘life-making projects’ (Carling, 2002). Thus, migration aspiration is essentially connected to imaginations concerning attaining the ‘good life’ and ‘better future’ for the would-be migrants and their families.

For this chapter, the focus shifts to the actual migration taken by the respondents. The goal of the subsequent discussions is two-fold. First, it retraces the migrants’ pathways to each global city, taking into account the complexities of geographical movements. It highlights the varied routes of the respondents to get to New York or London – with some journeys having intermediate stops or multiple cycles, while others can be characterized as one-time leap to the other side of the world. The attention to these variations in migration pathways of the respondents not only recognizes the limitation of the single-origin-single-destination model in understanding overseas migration, but it also points to the connections between immigration policies, demand for migrant labor, and the migrant networks that facilitated and enabled particular type of movement. Given that “realising a wish to emigrate can be thought of as overcoming the various barriers to migration” (Carling, 2002: 26), these pathways taken by the respondents could also be seen as part of their strategies to respond to the different levels of restrictions they encountered in reaching New York or London.

Second, by analyzing the respondents’ pre-migration networks and narratives of departure, this chapter maps the range of assistance and support that would-be migrants received from their networks, which made their journeys to New York or London possible. Picking up from the previous chapter’s discussion on network effects, this part conceptualizes migrant networks through its *social facilitation* function as it focuses on the resources that migrants derived from their networks to realize their migration aspiration (or the perceived necessity of doing so). Migrant networks, as a significant dimension of opportunity structures that enable and propel geographical mobility, are also embedded within emigration and immigration contexts, which also shape the kind of resources that can be mobilized and the impact of assistance received. In this way, migration can be conceptualized as being undertaken through the actions of migrants (in varying degrees of ‘voluntariness’) as well as the structures shaping and enabling such actions.

While network effects can be framed as facilitating and enabling actions, networks could also be restricting or limiting. Gurak & Caces (1992), for instance, labelled one of the functions of migrant networks as selective or channeling. Such function refers to the observed selectivity of migration flows (who are assisted to migrate and when) and the visible presence of particular migrant group in a certain destination, suggesting that subsequent migrants are also channeled to particular destinations by their networks. Drawing primarily on the works of Poros (2001, 2011) and Bashi (2007) on (pre-) migration networks, the second part of this chapter is organized using the

typologies of migrant networks based on the relevant ties that enable mobility and channel the respondents to specific pathways and place of destinations.

The first part, on the other hand, expands on migration scholarship forwarding multi-step patterns of overseas migration, particularly that of Paul (2011) on stepwise migration and onward migration (Kelly, 2013; Takenaka, 2007). Other observed patterns (circular migration and internal movements in destination country) are also discussed. Lastly, as a way of summing-up, comparisons between Filipino migrants in New York and London, as well as across occupational groups are undertaken to take into account both macro- and micro-level characteristics as factors shaping migration pathways, migrant networks, and ability to (further) migrate.

### Varied Migration Pathways: The Different Routes Leading to London or New York

Carling (2002) and Paul (2011) both started with the same observation concerning contemporary international migration – that it is has become increasingly restrictive, given the more stringent immigration policies in destination countries and other related barriers to geographical mobility. Their theorizing, however, diverged in their focus and emphasis. Carling, as discussed in the previous chapter, proposed to consider the concepts of aspiration and ability in the two-step model to explain mobility and immobility. The contribution of Carling’s (2002: 6) model is that it “places the possibility of involuntary immobility at the centre of the migration process.” Paul, on the other hand, sought to explain how migrants are able to overcome migration-related barriers and eventually realize their (place-specific) migration aspiration. Putting forward the concept of ‘stepwise international migration,’ Paul (2011: 1843) emphasized the centrality of agentic action vis-à-vis structural constraints – i.e. “how migrants might agentially accumulate migration-related capital while working overseas in order to expand their destination options with time.” Stepwise migration also offers alternative migration pattern that considers not only multi-step but also multi-destination type of mobility. By paying attention to the different pathways in getting to New York or London (through reconstructing the respondents’ previous journeys), the subsequent discussion opens up the possibility for re-conceptualizing overseas migration in a more dynamic manner and closer to the experiences of migrants who are neither passive nor insulated from the effects of structural and historical contexts from which their aspirations and ability to migrate also emerged.

In the sections that follow, distinct and prominent pathways exhibited by Filipino migrants in New York and London are outlined and discussed. Some of these migration pathways are observed in both groups of Filipino respondents, while others are more salient in one (*see* Table 6.1. for the distribution in both cities and across occupations).

**Table 6.1.** Migration Pathways Toward New York or London

	Nurses		Domestics		Care Workers		Total N= 134
	London (n=20)	NYC (n=27)	London (n= 20)	NYC (n=26)	London (n=18)	NYC (n=23)	
<b>Direct</b>	15 (75%)	17 (63%)	5 (25%)	12 (46%)	8 (44%)	10 (43%)	<b>67 (50%)</b>
<b>Onward/ Stepwise</b>	5 (25%)	6 (22%)	15 (75%)	6 (23%)	10 (56%)	3 (13%)	<b>45 (34%)</b>
<b>Circular/ Cyclical</b>		4 (15%)		8 (31%)		10 (43%)	<b>22 (16%)</b>
<b>Internal*</b>	9 (45%)	6 (22%)	2 (10%)	11 (42%)	2 (11%)	7 (30%)	<b>37 (28%)</b>
<b>NYC&lt;—&gt;NJ</b>		4		4		1	<b>9</b>

\*Internal movements within the US or the UK is another distinct pattern that can be combined with the first 3 pathways.



### ***Direct migration: The 'single-origin-single-destination' model***

Overseas migration is usually conceptualized and studied in terms of the movement from country of origin to receiving country. This is not surprising since most international migrants follow this type of migration path. In her study of Filipino domestic workers in Los Angeles and Rome, Parreñas (2015) notes that most of them are actually 'direct migrants' rather than 'step migrants.' Direct migrants are typified as those who "did not need to settle somewhere else first to amass either the human, social, or economic capital they would need to enter these more desirable destinations" (Parreñas, 2015: 11). They already possess the necessary resources to enter their target destinations. Similarly, Paul (2015) also found that her respondents in the US did not exhibit stepwise migration as a pattern given the absence of a formalized program in hiring domestic workers overseas. Thus, her findings corroborate what Parreñas also found in her study – that is:

the majority of interviewees who had entered the USA had done so directly from the Philippines after having been sponsored by their immediate relatives for a family reunification visa, or having arrived on family-sponsored tourist visas and then overstaying. In other words, only a certain kind of Filipino migrant, in possession of a certain kind and amount of pre-migration social capital can expect to gain legal access to the USA (Paul, 2015: 17).

Broadly, this finding resonates with what I found in my interviews, wherein half of the respondents can be classified as *direct migrants*. To be specific, this pattern can be observed as most common among nurses (in both cities), domestic workers (in New York), and, to a certain extent, care workers (also in New York). Given that Parreñas (2015) and Paul (2015) focused their studies on Filipino domestic workers, comparing the cases of migrant nurses and care workers expands the discussion to include other occupation-specific conditions that shape the contours of mobility pathways. While there is a global demand for migrant care labor, migrant nurses have considerable capital as 'skilled workers' compared to domestics and live-in caregivers. Despite the increasing restrictions in their entry and settlement in the countries in the West, it can be expected that such restrictions play out differently in the mobility of nurses and other health care professionals compared to those of 'low-skilled' migrant workers. This is illustrated in the differences among direct migrants in this study.

Table 6.2 provides details on the characteristics of these direct migrants in both global cities. It shows that nurse respondents in New York and London primarily used employment-based visa to gain entry to US or the UK – a general pattern for the majority of nurses I interviewed. However, US-based nurses exemplified more diverse US modes of entry, such as through family reunification or tourist visas, and arrived relatively earlier compared to the current UK-based nurses.

Previous discussions noted that migration of Filipino nurses to the US has become more difficult over the years. Several factors contributed to this. As some respondents mentioned, the application process is lengthy and costly (e.g. credentials evaluation and state licensure examination). This is in contrast to those who migrated to the US in earlier decades (1980s to 1990s) who spoke of the ease of the recruitment process (*see the later section on Recruits and the Role of Migrant Institutions*, p. 139).

**Table 6.2.** Characteristics and Modes of Entry of Direct Migrants

	Nurses		Domestics		Care Workers		Total (n=67)
	London (n=15)	NYC (n=17)	London (n= 5)	NYC (n=12)	London (n=8)	NYC (n=10)	
<b>Type of entry visa</b>							
Tourist	1	4	2	10	1	5	23
Student	1		1		2		4
Work	12	8	2	2	4	1	29
Family	1	5			1	4	11
<b>Age (mean/ SD*/range)</b>							
	38 (7) (25-54)	40 (10.5) <sup>a</sup> (26-58)	62 (15.9) (45-87)	52 (7.3) (38-64)	42 (4.8) (36-50)	51 (13.6) (28-71)	45 (11.9)
<b>Years of stay (mean/SD)</b>							
	10 (4.6)	17 (8.8) <sup>b</sup>	19 (18)	10 (3.9)	8 (0.9)	16 (12.1)	13 (9)
<b>Year of arrival</b>							
1970s			2			1	3
1980s		2					2
1990s	1	8 <sup>c</sup>		1		3	13
2000-2005	8	4		5	8	2	27
2006-2010	4		2	6		4	16
2011-2015	2	3	1				5

\* SD means standard deviation; <sup>a</sup> Computed mean age includes three 1.5 generation respondents. Excluding these 3 respondents, the average age would be 43 (SD = 9.4; range= 27-58); <sup>b</sup> Includes the three 1.5 generation participants in the computation. Excluding these 3 participants, the average year of stay is 16 (SD=9); <sup>c</sup> Three 1.5 generation respondents arrived during this decade.

There is also the so-called ‘retrogression’ in the processing of occupational immigrant visa, which happens when there are more applicants compared to the available number of visas in a specific category and/ or particular country.<sup>85</sup> As Jurado & Pacquiao (2015: 14–15) explained:

Since the Philippines has been the largest supplier of nurses to the US over the past several years, the increased demand for immigrant visas resulted in the oversubscription of employment-based third preference (EB-3) by countries like India, China and the Philippines. The Department of State imposes a cut-off date beyond which immigrant visa applications will not be processed until visa numbers become available. Retrogression has effectively created a major decrease in recruitment and certification of FENs [foreign educated nurses] (Richardson & Davis, 2009).

<sup>85</sup> “Under retrogression, visa applications are not processed until the backlog is completed. Retrogression may be limited to immigrants from select countries or from all countries. In 2004, when retrogression was ordered, it only applied to China, India, and the Philippines and lasted for several months. Retrogression again was declared in November 2006 for all countries and continues to the present, effectively causing a major decrease in the recruitment and certification of foreign-educated nurses” (Richardson & Davis, 2009).

These delays<sup>86</sup> in the processing of applications to the US have increased the waiting time for nurse applicants to finally be able to work and reside in the US even after passing all the necessary screenings and examinations (Carlos, 2013). In this context, nurse applicants can either go somewhere else (which may then turn into onward or stepwise migration; *see* next section) or stay in the Philippines while waiting. Katrina (who arrived in New York in 2012) and Clarissa (arrived in New York in 2015) are those nurse respondents who stayed and became direct migrants. Their narratives revealed that inasmuch as migrant capital is needed to migrate, it also takes a lot of necessary resources to stay and wait for their desired destination to become accessible. Katrina waited for 6 years for her application to be approved. During that time, she was working in a hospital in their province and was receiving around \$200 a month. Thus, her mother (who was still working at that time) and her brother in New York had to cover most of the expenses in their household. It should also be noted that she did try to apply somewhere but were unsuccessful. Her mother also forbade her to go to the Middle East given its negative ‘reputation’ (*see* previous chapter, *Intermediate Countries: Asia and the Middle East*, pp. 106–107).

Clarissa, on the other hand, first started her application to the US in 2005. It took 10 years before she reached the US soil. In the beginning, as most Filipinos, it was her dream to go to the US but she felt that the fulfilment of that dream came too late. When she was informed by her recruitment agency that her application had been approved, she was no longer interested. They were able to send her children to school already and the business of her husband was stable so they could have afforded a comfortable life. But her husband thought otherwise. He was insistent for them to go and not miss the *good luck* that had come their way – especially for the sake of their children’s future.

*I was no longer interested. I told [my husband], “Why do we have to go abroad? Can we endure it? We are used to the life here of having a maid. [. . .] We can go wherever we want. We are not destitute. We are able to send our children to school so why do we need to go there [in the US]?” But what he wants . . . his plan is for our children – that one day they might say the luck was [already] there [and we let it go] – because that’s how they call it, luck. If you’re able to go abroad, you’re lucky.*

(Clarissa, 42 years old, staff nurse in a nursing home, arrived in New York in March 2015)

As the barriers for Filipino nurses aspiring to migrate to the US became too high to overcome, other destination areas have become available for these nurses who are looking for opportunities to work overseas. Such is the case of the UK’s active and mass recruitment of foreign-trained nurses in the late 1990s to mid-2000s (Buchan, 2008; Carlos, 2013; *see* also Chapter 4, ‘*A Ticket to Migrate*’: *The Recruitment of Filipino Nurses in the United States and United Kingdom*, pp. 65–66). The years of arrival of nurse respondents in the UK reflect this period of active recruitment (for both direct and onward migrants). Direct nurse migrants to the UK talked about finding out about the opportunity to work in the UK through various means – e.g. colleagues, acquaintances, and recruitment agencies – at a time when they were exploring options for overseas work. However, similar to the US, it has become harder and more expensive for non-EU nurses to enter and settle in the UK following the years of active recruitment (Bach, 2010; Makulec, 2014). To some extent, this is also comparable to care workers in institutional settings, particularly in the short-lived

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<sup>86</sup> In January 2005, the EB-3 visa applications being processed from the Philippines were those filed earlier than January 1, 2002. By the end of the fiscal year 2010 (September 2010), the cut-off date was 15 December 2004. The situation somehow improved in recent years, with the cut-off date by the end of fiscal year 2017 being 01 November 2015. Current visa bulletin (May 2018) indicates that the cut-off date is 01 January 2017. These cut-off dates are taken from the published visa bulletins of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), <<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-bulletin.html>>, accessed 02 May 2018.

international recruitment of social care workers in the UK. Among the care workers I interviewed in London, those who entered the UK during that phase of active recruitment arrived between 2002 to 2007.<sup>87</sup> Four of them are *direct migrants* while three had experience working in another country (onward migrants). Most have background as health care professionals, except for one who has a psychology degree (though he had considerable experience working in a center for children with special needs).

Among the *direct* care worker migrants in the UK, Angela (a physical therapist), Natalie (a registered nurse), and Jerry (an occupational therapist) were recruited at the same time from the Philippines in 2006 to work as senior care workers in care homes in London. However, in practice (and salary-wise), their actual job was care support workers, as Angela confided. Jerry shared that they arrived as a big batch from the Philippines – resembling how Filipino nurses had also arrived in the UK during the period of active and massive recruitment. Jerry, now a home manager, said that the UK still needs carers and there is still a shortage but changes in the immigration policy have made it completely impossible for employers to recruit from outside the European Economic Area (EEA).<sup>88</sup>

Unlike the nurses and care workers, most domestic workers in New York entered the US directly through tourist visas, which they either converted to student or other types of visas to legally stay in the US or overstayed beyond the allowed time and became undocumented. Obtaining a tourist visa and being allowed to enter the US, on the other hand, is no easy feat. The statement of Efren is illustrative of the supposed need to prove one’s social standing:

*I already travelled to Asian countries. Because they said, “Oh you should travel already so that when the consul in the [US] embassy interview you, they will see that you are well-travelled. If you go to these countries, of course they will think that you have the money.*

(Efren, 52 years old, former private caregiver, physical therapist assistant, arrived in Washington D.C. in 2009, moved to New York in 2014)

The evidence of ‘having the money’ is to show not only that you can afford the trip but also to prove that your life in the Philippines is ‘great’ – which means that you do not need to overstay in the US to work and earn money.<sup>89</sup> Efren, as an accountant working in a big media outfit, was able to prove that when he finally applied for a US visa. Efren also has relatives in the US with whom he initially stayed with upon his arrival. Having access to particular type of capital (i.e. economic and social) also applies to those who used tourist visa as a way of entering the US or the UK, regardless of occupation.

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<sup>87</sup> It must be noted that the current points-based immigration system has been put into place starting 2008.

<sup>88</sup> Unlike before, senior care workers were no longer listed in the shortage occupation list (SOL) starting 2011.

<sup>89</sup> According to the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the US Department of State, “the required presumption under U.S. law is that every visitor visa applicant is an intending immigrant until they demonstrate otherwise. Therefore, applicants for visitor visas must overcome this presumption by demonstrating: that the purpose of their trip is to enter the United States temporarily for business or pleasure; that they plan to remain for a specific, limited period; evidence of funds to cover expenses in the United States; that they have a residence outside the United States as well as other binding ties that will ensure their departure from the United States at the end of the visit.” Retrieved from [https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/VisaFlyer\\_B1B2%20March%202015.pdf](https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/VisaFlyer_B1B2%20March%202015.pdf), accessed 24 September 2017.

Few of the Filipino domestic workers that I interviewed came directly to London from the Philippines. Juanita and Imelda were directly hired by their employers in the UK in 1976. Juanita said that it was easy then because the Labour government was in power. *“Only Labour government [is] more relaxed . . . in accepting [migrant workers].”* More recently arrived Filipino domestics who went directly to London did so either through a tourist visa or a student visa.

For a time, getting a student visa became a popular route for Filipinos to get to the UK. The usual story was that of Filipino recruiters or recruitment agencies in the Philippines or in the UK offering to process one’s student visa application – usually asking for exorbitant fees for such ‘service.’ Upon arrival in London, these Filipinos were enrolled in schools or colleges –to earn an NVQ- level certification, typically on health and social care. These schools and colleges usually had some tie-up with nursing homes or other care facilities since in the past, those who are under student visas were legally allowed to work.<sup>90</sup> With the government clampdown on the ‘abuse’ of student visas, these colleges started closing down – leaving student visa holders in a state of limbo. They either returned to the Philippines, became undocumented (as in the case of some domestic workers discussed in the previous section), or were able to remain documented, eventually converting their student visas to work permits.

Finally, it can be recalled that in the case of Filipino nurses (and, partly, among domestic workers and caregivers as well), London has been perceived and imagined as just another stepping stone destination to gain entry to the US or Canada. For instance, Imelda, a retired domestic worker in London, had always dreamt of going to America. Even after she got her British citizenship, she still decided to move to the US to accompany her American employers and to fulfill her lifelong dream. However, after experiencing life in the US, she said that it was not for her. She then returned to London after two years.

*I applied as a nanny and went to America. Two years, I stayed in the States. My employer in the US didn’t want to let me go because of the kid. But then I like it more here [London]. I said, “I prefer London.” I said, “It’s more accessible for me to travel than in here.” I said, “You have to take me from church. You have to collect me from the church. I cannot find my way.” That’s what I said. [. . .] [Rizza: Where in the US?] Connecticut. [. . .] [Rizza: What else did you not like in the US?] I didn’t like the arrogance of those in the US. You know, those [Filipinos] in America, if you’re only a domestic, they will snub you. [. . .] They look at – they look strange at you <laughs> I don’t like those kinds of people. [. . .] [Rizza: So, you didn’t like the kind of life in America?] No.*

(Imelda, 87 years old, retired domestic worker, arrived in South East England in 1976, moved to London in 1978)

The case of Imelda raises the question of how final is the migrant’s current destination and illustrates the possibility for onward migration to be undertaken at some point in the future. The nurse respondents in London who have existing applications in the US may likewise find themselves considering further migration as a viable option in the future. I return to this issue in

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<sup>90</sup> In the current immigration rule, student visa holders (studying in colleges) are no longer allowed to work (unless they are studying in universities). However, those coming from the Philippines are not usually informed of this – thinking they can still work just like those who came before them. In my fieldwork in London, I came across a Filipino who was asking fellow Filipinos for help in the streets of Central London. He confided that they did not know that they will not be able to work once they reached the UK. He said that he and other Filipino men are homeless, relying on the help other Filipinos are giving them, while the women who came with them opted to get married to survive and stay in London.

Chapter 8 as respondents reflect on their imagined futures vis-à-vis their migration and ‘life-making’ projects.

### ***Onward and stepwise migration: The ‘multinational’ journeys***

Recognizing the limits of the dominant single-origin-single-destination model, there has been increasing recognition of the multi-destination type of migration in studying contemporary geographical mobility. This dynamic type of migration trajectory has been labelled as *onward migration*, *transit migration*, *serial migration*, and *stepwise migration*. Different authors provide varied definitions of these terms but the unifying element is the concept of intermediary stops in between the country of origin and the current place of destination.

Anju Mary Paul is one of the primary migration scholars who has been working towards the development of the theoretical underpinnings of this ‘multinational’ model of migration pathway by re-working Ravenstein’s (1885) concept of ‘stepwise migration’ to specifically refer to international (as opposed to internal) migration. Paul (2015: 3) considered stepwise international migrations as a particular type of onward migration, which she defined as the “process of migrants undertaking stops of at least a year each, in at least two destination countries.” In her original conceptualization, Paul (2011: 1843) described stepwise international migration as “a pattern of multistage international labor migration involving stints of substantive duration working in intermediate countries as an intentional strategy adopted by low-capital migrants unable to gain immediate entry into their preferred destination countries.” The expanded concept of ‘stepwise international migration’ proposes that not only are migrants moving from low to high-tier destinations in a multistage process but such movements are deliberate and planned. In the words of Paul (2011: 1845), “prospective migrants can determine their final, preferred destination from the very start and consciously work their way toward that destination through various stops in other intermediate locations.” In those intermediate stops, these migrants accumulate various forms of capital – economic, human, and social – that could help them move to higher destinations.

Though ‘intentionality’ is not so pronounced in Paul’s (2015) later work, Ahrens, Kelly, & Van Liempt (2016) and Kelly (2013) pointed that onward migration (in contrast to stepwise migration) does not necessarily presuppose a consciously planned movement. This means that the concept of onward migration is “leaving open the possibility that after settling in one place, migrants may later decide to migrate to another place – or even a number of other places – they had not considered at the start of their journey” (Ahrens et al., 2016: 85). But as discussed in Chapter 5, any form of migration – whether international or internal, high-skilled or low-skilled, temporary or permanent, one-time, recurrent, or multistage – has elements of both active decision-making and reaction to happenchance. To what extent does intentionality play a role and how much of the movements can be attributed to forces outside the control of the migrants? What shapes and forms do these onward and stepwise migrations take?

Table 6.3 outlines and presents the intermediate countries that became parts of the respondents’ multinational journeys before getting in either of the two global cities. It can be seen that these are predominantly in the Middle East, and in East and South-East Asia. This is to be expected given that most of the onward migrants are domestic workers currently in London (*see* Table 6.4), and as Paul (2011, 2015, 2017) found in her study of stepwise migration among Filipino domestic workers, these intermediate countries are more accessible to aspiring migrants who lack the necessary migrant capital to get to the countries in the West directly. Likewise, we find similar pattern among Filipino nurse respondents in London, but as discussed in the previous chapter, it is worthwhile to examine the conditions surrounding the onward migration of ‘skilled’ workers compared to what are considered as ‘low skilled’ ones. More than half of care workers in London also migrated to other countries before getting to the UK. There are two types of onward migrants among them –

those who were former domestics and those who entered the UK to primarily work as care support workers in institutional setting.

**Table 6.3.** Intermediate Destinations of Onward/Step Migrants

	Nurses		Domestics		Care Workers		Total
	London	NYC	London	NYC	London	NYC	
<b>Middle East</b>	5	4	12	3	8	2	<b>34</b>
Bahrain			2				2
Iran					1		1
Israel				2	2		4
Kuwait				1	2		3
Qatar			2				2
Saudi Arabia	4	2	6			2	14
UAE	1	2	2		3		8
<b>East &amp; SE Asia</b>	2	1	7	3	4	2	<b>19</b>
Brunei			1				1
Hong Kong		1	4	1	2		8
Singapore	2				1		3
South Korea				1			1
Taiwan			2	1	1		4
<b>Europe</b>		2	1	2	1		<b>6</b>
Austria				1			1
France		1			1		2
Sweden			1				1
UK		1		1			2
<b>Americas</b>			2			1	<b>3</b>
Canada						1	1
Haiti			1				1
USA			1				1
<b>Africa</b>		1			2		<b>3</b>
Nigeria					2		2
Zambia*		1					1

\*The nurse respondent was classified as direct migrant though she spent her childhood in Zambia as a child of an engineer working in this African nation. She moved to the Philippines for her study but did not return to Africa. She instead migrated directly to the US from the Philippines.

**Table 6.4.** Characteristics and Modes of Entry of Onward/Step Migrants

	Nurses		Domestics		Care Workers		Total (n=45)
	London (n=5)	NYC (n=6)	London (n=15)	NYC (n=6)	London (n=10)	NYC (n=3)	
<b>Type of entry visa</b>							
Tourist		1	1	3		1	<b>6</b>
Student			1		2	1	<b>4</b>
Work*	5	2	13 <sup>a</sup>	2	8 <sup>b</sup>	1	<b>31<sup>c</sup></b>
Family		3		1			<b>4</b>
<b>Age (mean/ SD/ range)</b>							
	48 (9.6) (39–58)	44 (10.8) (29–55)	49 (10.5) (33–66)	52 (10.5) (40–65)	50 (9.5) (39–63)	39 (14) (25–40)	<b>48 (10.4)</b>
<b>Years of stay (mean/SD)</b>							
	13 (1.1)	12 (10)	10 (8.6)	12 (5.7)	14 (6.8)	4 (4.6)	<b>11 (7.5)</b>
<b>Year of arrival</b>							
1980s		1	1				<b>2</b>
1990s		1	3	2	3		<b>9</b>
2000–2005	5	1	2	1	4		<b>13</b>
2006–2010		1	4	2	3	1	<b>11</b>
2011–2015		2	5	1		2	<b>10</b>

\*This includes 'domestic worker visa,' a specific visa for domestic workers entering the UK to accompany their employers. While this is technically classified as a 'visit visa,' I classified it under the employment-based visa category to show that the mode of entry to the UK is based on one's occupation.

<sup>a</sup> These are all domestic worker visas; <sup>b</sup> Five (out of the eight) are domestic worker visas, indicating that they entered the UK as domestic workers in private households (and later transitioned to become private or institutional care workers); <sup>c</sup> In total, 18 (out of the 29) are domestic worker visas.

Table 6.4 also shows that there are fewer onward migrants among the domestics and care workers in New York compared to their London counterparts. Among the nurse respondents in New York, family reunification plays a larger role in their onward migration to the US. Leonora, Emilia, and Camille all moved to New York to be with their husbands, instead of being motivated to work as nurses in the US. The case of Leonora is interesting because being a nurse did not figure prominently in her overseas migration. She first worked in Hong Kong as a domestic worker for two years when she did not pass the local licensure exam the first time. Thinking that she was wasting her education with the kind of work that she was doing, she went back to the Philippines, took the licensure exam the second time, and passed. She eventually moved to New York because her then husband (and his family) were living in New York. Unlike the previously discussed mode of entry, Leonora was able to reach the US not because she is a nurse but through the petition of her then husband. The same was the case for Camille and Emilia. Camille was working in Abu Dhabi for 1 ½ years. It was in Abu Dhabi where she met her husband who is from New York. Emilia, on other hand, first worked in Dubai for 3 years before moving to London, where she thought she would permanently settle. She stayed in London for 6 years but the man she married is residing in New York. Her husband did not like to stay in London because his pension has a lower value there. They then decided that she would instead move to New York.



On the other hand, the two nurses – Julia and Yvette – who came to New York through employment-based (immigrant) visa arrived in two different decades (one in the 1980s and the other in 2015) and have different experiences and evaluations of the role of their recruitment agencies given the immigration policy contexts surrounding their recruitment. It is worth noting that it took 7 years for Julia’s application to the US to be processed and approved. In contrast, after passing all the requirements, Yvette left for New York after three weeks – a far cry from 6 years or 10 years of wait others had to endure. It was in 1989 and, as previously highlighted, US recruitment of foreign nurses back then was different. Unlike April and Clarissa, who stayed in the Philippines while waiting for their US applications to be approved (and, eventually, directly migrating to the US), Julia first worked in Saudi Arabia. Though she was afraid to apply at first, given the reputation of the Middle East as a destination for migrant workers, she shared that she eventually enjoyed her stay in Saudi Arabia and was hesitant to move to New York to start all over again.

Similar to the intermediate destinations of their counterparts in New York, the Filipino nurses in London I interviewed also worked in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, or Singapore prior to their migration to the UK. They emphasized the relative ease in accessing these countries as they do not require expensive exams and the application process does not take too long (compared to that of the US). As Tessa, who first worked in Saudi Arabia for 4 ½ years (before moving to Northern Ireland and eventually to London), put it: *“That was the easiest place to go when you want to go abroad.”* While she had good experience in Saudi and liked her stay there, it was also clear that she could not stay there permanently. To work in the Middle East is temporary given that foreigners can never get naturalized no matter how long they stay – unlike in the UK and other Western countries. She applied in Australia as well but the UK application was the one that got approved first. For her part, Melissa didn’t plan to go to Saudi Arabia. Like almost everyone, her ideal destination was the US. But also like almost everyone, she recognized that it wasn’t easy to get to the US – given the cost and the long wait.

*I didn’t plan to go to Saudi. But maybe, if anything, your ideal destination is the US. But I am realistic in terms of, uhm, expenses because if you apply to the US, you will really spend a lot. You have to take CGFNS, you will pay for that, review, all that. Then, you need [to pass] an English exam. Then, you need NCLEX. Then you need to pay an agency to get there, to facilitate that you have an employer there, things like that. So overall maybe you will spend a lot before you’re able to get to the US and the wait, it’s a long wait. Also, because US closed its doors for nurses for a while. So, I didn’t push that idea. All I said was, I just don’t want to be a burden first thing to my parents. My younger siblings were still studying. We are not rich. So, I said, if the opportunity is in Saudi, I will go there and then we’ll see from there what will work out.*

(Melissa, 41 years old, nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in south-east England in 2001, moved to London in 2007)

It is apparent from Melissa’ statement that she intended to look for other opportunities once she was out of the Philippines. On her first year in Saudi, there were news spreading that UK was open for hiring. While finishing her two-year contract, she applied to the UK. After finishing her contract, she left Saudi Arabia for a nursing job in an NHS hospital in England. The migration pathway of Melissa exemplifies Paul’s (2011) original conceptualization of stepwise migration given that she was well-aware that she didn’t have the initial migrant capital to access her ‘desired’ destination *directly*, and she considered her initial move to Saudi Arabia as temporary and as an opportunity to look for better options in the long run. As Carlos (2013: 19) noted in her study on stepwise migration of Filipino nurses, migrating to intermediate countries serves as “an efficient way to spend time while waiting for the opportunity to go the most preferred destination.”

As discussed in the previous chapter, Israel is another prominent intermediary country particularly among Filipino caregivers. It was in Israel where Liezel and Donna lodged their application to work in the UK as care workers. Liezel learnt of the opening in a newspaper advertisement while Donna's childhood friend (who was also working in Israel) informed, encouraged, and financially supported her to apply. Liezel has a midwifery degree and had been working in Israel for 3 years before she moved to the UK – first in Norfolk where she was deployed, and then eventually to London. Donna first worked in Taiwan for 3 months as a caregiver and then in Israel for 2 ½ years before moving to London. Both of them considered Israel as a 'stepping stone' and were consciously strategizing on moving to what they deemed as 'better' countries – Canada and the United States. Like most of the respondents, UK was not initially in their horizons as target destinations. Exceptions are those who have pre-existing ties in the UK like Margaret and Geraldine, who both worked in Hong Kong before moving to London as domestic workers. Margaret was following the footsteps of her aunt, who also first worked as a domestic in Hong Kong before moving to London. Geraldine was thinking of moving to Canada but chose London instead because of her mother who was in London at that time. She shared that she became aware of the possibility for step migration in Hong Kong since people around her were also trying to move somewhere else.

Paul (2015) talks about how the conditions encountered in initial destinations can shape future possibilities for migrants. Becoming aware of the options available, after being exposed to the practices and aspirations of other migrants in intermediate countries, is important when considering embarking on subsequent trips. Knowing people who actually did such moves works out as a source of models in selecting which particular destination to try and how to actually do it. Recruitment agencies in intermediate countries also serves as an important resource in actualizing the aspiration to move to preferred destination. Hence, while mobilizing resources is important (e.g. raising funds to finance further trips), the role played by chance ("luck") and acting on opportunities is equally significant for these step migrants.

The role of luck and chance is also apparent among onward migrants who were not consciously strategizing to get to top-tier destination countries. For instance, Marissa, who first worked in Saudi Arabia for 17 years, didn't think that she could apply anywhere else. She was also trying to go to the US but wasn't able to pass the examination. *"My target destination is the US. But unfortunately, Saudi came first. So, grab the opportunity, which one comes first."* When the UK began its active recruitment of foreign nurses, Marissa was able to move out of the Middle East – something she thought would never come. She considers it luck. Like Marissa, Amelia never explored or thought of any other place apart from the Middle East. She was ready to go back to Dubai when, by chance, she attended a party of her friend who relayed the information that the UK was open for hiring. An acquaintance in the UK – a friend of her friend – also forwarded the recruitment agency that processed her application and eventual move to London.

Responding to encountered 'opportunities' in intermediate countries as well as accumulating necessary migrant capital to reach the desired or top-tier destinations also mean that the stepwise or onward migration pathways could take various forms in terms of the length and number of intermediate destinations. Some only had one intermediate stop, while others have several journeys in-between.

Finally, looking at Table 6.4, it can be observed that most onward migrants are domestics in London (and former domestics who currently work as care workers). However, for most of them, coming to London was not of their own choosing as they were accompanying their former employers from intermediate countries in the Middle East or Asia. Most of them also escaped these employers because of the appalling working conditions they were enduring. As a particular migration stream, I examine this group more closely in the latter part of this chapter in relation to their pre-migration networks (*see* 'solitaries').

In the sections that follow, I introduce additional variants of direct and onward/stepwise migration that emphasize the dynamic movements undertaken by Filipino migrants and the conditions that make such movements possible.

### ***Circular migration: The repeated travels to America***

One type of migration trajectory that has not been observed in London is that of recurring journey(s) to the US prior to ‘permanent settlement’ (either through overstaying or converting the tourist visa to stay in the US legally). Having a tourist visa that allows multiple entries to the US in a span of ten years provide an option to travel back and forth the US and the Philippines. This dynamic pattern of migration is a prominent path taken by the Filipino domestic workers and care workers I interviewed in New York, while minority of nurses also exhibited a similar pattern.

The back-and-forth movements are made largely possible because of the presence of family members and relatives in the New York metropolitan area to whom they can count on or were the main reason for their initial travel. This initial travel can also be characterized as ‘testing the waters before taking the plunge.’ For instance, Rachel knew that they would eventually move to New York since her husband was petitioned by his father. But with a tourist visa and an aunt in Queens, she went ahead of her family and worked in New York for 6 months before returning to the Philippines. After the papers of her husband had been granted, she followed him to New York – this time, with her two children. Rachel, who was working in a bank in the Philippines, said that because of that initial trip, she had come to know first-hand that life in the US is different. Sharing her realization, she said that, *“you cannot look for the system, the kind of lifestyle you have in the Philippines, especially the line of work. You shouldn’t be choosy. You should be practical.”*

There were various reasons cited for coming back to the Philippines after the initial entry to the US. Sophia, currently working as a staff nurse in 2 nursing homes in New York, first came to the US in 2009 but she could not find work so she returned to the Philippines. In 2010, she returned to New York to attend the wedding of her brother and started working on obtaining a state license to practice as nurse in New York while doing informal work like caregiving and house cleaning. Robert, on the other hand, was petitioned through her grandmother who sponsored him and his mother to move to the US.<sup>91</sup> He first went to the US in 2001 before he turned 21. He went back to the Philippines to finish his nursing degree and then returned to the US in 2003. He first worked in an assisted living facility of his mom’s friends in Florida before settling in New York in 2006. Similarly, Arvin (a certified nursing assistant) and Paolo (a direct care provider) also went back to the Philippines to finish their nursing degrees (though Paolo was not able to finish his) since the cost of a college education is cheaper in the Philippines compared to the US.

Sometimes, recurrent journeys to the US happened more than twice before the migrant decided to stay indefinitely. Charlene, together with her husband, travelled to New York four times before deciding to settle more or less permanently. The case of Charlene and her husband is of interest given that their pattern of migration resembles that of the traditional circular migrants or seasonal workers only that they were on tourist visas. Charlene said that they found that they could actually work and earn relatively well in the US for 6 months or less before returning to the Philippines to be with their children. Having relatives in New Jersey, they had free accommodation every time. During their fourth trip to the US, their children were about to attend university. Her eldest wanted to study at a private university and the tuition fee was one of the most expensive in the country. She shared that they would not be able to afford the cost no matter how hard they would work in the

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<sup>91</sup> Robert did not specify this process of sponsorship in his case given that grandparents cannot petition for their grandchildren, unless they adopted their grandkids (which is plausible in his case as his parents’ marriage was annulled) or the parents would file the petition if they are eligible to do so (as permanent residents or US citizens).

Philippines. With that, they decided to stay in the US. The migration pattern of Arturo, a clinical review nurse in New York, is another extreme illustration of cyclical or circular migration. Having a successful events business in the Philippines, Arturo kept on going back and forth the Philippines and New York from 2008 to 2015. At times, he didn't work as a nurse in the US. But when his business started to slow down in 2013, he started to consider settling permanently in the US. He came back to New York in June 2015 after closing his business in the Philippines.

Rebecca, who was also working in a bank in the Philippines, had stronger words to describe her initial trip to the US – “*I was cursing America*” – and vowed never to return. But Rebecca resigned from her job in the bank when she went to the US the first time as she was expecting a better future. So, when she went back to the Philippines, she had to look for jobs and even tried putting up a business but nothing happened. A single mother of two, she decided to return to the US – describing her return as “*kapit sa patalim*” (literally, clutching the blade of the knife) to express desperation. The first time Rebecca went to the US, she initially stayed with her brother in Texas who wanted her to work in a nursing home. She then trained to become a caregiver but was shocked to experience what this work entails. Having worked in a bank, she could not stomach having to wash someone else's ass. She decided to move to Maryland because her best friend's sister was able to help her find a job as a housekeeper but she didn't have a good experience with her employer whom she described as someone with a bad attitude. Her last resort was to go to her cousin in New York even though she was shy to ask for help. She went back to the Philippines before her visa expired as she didn't want to be ‘out of status.’ The second time, she first went to Los Angeles because her best friend was there. However, job prospects were not promising and she could not move around without a car, unlike in New York. She then returned to New York – this time, to stay for good.

In these migration patterns, it can also be seen that aside from the back-and-forth journeys between the US and the Philippines, some also tried their luck in other states before coming back or finding their way to New York. In the next section, I discuss the final migration pattern that takes place within the US and the UK to illustrate that getting to London and New York may also involve additional steps as migrants continue to search for the ‘better life’ overseas.

### ***Internal movers: Movements within the destination country***

Given the geographical locations of New York and New Jersey, it is not surprising to observe respondents who moved their residence or workplace to either of the two states. Aside from looking for better opportunities (e.g. higher salary or better job offers), such relocation could also be undertaken for non-economic reasons such as to live closer to one's kin. For instance, Luis and Marie moved to New Jersey to be near Luis's relatives and because they felt that it is a better place to raise a family – compared, say, to Queens where Luis was first deployed as a nurse in 1999. Amanda, who came to New York in 1985 as a direct hire of a hospital, also moved to New Jersey to be near her family after staying in New York for 5 years. In 2013, she returned to New York. She is currently teaching part-time in a university and working full-time as a clinician.

However, there are also respondents whose movements within the US (and the circumstances surrounding such movements) are more complex. Janice and Diana entered the US with work visas. Both of them applied in agencies in the Philippines and paid considerable amount of money. Janice was hired as a teacher in Maryland and Diana as a housekeeper in a hotel in Florida. They both encountered issues that drove them to leave and seek opportunities elsewhere. From Maryland, Janice went to New York because she said that she had many friends there. Diana had to move to other states and cities several times before she found her way to New York. After the hotel dropped them and refused to sponsor their visa after a year – despite their three-year contract – she looked for another agency to help her find jobs that could sponsor the renewal of her work visa. She went outside of Florida – to Arizona and Chicago looking for work. She didn't know anyone except that she made it a point to find a chapter of her local church in whichever place she found herself into.

After three years, she was out of status as she could no longer find a sponsor. A friend whom she met in the US told her to go to New York because he had a friend who could help her. Since then, she never left New York because of higher salary and a better transportation system that allowed her to move around easier.

There are also instances when the respondent was actually moving away from one's relatives because of familial conflict, lack of opportunities, or limited ability on the part of more settled relatives to provide assistance or connections to employment opportunities, particularly for undocumented respondents. Brian, a former care worker in a nursing home, did not have a good relationship with his father in California who stopped supporting him financially. He also did not get along well with his mother's relatives in Colorado. It was his college friend in New York who suggested for him to move there. In contrast, Efren (a former private caregiver and currently working as physical therapist assistant) did not encounter problems with his relatives in Washington D.C. However, he could not find financially rewarding and stable job in that area (given his undocumented status). He tried looking for work in Maryland and Florida to no avail. Eventually, he moved to New York after visiting his friend and he was able to have good relationship with members of his local church in Queens. He never left since then. Both Brian and Efren echoed that the ease of commuting in New York was one of the reasons why they opted to stay after moving around in different states.

In the case of respondents in London, internal movers are rather uncommon except among the nurses I interviewed (*see* Table 6.1). Since most of the nurses in London have utilized the assistance of recruitment agencies, they have little to no control where they would be deployed. Those who were initially recruited in hospitals or care homes outside of London spent some years in their first area of deployment before deciding to move to London at some point. Some had a relatively brief stay; others seemed to be permanently settling until they made the transfer. It must also be pointed out that unlike in the US, nurses in the UK can move anywhere in the country without having to worry about a specific license to practice in a particular city in another region. In the US, nurses are licensed depending on the state where they practice (though they can apply to practice in another state). Furthermore, as most of them work in the National Health Service (NHS), they can move between different hospitals with relative ease provided that they passed the screenings and exams for an open position.

Rina stayed in a city south of London (in south-east England) for only two years. In those two years, she had been constantly visiting her friend in London and she eventually met her husband because of those visits. She then moved to London, which has been her residence for 14 years – a place where she built her family and career as a nurse. Leila stayed in a city northwest of London (also within the region of south-east England) for 6 years before moving to central London. Like Rina, she was also visiting her friend and colleague in London and was encouraged by this friend to transfer. She now has lived in central London for 7 years and is currently working in a teaching hospital. Richard, on the other hand, complained of the lack of professional growth in his initial workplace in a town northwest of London (in east of England). He stayed there for 6 years. While Richard transferred work in central London, he still lives in the same town because his wife works there. He has then been commuting in the last three months since his transfer. Richard considers his batchmate, Andrew, as instrumental in his transfer to a London hospital. Andrew was the first one in their batch to move to London and he provided Richard with necessary information. Richard also moved to the same hospital where Andrew currently works. Andrew, on the other hand, has been staying in London for 2 years.

In contrast, looking at the first part of the narratives of Mia and Eliza, it seemed that they would permanently stay outside of London – where they were first deployed. Mia stayed in a town northwest of London (in south-east England) for 13 years before moving to central London. It took Eliza 10 years before she moved to London from Wales. Both have housing mortgages in their

initial place of deployment. However, Eliza had a bitter divorce with her former husband while financial and administrative problems beset the NHS trust where Mia was employed for a long time. Given these problems, they found their way to London. While Eliza (who moved to London from Wales) and Richard (who was first deployed in east of England) were married, they did not have kids unlike Celeste (who stayed in a town outside of London where she was first deployed) – making it less complicated to transfer compared to having to uproot the children once more.

It can be noticed, however, that there was no mention of pre-existing familial ties among these nurses in London (compared to those in New York), a fundamental difference between Filipino migrants in New York and London in this study. In the subsequent part of this chapter, I will elaborate on the various kinds of ties and networks that made migration in New York and London possible for these respondents.

### **Pre-Migration Networks: Enabling and Constraining Mobility**

The significance of social networks for migrants moving and settling in places of destinations has been emphasized in various studies and recognized in migration scholarship (e.g. Boyd, 1989; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Faist, 2000; Gurak & Caces 1992; Massey et al., 1987; Palloni et al., 2001; Ryan et al., 2008). Migrant networks are crucial for geographical mobility, integration (and survival) in receiving societies, and transnational engagements (Faist, 2000; Gurak & Caces, 1992; Ryan, Erel, & D' Angelo, 2015).

As discussed in Chapter 2 (*'Networks and the Migration Process,'* p. 11), earlier works on chain migration have examined the roles of kinship networks as facilitating the movements of relatives and providing (initial) assistance in the place of destination. In other words, the *adaptive* and *channeling* or *selective* functions of migrant networks (Gurak & Caces, 1992) were not distinguished as two different networks pre- and post-migration. However, more recent scholarships have pointed to other forms of migration streams based on types of ties that are not (entirely) familial or kinship-based (Collyer, 2005; Krissman, 2005; Poros, 2001, 2011; van Meeteren & Pereira, 2016). Likewise, the research of Menjivar (1997) and Chelpi-den Hamer (2008) showed that different types of ties may constitute pre-migration and (initial) settlement support networks. Particularly in the context of severe scarcity of resources and tighter immigration policies, kin-based networks (financing the trip and enabling mobility) could be unable to assist newly-arrived migrants who, in turn, would need to rely and tap other sources of support apart from their kin-based networks. Thus, pre-migration and post-migration support networks are analyzed separately in this study to take into account the varied configurations of diverse ties, and the possibility of discontinued support and the need to find other sources of assistance upon arrival.

In the sections that follow, I expand on the previous discussion on migration pathways by taking a closer look at the different configuration of ties in the respondents' pre-migration networks. As Massey et al. (1993) suggested, networks – operationalized as interpersonal ties – reduce the costs and risks associated with migration. I argue, following Poros (2001; 2011), that relevant ties are not only interpersonal. In a country like the Philippines, where the state promotes and brokers overseas migration and where there is an extensive migration industry, institutional actors do play a central role in sending people abroad. The combination of interpersonal and institutional ties in propelling migrants to move are therefore examined. As outlined in Chapter 2 (*'Conceptualizing Dynamic Migrant Networks'*), Poros (2001, 2011) developed a typology of migrant stream based on the configurations of ties in migrants' networks, namely: solitaires (no pre-existing ties); chains (have

interpersonal ties); recruits (have organizational ties); and trusties (have composite ties, i.e. overlapping interpersonal and organizational ties, also called multiplex<sup>92</sup> ties).

I re-worked Poros' typology to closely reflect the migration context and realities of Filipinos and to account for multinational migration pathways. I divide those whose migration is primarily facilitated by interpersonal ties ('chains') into three sub-categories based on the 'strength of ties': kin-based, non-kin (which includes friends and acquaintances), and the hub-and-spoke model. I included Bashi's (2007) hub-and-spoke model (*see* Chapter 2, p. 19) as another sub-type of networks with pre-dominantly interpersonal ties. This model shows how a pioneer migrant ('hub') from a particular community could actively encourage and facilitate the migration of selected people from one's hometown. I consider this as a separate type given the consequence of this kind of network for the support available to 'spokes' upon arrival, as well as the relational dynamics involved in this type of network. Non-kin networks are treated separately given that these relations lack the strong familial obligations found in kin-based networks, and, therefore, less enduring and more prone to dissolution post-migration.

I retain Poros' notion of 'recruits' as those who have organizational or institutional ties, except that I specifically refer to ties to institutional actors (instead of connections to individuals mediated by organizations or institutions). Based on the narratives of Filipinos I interviewed, I found that institutions do not only mediate relations but are also connected to migrants as distinct entities. I also classified those whose migration became possible through their combined interpersonal and institutional connections ('dual ties') as another distinct group. Uzzi's (1999) notion of 'network complementarity' is discussed in relation to this type of pre-migration networks to show how actors could access both strong and weak ties depending on their needs or constraints encountered.

Lastly, there are the solitaires who do not have prior ties to place of destination. Poros did not find this type of migration stream in her study. Solitaires, however, emerged in this research given the conjunction of immigration policies in the UK and the dynamics of migrant domestic work in the Middle East and other intermediate countries. Solitaires are those domestic workers who accompanied their former employers in the UK as tourists or visitors, and eventually ran away (despite not knowing anyone in London), usually because of deplorable working conditions and relations.

Table 6.5 presents the distribution of the respondents in terms of the types of the relevant ties in their pre-migration networks.

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<sup>92</sup> Multiplexity occurs when two actors (or nodes) are connected through more than one type of social relations (e.g. when one's colleague is also a relative).

**Table 6.5.** Typology of Pre-Migration Networks

	Nurses		Domestics		Care Workers		Total N= 134
	London (n=20)	NYC (n=27)	London (n= 20)	NYC (n=26)	London (n=18)	NYC (n=23)	
<b>Chains</b>	3	17	7	22	7	22	<b>78 (58%)</b>
<b>Kin</b>	3	17	6	15	4	20*	<b>65</b>
<b>Non-Kin</b>			1	4	3	2	<b>10</b>
<b>Hub-and-Spoke</b>				3		1*	<b>4</b>
<b>Recruits</b>	14	2	2	4	6		<b>28 (21%)</b>
<b>Dual Ties</b>	3	8	2		2		<b>15 (11%)</b>
<b>Solitaires</b>			9		3	1	<b>13 (10%)</b>

\*The considered 'hub' in this study migrated (and overstayed her visa) through the help of a distant relative – thus, being counted both in the 'kin' category and hub-and-spoke model. In the overall 'chain' category, the respondent is only counted once.

### ***Chains and the Configurations of Interpersonal Ties***

The concept of migrant network as 'sets of interpersonal ties'<sup>93</sup> is often traced to the works of Douglas Massey and his colleagues on Mexican migration to the United States. In *Return to Aztlan*, they stated that:

These ties bind migrants and nonmigrants within a complex web of complementary social roles and interpersonal relationships that are maintained by an informal set of mutual expectations and prescribed behaviors. The social relationships that constitute migrant networks are not unique to migrants but develop as a result of universal human bonds that are molded to the special circumstances of international migration. These social ties are not created by the migratory process but are adapted to it and over time are reinforced by the common experience of migration itself (Massey, Alarcón, Durand, & González, 1987: 139–140).

Two things should be noted from this explanation concerning social ties that constitute migrant networks. First, while social relations (such as kinship, friendship, or hometown-based) exist within and outside of the migration process, there are also institutional ties and relations that emerge out of it (and because of it). Actors within the migration industry (e.g. recruiters, fixers, traffickers, or smugglers) are cases in point. I return to this point in the second type of pre-migration networks (in *Recruits and the Role of Migrant Institutions*, p. 138). What needs to be highlighted at this point is that there are other types of ties that must be taken into account apart from 'interpersonal ties' that constitute kinship, friendship, and community-based networks. The discussion on the migration pathways in the first part of this chapter illustrates the complexity and dynamics of the migration experiences of the respondents. Migrating to intermediate countries expands the possibility for social contacts beyond the boundaries of one's hometown or community. In other words, it is

<sup>93</sup> For the original definition of the concept of migrant network by Massey et al. (1993), see Chapter 2, *Situating the Concept of 'Network' in Migration Studies*, p. 10.



necessary to recognize the configuration of diverse ties to fully understand the role of migrant networks in the migration process. However, this is just half of the story – the contents of these ties must be also examined to appreciate how migrant networks function.

The second point thus pertains to the idea that underlying social relations are obligations and normative expectations that guide how people interact and relate to each other. Faist (2000: 33) refers to these as resources (obligations, reciprocity, and solidarity) and dimensions of social capital, which are the contents of social and symbolic ties: “Migrants use resources inherent in these ties, such as various dimensions of social capital — exchange-based obligations, the norm of reciprocity and solidarity, and benefits derived from them, such as access to the resources of others, information, and control.” It can then be expected that access to different types of ties would mean that different forms of resources could be generated and utilized. How ties are formed and developed, as well as what sort of resources can be activated and appropriated through such connections should therefore be examined, instead of taking the presence of such networks and resources as given.

In this section, I divide migrant networks that are predominantly composed of interpersonal ties into three sub-types. Since familial obligations are central to migrants’ narratives and kinship ties are structured through strong obligations and expectations, I examine kin-based networks separately from non-kin ones. Interviews with the respondents also illustrate cases that make up Bashi’s (2007) hub-and-spoke model. This type also needs to be analyzed distinctly from the other two given that relationships and obligations are structured differently in this model.

### **Kinship Networks**

Table 6.5 shows that kin-based chains are the pre-dominant type of pre-migration networks among the Filipino respondents in this study. However, looking closely, it can be observed that this is the case only among the respondents in New York, and this pattern is consistent across all occupations. This is not surprising given that the concentration of particular migrant groups in a destination area is among the features of chain migration – as exemplified in the works of MacDonald and MacDonald (1964) on Italian migrants in the United States, highlighting familism and patronage as the organizing principle of such movements (*see* Chapter 2, *Networks and the Migration Process*, p. 11). In the case of the migration stream of Filipinos to the UK (*see* Figures 4.7 & 4.8, pp. 58–59), it can be seen that the considerable increase is more recent compared to the long history of mass migration of Filipinos to the US. As emphasized elsewhere in the manuscript, this means that we can expect longer ‘chains’ of Filipinos moving to the US. Given the emphasis of the US immigration policy post -1965 on family reunification combined with colonial history, familial ties play an almost exclusive role in facilitating the movements of Filipinos to the US. But what types of support do kin in the place of destination provide and extend to the would-be migrant? What forms do transnational family networks take?

As illustrated in the previous chapter, relatives overseas shape not only the migration aspiration (desire to migrate) of their left-behind family members, but also place-specific aspirations (desire where to migrate). In this sense, the channeling function of migrant networks becomes apparent. Would-be migrants tend to aspire for and choose certain destinations because they are made aware of the possibility of moving to such places in the first place. The presence of family members increases the perceived viability of ‘making it’ – not only in terms of successful entry but also in realizing one’s migration project (i.e. attaining a better life) given the implied obligation to help one’s kin. As Massey et al. (1987: 140) put it, “kinship forms one of the most important bases of migrant social organization, and family connections are the most secure bonds within the networks.” In practice, this is of course not that simple as will be shown in Chapter 7, when newly-

arrived migrants have to rely on the resources and networks of their kin, and notions of obligations, reciprocity, and ‘being a family’ may be subjected to opposing interpretations and expectations.

Pre-migration, however, relatives in the places of destination provide various forms of support to enable mobility. The most direct way of doing so is to petition or sponsor for these relatives, as in the cases of respondents joining their spouses residing in New York or London. Other family members could also petition for their other relatives (parent, child, and in the case of the US, even siblings) but this is subject to existing immigration policy in the country of destination and the status of the petitioning family member. For instance, Emma migrated to Ohio in 1996 where her eldest sister (who petitioned for her) has been residing. However, it takes considerable time for the petition of relatives to be approved. Brothers and sister of a US citizen fall under the fourth preference of the family preference immigrant visas, which has yearly numerical limitations (unlike the immediate relative immigrant visa). For siblings and married children (third preference) of US citizens, waiting for the processing and approval of the petition takes decades. Lita’s sister filed the petition in 1984 and she was only able to join her in the US in 2008 – 24 years after.<sup>94</sup>

In the case of the UK, family visas could only be granted to other family members (besides partners, children (under 18), and parents) if the relatives applying could prove that they need to be cared for by their family members in the UK (who need to be British citizen, permanent resident, or have refugee or humanitarian protection status).<sup>95</sup> Another constraint concerning family immigration in the UK is the ‘minimum income requirement,’ which was implemented on 09 July 2012.<sup>96</sup> This immigration rule requires non-EEA nationals applying to join a British citizen or permanent resident to have a combined yearly income of at least £18,600 (required income is higher if non-EEA children are also applying).<sup>97</sup> Given these constraints and other additional requirements on the part of the petitioning family member, getting relatives to the US or the UK through sponsorship or petition could only be done with necessary resources (e.g. income and legal status of the relatives overseas) and under particular circumstances that immigration policies in both countries allow.

However, relatives in the places of destination do help and provide support in other ways as in the case of Sheila, who did not really intend to go abroad but her brother was insistent and determined to bring her to the US. Her brother shouldered all the expenses she incurred in applying for a tourist visa, which included more than \$5000 she paid to an agency to assist in handling her visa application. She shared that she was able to pay her brother little by little when she was already working in New York as a domestic worker. Patricia, on the other hand, sought the help of her aunt to originally finance her onward migration to Canada. Her aunt suggested for her to first try to go to the UK instead and provided the ‘show money’<sup>98</sup> so that her tourist visa would be approved. In this manner, relatives in the US or the UK provide financial assistance to ensure the legal entry of their family members in the country of destination. Likewise, kin-based ties are also possible source

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<sup>94</sup> In the May 2018 visa bulletin, the cut-off dates for third and fourth preference from the Philippines were 01 April 1995 and 01 February 1995, respectively – indicating almost the same length of waiting time for the approval of the petition of Lita’s sister. <<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-bulletin/2018/visa-bulletin-for-may-2018.html>>, accessed 06 May 2018.

<sup>95</sup> ‘Apply as an adult coming to be cared for by a relative,’ <<https://www.gov.uk/uk-family-visa/adult-dependent-relative>>, accessed 06 May 2018.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Family and private life immigration rule changes 9 July 2012,’ <<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-and-private-life-rule-changes-9-july-2012>>, accessed 06 May 2018.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Give proof of your income,’ <<https://www.gov.uk/uk-family-visa/proof-income>>, accessed 06 May 2018.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Show money’ is basically to prove that the visa applicant has sufficient funds in her account to finance the trip to the place of destination, in this case, the UK.

of information or strategy, particularly in the context of tighter immigration policies, allowing would-be migrants to navigate the (legal) process of gaining entry to desired destination.

Assistance from kin to enable one's mobility may also be indirect as they serve as 'bridges' to connect would-be migrants to employers that could facilitate their migration. Examples of which are the cases of Dolores and Divina (cousins; *see* Figures 6.1 and 6.2 for the network maps) – who were 'recruited' by Divina's sister, a pioneer migrant in London. Divina's sister was working for an Indian family whose business operated in Hong Kong, Nigeria, and London. Since these employers and their other relatives were in need of additional domestic workers, Divina's sister referred both Dolores and Divina.

*[. . .] my sister was in Hong Kong, and then her employers would move to Nigeria for good. Then her employer who was here in London needed a domestic worker. That's why my sister went here in London. Now, she told her employers to get me and to send a [plane] ticket for me. [. . .] Then my sister said to tell our cousin [Dolores] as well [about the job]. We were teaching in the same school then.*

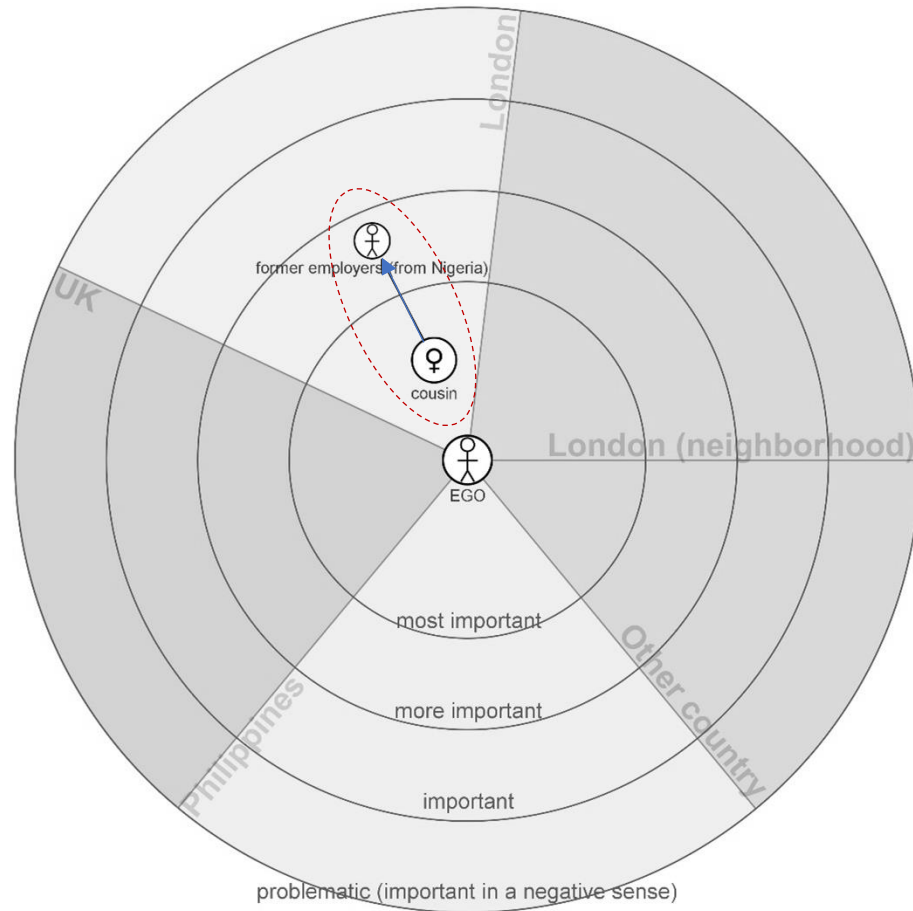
(Divina, 63 years old, private caregiver,  
arrived in London in 1992)

They were first brought to Nigeria and eventually to London when the children of their employers were about to go to school (with Divina arriving in London in 1992 and Dolores in 1995). Coupled with a more favorable immigration policy and information from Divina's sister and her networks, they were able to plan their stay in London. Unlike other domestic workers who escaped from their former employers who brought them to London, Divina and Dolores were aware of the immigration policy and they knew that they could eventually apply for indefinite leave to remain (permanent residency). After some time, they both switched to caregiving job and also started to get their own families to join them in London – continuing the chain migration through familial networks. In this sense, even though Divina's sister did not have the financial resources nor the 'required' legal status, her social ties to her employers and their relatives allowed her to facilitate (albeit indirectly) the overseas migration of her own relatives from the Philippines to London. This points to the range of assistance that kin-based networks can provide to propel the geographical mobility of their left-behind family members, and to the importance of the social networks that these relatives develop in the places of destination. However, as the cases of Divina and Dolores showed, having strategically positioned contact in one's network could spell a great difference. In post-migration context, it will also be shown how being connected to someone who is strategically positioned is crucial for survival and social mobility (*see* Chapter 7).

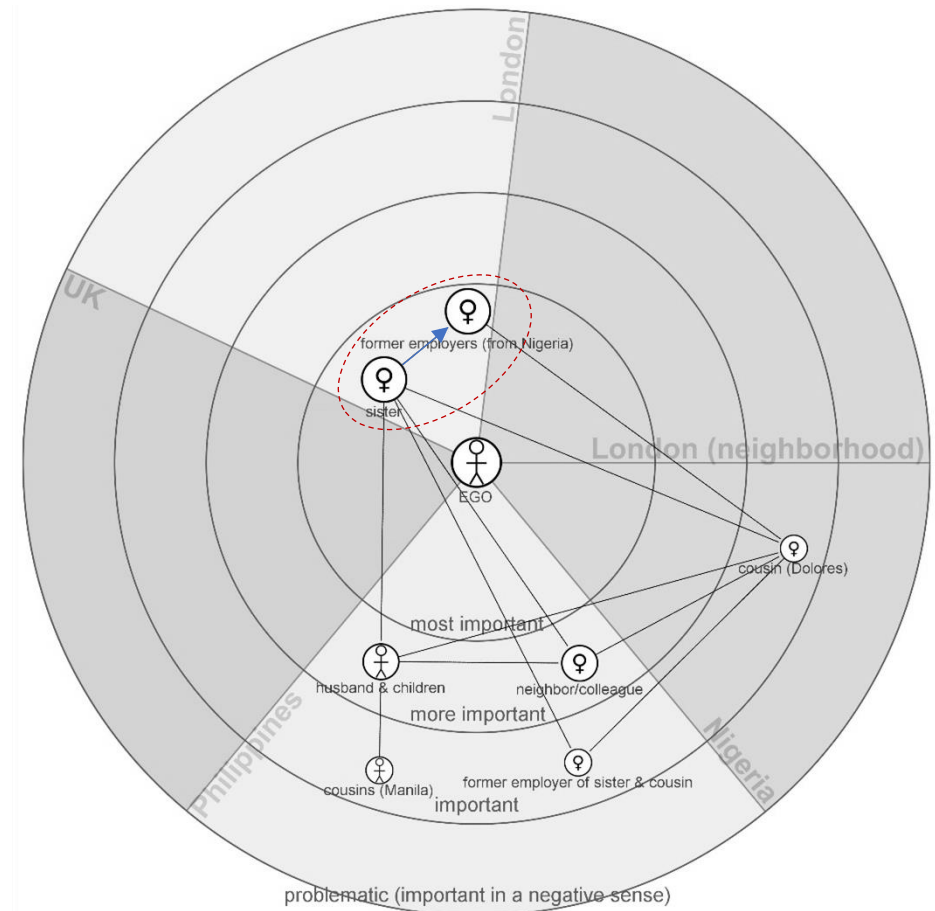
Lastly, looking at the composition of these kin-based pre-migration networks reveals the multiplicity of familial ties that are important for mobility. As Ryan (2008: 467; citing Chamberlain, 1997) put it, "kinship migration networks should not be regarded simply as conjugal, nuclear family units." Similar to the findings of Ryan (2008) on the family-led migration of Irish nurses to England and Chamberlain (1999) on Caribbean migrants, siblings (as well as aunts and cousins) have provided invaluable assistance in facilitating and encouraging overseas migration.

In the next section, the role of relationships and ties outside of one's kin in enabling migration will be explored, expanding further the variety of ties that are considered and examined in this study.

**Figure 6.1.** Dolores' Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



**Figure 6.2.** Divina's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



<sup>99</sup> Compared to Dolores, Divina also listed ties in the Philippines whom she considered relevant and important in her migration. These ties include family members, colleague, and acquaintance who provided encouragement and moral support, as well as accommodation in Manila when they were preparing to leave for Nigeria.

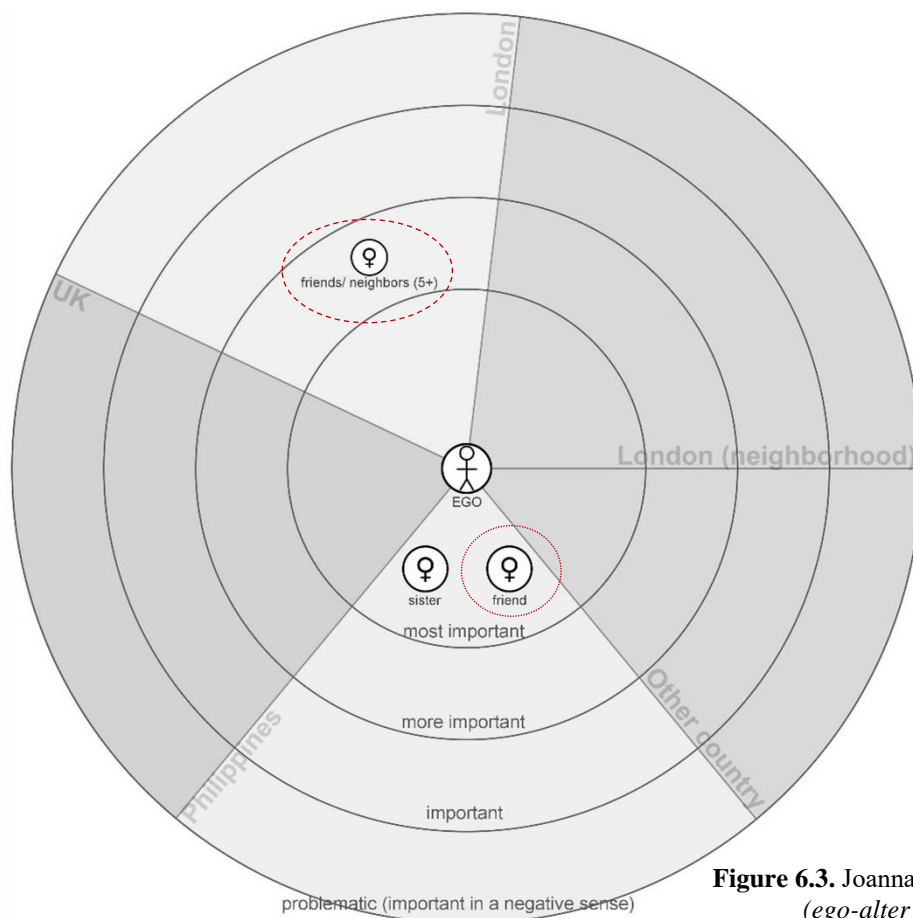
### Non-Kin Networks and Weak Ties

When she got married and had a son, Jessica seriously considered her options and thought that she could no longer rely on her parents nor her job when they experienced a financial need. She then decided to go to the US. However, unlike most respondents in New York, she has no familial ties in the US and was instead encouraged by the job prospect through her friends.

*Business and job in the Philippines are unstable. So, I said, why not pursue a job overseas [. . .] here in America [. . .] I said, okay, I will try to be a caregiver in States, in California, because we have friends who own assisted living [. . .] homes there.*

(Jessica, 38 years old, full-time housekeeper in Manhattan; part-time caregiver in Long Island, arrived in California in 2010, moved to New York in 2011)

In the absence of family ties in the US or the UK, there were respondents who listed friends and acquaintances as important sources of support that made their migration possible. Friendships, in varying degrees of closeness, provide encouragement, vital information, link to possible employment opportunities (that made migration enticing), and (at times) even financial assistance. The narrative and network map (Figure 6.3) of Joanna (a stay-in caregiver in London) demonstrate these various forms of support from different groups of friends.



**Figure 6.3.** Joanna's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

First, she got the information as to what kind of documents she needed to submit and the process of applying for a tourist visa from her friends (neighbors) who were already in London. She also became aware of 'going to London' as a possibility from this set of friends, whom she maintained contact prior and after her migration. Following what they did to obtain a tourist visa, she also paid

for visa assistance services. Financing the cost of her trip (payment to visa assistance service, plane ticket, and ‘show money’) was her close friend whom she considers ‘like a sister.’

It is not surprising that the kind of support offered and given depends on the ‘level’ of friendship one has. Thus, financial assistance is quite uncommon among respondents with predominantly friendship ties – except when, like Joanna, the friend is considered a very close one. Information and advice are the most common assistance that friends provide – from what one can expect after migration (e.g. salary and possible jobs available) to the more practical information concerning gaining entry to the place of destination (such as how to apply for a visa and what documents are needed). Different sets of friends and acquaintances could be beneficial in accessing valuable information (e.g. job opportunities, ‘better’ destinations, and other viable, less costly options to emigrate) as suggested by Granovetter’s (1973; 1983) theory on the ‘strength of weak ties’ (SWT). However, relying on the goodwill and trustworthiness of acquaintances could also be risky given the lack of strong moral obligations governing relations and interactions, unlike within closely-knit networks of family and friends. Consider the cases of Maricel and Melanie, both of whom entered the UK through student visa. Melanie felt outright cheated by the supposed ‘recruiter’ – the sister-in-law of her friend in the Philippines – who agreed to arrange her papers and enrolled her in a college in London. Upon arrival, the ‘recruiter’ asked for additional payment to enroll her again. When Melanie asked where is the money<sup>100</sup> she paid when she was still in the Philippines, she was told that was already gone. Other inconsistencies and problems arose – especially when the college where she was enrolled closed down. Melanie was also asked to pay a weekly rent of 45 pounds for sharing a room with two of the recruiter’s nephews (and even though she was a stay-in caregiver).

In contrast, Maricel already knew how to apply for a student visa since she researched the process on her own. However, she also needed someone in London to enroll her in a college given that a proof of enrolment was required to obtain a student visa. She sent the money to an acquaintance, taking a chance:

*Through a friend as well. Friend of a friend. Something like that <laughs>. It’s like, okay, just trust someone here [in London] because [. . .] if you will not do that, nothing will happen. Like, you have to trust somebody to do that for you.*

(Maricel, 47 years old, health care assistant,  
arrived in London in 2009)

Unlike Melanie, she was able to receive the document she needed without any trouble and her acquaintance also referred her to a relative renting a place for accommodation. That relative helped her to find initial part-time job and even borrowed her money while she was still looking for work.

With these two contrasting outcomes, it can be seen that relying on acquaintances could end up as a form of assistance and support or as source of bigger problem. Thus, aspiring migrants who do not have access to other types of ties and exchanges that are more secured have little choice but to enter riskier relations to facilitate their mobility.

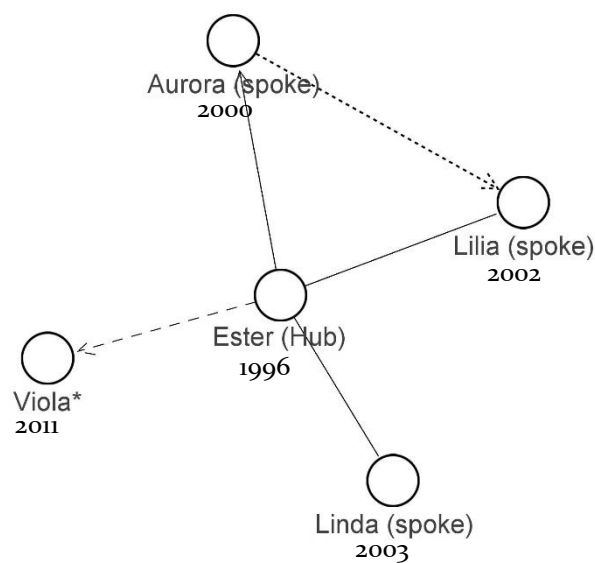
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<sup>100</sup> Melanie remembered paying 3600 pounds in installments, which the ‘recruiter’ converted to about 80 pesos/ pound (₱ 288,000) back then.

## Hub-and-Spoke Model

Another form of pre-existing ties that proves to be important in the absence of kin-based social network are those ties to ‘hubs’ – an established person from one’s hometown who had been the most instrumental in the respondent’s movement to their preferred destination. This is reminiscent of Bashi’s (2007) concept of ‘hubs and spokes’ based on her study on Black Caribbean migrants in New York and London. In this type of network, the recruitment of newcomers (‘spokes’) is continuously facilitated by a pioneer migrant, which she calls a ‘hub.’

I found one network that resembles Bashi’s (2007) ‘hub-and-spoke’ model in my sample, which is composed of Ester (the hub, currently working as a private caregiver) and those domestic worker respondents who mentioned her as vital to their movement to New York – New Jersey area. Aurora, Linda, Lilia, and to a certain extent, Viola (who all came from the same town in the Philippines) credited Ester for helping them get to America (or in the case of Viola, for moving to New Jersey from California). She not only gave information on how to obtain passports and US tourist visas, but also borrowed money to some to avail of visa assistance services in the Philippines. Upon arrival, she provided initial (or continuous) accommodation and assisted in finding work.



**Figure 6.4.** Visualization of Hub-and-Spoke Model (New York sample)

Ester came to the US in 1996 to attend a seminar for teachers. She shared that she intended to go back after two weeks but her brother-in-law in New Jersey offered her some part-time work. Enticed with the amount she was able to earn, she extended her stay to some more months until she did not go back. Cutting the story short, she was able to regularize her status through her church. From then on, she did not only facilitate the migration of her kin from the Philippines, she also encouraged and helped others from their *barrio* to get to America.

Among those was Viola, a nurse retiree from Austria, who was visiting her son in California. Viola and her husband were thinking of trying to try to reside in America after her early retirement. Viola has always dreamt of going to the US, and she thought

that it was her chance to realize that dream. They initially planned to stay with her son and his family in California, but little conflicts with her daughter-in-law arose. She also wanted to work so that she can support her daughter, a budding designer in London, who was starting her own business. Ester encouraged her and her husband to move to the East Coast for more job opportunities.

Aurora came to the US in 2000. Ester convinced her to try applying for a US visa and join her. Later on, she was able to reconnect with her cousin in Queens and moved out of Ester’s house in New Jersey. When Aurora was already in the US, she then encouraged Lilia, her friend, to try to go to the US as well. When Lilia arrived in New York, she was also supported by Ester. Linda, on the other hand, had an aunt in Maryland but chose to go to New York and stay in Ester’s house in New Jersey because she was told that it is easier to find work in New York. All of them benefitted from Ester’s expansive networks as she had been in the US for approximately 20 years. They were also referred to someone who assisted in their visa application. Lilia recalled paying around \$3,000,

which she borrowed from the husband of Ester who was in their town at that time. She was able to pay this debt when she was already working.

These four women from her hometown were just a handful of the individuals and families that Ester said she was able to help in moving and settling in the US – about a hundred, she reckoned: “*My God! You know, maybe there are about a hundred people whom I was able to help in coming here.*” As Bashi (2007: 81–82) noted, it takes enormous effort and resources on the part of the hub to serve as a sponsor.

They have the immigrant live with them, opening their home and committing the resources to be sure that the new immigrant is properly settled. [. . .] Hubs take on the role of a sponsor, a role that requires much effort and commitment and that is costly in time and money, and even in one’s spouse’s goodwill! Thus, hubs are a particular sort of immigrant.

But why would a hub like her go at length in extending help and assistance beyond one’s kin? Similar to what Bashi (2007: 107) found among the hubs in her study, “there was no indication other than the psychological motivations . . . to explain why they displayed such seemingly altruistic behavior toward their co-ethnics.” Apart from having positive image and reputation both in home community and in the place of destination, Ester felt rewarded by the recognition of those she helped and, seemed fulfilled that she was able to provide as much assistance as she could.

Further characterizing a hub, Bashi (2007: 82–84) outlined five things that hubs work hard to accomplish.

*“First, the hub makes great effort to keep or renew ties back home.”*

Ester talked about the times she was returning to their hometown to talk in their church and encourage people, particularly women, in their *barrio* to go to America. She assured them that they could rely on her once they are there.

*When I was returning home for a visit [balikbayan], this is what I do. They asked me to be a speaker in church. Then after – when it was already the time to shake hands, I called all the women. [. . .] I told them, “Come here, I have something to tell you.” I told all the women in the church . . ., “You know what, come [to the US], I will take care of you once you’re there. I got your back. I will take care of it.”*

Maintaining her connection to their local church, Ester also regularly sends donations in cash and in kind. With these sustained transnational engagements, she is known in her hometown – not just as a successful migrant, but also someone who exudes an image that is generous, helpful, and kind.

*“Second, hubs make sacrifices . . .”*

Being a hub entails going out of one’s way to help others, even if this means doing extra work or sacrificing one’s time and resources. Ester talked about how she would fetch a newly-arrived migrant from the airport, of letting them stay in her in place even if they were still living in an apartment at that time, driving them around to look for work, and practically taking care of their needs as they start their lives in the US.

Before getting to the US, Ester also mentioned how they (with her husband) try to ensure that the would-be migrants from their hometown would successfully obtain a US visa.

*I told them, “Get a passport.” I taught them the process. [. . .] The questions of consul, the things that must be seen there, we listed them all with my husband. We made a list. Then, I gave it [the list] to them. I told them, “Go there — Study this one. This is what you need to do.” Then I looked for an agency [for visa assistance services] in the Philippines, I*



*didn't get anything mind you, not a single centavo, God knows, I did not get anything even a single centavo. I did not ask for anything, I did not get anything from that agency, nothing. When they are about to leave from the Philippines, their airfare would come from my husband. Uhm, there, they are alive. You can ask them. Their airfare and their pocket money were from my husband."*

In this way, as a hub, Ester remains an important tie from pre-migration to post-migration support networks of spokes, as she extends assistance throughout the migration process – a practice that requires considerable effort to sustain.

*"Third, hubs buy into the network's culture of reciprocity . . ."*

When asked why it became her practice to sponsor people from their hometown to get to the US, she said that helping those from their *barrio* has been on her mind since coming to America. *"In our barrio, people are poor. In our church, people are also poor. So, I immediately thought, I also want them to experience what I experienced here. I want to lift them out of poverty."* Her idea is to take at least one from each family to the US so that each of those can help their families in turn.

Though she insisted that she was not asking anything in return, Ester also shared that it also feels great that those she helped appreciate her and made her special. In addition, as part of an extensive network, Aurora, Viola, Linda, and Lilia considered each other, as well as Ester, her extended family and friends, as people they can rely on in times of need – in the same way that Ester treats them as part of her support network (despite instances of conflicts and tensions between and among each other).

*"Fourth, hubs use their position in the labor market to help others."*

As a pioneer and as someone who is central in the expansive network of people from their hometown, Ester was able to connect newcomers to job contacts. The 'spokes' I interviewed verified this when they narrated how they found work upon arrival through Ester or her social connections. Ester also worked in various occupations – e.g. as a teacher, nanny, office worker, caregiver – and she was able to refer people from her network upon learning of job openings.

*"Hubs have control in the selection of new immigrants . . ."*

This last point is not so apparent in this particular hub-and-spoke network in this study. While Ester specifically encouraged women from her church in their hometown, other 'spokes' also referred people they know to Ester. Of course, she has the final say on whom to assist. But she also never spoke of being selective on whom to help, but rather emphasized that she would extend assistance whenever she can.

In Chapter 7, I will revisit the hub-and-spoke dynamics post-migration to examine the dynamics and exchanges of support upon settlement. As Bashi (2007: 82) put it, "after migration occurs, hubs keep ties with those they have helped, making sure that the network remains a community long after the initial migration experience." This is especially the case among 'spokes' who continue to live in the accommodation provided by the hub.

In the section to follow, I shift the focus from interpersonal ties to institutional ones – examining the role of migrant institutions in enabling migration of specific types of migrants in particular destinations.

### ***Recruits and the Role of Migrant Institutions***

“A review of the immigration and network analysis literatures, as well as my field data, led me to conclude that the ‘migrant network’ is inadequate to study international migration,” writes Krissman (2005: 4) in his critique of what he called the ‘Massey model’ of migrant network. But as Poros (2011) noted, such criticism is based on the narrow conceptualization of migrant network as comprising of interpersonal ties. Therefore, expanding the limited definition of migrant network to include other types of ties and actors that are relevant to the migration process is a way forward to gain a better understanding of the role of migrant networks in facilitating geographical mobility and sustaining migration streams to particular destinations (*see* van Meeteren & Pereira, 2016).

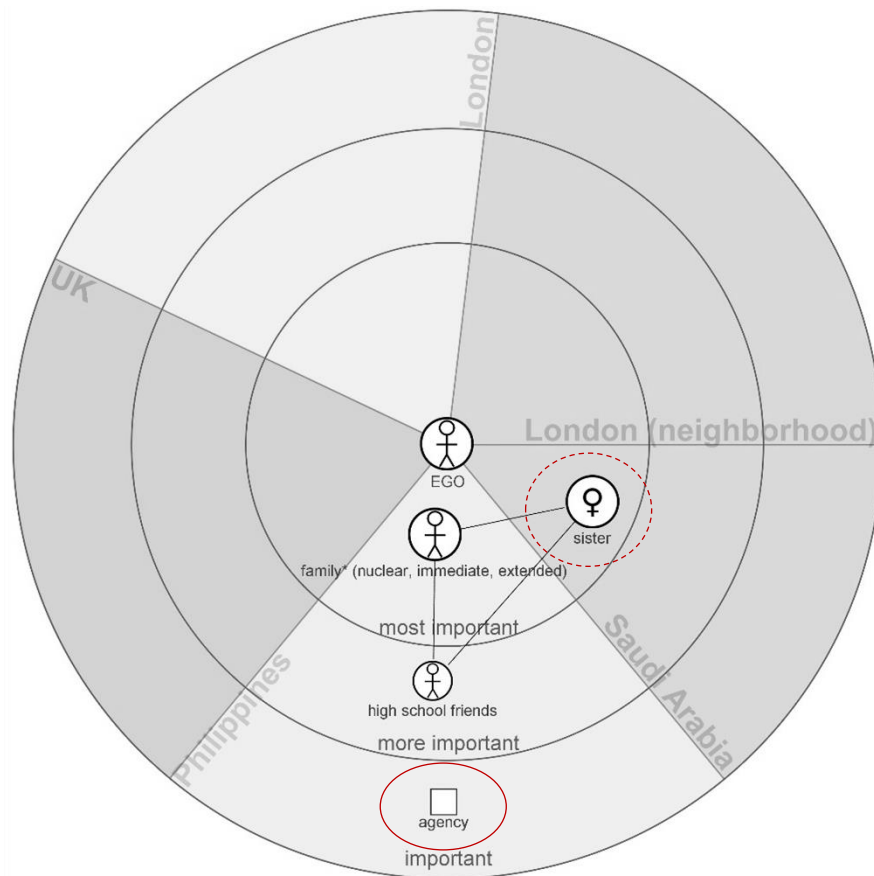
As discussed in the previous chapters, Poros (2001, 2011) extended the concept of ‘migrant network’ to include organizational and composite ties (*see* Chapter 2, ‘*Conceptualizing Dynamic Migrant Networks*, p. 24). She specifically referred to those whose migrations are facilitated primarily by organizational ties as *recruits*. In this study, however, I employ the term ‘recruit’ as a type of pre-migration network that mostly to refer to those who have ties to ‘migrant institutions’ (Masselink & Lee, 2010; *see* Chapter 5, p. 93) rather than ties to individuals within organizations or relations mediated through institutions (which is more akin to Poros’ type of ‘recruits’). As emphasized, the presence and activities of government agencies and private recruitment agencies in the Philippines play a crucial role in the dynamics of Filipino migration. Considering the specificities of Filipino migration, this section examines more closely how migrant institutions shape the migration process as seen from the perspectives of migrants whose movements to the US or the UK were predominantly made possible by these institutions.

In Chapter 5, it has been highlighted how migrant institutions (e.g. recruitment agencies, educational and training institutions, and government agencies) cultivate the ‘culture of migration’ by promoting the appeal of labor migration. Recruitment agencies could also market particular destinations that are open for hiring and recruitment, in the same way that the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) publicly disseminate information on which countries are currently in need of foreign workers. In this way, migrant institutions also channel would-be migrants to certain destinations. For instance, Francis (a nurse in London; *see* Figure 6.5 for the network map) initially did not consider London nor the UK as possible destination. He was trying to go to Saudi Arabia where his sister was working but the recruitment agency was insistent that he tried to apply in the UK instead. Francis was oblivious of London but he applied nevertheless. Without any ties to the UK, Francis was the first of his family to reach its shores.<sup>101</sup>

Table 6.5 shows that most *recruits* are nurse respondents in London. The concentration of recruits among these respondents can be situated within the relatively recent mass recruitment of foreign-trained health professionals by the UK government to fill the need of the expanding National Health Services (Buchan, 2008). This particular context of nurse recruitment could be reflected in the network map of Eliza (*see Eliza’s network map*; Figure 6.6) who considered the demand of NHS for nurses as even more important than the role played by the recruitment agency in her migration to the UK. As with the role of the recruitment agency, she described it as “*also important because they became the gateway . . . like they became the way for me to be able to go to the UK.*”

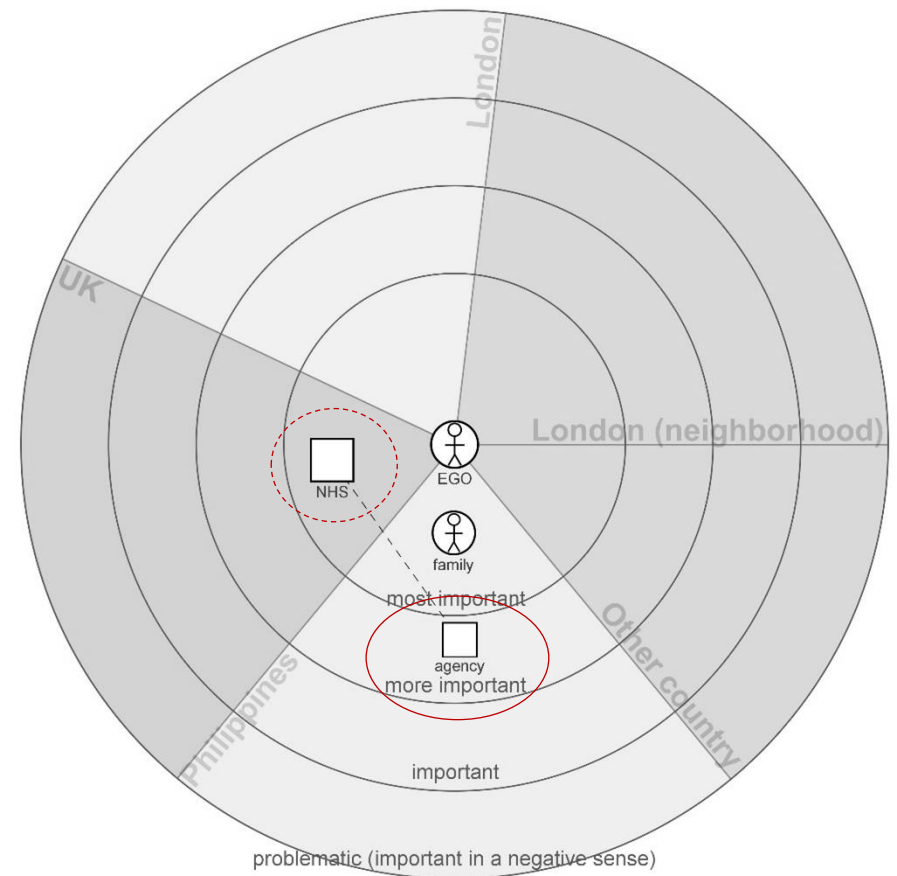
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<sup>101</sup> Later on, Francis sponsored his wife Janine, also a nurse, and their daughter to join him. This shows how migrant streams of recruits can give way to flows of chains, and how particular occupations could also make such process easier (e.g. by having the required amount of income to petition).



**Figure 6.5.** Francis' Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed; family ties are combined)

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**Figure 6.6.** Eliza's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

<sup>102</sup> In Francis' pre-migration network, familial and friendship ties provide encouragement and moral support. The desire to help family members is also the reason why he listed familial ties in his pre-migration network.

There are also considerable number of support care workers (also in London) that are classified as recruits. As mentioned in the first part of this chapter (*Direct migration: The single-origin-single-destination model*, p. 116), there was also a short-lived recruitment of support care workers in the UK, which was somehow comparable to the active recruitment of Filipino nurses. Carlo was among those support care workers who entered the UK during such period. Unlike others who either saw the advertisement of the recruitment agency in the newspaper or through the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) website where job orders and accredited recruitment agencies are posted, Carlo narrated how the representative of the company (employer) also visited his then workplace (a center for children with special needs).

*Because carers were in the occupational shortage list, so they [employers] could directly recruit from the Philippines. So, they reviewed the applications from the previous year. They saw that a lot came from the center. [. . .] So, the head of the HR visited the center since – like they were sort of intrigued – . . . why there a lot coming from here? [. . .] So, that’s how we were able to get the chance to apply. [. . .] Also, the first batch who left were the OT, PT, and nurses. So, they were the one who – sort of alerted us the following year that the recruiters [representatives of the company] would come [personally to the center]. [. . .] But, not [to apply] directly to them, it was still through the [recruitment] agency. And then, in the agency, we thought that they would deny our applications. Because, when we went there, the one who interviewed us said . . . that those with psychology degree were not included in the qualifications that they were looking for. They wanted OT, PT, or nurse. [. . .] But then I remembered reading in the newspaper advertisement that any Behavioral . . . Sciences [graduate could apply]. [. . .] So, they accepted our . . . resumes. Then they called us for an interview, more than ten, I think, were from our center.*

(Carlo, 40 years old, asst. care manager in a residential home, arrived in London in 2007)

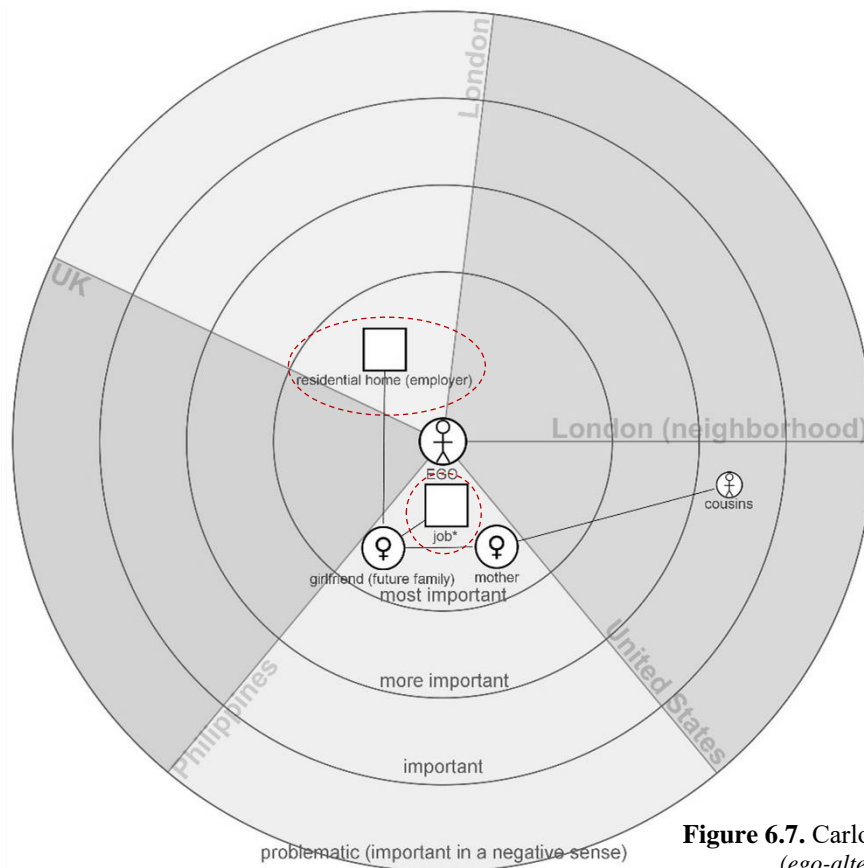
In his network map (*see* Figure 6.7), it can be observed that instead of a recruitment agency, Carlo listed the company (the residential home, his would-be employer) as the one who facilitated his migration to the UK. He also considered the center where he worked as equally important because working there trained and enabled him to qualify for the caregiving job in the UK. In Carlo’s case, the mediating function of the recruitment agency was minimized since he was more closely connected to the employer from the destination country (given that they visited his former workplace) compared to other respondents.

It is interesting to note that there is also a general absence of recruitment agencies in the pre-migration network maps of nurse respondents who are onward migrants. Neither of these five nurses mentioned recruitment agency as important in their onward migration to the UK even though these movements were facilitated by recruitment agencies.<sup>103</sup> Glaiza considered her initial employer – instead of the agency – as important as they were the ones who hired her. She also listed her friends who were already in the UK for their encouragement and information. Tessa also considered her friends in the UK as important in encouraging her to move to the UK. Marissa listed her close friends in Saudi Arabia who accompanied her in the application (and her profession, i.e. being a nurse) as instrumental in her relocation. When asked if she considers the recruitment agency as important, Melissa said that the agency is more of a ‘thoroughfare’ and that she can be with any

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<sup>103</sup> As discussed in the methodology chapter, this illustrates the importance of embedding the network maps within the participants’ narratives so as to provide significant background and contexts – as opposed to simply eliciting for the migrant networks – and thereby allowing the researcher to have a more thorough understanding of both the networks maps and the narratives of the participants.

other agency anyway. Perhaps, for those who are not first-timers in working overseas, recruitment agencies have become taken-for-granted as part of the process of going abroad; their ubiquity has rendered them invisible.



**Figure 6.7.** Carlo's Pre-Migration Network<sup>104</sup>  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

As the demand for care workers in the UK increased, another route became (for a time) popular among Filipinos until the UK tightened its immigration rules. I am referring to *student visas* – which in recent years has earned some degree of notoriety (discussed in the first part of this chapter; see *Direct migration: The single-origin-single-destination model*, p. 117). Taking advantage of the opportunity to send additional workers (and to earn more), recruitment agencies saw the student visa route as a profitable option – since before the more restrictive immigration policy was implemented, student visa holders were also allowed to work in the UK for limited hours (which they usually didn't follow as they worked longer hours). Gwen is among those who came to the UK through a recruitment agency that was sending applicants through the student visa route. She paid a considerable amount of money<sup>105</sup> to this recruitment agency – which painted a rosy picture of what her life would be in the UK. Gwen, who arrived in 2008, had some doubts in the beginning and some failed expectations, as well.

*I said, "Is there something like that? You will study and then you will become a supervisor?" Because I wasn't really [buying it]. [ . . . ] But it is really true, since when you finished NVQ3, that's supervisory. NVQ4*

<sup>104</sup> Similar to most respondents who included familial ties (mostly in the home country) in their pre-migration networks, familial ties in Carlos' network (including that of the future family he was planning to build with his then girlfriend) provided encouragement and motivated him to seek for better life overseas. His cousins in the US, in particular, inspired him to go abroad.

<sup>105</sup> Gwen mentioned that she paid 180, 000 in Philippine pesos to the recruitment agency.

*is already managerial. That's really true that that level that you're studying is for a managerial position but it doesn't also mean that you will become one in a residential [home] though that is your qualification. [. . .] We were already in level 5 when I finished my course. [. . .] but I didn't know that you need to go to school regularly, that you would pay that much tuition fee – to the point that almost nothing would be left for you.*

(Gwen, 36 years old, live-in care worker, arrived in East Midlands in 2008, moved to London in 2012)

There are considerably far less recruits in the US sample, which can be divided into nurses and domestics who were hired to work in the US for a different job (e.g. caregiver, teacher, or chambermaid in a hotel) in a different state (Maryland or Florida). This latter type of recruits also encountered problems with their US employers that led them to become undocumented. As they were looking for employment opportunities, they ended up moving to New York.

The two cases of recruits among the US respondents are illustrative of how recruitment agencies could be perceived differently depending on the constraints (or lack of which) that impinge upon the recruitment process and international hiring. Yvette considered the recruitment agency that processed and facilitated her application as the only actor important and instrumental in her move to New York (*see* Figure 6.8 for the network map). Yvette previously worked in Paris for almost 5 years. She applied in the US as she saw her colleagues applying at that time. After passing all the requirements, she left for New York after three weeks – a far cry from 6 years or 10 years of wait others had to endure. It was in 1989 and, as previously highlighted, US recruitment of foreign nurses back then was different. As Yvette noted:

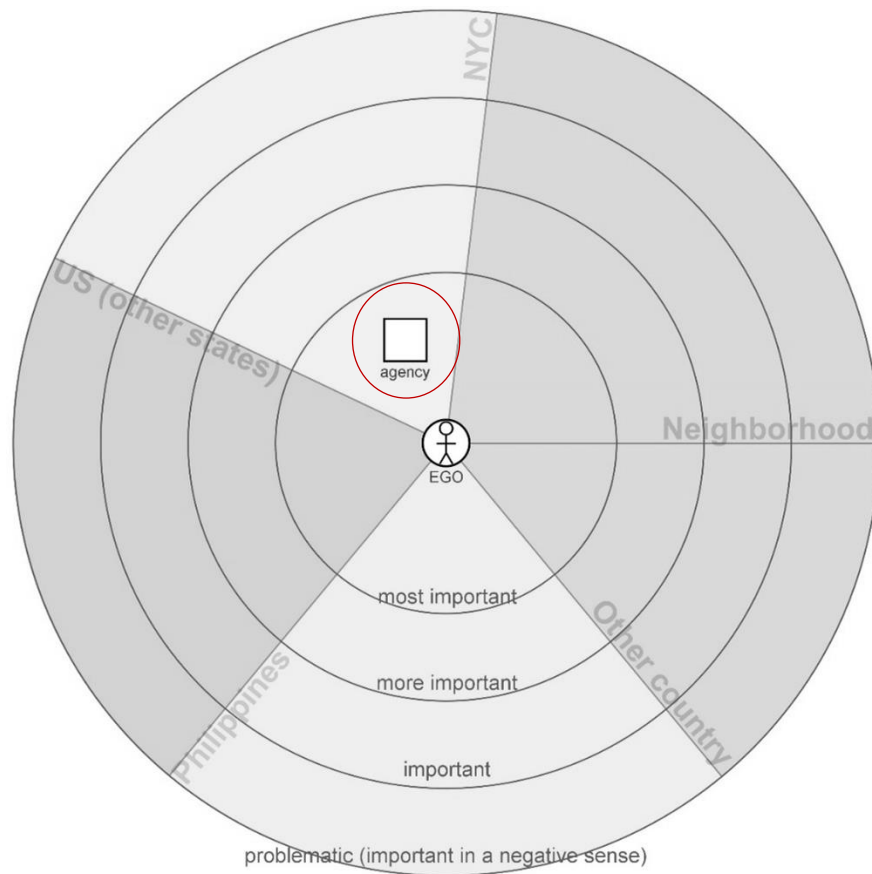
*It was that easy as long as you pass all the exams. So, all that was needed then was your patience in studying so that you can pass the requirements. Moneywise, it was on them, because everything was free – ticket, housing... That time, it was fast because they were really looking for nurses... Jobs are the ones looking for people <laughs>. They [job offers] were lining up and you just choose where you want to go.*

(Yvette, 55 years old, registered nurse in a hospital in Bronx, arrived in New York in 1989)

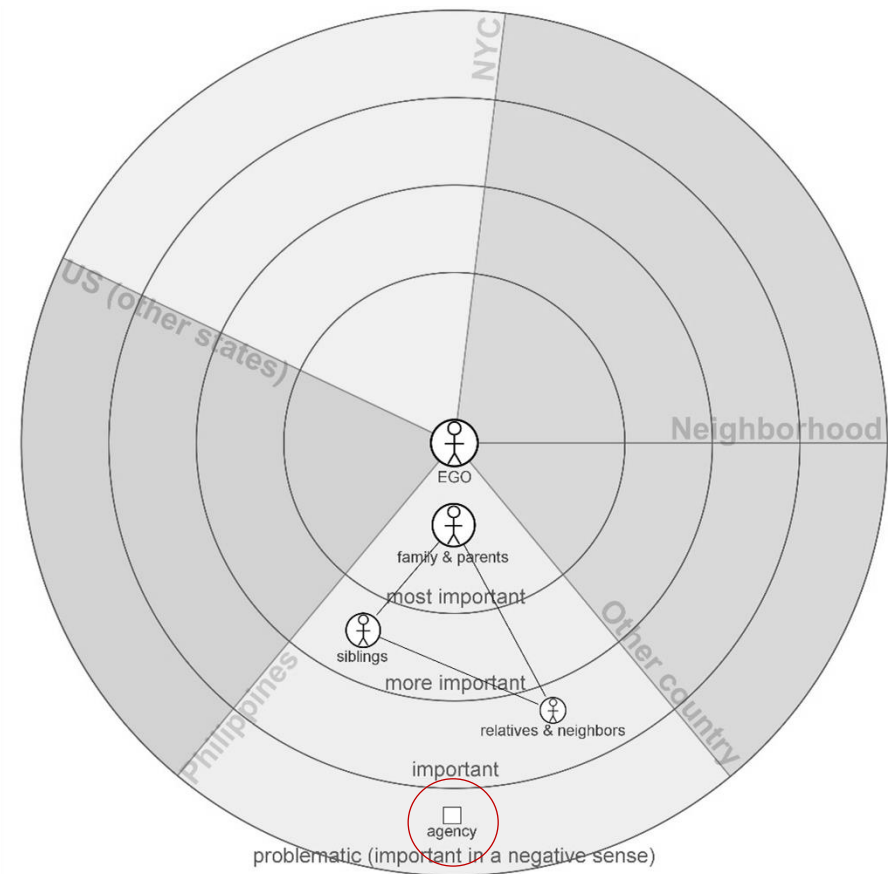
In contrast, Clarissa applied in 2005 through a recruitment agency and it took 10 years for her application to be processed and approved – to the point that she no longer wanted to go to the US (*see Direct migration: The single-origin-single-destination model* in the first part of this chapter, p. 115). Though she considered her recruitment agency as instrumental in facilitating her migration to the US, she also complained of the lack of proper communication and information about her then ongoing application (*see* Figure 6.9 for Clarissa's network map). In addition, unlike earlier recruits (and nurse recruits in the UK), more recently hired nurses in the New York sample tend to be deployed in nursing homes (instead of hospitals), which exacerbated their negative experiences concerning their hiring process and deployment.<sup>106</sup> This shows that changes in immigration policies shape not only the entry and deployment of overseas-educated nurses in the US but also how migrants perceive institutional actors such as recruitment agencies as they represent the current mode of immigration and recruitment in the receiving country.

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<sup>106</sup> As the respondents mentioned, this is because of the lower salary in nursing homes and the heavier workload. Thus, most of them hoped to get a job in a hospital instead. For those who were under contract (through the recruitment agency), they have to wait for their contract to finish before they can even apply to work somewhere else.



**Figure 6.8.** Yvette's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



**Figure 6.9.** Clarissa's Pre-Migration Network <sup>107</sup>  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

<sup>107</sup> Clarissa considered her family (nuclear, immediate, and extended) and neighbors as important since she decided to continue her application to the US and move there so that she would be in a better position to help them. She put the recruitment agency in the problematic part of the network map because of her ambivalence towards it.

### *Dual Ties and Network Complementarity*

While previous discussions centered primarily on pre-migration networks as composed of *either* interpersonal ties or institutional actors, there are also networks that contain *both* interpersonal and institutional ties. Those respondents with this type of network have pre-existing ties in the place of destination (either kinship or friendship) that extended valuable assistance to enable one's mobility. At the same time, their migrations were also formally arranged and facilitated by recruitment agencies. I consider this a distinct type of network (rather than subsuming to *recruits*) because it provides an opportunity to examine the various configurations of the types of support that the respondents received from both interpersonal ties and institutional actors. More importantly, it is also possible that their post-migration experiences might be different from recruits who did not have pre-existing ties in the destination country. As van Meeteren & Pereira (2016: 48) noted, there is a need to go beyond recognizing the existence of various types of actors that shape the migration process:

Although reference has been made to the relevance of other migrant-supporting institutions in facilitating migration as well as other actors beyond kinship, friendship and community ties, such as employers, government officials, traffickers and other migration brokers (Margolis, 1994; Singer and Massey, 1998; Krissman, 2005; Elrick and Lewandowska, 2008; Fonseca et al., 2014), who are also important facilitators of migration, few studies have examined and provided specific empirical evidence of the multiple actors that may be involved and the details of their participation (Garip and Asad, 2013, p. 6). For example, there is little account of 'where' actors providing assistance are located and who/which actors are involved in the different domains of assistance.

In this section, I identify the contexts in which networks with 'dual ties' are formed and explore how varied forms of support from these two types of ties complement and shape the movements of the respondents to the US and the UK. A useful heuristic to understand the co-existence of interpersonal and institutional ties (as well as 'strong' and 'weak' ties) is Uzzi's (1999: 491) concept of 'network complementarity' – which refers to "a network's ability to synthesize the benefits of different types of ties" in such a way that "the features of different ties reinforce one another's advantages while mitigating their disadvantages."

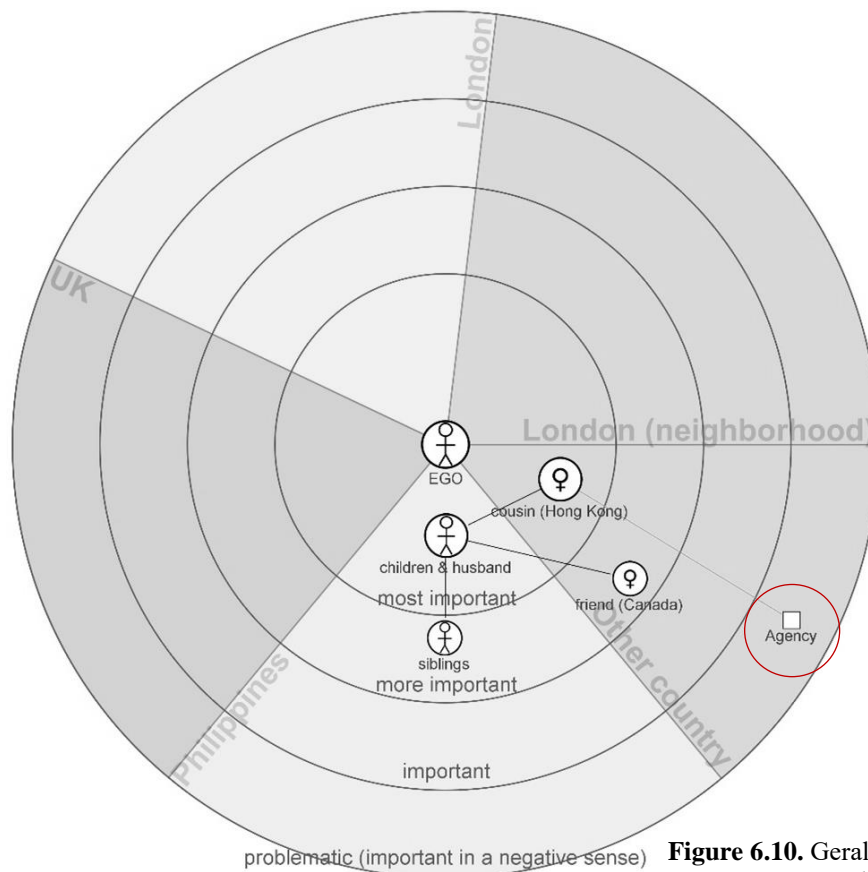
To successfully enter one's preferred destination amidst structural barriers (such as tightened immigration policies), migrants combined resources they were able to generate from various types of ties – kinship, friendship, and institutional ties. Consider how Geraldine (a domestic worker in London) was able to get to London from Hong Kong - her intermediate destination. While Geraldine's mother was in London, Geraldine had to rely on an agency in Hong Kong to obtain a domestic worker visa in the UK. This agency was referred by her cousin who was also in Hong Kong. Her mother, on the other hand, partially helped in covering the expenses such as placement fee and airfare but they still had to borrow money in a cooperative (in her hometown) to finance her move. Looking at her pre-migration network map (Figure 6.10), it can be noticed that she did not list her mother<sup>108</sup> – though she mentioned the financial support she received from her, as well as how her presence and information about London contributed to her decision to move there. She also considered the agency as 'problematic' after finding out in London that they overcharged her with the placement fee. Another relevant tie in her network is her friend in Canada who encouraged her

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<sup>108</sup> One way of looking at this is that financial support received from parents may be taken for granted because such support is seen as 'normal,' 'natural,' and part of parental responsibility and obligation. There might be other reasons that the respondent did not want to share and this possibility must be bear in mind. However, it is clear that financial support was given to pay for the respondent's placement fee to be able to go to London.



to move out of Hong Kong and seek better opportunities in another country as important. Intending to go to Canada, her cousin informed her of the agency that could send her to London instead. Such deemed the referral and information from her cousin as very important in enabling her onward migration.



**Figure 6.10.** Geraldine's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

As mentioned in the discussion on kin-based networks, family members in the place of destination may be restricted in petitioning for their relatives in the home country to join them abroad. Nevertheless, they provide other forms of support and assistance in enabling the eventual overseas migration of these relatives. Financial support from kin (e.g. to pay for smugglers, recruiters, fixers, visa assistance services, and other associated costs) is one of the common ways of facilitating geographical mobility. As observed in Table 6.5, those with dual ties are predominantly nurse respondents in New York. Aside from helping to pay for their nursing education (see Chapter 5, *Migration as both constraining and enabling*, p. 89), relatives in the US also financed the costs of exams they needed to take to qualify to work as a nurse in the US. However, since their applications were processed by recruitment agencies, available job offers may not be in the same state or city where the relatives in the US were located<sup>109</sup> (see the network maps of Rosalia and Paulina as illustrations; Figures 6.11 & 6.12, respectively). Similar to the findings of Chelpi-den Hamer's (2008) research on the support networks of West Africans in the Netherlands, this more complex process of 'reuniting with one's kin' also extends the concept of chain migration, exemplifying how migrants and their families overcome the barriers to international migration.

<sup>109</sup> Though they may later on move to another state to reunite and be near their kin after their contract with the sponsoring hospital or nursing home ended.

In other instances, family members may also influence the recruitment process by submitting application of the nurse relative to potential employer. For instance, in the case of Julia, a staff nurse in a hospital in Manhattan, her aunt in New York was the one who submitted her application to the hospital where she is currently working though the processing of her application was still facilitated by a recruitment agency. Thus, unlike Rosalia and Paulina, Julia moved to New York where her relatives in the US are residing.

Apart from financial support, it has been shown in the case of Julia that familial ties also provide other forms of instrumental support – called *practical support*<sup>110</sup> (Finch, 1989) – such as unpaid services to accomplish certain parts of the application process (e.g. obtaining documents, submitting application, or looking for a sponsoring employer/college).

Likewise, friends in the US or the UK could also extend practical support by giving advice and information. This is, however, more common among respondents in London with dual ties compared to their counterparts in New York. For instance, James already had one of his friends from college in London at the time that he was applying. They had the same recruitment agency and she provided information that somehow lessened the unfamiliarity of the place (*see* Figure 6.13 for James's pre-migration network).

*Because she was the first one to come here and then I got my ideas from her. Somehow, she was able to alleviate my doubts and fears. [ . . . ] Like, when I say, "[I heard] it's like this there, like this, like that." [She would say], "Not really. It's okay here," like that. Like she was able to encourage me not to be scared to come here because it's okay here.*

(James, 30 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital,  
arrived in London in 2010)

He also narrated how their recruitment agency was able to assist them in processing their applications. They also gave them information and orientation on what to expect in London, which also made him feel secured and confident that they can manage.

*Very helpful and uhm, like, they were prompt. Their correspondence. When you ask them, they would answer immediately that it's like this and that. Especially the final phase [of the application process]. They really helped us with the paperwork, how to go to the embassy . . . like they gave us a [bird's] eye view of what would [happen] here, what the process would be like upon arrival. It's like . . . we were not that afraid because they oriented and taught us.*

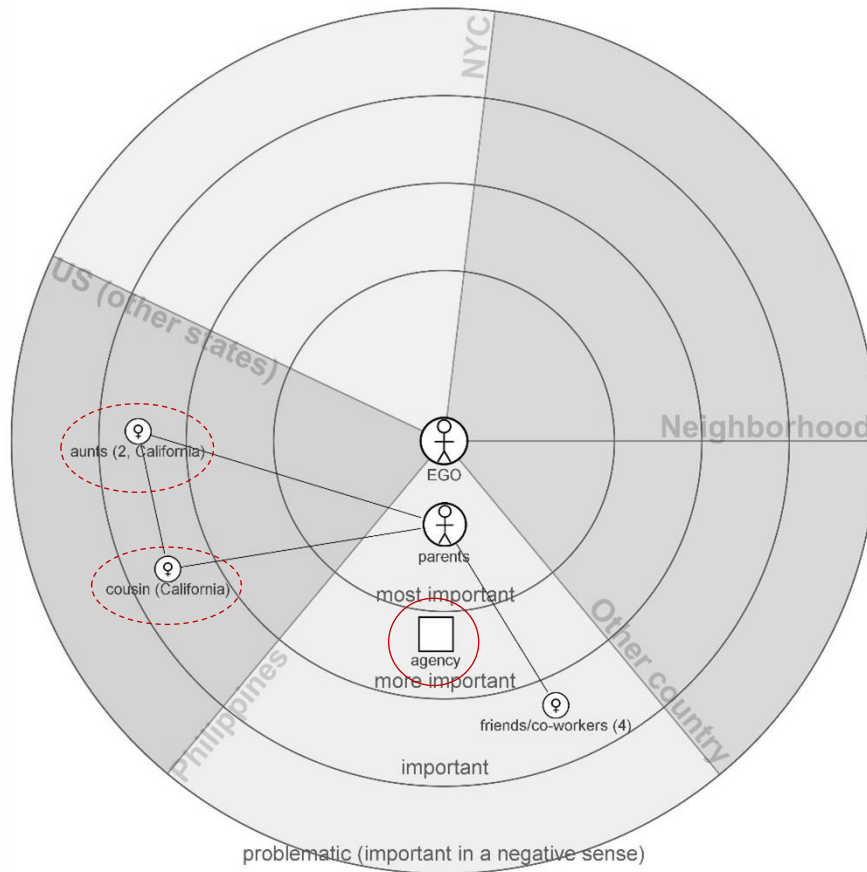
(James, 30 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital,  
arrived in London in 2010)

In this way, institutional actors – particularly recruitment agencies – could also give some form of emotional and moral support to the respondents apart from the practical support and services that they render. Likewise, the presence of friends and, more importantly, family members in the place destination also give respondents a sense of security and assurance. Such feeling of security is not only based on the provision of financial, practical, and moral and emotional support that enabled them to realize their migration aspiration, but also on the expectation that they could rely on the assistance of kin and friends after migration. Whether this expectation would be translated into actual experience (or disappointment) is explored in Chapter 7.

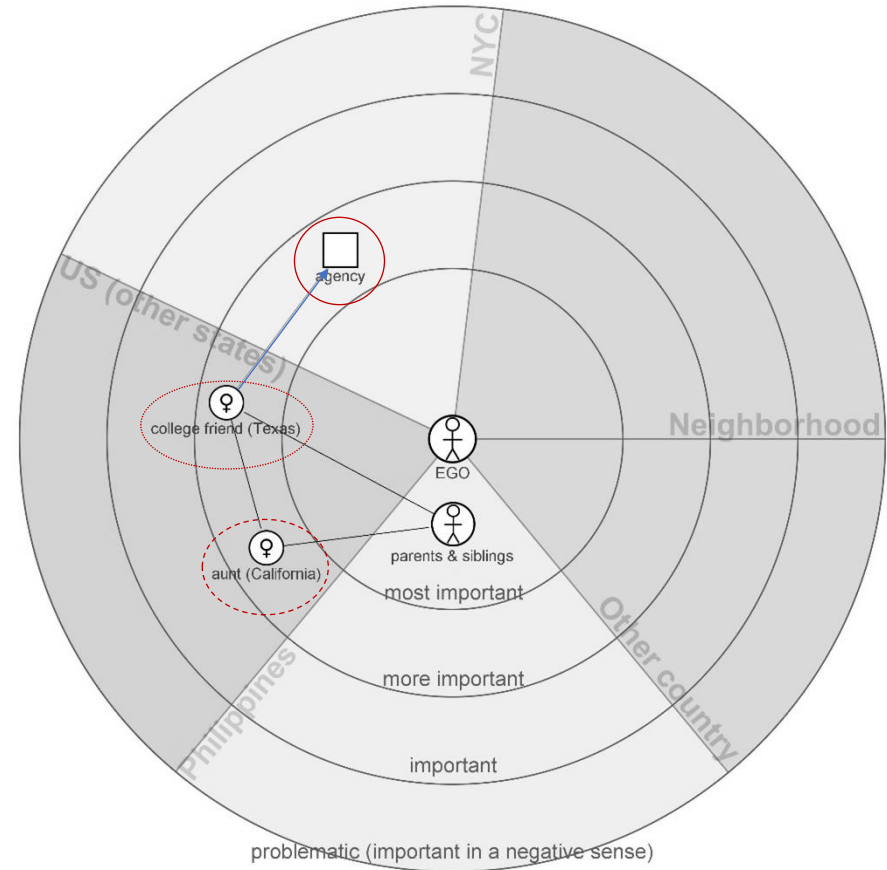
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<sup>110</sup> Based on Finch's (1989) five types of support: financial, practical, personal, accommodation, and emotional or moral support (*see* also Baldassar, 2007; Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding 2007).

**Figure 6.11.** Rosalia's Pre-Migration Network<sup>111</sup>  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

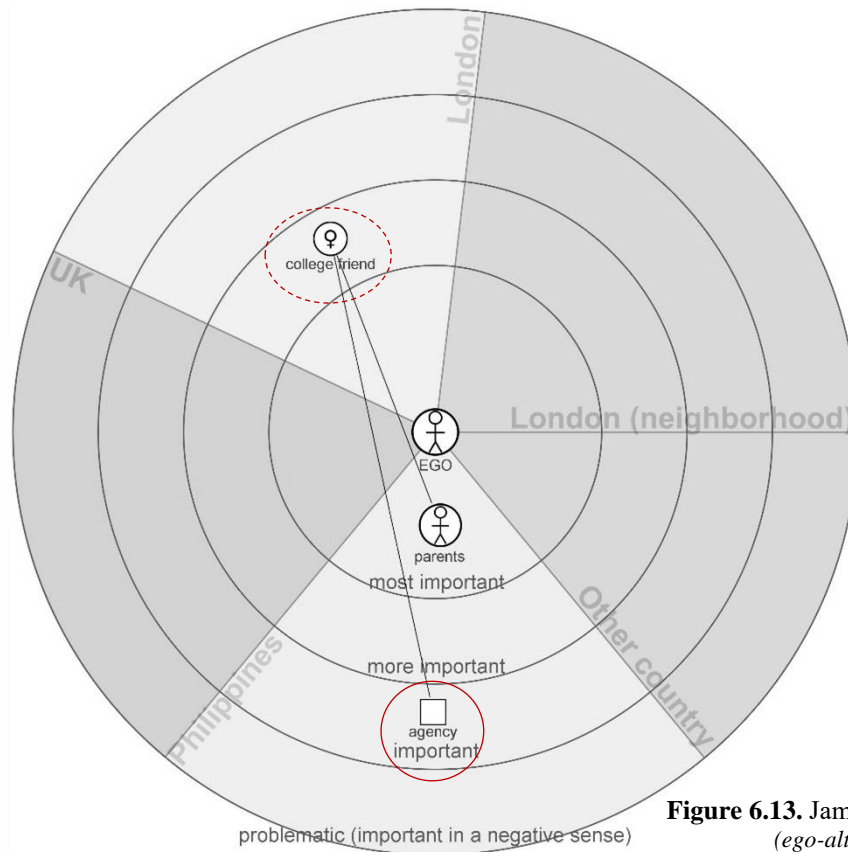


**Figure 6.12.** Paulina's Pre-Migration Network<sup>112</sup>  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



<sup>111</sup> Included in Rosalia's pre-migration network are her friends from work who were her companions during those times that they were looking and applying for overseas job.

<sup>112</sup> It was Paulina's friend in Texas who referred her to an agency in New York. Paulina first worked as a nurse in Texas under the H-1 C visa (temporary worker visa for nurses) for 3 years. She had to go back to the Philippines after her visa expired. To be able to go back to the US, she applied through the agency that her friend told her to try.



**Figure 6.13.** James's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

The narratives and network maps of respondents who have dual ties in their pre-migration networks illustrate not only the varied support that they were able to mobilize through their interpersonal and institutional ties, but also how the configuration of ties and generated support facilitated their successful entry to their preferred destination. Concluding this chapter, we turn to the last type of pre-migration network (*solitaries*), which explores the other end of the continuum – the lack of pre-existing ties in the place of destination.

### ***Solitaries and 'Escapees'***

A day before they were supposed to leave London, Olivia's belongings were already packed and she was ready to go. But she did not intend to go back to Saudi Arabia with her employers whom she was accompanying in their vacation in the city. She was planning to escape and run away.

Of the twenty domestics I interviewed in London, 13 entered the UK through a domestic worker visa, 11 were accompanied by their employers, and 9 left or ran away from these employers who brought them to London. Leaving one's employer is not an easy feat; venturing into an unfamiliar city without really knowing anyone is worse. I shared a house in London with three women who escaped their former employers from the Middle East. The first time I heard their stories of escape and how they were able to find their ways in the city was quite distressing but it also made me wonder about the great lengths migrants like them went through to gain freedom and a shot at achieving a better life. Indeed, for most of them, it was a leap of faith as some of the respondents were as akin to being imprisoned inside their employers' apartments, with no day-offs and their passport confiscated. They talked about the lack of freedom to move around and talk to fellow Filipinos, of not having a bed to sleep but a floor instead, of round-the-clock working hours. Others spoke of verbal abuse and being physically hurt by a violent employer. They also complained about

the low salary they were getting<sup>113</sup> – much worse, others were not regularly receiving their wages or even not all. In the end, they left their employers carrying almost nothing and barely had any idea on where to go or what to do. These appalling working conditions they experienced<sup>114</sup> made the idea of escaping prevalent despite not knowing anyone in London.

For instance, Perla didn't plan to leave her employers despite the deplorable working conditions and treatment. However, she was threatened to be sent back to the Philippines after their return to Bahrain because she was asking for the salary that she hadn't received for 6 months. Another Filipina working in the same household encouraged her to run away. She was given the name of an organization that was said to be helping migrant domestic workers who escaped their abusive employers. The following day she left the place while her employers were still sleeping – taking nothing with her so as to avoid suspicion and having no one to go to as she didn't know anyone in London then. By chance, she met another Filipina in the street who helped her start a new life in the city.

For these domestic workers, their entry to this destination city was by chance as they just accompanied their employers wherever they decided to go. For instance, Olivia had an opportunity to run away in Switzerland. In a shop, she met a Filipina who secretly communicated with her that she would help her escape. Putting her contact number in a piece of paper, she threw it for Olivia to pick up. But to run away into a non-English speaking country seemed too much for her to bear. She did not leave her employers when they visited Paris for the same reason. Olivia said that she got the idea of running away from other Filipinas in Saudi who told her to take the opportunity to escape when her employers take her for a vacation abroad. While going to London was not their decision, settling here required deliberate action on their part – surmounting the risks and uncertainties from running away from their employers given that they did not have any pre-existing ties in London and they must develop their networks from scratch.

With regard to their pre-migration networks, these respondents could be considered as *solitaries*.<sup>115</sup> In their case, being solitaries speaks of the condition surrounding their movement and initial settlement in London after their escape – they were alone in a place that was foreign. All of them credited their former employers as the ones who facilitated their move to London. But while they all recognized that they could not get to the UK without these employers, their ambivalent relationship with them led these domestic worker solitaries to evaluate their importance to their onward migration to London in varying degrees (and in different direction, i.e. positive or negative). This can be illustrated with the network maps of Anita (*see* Figure 6.14) and Mercy (*see* Figure 6.15). While Anita considered her former employers as 'problematic,' Mercy listed her then employers as most important. Mercy also included people (a nurse and hospital worker) she didn't know but were instrumental in her escape. Given that Mercy was looking after the child of her employer in a hospital in London (while also working in the flat during daytime), those who were witnesses to her hardships helped her escape. The nurse gave her some money and two golden rings

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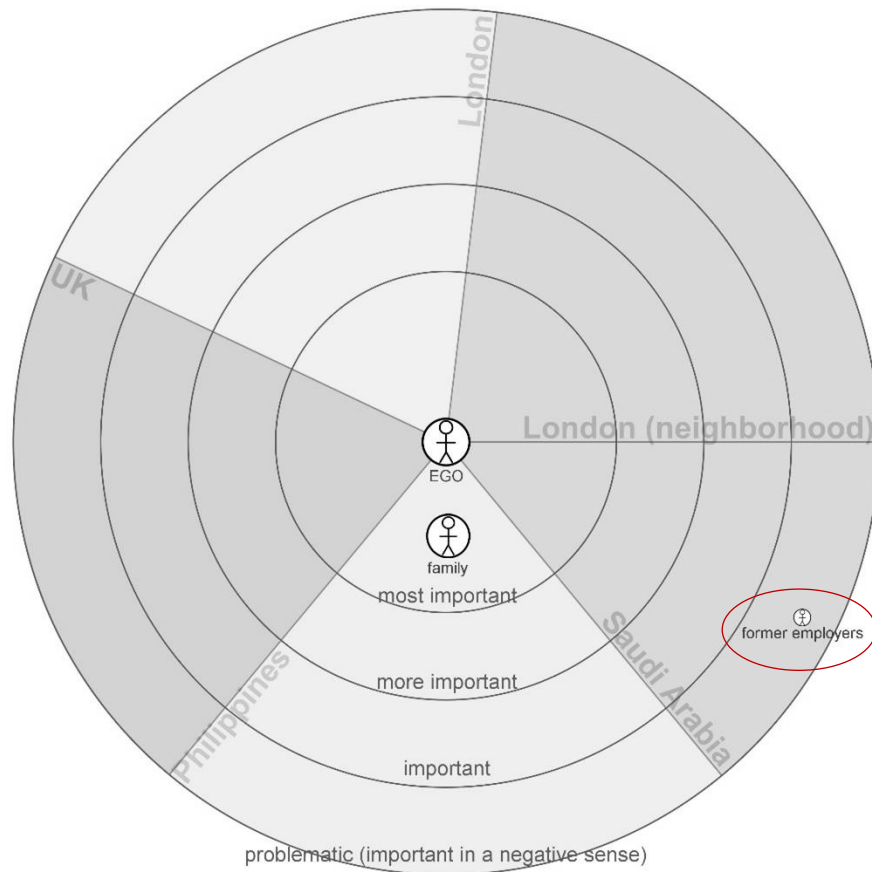
<sup>113</sup> Olivia mentioned that she was receiving 10,000 pesos (less than \$200) a month.

<sup>114</sup> While the working conditions in the intermediate countries were also not ideal, the respondents shared that their workload increased considerably in London (or in other places where they would accompany their employers for a vacation or temporary stay). This is because their employers could not bring all their domestic workers and entire household staff when they travel. Some respondents also mentioned that they find escaping in the Middle East futile because they would just end up in the same kind of condition they wanted to escape.

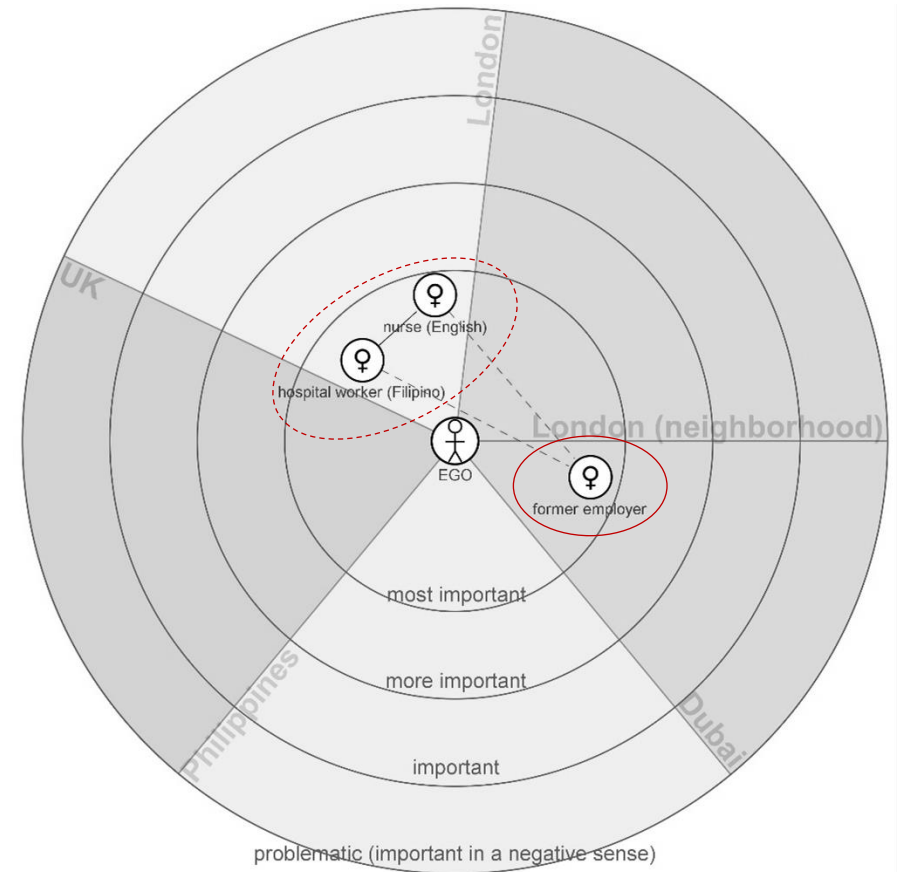
<sup>115</sup> I was able to interview one respondent in New York who could be considered in this category but the conditions surrounding his migration to the US was different. He accompanied a friend from the Philippines to try to apply for a position in the United Nations. Though he also didn't have pre-existing ties in New York and was also taking chances, his situation was entirely different from the stories of escape of the domestics in London.

to sell. She told her to run away so that she can have a better life, and asked other hospital workers to help her. One of the hospital workers, a Filipina, provided her with a telephone number she can contact as well as helped in taking her belongings unnoticed. Mercy shared that it was even difficult for these two people to help her given that she was not allowed to talk to anyone and they must avoid suspicion of aiding someone to escape given their positions in the hospital.

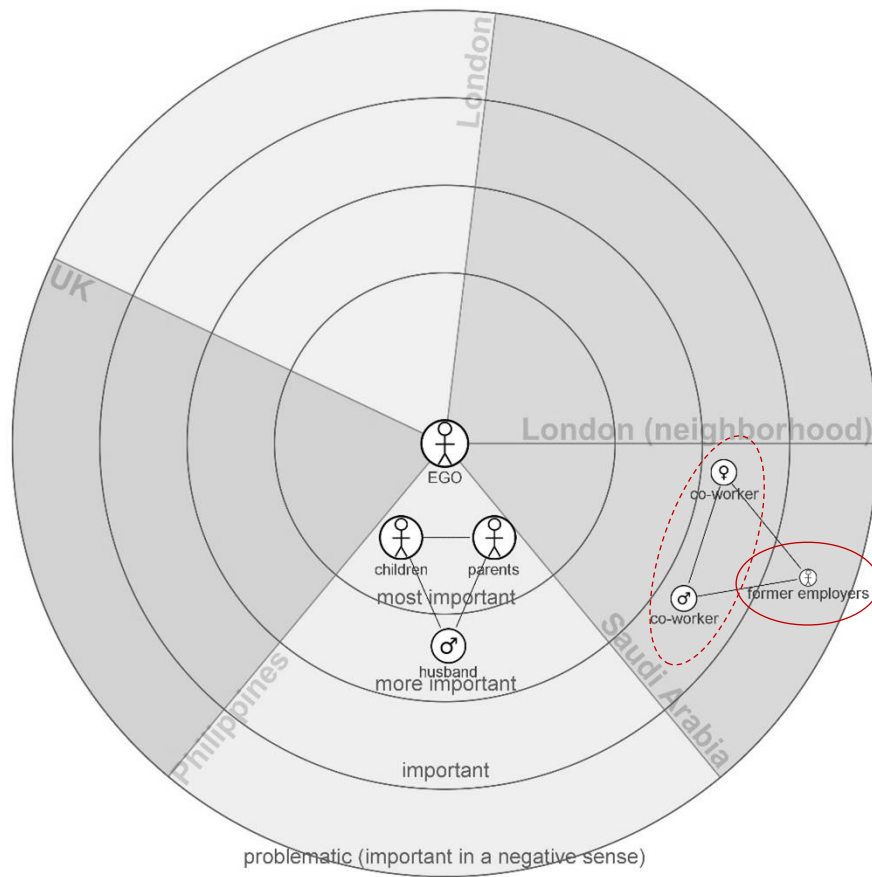
Other solitaries, like Olivia and Perla, also listed their co-worker in the same household (either in the intermediate destination or in London) as important in their pre-migration network because these co-workers encouraged and gave them the idea to leave their employers (*see* their network maps as illustrations; Figures 6.16 and 6.17, respectively). Others talked about of random people they met in public spaces as those who provided them with information and idea of escaping – albeit their fleeting interactions. For these women, the path to London might not be their own choosing. However, staying in London did involve a different form of agency – leaving one’s employer and risking their safety in the process, considering that they were venturing into the unknown, an unfamiliar city, all by themselves. They didn’t have the support networks of family, relatives, or friends and had to trust strangers that by chance willingly helped them. Some took comfort from what they heard that a certain organization, run by priest and nun, would be helping people like them – “*takas*” (‘escapees’). In the subsequent chapter, I examine the support networks that emerged out of this particular pathway for these domestic worker respondents and through their initial ‘networking’ practices for survival.



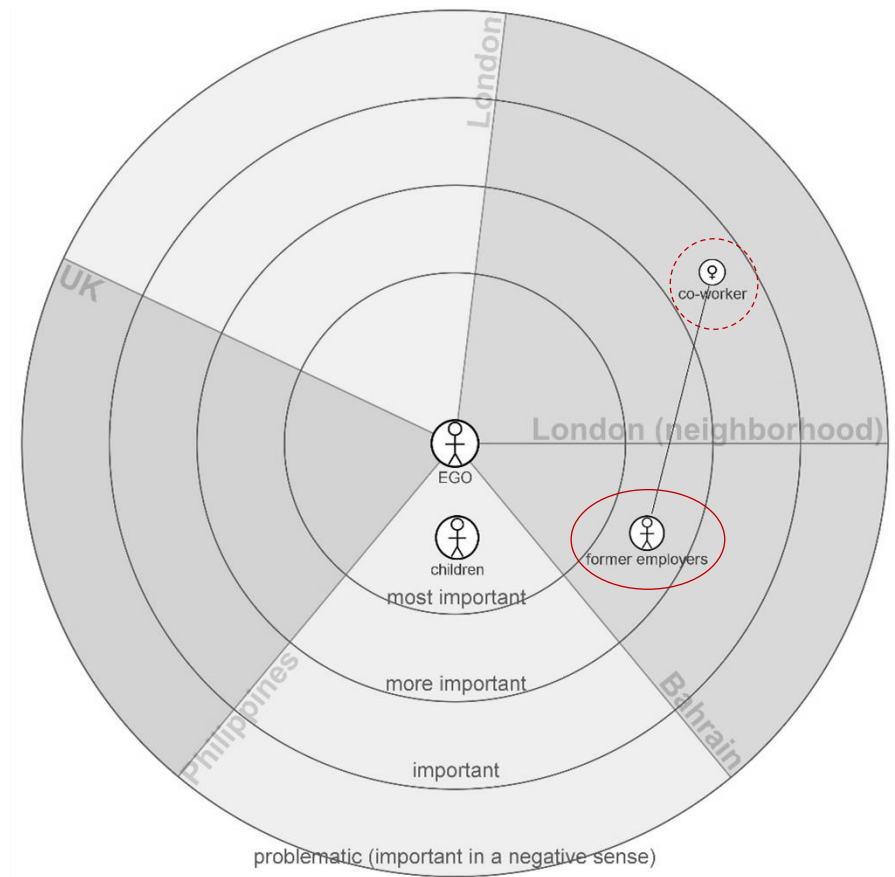
**Figure 6.14.** Anita's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



**Figure 6.15.** Mercy's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



**Figure 6.16.** Olivia's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



**Figure 6.17.** Perla's Pre-Migration Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



## Summing Up: Towards a more nuanced account of Filipino migration

Findings presented and discussed in this chapter paint a more dynamic picture of Filipino migration in two levels. One, the migration pathways of the Filipino migrants I interviewed go beyond the conventional single-origin-single-destination model and show that half of the respondents exhibited more complex ways of getting to New York or London. They are either onward/stepwise migrants who first migrated to intermediate countries or circular migrants who went back-and-forth (at least once) before settling in New York more permanently. Re-tracing the migration routes and pre-migration networks of Filipino nurses, domestics, and care workers in getting to London and New York reveals striking contrasts as well as interesting similarities.

Following the concept of *hierarchy of destination* (Paul, 2011), it can be expected that those who intend to migrate to the US and the UK must overcome higher and more costly barriers compared to intermediate countries. Thus, the direct migrants in the study possessed the necessary capital – economic, social, and human – that allowed them direct access to the US or the UK (Parreñas, 2015; Paul, 2015). While half of the study participants are direct migrants, this pattern only holds among the interviewees in New York and nurse respondents in London. Comparing the two migration streams shows that, in terms of mode of entry, respondents in the US relied generally on family reunification and assistance of kin combined with opportunity structures arising at the time of their application and eventual migration. On the other hand, the direct migration of nurse respondents in the UK depended more on the intersection of their occupational credentials and the period of active recruitment of the UK.

In the case of onward and stepwise migration, aspirations and opportunities that emerged from intermediate countries have been crucial to the onward migrants' pathways to New York or London. Those who were not initially thinking of onward migration became aware of such possibilities in the intermediate countries by getting to know other migrants who aspired or who realized their aspiration to move to other countries. Even the concept of 'desirable' and 'top-tier' could be learnt and imbibed during their temporary stays in countries in the Middle East or Asia. As emphasized in Paul's (2011, 2017) concept of stepwise international migration, aspiring migrants also generate and accumulate the necessary migrant capital that they previously lacked to enter more 'desirable' destinations. In the case of the respondents in this study, temporarily working in intermediate countries is more of a means to pursue better paying jobs while waiting or eventually coming across opportunities that they can take advantage of (Carlos, 2013). Such can be observed among onward nurse migrants in London, who happened to apply during that time that the UK was actively recruiting foreign-trained nurses.

Another type of migration pathway that was only observed among the New York respondents is circular or cyclical migration. Typically, these are domestics and private caregivers who had readily available tourist visas, and had back-and-forth trips between the US and the Philippines as a way of 'testing' if possible longer stay would be viable. Others were enticed to earn through informal work (such as domestic and caregiving jobs) while being able to travel and visit one's kin in America. The presence of kin-based networks in the US made this dynamic pathway possible since family could provide accommodation and access to informal employment.

Apart from presenting varied migration pathways in between and among countries, internal movements within the US and the UK were also explored. Such cases point to the advantages that migrant workers found in London and New York as global cities, or what Bloemraad (2013: 34) referred to as "migrant-attracting labor market structures.". Respondents who entered or were deployed in other cities and states found better employment opportunities in New York and London, especially among those working in the informal economy because of their undocumented status.

It is apparent in comparing migration streams of the respondents how historical ties (or the lack thereof), changing migration policies (more stringent immigration laws), labor market demands

(demand for care and ageing society), as well as pre-migration networks (predominantly kinship-based or institutional ties, or both) shaped the pathways and modes of entry of the research participants. On the other hand, how network functions and what sort of support and assistance can propel migration also depend on the overarching influence of social, political, and economic structures in origin, intermediate, and destination countries (Menjivar, 1997, 2000; Gill & Bialski, 2011; Offer, 2012; Morosanu, 2013).

The ability of migrants to realize their place-specific migration aspiration has been explored in the second part of this chapter through the concept of *migrant networks* – a form of social capital that migrants can access to generate support and assistance. As a specific opportunity structure that propel (onward) migration to New York and London, pre-migration networks have been examined primarily by re-working the typology of migrant network provided by Poros (2001, 2011) in her study on Asian Indian migrants in New York and London. Poros (2001, 2011) conceptualized four types of migration streams based on the kind of pre-existing ties in the place of destination: *solitaries* (no prior ties), *chains* (interpersonal ties), *recruits* (institutional ties), and *trusties* (composite or overlapping interpersonal and institutional ties). In Poros' study, composite ties are found among *trusties* who migrated as entrepreneurs (such as the diamond traders in New York). Filipino migration, on the other hand, is hardly entrepreneurial. Instead, a combination of interpersonal ties and institutional actors is observed, rather than an overlapping or multiplexity of such ties (e.g. business partners are also one's kin).

Poros' typology rests on the re-conceptualization of 'migrant network' as being composed of *interpersonal* ties (Massey et al., 1993). But as this study (and Poros' research) illustrate, *institutional* ties are also significant and should therefore be included in examining migrant networks. Given the multiplicity of ties comprising the respondents' pre-migration networks, the dynamic feature of Filipino migration could also be observed through the configuration of varied ties and connections in their networks. For instance, *chains* are further sub-divided based on the 'strength' of interpersonal ties – i.e. between kin and non-kin – given that the expectations, obligations, and norms of reciprocity surrounding kin-based relations are different from those of friends and acquaintances. Findings showed that the types of support rendered by familial ties that enabled mobility involved large amount of money while those of friends and acquaintances were mostly information, advice, and to a certain extent, practical support. Since non-kinship ties are not based on strong moral obligations, experiences of the respondents are ambivalent – some felt cheated and taken advantage of, while others had favorable and positive evaluation of their ties to friends and acquaintances in their pre-migration networks. This is not to say the familial relations are not subjected to tensions, conflicts, and exploitation. This becomes more apparent post-migration when newly-arrived migrants had to rely on the assistance of kin more than ever in order to survive in the place of destination.

The third sub-type of pre-migration networks based on interpersonal ties is taken from the *hub-and-spoke model* proposed by Bashi (2007). Though not as widespread as kin-based chain migration or institutionally-facilitated deployment, there is also a case of a pioneer migrant (hub) encouraging and supporting the migrations of people from her hometown (spokes). In the absence of extensive kin-based networks, this 'hub' was not only able to assist in the migration of these migrants (e.g. by guiding them in the process of applying for visa) but also ensure that they have a place to stay and help in securing a job in the US. This type of pre-migration network is distinct given the role of hubs in the mobility and post-migration experiences of spokes. Hubs (mostly someone from the same hometown) act as sponsors but such role is rooted on perceived benevolence and generosity. Upon arrival, spokes are embedded in the expansive networks of hubs and continue to be part of such community as hubs make considerable effort to keep them connected post-migration.

Pre-migration networks that are pre-dominantly composed of institutional actors are called *recruits*. This is different from Poros' type of recruits since I specifically referred to ties to migrant

institutions such as recruitment and placement agencies. On a much larger scale, the Philippine government has been central in encouraging and promoting overseas work – as Rodriguez (2010) would call it, ‘a labor brokerage state.’ The enterprise of deploying Filipino workers overseas requires a system of institutional actors that would manage and regulate the process. Most prominent among these actors are recruitment agencies. The proliferation of recruitment agencies and their role in facilitating deployment are illustrative in the pre-migration network maps of participants, apart from kin and kith in the place of destination.

I also made a distinction for those whose networks are comprised a combination of interpersonal and institutional ties. These networks with dual ties exhibit what Uzzi (1999) referred to as *network complementarity*. Responding to the increasingly restrictive immigration policies of the US and the UK, onward and would-be migrants tapped different ties (kinship, friendship, acquaintances, and institutional actors) that could provide various forms of support that contributed to their successful entry to the preferred destination.

The last type of pre-migration is *solitaries*, or those without pre-existing ties in the place of destination. According to Poros, solitaries are rare. In fact, she was not able to find this type of migrant stream in her study. But the Filipino domestic workers in London, who have no prior ties except that they had been brought by their employers in the UK, illustrate that this is not necessarily the case. Escaping from an exploitative and appalling working and living conditions, these domestic workers eventually escaped from their employers despite not knowing anyone in the city.

The case of solitaries also illustrates how one’s migration experience could involve both aspects of ‘voluntariness’ and ‘forcedness’ discussed in the previous chapter. While these domestic workers did not choose their destination (as they were simply accompanying their employers) and their migration to London was mostly by chance, it also took a great deal of agentic action on their part to escape an exploitative working conditions and venture into a place unknown to have a shot at a better life.

Stepwise and onward migrants could also exhibit both conscious strategizing to get to their desired destinations and acting on the perceived luck and chance that came along their way. In general, while migrants access their networks to generate support and assistance (i.e. the *social facilitation* effect of networks; Garip & Asad, 2015, 2016), the kind of connections and ties they have also channel them to certain destinations and migration trajectories, thereby limiting one’s options and possibilities (i.e. *channeling* or *selective function*; Gurak & Caces, 1992). In short, getting to New York or London could be characterized as involving both the enabling and constraining aspects of migrant networks.

It has been shown in this chapter how participants’ narratives of departure are complex and multidimensional given their varied pathways to reach London and New York and multiple ties they relied on in their journeys. In the subsequent discussions, I further explore how such complexities and ambivalences are exemplified in the post-migration experiences of the respondents.

In the next chapter, I specifically focus on the initial support networks of the respondents as potential sources of support and assistance as migrants faced challenges as well as opportunities to realize their migration projects.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### New Ties, Old Ties:

#### *Initial Support Networks of Filipinos in London and New York*

#### **Introduction**

In the preceding chapters, I have outlined the research participants' motivations and opportunities to migrate and how they were propelled in various pathways toward their place of destination through their pre-migration networks. Networks acquire new role as migrants arrive in the place of destination. From enabling and facilitating geographical mobility, the newly-arrived migrants must then tap on their old and new ties as they contend with the challenges that come with settling in a foreign place. In the words of Gurak & Caces (1992), the function of migrant networks shifts from channeling or selectivity to *adaptation* post-migration. Adaption, in this case, "refers both to adjustment to harsh temporary conditions in the short run, and to integration' into major institutions of the destination society in the long run" (Gurak & Caces, 1992: 15). They also noted that migrant networks connect sending and origin countries as migrants maintain relationships in their home country.

However, similar to pre-migration networks, the existence and supposed benefit generated from social networks are taken for granted as a given. As Faist (2000: 28) put it, "to postulate the existence of migrant networks and to insist on their importance is not the same as showing how they come into being and how they function." Similarly, Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara (2008: 676) asserted that "the assumption that migrants are able to enter dense networks within close-knit local communities simplifies the experiences of newly-arrived migrants, underestimating difficulties they may face in accessing support." Therefore, there is a need to examine whether (1) migrants are able to access support from their 'old ties' (i.e. pre-existing ties in the place of destination) upon arrival; (2) how they are able to form new ties that could potentially provide needed help; and (3) what are the actual support they received and how such 'exchanges' of support and assistance could be situated within the notions of obligations and norms of reciprocity.

In this chapter, I examine both continuities and discontinuities in the research participants' support networks prior and after migration by taking a closer look into the varied types of ties that migrants were able to maintain and develop upon arrival. Table 7.1 summarizes these ties and their distribution across occupation in two global cities. Following the expanded definition of migrant networks, initial support networks are also composed of interpersonal and institutional ties, and are divided into four broad types of connections: kinship, friendship and acquaintances, work-based, and institutional actors. Post-migration, respondents tapped into these ties for survival and social mobility, albeit to different degrees. While familial ties are seen to be relevant across occupations and in two cities, it can be observed that interviewees in New York tend to list their kin in the place of destination compared to their London counterparts in their initial support networks. This is not surprising given the predominance of pre-existing familial ties in the pre-migration networks of respondents in New York. It can also be seen that 'batchmates' constituted most of the networks of nurse respondents in London given their manner of recruitment. Likewise, domestic workers in London also included varied types of ties, illustrating how they had to depend on different connections to survive after escaping from their employers. These specific characteristics of post-migration support networks of interviewees exemplify how pre-migration networks and modes of entry (coupled with migrants' individual circumstances) shaped how they were able to generate support and assistance upon arrival.

**Table 7.1.** Types of Ties in Participants' Initial Support Networks

	Nurses		Domestics		Care Workers		Total N= 131 <sup>a</sup>
	London (n=20)	NYC (n=24) <sup>a</sup>	London (n= 20)	NYC (n=26)	London (n=18)	NYC (n=23)	
<b>Kinship</b>							
In NYC/London	12	19	9	16	10	21	<b>87</b>
Transnational (PH & other countries) <sup>b</sup>	10 (1)	3	7	2	11 (2)	(1)	<b>43 (4)</b>
<b>Friendship &amp; acquaintances</b>							
From home country (includes 'hub') <sup>c</sup>	4	8	2	8 <sup>c</sup>	7	10	<b>39</b>
New friends/ acquaintances	6	8	14	9	11	20	<b>68</b>
Co-ethnics	1	-	10	5	2	2	<b>20</b>
<b>Work-based</b>							
Employers (individual/institution)	5	4	10	2	8	-	<b>29</b>
Batchmates	16	3	1	2	4	-	<b>26</b>
Colleagues	11	3	2	3	7	-	<b>26</b>
<b>Institutional actors</b>							
Church & religious group	3	-	10	3	6	4	<b>26</b>
(Churchmates)	1	1	2	6	-	1	<b>11</b>
Filipino community	2	2	2	-	-	2	<b>8</b>
Migrant organization	-	-	6	-	1	-	<b>7</b>
Placement/ Recruitment agency	-	4	-	1	-	-	<b>5</b>
Average Size (interpersonal ties) <sup>116</sup>	4.9	3	4.7	3.3	4.6	4	-
Average Size (+ institutional ties)	5.5	3.3	5.4	3.6	5.2	4.2	-

<sup>a</sup> Three 1.5 generation respondents are not included as they were too young when they first came to the US and were evaluating the support they received as a family while growing up as children of first-generation migrants. However, their experiences were incorporated in the subsequent discussion in so far as they illuminate main points and themes;  
<sup>b</sup> Numbers in the parentheses are kinship ties in other countries; <sup>c</sup> 'Hub' listed by 4 'spokes' is counted here (4x).  
 \*Average network size does not include the ego.

<sup>116</sup> Also includes 'clusters' of interpersonal ties (groups) – e.g. when the respondent listed 'family' instead of enumerating each family member.

Following Briggs (1998) and Dominguez & Watkins (2003), it is also useful to distinguish between two forms of social capital that can be derived from migrant networks: (1) *social support*, or social capital that helps migrants to *survive*; and (2) *social leverage*, or social capital that encourage or lead to upward mobility.<sup>117</sup> Based on this distinction, strong ties (and bonding capital) are commonly associated with social support, while weak ties (and bridging capital) are generally linked to social leverage. However, as what will be shown in this chapter, there are also cases wherein strong ties facilitated professional mobility by providing practical support,<sup>118</sup> particularly in instances when kin and kith are strategically positioned, and migrants have the potential (human) capital to work on.

Lastly, inasmuch as support and leverage could be generated from migrants' old and new ties, instances of withdrawal of support, abusive relations, mistrust, and hostility could also not be ignored. Thus, attention is also given to the forms of solidarity as well as contentions within these networks, highlighting the co-existence of supportive as well as tenuous and conflictive ties in migrant support networks (Gill & Bialski, 2011; Menjivar, 1997, 2000; Morosanu, 2013).

## Kinship Ties

It is not surprising that the initial support networks of most respondents are predominantly composed of pre-existing familial ties in the place of destination (*see* Table 7.1). As seen in the previous chapter (Chapter 6), kin-based *chains* are the most common type of pre-migration networks, particularly among the respondents in New York (*see* Table 6.5, p. 128). One can therefore expect that these kinship ties would be part of the respondents' support networks upon arrival. Post-migration, other respondents also mentioned about finding out that they have relatives in London or New York and re-connecting with them sometime after their arrival. There were also those who were in a position to immediately sponsor for their spouse and children to join them. These two scenarios could explain why, to a certain extent, respondents in London have familial ties in the destination country listed in their initial support networks even though these relatives did not figure in their pre-migration networks and narratives of departure.

Analyzing the impact of the support of kin-based networks in the post-migration context, assistance coming from family members in the place of destination and in the home country (and even in other countries) could be differentiated – given the proximity and physical distance, and (as a result) the type of support rendered. Through this distinction, dynamics concerning social support and familial obligations could be further explored as network maps and narratives of adjustments of the respondents are examined. In the first part, I look into the range of assistance and aid that were extended by kin in the US or the UK and how the respondents evaluated such support in connection to their perceived needs and expectations. Since this is the most prominent type of ties in the respondents' initial support networks, I discuss familial ties in the place of destination at length, emphasizing the conditions and contexts upon which support is extended (or withheld).

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<sup>117</sup> Briggs (1998: 178) originally defined these two forms of social capital as follows: “Social leverage—social capital that helps one ‘get ahead’ or change one’s opportunity set through access to job information, say, or a recommendation for a scholarship or loan. This form is about access to clout and influence (Boissevain 1974). Social support—social capital that helps one ‘get by’ or cope. This might include being able to get a ride, confide in someone, or obtain a small cash loan in an emergency. Although people at all income levels need social supports, coping capital is especially vital to the chronically poor, as it routinely substitutes for things that money would otherwise buy (Stack 1974). Some of the most important supports we all rely on, though, are emotional and not material.”

<sup>118</sup> The possibility that social support and leverage could overlap has been also recognized by Briggs (1998).

The second part explores the types of support given by families that migrants left-behind in their home country. While it is often the case in extant literature that the direction of assistance is from the migrants to their families back home, there are also cases wherein the direction of support is from the country of origin to destination (known as *reverse remittance*; see Boccagni, 2015; Mazzucato, 2011; Mobernd, 2012). Based on the reported support networks of the respondents, I also expand the transnational family networks to include support and assistance coming from other countries where (migrant) relatives are located.

### ***Familial Ties in the Place of Destination***

The role of kin-based networks in the adjustment, settlement, and integration experiences of newly-arrived migrants has long been established in earlier research on chain and family-led migration (Choldin, 1973; Hareven, 1978; Tilly & Brown, 1967). Family members in the place of destination do not only help in making migration happen, but are also seen as crucial sources of assistance upon arrival. More commonly, such support pertains to providing initial accommodation and connecting newly-arrived migrants to job opportunities. This finding, however, must be qualified and interrogated by examining three interrelated issues: (1) the extent of support that relatives are (willingly) able to give; (2) the articulated needs of the migrant respondents; and (3) familial dynamics, tensions, and conflicts.

### **Ability to help and the extent of support provided**

Since familial ties are based on strong sense of obligations, help from one's family could be initially seen as 'normal,' 'natural,' and, therefore, something one can always count on. On the other hand, it is also possible that post-migration experiences would alter this view:

*When I arrived, I thought I can depend on everybody, especially family, relatives. But in my case, my family, relatives helped me out, but they can't really provide everything. So, I have to find resources in surviving New York. Especially in dealing with the finances. I live with my Auntie but I have to share or contribute, because it is embarrassing that you cannot contribute anything. [. . .] They never asked. But I feel obliged.*

(Marvin, 25 years old, student, part-time home health aide, arrived in New York in 2014)

While it is not common for the respondents to explicitly state that they were expecting family members in the place of destination to help them upon arrival (i.e. implied expectation), Marvin had to mention this openly to contrast his expectation and his actual experience. He realized that life in America was not easy and earning money required him to do jobs he never imagined that he would be doing. He also realized that his relatives were experiencing the same thing. Taking into account the previous discussion in Chapter 5 on imaginaries surrounding 'dream destinations,' it is often the case that relatives overseas would leave out their hardships and difficulties when they tell stories to their left-behind kin about their lives abroad. Thus, newly-arrived migrants may have bigger expectations with regard to the kind of lives their relatives have and the amount of support they could give. While some may have kin, who are strategically positioned and can provide most of the support that the newcomers needed without much disappointments and conflicts (a point I will shortly return to), others could also be struggling to survive in the place of destination. Marvin, in this case, had to also rely financially on her mother who is working in Saudi Arabia as a nurse (see *Transnational Family Networks* in the next section, p. 167).

Finding out about these everyday struggles and difficulties, some respondents shared that they felt hesitant to ask for assistance or completely rely on their kin. Consider staying in the place of one's relatives upon arrival. Newcomers, seeing the place as small and cramped, felt uneasy not only

because of their own discomforts but also because of the inconvenience it had caused to their relatives.

*That time [coming to New York], I was so stressed because I still didn't have a place to stay. Because in Saudi, you do not need to worry about that. When you arrived, they [employer] will fetch at the airport and take you to your accommodation. Here [ . . . ] I first stayed with my family, with my aunt and cousins. So, that was not enough because even if they are your cousins [ . . . ] it was still embarrassing. And also, as you know, here in America, the places are small. So, I was sleeping in the living room. It was painful for my back but since I was not working yet, I had to endure that. So, when I started working, I also started renting [a place] in Queens so there's some privacy, but then, you have to pay. But that's okay since [ . . . ] I need not stay in someone else's place.*

(Julia, 33 years old, registered nurse in a hospital in Manhattan, arrived in New York in 2015)

*Upon arrival, I stayed here in [ . . . ] in one-bedroom apartment with my brother [but] he already has a wife. They were also not expecting me to move here immediately. It was like fast. [ . . . ] So, then, I was only sleeping in a sofa in their place.*

(April, 32 years old, registered nurse in a hospital in Long Island, arrived in New York in 2012)

Given the situation in the place of their relatives, it was clear from the beginning that the set-up was a temporary one. Since both Julia and April are nurses, they were able to afford renting their own place immediately after working.

### **Obligations and norms of reciprocity: 'Hiya' and 'utang ng loob'**

For newcomers who did not have much resources on their own, they had to endure living with their relatives for longer period of time. Apart from the discomforts, this living arrangement has different dynamics because staying in the place of one's kin meant that they are not on equal footing given that the relatives are the ones giving assistance – a debt of gratitude ("utang na loob"<sup>119</sup>). Thus, the challenges and tensions involved were reciprocating the support given to them (in this case, providing initial shelter) and avoiding being seen as a 'burden' or a responsibility.

*As a way of giving back, I was taking care for their kid, and then I was also cleaning and cooking. [ . . . ] When my husband arrived, he also did the same thing. He was the one fetching and taking the kid to school because we were staying in their place [nakitira]. Because they said that you have to pay for everything here. [ . . . ] So, we were embarrassed [nahiya kami].*

(Rita, 46 years old, registered nurse in a hospital in Queens, arrived in New York in 1995)

*I mean, they [relatives] gave us support for the most part. [ . . . ] But sense of belonging, [they were] not so accommodating. [ . . . ] More like a burden. [Rizza: And you felt it even as a child?] Yeah. [ . . . ] We know we have to humble ourselves so [we have to] conform [makibagay].*

(Dennis, 30 years old, licensed practical nurse (LPN) in a hospital in Brooklyn, arrived in California in 1990; they moved to New York in 1991).

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<sup>119</sup> See De Guia, 2005.



Here we can see the strong emphasis on norms of reciprocity and the concept of *hiya*<sup>120</sup> (both as a feeling of shame and a sense of propriety) combined with what was deemed to be the way of life in America – ‘nothing here is free.’ While familial ties are bounded by strong sense of obligations, these obligations do not only refer to giving or lending support to one’s kin. As a receiver of support, one also needs to abide by the expectation of recognizing the help as a debt and ‘repaying’ the kindness and generosity. Hence, Rita and her husband – out of sense of propriety (*hiya*) – had to offer their services for free in exchange for the free lodging that they were receiving from her husband’s family. On the other hand, when Dennis shared that he felt that they were a burden to their relatives, the assistance became construed as forced or not freely given. Nevertheless, he recognized that they had to ‘humble themselves’ so as to maintain harmony and good relations. Thus, tensions could also arise not only when relatives fail to provide expected assistance, but also when help was rendered in a manner that seemed unacceptable – such as in the case of Dennis, when support was given but perceived as not out of one’s own volition and good will.

On the part of the newly-arrived migrants, trying to ‘give back’ to their relatives who were indefinitely housing them could also impinge on their freedom and limit their opportunities to develop new ties beyond one’s kin. Portes (1998) considered this as one of the downsides of social capital, wherein network members are saddled by moral obligations, which could be detrimental to their social mobility. Take for example the experience of Rebecca, who shared that the most difficult adjustment for her was living with her relatives because she was tied to the unwritten (yet strictly enforced) norms that accompanied it.

*That you’re staying in your cousin’s place. [ . . . ] Of course, you’re embarrassed [nahihiya]. You want to be able to work as soon as possible so that you can – [ . . . ] share [in the expenses]. Although my cousins didn’t want that. So, what you will do is to get along well with them [makikisama]. So, it’s like you don’t have your own life. During weekends, you will help them with the shopping, [ . . . ] everything since you’re trying to get along well. [ . . . ] Wherever they would go, I was there. [ . . . ] I was washing their clothes, cleaning their place even without them telling me to do so. [ . . . ] That’s why they also could not forget me. I mean, I owe them a lot [ . . . ] because they accommodated me. [ . . . ] But, I mean, I was also able to help them a lot as well.*

(Rebecca, 50 years old, part-time housekeeper in Manhattan, nanny in New Jersey, arrived in Texas in 2006; moved to New York in 2006; New Jersey in 2010)

What is interesting in her account is when she mentioned that ‘*it’s like you don’t have your own life.*’ Since she was preoccupied in ensuring that she was able to *return* the favor given to her, she could not go out, meet other people, and build new connections. By being tied down by familial obligations, forging new relationships and fostering old ties beyond one’s kin are hampered, thereby preventing migrants to expand their sources of support and social leverage (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003).

### **Extreme cases: Familial conflicts and exploitation**

Staying with relatives also has the potential for conflicts and tensions to arise since they are sharing an intimate space – a home. As newcomers who started to inhabit the same space, other members of the household may find it bothersome. When Lita was petitioned by her sister, she was not expecting their reunion to end with her and her niece packing their things and getting out of her sister’s place. While Lita’s sister was glad to have them in her place and was very much willing to help, her children saw them as encroaching and exploiting their mother’s kindness. When Lita was confronted by her nephew and was asked, “*So aunt, where did you get your food?*” it was clear that

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<sup>120</sup> See Reyes (2015) and Lasquety-Reyes (2016).

they could no longer live under the same roof. And because of that, they really had to struggle to survive in the beginning since they had to rent their own place, given that they were just starting out. Glenda also had to move out of her relatives' place when her son arrived. While admitting that her son was spoiled and could not get along with her brother-in-law, she also said that she could not leave her son to fend for himself. So, they moved together, which proved to be financially challenging for her.

*When I took [name of her son] here, it was really more challenging for me. My brother-in-law drove us out of the house. I totally lived with [name of the friend] for one week. [. . .] I was working then as a medical assistant [and] the salary was every two weeks. [...] and small. I was still paying for my tuition, paying rent, and sending money to the Philippines, also my expenses [here] as well. [. . .] Financially, it was difficult then.*

(Glenda, 49 years old, nanny and medical assistant,  
arrived in New York in 2007)

In this case, familial conflicts can fragment kinship ties and can therefore exacerbate the challenges for newly-arrived migrants (Menjivar, 1997, 2000; Offer, 2012), especially for Glenda who arrived on a tourist visa and was trying to stay legally by maintaining a student visa, while also fulfilling her duties and obligations back home. Since house rents are expensive in New York (and in London, as well), the initial accommodations offered by relatives were big help, and to withdraw such help meant additional difficulties for migrants. Unlike nurses who eventually found a stable and well-paying job, newly-arrived domestics and private caregivers still had to build their contacts for job leads and better employment opportunities. This put them in a more vulnerable position and made the support from familial ties vital for their survival.

There are also extreme cases when support was denied or familial relations turned abusive. These cases exemplify the need to problematize how newly-arrived migrants access support and from which ties particular types of support were generated, rather than simply assuming that the presence of networks would automatically lead to provision of support (Ryan, 2007; Ryan et al., 2008; White & Ryan, 2008; Wierzbicki, 2004). For instance, even in the closest familial relations, it is possible that the expected assistance could be withheld and discontinued upon arrival. Consider the case of Brian who was petitioned by his father in California before he finished his nursing degree in the Philippines.

*When I was in the Philippines, everything was provided. All that I was thinking was school, house. I was not thinking about budget, stuff like that. Because my dad provided for my needs. But when I came here, you need to budget, you need to have a source of income, you need to survive.*

(Brian, 28 years old, line cook, former caregiver in a nursing home,  
arrived in Portland in 2009; moved to New York in 2011)

While his aunts were telling him to save and continue his schooling, he found that it would be difficult to do so since it would be expensive and his father stopped supporting him financially. "I'm on my own," he said, and he was not expecting that. "I was expecting that he would continue supporting me while I was starting out . . . but . . . that didn't happen."

In the case of Manuel, his cousin sponsored his domestic worker visa to the UK. However, upon arrival, he was made to work in her restaurant like a slave – being paid with a much lower rate (at £2/hour) compared to the other staff in the restaurant. His cousin also made sure that he would not have contacts with other people, which Manuel now sees as a way for him not to have ideas and other options, thereby ensuring that he would remain dependent on his cousin as he had nowhere to go. He was made to work until half past midnight or even beyond and was required to wake at half

past six in the morning. Eventually, Manuel decided to leave. His workmate mentioned that a certain organization (*Kalayaan*, see the section on *Migrant Organization*, p. 190) might be able to help him. When he left, he not only severed his ties to his cousin but his side of the family also had to cut the ties with this cousin as well. This reminds us that familial ties are not immune to being exploitative. Relatives can also inflict harm and trouble inasmuch as they can provide support and assistance. For instance, the cousin of Perla's late husband tipped her off to the immigration officials when Perla (who was then an undocumented domestic worker in London) refused to lend them money since she was building a house for her children in the Philippines during that time.

These narratives disrupt the commonly-held image of kin-based networks as tightly-knitted and supportive. However, this is a necessary disruption if we intend to better our understanding of migrant networks (Bashi, 2007; Menjivar, 2000). It is also important to note that familial ties should not be automatically assumed as migrants' strong ties (in terms of emotional intimacy and frequency of interactions). This means that newcomers may view their relatives in the places of destination as strangers. As a consequence, they do not count nor expect them as possible sources of support. Clarissa said that, in the beginning, she felt threatened that they might run out of money given that they were not yet working. "*No one will help you here,*" she said. When I asked her if that was because they don't have any relatives in the US, she replied that they do. She has first cousins in New Jersey and they are also nurses but she felt that they do not count: "*It's different, we are not that close.*"

### **Favorable conditions and arrangements for support exchanges**

These rather discouraging and ambivalent accounts concerning the dynamics of social support exchanges within kin-based networks, however, are not meant to undermine the value of familial support among the Filipinos I interviewed in London and New York. Support from kin-based networks (particularly accommodation, financial assistance while unemployed, job leads, and security) still allowed the respondents to survive their initial years in the place of destination – regardless of whether there were (more or less) strings attached to such assistance.

For instance, among nurse respondents in New York who were not nurses upon arrival, their relatives encouraged and provided the pre-condition for them to go back to school and earn a nursing degree. They also gave advice and information to regularize their immigration status. Consider the case of Marie who started working a year after giving birth. She was also able to finish her associate nursing degree while juggling work and family life. While she and her husband (also a nurse) experienced difficulties in the beginning, she felt that they were still in a better position given that her husband's family helped in babysitting and looking after their children.

*It's a little bit of [a] challenge in the beginning. [ . . . ] But then, compared to other people's experience, we had better experience. My friends who started from scratch and came from the Philippines and stayed here, they had so much hardships usually than we had. They [husband's relatives] had supported us very well. That's why.*

(Marie, 41 years old, nursing director in an assisted living facility in New Jersey, arrived in New York in 2000, moved to New Jersey in 2001)

Marie's initial support network conforms to the typical characteristics of a kin-based network: densely-knit and composing of strong ties (Lubbers et al., 2010). But unlike in the studies focusing on low-income groups (e.g. Dominguez & Watkins, 2003), having pre-dominantly familial ties in one's network does not necessarily restrict social mobility. However, as Marie's case exemplified, being a highly-skilled professional, having strategically located relatives in the labor market, and having familial ties that provide practical support (in this case, childcare) allowed Marie to advance in her career (currently, she is the director of nursing in an assisted-living facility).

Apart from having strategically-positioned relatives and possessing high level of human capital, there are also another way of ensuring that help will be provided among the ‘low-skilled’ migrant workers. In the case of Margaret, a domestic worker in London, having extensive kin-based network allowed her to rely not only on one relative but on several aunts and cousins. This is important since a larger pool of sources of support does not overburden the relatives and improves the chance for continued assistance. Proximity is another factor in providing effecting aid to newly-arrived migrants. Those whose family members were residing outside London or New York metropolitan areas, obviously, could not provide accommodation or may not have the networks in London to provide job leads. In this case, participants had to diversify their ties and connections beyond the kinship network (as discussed in the next section on ties to friends, acquaintances, and co-ethnics).

### **Job leads and ‘chain occupations’**

Lastly, findings also suggest that in linking newly-arrived migrants to particular jobs, they were also being channeled to the line of work that their relatives were doing. In other words, engaging in a particular kind of job can also be kin-based. This is hardly surprising as newly arrived migrants not only ‘inherit’ the ties and networks of pioneer and already settled relatives but also the work they do, as they are incorporated in certain jobs specific to these networks (Caces, 1986; Massey et al., 1994). This process is particularly captured by the notion of ‘ethnic niches’ (*see*, for example, Kasinitz & Vickerman, 2001; Waldinger, 1994, 1996).

Beatrice, for instance, wanted to have part-time babysitting jobs instead of private caregiving because of a difficult elderly she encountered. But since her mother, aunts, and other relatives were mostly doing caregiving jobs, she didn’t know how to look or whom to ask for babysitting jobs. In addition, some respondents also have relatives and family friends who own care homes in other states. Brian, for instance, have relatives in Portland and California who are running care homes where he first worked upon arrival. Thus, respondents can be channeled in certain jobs primarily because their networks, generally kin-based, are concentrated on a particular industry. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is what MacDonald & MacDonald (1964) referred to as ‘chain occupations’ or occupational niches and ethnic economies (*see*, for example, Caces, 1986; Cranford, 2005; Hareven, 1978; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Ryan, 2008). While being tied to particular occupations (such as caregiving or domestic work) could potentially hamper social mobility for migrant workers, I suggest that it is also important to take into account migrants’ imagined futures and what they actually want to achieve through overseas work. While they might experience *contradictory class mobility* (Parreñas, 2001, 2015), the hope of future return to one’s home country and the adoption of *dual frame of reference* (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995; *see also* Gelatt, 2013) allow migrants to cope with being downgraded and trapped in low-status work. I return to this point in the subsequent chapter (*Belonging, Exclusion, and Transnational Connections*, p. 217)

Summing up, kin-based networks are shown to be crucial in providing for the initial needs of the respondents in the place of destination – in particular, accommodation and connections to initial employment. However, the narratives of the respondents also illustrate that social support exchanges within family-based networks are embedded within notions and practices of moral obligations and norms of reciprocity (Boyd, 1989). Furthermore, it may turn out that relatives in the place of destination do not have enough resources and are unable to provide for the needs of newly-arrived migrants (Menjivar, 1997, 2000). In this way, support given and received could be evaluated in more ambivalent terms by the respondents. In extreme cases, expected support could also be withdrawn or denied when conflicts arise within the family – pushing respondents to an even more vulnerable position (Menjivar, 1997, 2000; Offer, 2012). Much worse, relatives may also exploit the vulnerability of newly-arrived migrants for their own gain (Cranford, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). On the other hand, it has also been exemplified that under favorable conditions, familial support does not only contribute to newcomers’ survival and adjustment but

also to their possible social mobility (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003). Finally, employment assistance from kin may also lead to newcomers to occupational niches that may or may not hamper their upward mobility or economic stability.

In the next section, support received from another type of kinship ties are explored – this time from left-behind families and those relatives in other countries.

### *Transnational Family Networks*

Kelly & Lusic (2006: 842), in their study on Philippine-Canadian transnational linkages, noted that “emotional and psychological need for social ties can be satisfied in the form of transnational connections, as continued involvement in social life ‘back home’ is possible through the use of text messaging, e-mail, and low-cost phone cards.” Similarly, among Polish migrants in London, Ryan et al. (2008) also found that transnational ties provide invaluable emotional support and advice, and are considered as migrants’ most trusted confidants.

In the case of the respondents who listed ties to their home country as well as to their relatives in other parts of the world (albeit in rare cases), emotional support is primarily the type of support of given by their transnational familial networks – corroborating both studies of Kelly & Lusic (2006) & Ryan et al. (2008). In the initial support networks, communication with left-behind families were essential to battle homesickness and uncertainty in the place of destination. As Michael (a nurse in London) put it, “*But of course, when you are far away, you are emotional. [So] their support, it’s very important to you.*” However, as Table 7.1 shows, interviewees in London tend to list their family members in the Philippines in their initial support networks compared to their New York counterparts.<sup>121</sup> They often referred to their families back home as their source of strength and inspiration, and the reason why they are there in the first place (e.g. so as to be able to help them).

*Family still. Because I need to – because if I give up, what will happen to my family? Because anytime you can go back, right? It’s like that. So, they are still important. “You are here for your children so you should really adjust.”*

(Evelyn, 48 years old, nanny/housekeeper, arrived in London in 2014)

*And then, my family as well. They are still the most important because, of course, they are my inspiration in times of hardships.*

(Divina, 63 years old, private/ domiciliary caregiver,  
arrived in London in 1992)

*Because – I get my support from them – my strength. They are my inspiration as to why I am here. Like, I keep reminding myself that, “Ah! [. . .] It’s because of them so I have to be strong here,” something like that.*

(Eliza, 37 years old, nurse practitioner in an NHS hospital,  
arrived in Wales in 2004, moved to London in 2014)

Given that overseas migration and the associated difficulties of settling in a new place were seen as ‘for the family,’ familial ties in the home country provide meaning to the myriad of challenges that newly-arrived migrants could face post-migration. Aside from motivating newcomers to continue with their stay (rather to return prematurely), the respondents also considered being able to talk and communicate with their families in the Philippines as important while getting used to the life abroad.

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<sup>121</sup> One of the possible reasons is that respondents in New York tend to have familial ties in the place of destinations compared to those in London.

*They [parents] were still important even when – especially when I was already here because I always – [. . .] not really initially in a sense that it was right away but especially when you are feeling homesick, you talk to them so, at least, you don't feel sad.*

(James, 30 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital,  
arrived in London in 2010)

In the past, migrants and their families in the home country had to rely on snail mail and expensive phone calls. However, even during those times when long distance calls were expensive, respondents shared that they allotted a budget to buy phone cards so that they were able to contact their families back home. In recent years, the development in communication technologies allowed family at a distance to become closer and more present in each other's lives than ever. Not only because it has become cheaper, but also because communication could now be done over various (and more dynamic) platforms.

Once users have obtained either a computer or a smartphone, and once the hardware and connection costs are met, then the cost of each individual act of communication itself becomes largely inconsequential. So today a typical urban young adult of a lower- to middle-class income in many parts of the world can choose between calling through a landline, mobile phone or Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) through applications such as Skype, with or without webcam; alternatively she or he can send a text or an email, use Instant Messaging (IM) or a variety of social networking applications (Madianou & Miller, 2012: 170).

In this way, the potential for transnational familial ties to render emotional support at a distance and reduce the anxiety of newly-arrived migrants is also enhanced – as communication exchanges can be more frequent and each party can also see each other as they talk. Nevertheless, whether it is a phone call, a snail mail, or a Skype call, the impact of the moral support and encouragement of left-behind families should not be underestimated – especially since families back home constitute the backbone of one's migration project (Asis, 1994, 2002).

Though uncommon, financial assistance could also come from family members in the country of origin, as newcomers try to establish themselves in the place of destination. For instance, before David (a health care assistant in an NHS hospital) followed his wife Mariel (then a support care worker in a nursing home) in London, he mentioned sending her money to cover her expenses and credit card debts.

*It was difficult for her [his wife] when she was still alone here. Because it was negative [her finances]. I was even the one sending her money. [Rizza: Ah. Why? What happened?] Maybe . . . in her way of living. I don't know why it turned out that way. Because sometimes she was crying, telling me she didn't have money. I told her cousin in Korea, "Send money to your ate [elder sister] because she said she didn't have money." Maybe because she was alone here. She was going out. She was getting homesick as well. [So] she could not control [the use of her credit card].*

(David, 45 years old, health care assistant in an NHS  
hospital, arrived in London in 2008)

This (reverse) financial transfers presupposes that family members are in a relatively better financial position and could afford to provide such kind of support to temporarily keep newly-arrived migrants financially afloat. This flow of support from country of origin to destination is called 'reverse remittance,' highlighting the direction of the "flows of goods, money, and especially

services from countries in the Global South to migrants”<sup>122</sup> (Mazzucato, 2011: 454). As Mazzucato (2011) and Boccagni (2015) demonstrated, support from the home country is rarely financial and mostly in the form of services and emotional support given to the migrants, as well as caring for the migrants’ left-behind children, elderly parents, and other obligations. As previously discussed, the accounts of the respondents who included transnational familial ties in their initial support networks supported the findings of these previous studies.

However, transnational ties do not only refer to relatives back home. There were also support mentioned that came from family members in other (intermediate) countries. Though less common in the respondents’ network maps compared to ties back home, these family members from other countries (which are parts of the larger Filipino diaspora) also provided financial and emotional support during those times when the respondents were newcomers and trying to adjust to the life overseas. This is exemplified in the initial network of Celeste, a staff nurse in a town in the east of England (see Figure 7.1). She considered her cousins in Switzerland and Canada as significant ties as they extended emotional, financial, and practical support to her as a newly-arrived migrant, regardless of the distance.

*That’s moral support [referring to her cousin in Canada]. She was sending me messages all the time. She was constantly explaining to me that life abroad is really like that [difficult]. [. . .] [Then] when I arrived here in August, January, I went to Switzerland to like, just to visit my cousins there and then they sort of welcomed me. [. . .] [Rizza: And you consider them important during your initial years because?] Yes, because of course in your adjustment, they were – actually, they gave me money, they gave me – really their support was constant. [Rizza: So moral [and] financial support as well?] Yes, like they also know the kind of life abroad. They’ve been [away] for a long time.*

(Celeste, 41 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital,  
arrived in east of England in 2001)

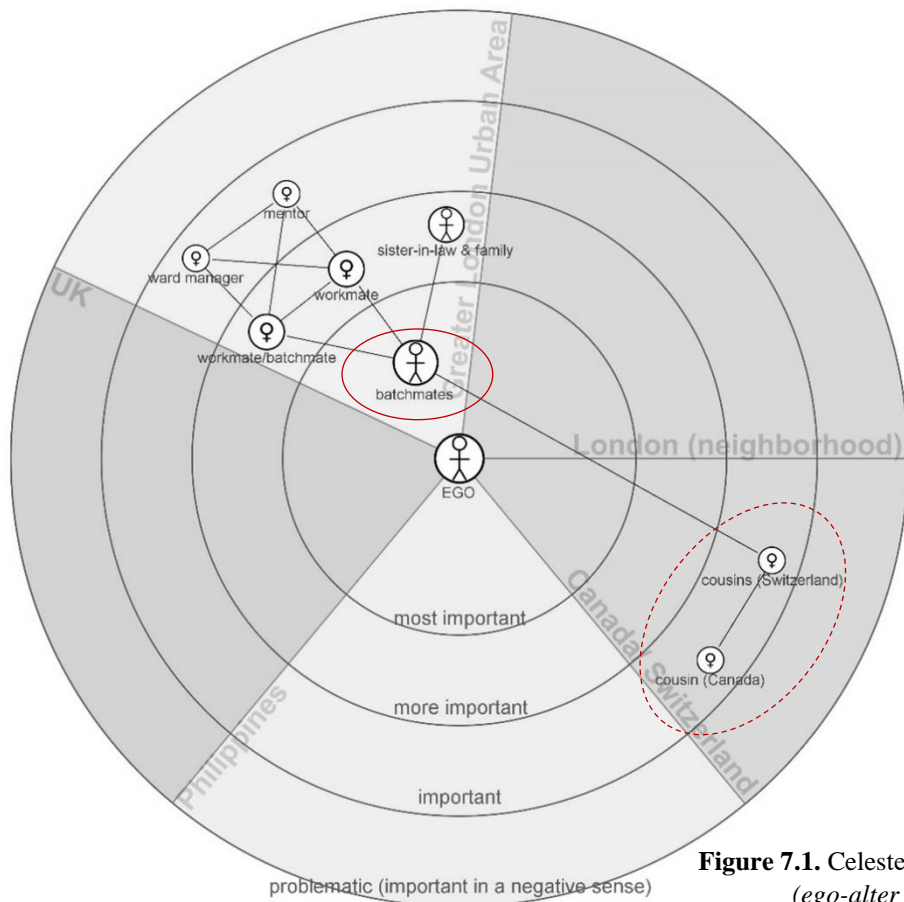
Mapping the possible support coming from relatives in other countries paints a more expanded space where transnational family-making takes place. Similar to multi-destination model of migration pathways discussed in Chapter 6, the flows of material and non-material support could also involve not just the countries of destination and origin, but also other receiving countries where members of transnational family networks are located. In the next chapter (*On the Stability of Transnational Ties*), I will discuss other forms of transnational ties beyond kin-based networks.

In addition, it should also be noted that transnational familial networks are also not conflict-free. On the flip side, the high demands and obligations from the families they left behind also added additional pressure for the newly-arrived nurses. Moreover, expectations concerning the future and how the norm of reciprocity is interpreted in practice could also possibly bring tensions between the migrants and their left-behind families in the home country. I will go back to this point in the expanded discussion of transnational ties in Chapter 8 (*The Dilemma of Care: Who Will Care for the Carers?*, p. 210).

In the subsequent section, other types of ties beyond the family-based networks are explored – especially in the contexts of absence of familial ties in the place of destination, their limited ability to help and cover the needs of the newly-arrived migrants, or their unwillingness to do so.

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<sup>122</sup> See also Mobrand (2012) for the process of reverse remittance in the context of internal migration in Korea; and Boccagni (2015) for the material and non-material support rendered by left-behind kin in Ecuador.



**Figure 7.1.** Celeste's Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

### Friendship-Based Networks and Acquaintances

In their study on the social networks of low-income mothers in Boston area, Domínguez & Watkins (2003: 120) found that the “respondents without a strong and extensive family network rely on friends or combine ties to build alternative webs of support.” It is not surprising that lack or inadequate support from familial ties will lead migrants (and non-migrants) to explore other options outside of one’s family to survive or gain upward mobility. This can be observed among respondents who, prior to their migration, were seeking or (out of chance) getting connected to actors (besides their kin) that eventually facilitated their movements (*see* Chapter 6). Post-migration, the question then is how do newly-arrived migrants get connected to friendship-based networks and mobilize resources through these connections?

In this section, I look into three types of friendship and acquaintance-based ties that were included in the initial support networks of the interviewees. First, respondents listed their friends and acquaintances from the Philippines who were in the place of destination when they arrived. Since, these are pre-existing ties, these are the types of friends that respondents were more familiar and closer to – at least initially – compared to new friends and associates they established in the place of destination. These new acquaintances are the second type of friendship-based ties that newcomers formed and developed through their pre-existing ties (i.e. these are those who were either friends and acquaintances of another friend or of one’s relatives). The third type is the ethnic-based connections that could emerged out of chance (someone they happened to meet in public spaces), and either became a fleeting, one-time encounter or evolved into more lasting relations. What distinguishes this kind of ties is that they were formed based on one’s ‘Filipino-ness’ and shared national identity. I examine the formation and support generated from each type in the sections that follow.



### *Old Friends in New Places*

When Nicole was two and a half years old, her father, a registered nurse, got a job in New York. Her parents decided for the whole family to migrate despite not having any support network in their destination. Nicole remembered how they struggled in the beginning and the difficulties they experienced as a family when they were starting out.

*Since my dad [a nurse] just started, I remember [. . .] we lived in Queens at first. It was very, very crowded. I remember [. . .] we moved a lot from [one] place to different apartments. [. . .] We [had] very little food at that time. I just remember growing up and I wanted all the new clothes. I wanted all the new toys. And my parents could not get that [for] me. I just remember just the housing condition weren't ideal. [. . .] I saw a lot of cockroaches. It was very uncomfortable. We didn't have a car at that time, so we always [had] to travel, we always [had] to use public transportation. I just remember food-wise, we didn't have the best. We ate a lot of pandesal [Filipino bread roll], just a lot of bread, a lot of cheese. Sometimes, we would be eating the same thing for . . . 3-4 days 'cause whatever my mom would cook, we [tried] to like, portion that out so that we can have it for a week. I remembered that when I was younger.*

(Nicole, 26 years old, registered in a hospital in Manhattan, arrived in New York in 1991)

They eventually moved to Staten Island and that was when their lives became a lot better. Her father's classmate from the Philippines convinced her father to move, and she then introduced and connected them to her family and network in Staten Island. Through the classmate of her father (whose family became their adoptive family as well), they started to have an extensive support network that helped and assisted them – like babysitting, allowing her mother to work. In this way, her dad's classmate and friend from the Philippines was able to lend her support networks to Nicole's family, mitigating the financial difficulties and challenges of family-making overseas that those without familial networks usually experienced.

In cases when assistance is unavailable or inadequate despite the presence of (extensive) familial networks in the place of destination, reconnecting with old friends from the home country serves as an alternative strategy for mobilizing resources for survival. For instance, when Brian's father withheld expected support when he arrived in the US (*see Extreme cases: Familial conflicts and exploitation*, p. 162), Brian had to find not only another place to live but also other connections he can tap to help him survive in America. Despite the presence of extensive kin networks spanning various states (California, Portland, and Colorado), familial conflicts and difficulty in moving around<sup>123</sup> led Brian to New York where his college friend, Danica (a part-time nanny), encouraged him to try the kind of life New York City can offer.

*In San Francisco, my relatives are there. [But] I am not too familiar, I mean, close [to them]. And then my dad I are not getting along. So . . . Danica, she was my classmate in college. [. . .] She told me, because she also went here [in the US], when I was still in Portland, she told me that – [. . .] it's good here in New York. She said that I should try. On my end, I didn't expect that much. I said, "Come what may [Bahala na]." As long – I was thinking that as long as you have a job, you have salary, you can survive. Because what I was thinking then is to survive. [. . .]*

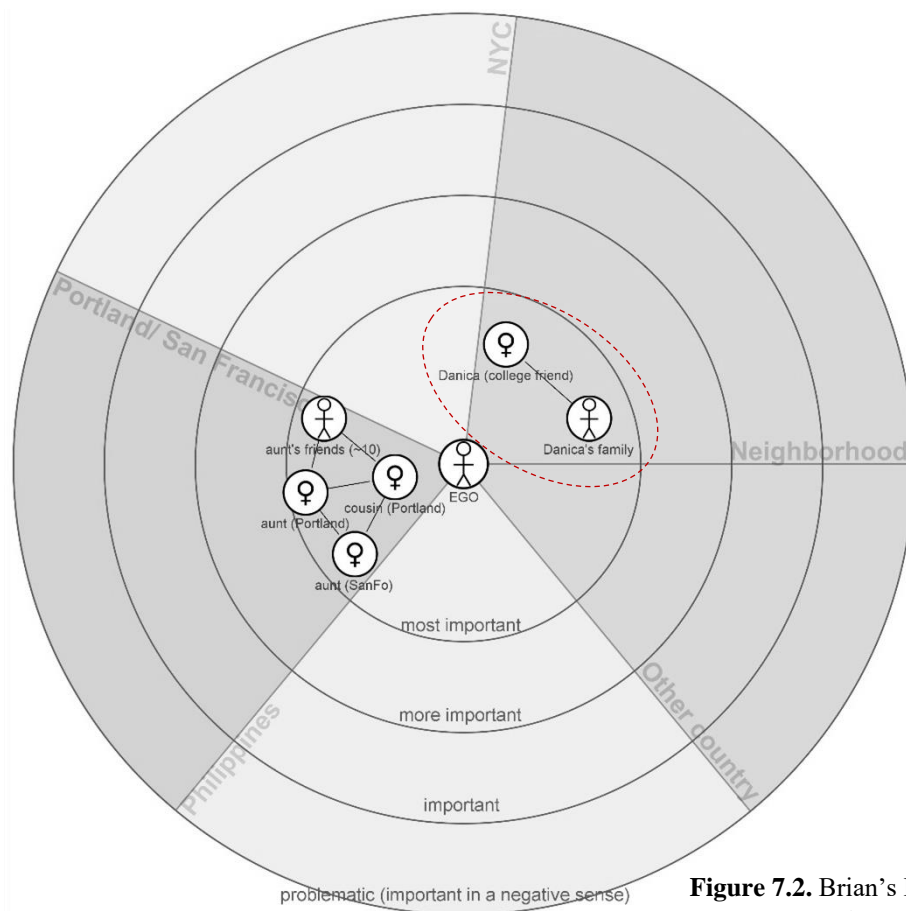
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<sup>123</sup> Respondents mentioned that while they have family members in other states, the difficulty of getting around because of the lack of extensive public transportation system made them dependent on the rides provided by family members. This can be limiting since they could not move freely by themselves and had to rely on the availability of their relatives to drive them around.

*So, I said, okay I will go to New York even though I don't know anyone apart from Danica [and her family], that's okay. As long as I have a job, I would be okay. That's why I came to New York.*

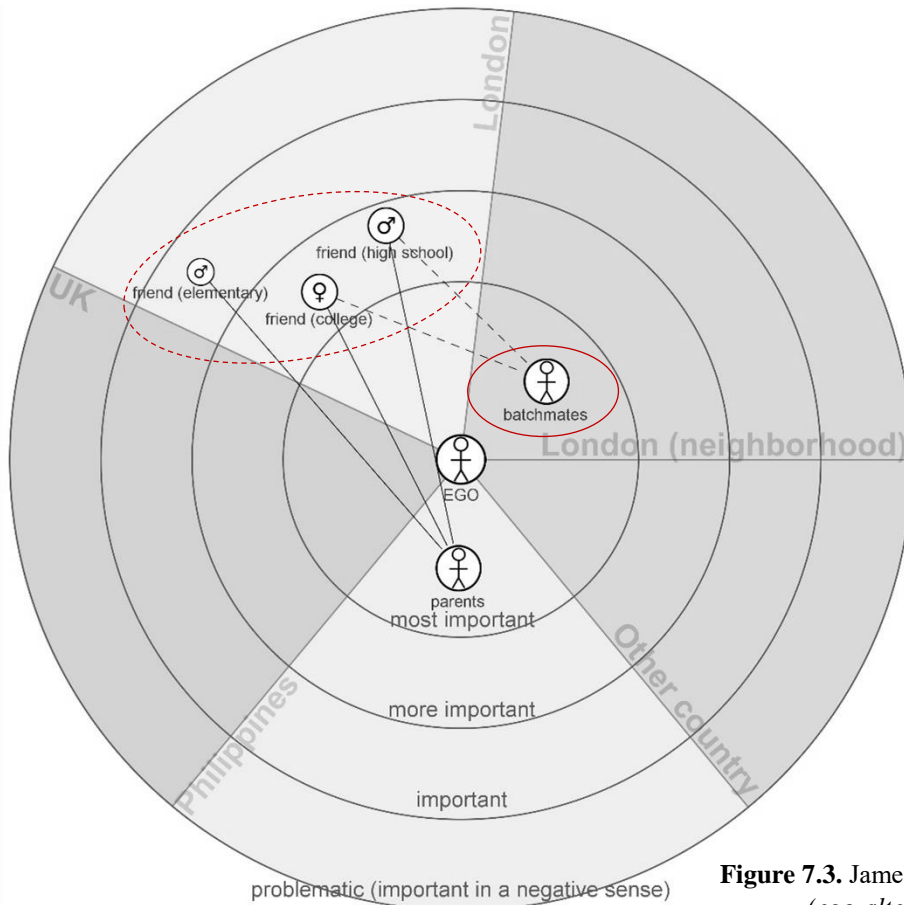
(Brian, 28 years old, line cook, former caregiver in a nursing home, arrived in Portland in 2009; moved to New York in 2011)

Danica and her family provided accommodation and job leads. They were also the ones who oriented him about New York and how to survive in the city (see Figure 7.2 for Brian's initial support network). Currently, Brian still shares rent and lives in the same flat with Danica and her family, and they remain to be his primary support network.



**Figure 7.2.** Brian's Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

For those who received assistance from friends in the place of destination to facilitate their migration, it is likely that the same friends would also constitute the respondents' initial support networks. Thus, continuation between pre-migration and post-migration networks that are friendship-based could also be observed. Recall the pre-migration network of James (see Figure 6.13, p. 148), a staff nurse in London, in Chapter 6 (*Dual Ties and Network Complementarity*, p. 146). His friends from school did not only serve as familiar faces in a foreign place, but since they arrived earlier, they were able to orient him and share what they learnt from their own experiences (see Figure 7.3 for James's initial support network). They provided emotional support, kept him company at times, and checked up on him to ensure that he was doing fine.



**Figure 7.3.** James's Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

However, there are also instances when friendships were developed not in one's home country, but through their temporary stay in intermediate destinations. For instance, unlike most domestic workers in London who ran away from their employers, Iris was more informed about the place and more secured with her prospects since she has maintained connections to friends she met in Qatar who were already in London before her. She was able to plan before she left her former employers and shared that running away was not difficult in her case as she already knew a lot of people in London. She was also informed that a concession was still in place that would allow her to extend her domestic worker visa. One of her friends provided initial accommodation and her friend's family also helped by accompanying her in going around so as to familiarize herself with how things work in London (e.g. how to ride the underground and buses, and how to find her way). Thus, even before she started her first job in London, she already knew her way around. This friend also referred her to a migrant organization that assisted her with extending her visa. It is apparent that through the presence of her friend and the support extended by her and her family, Iris did not experience so much difficulties that other domestic workers who escaped their employers had to go through. She was able to adjust easily and became financially stable in a shorter period of time compared to other domestics like her.

It is important to note that similar to kin-based networks, formation of friendship ties and expanse of friendship-based networks also go beyond the single-origin-single-destination-model and can encompass intermediate countries and other destination areas. Inasmuch as the movements of the respondents could follow a multi-destination pathway, their friends and acquaintances could migrate in a similar fashion. As will be shown in the subsequent chapter, dispersion of friendship ties in various countries could also be observed in the interviewees' current support networks, indicating the extent and dynamics of Filipino overseas migration.

Finally, connection to a ‘hub’ (though distinct) could also be considered as another type of acquaintance or friendship-based tie that has been developed in the home country and whose support is crucial for the newly-arrived migrant. As what has been discussed in the previous chapter (*Hub-and-Spoke Model*, pp. 135– 137), hub serves as a benevolent sponsor and provides most of the needs (e.g. accommodation and job leads) of the newcomers. However, the community that hub creates is also invaluable to both old timers and newcomers. Coming from the same hometown, the hub, in a way, transported their community to a new place – allowing members to continuously draw on the concept of home and affinity from the hub’s expansive network. Staying in the same accommodation, ‘spokes’ (who may or may not know each other back in their hometown) are also able to rely to each other for emotional and practical support – particularly in the absence of their own kin-based networks in the place of destination.

In the next section, I expand on the acquaintance and friendship-based networks of the respondents to include the friendship ties they developed and established in the place of destination.

### ***New Acquaintances and Yearning for ‘Soul Friendships’***

So far, I have presented and discussed ties that and connections that had already been developed in the home country and sustained post-migration. However, migrants also form new ties in the place of destination that have potential to generate both social support and social leverage (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003). Focusing on *networking* practices and strategies of migrants, Ryan & Mulholland (2014) and Schapendonk (2015) emphasized the need to give attention to the process of building ties and the contexts in which such networking happens. Specifically, the questions for this part are: (1) how connections to new friends and acquaintances were established; (2) under which conditions did they take place; and (3) what kinds of support and assistance were generated from these new ties.

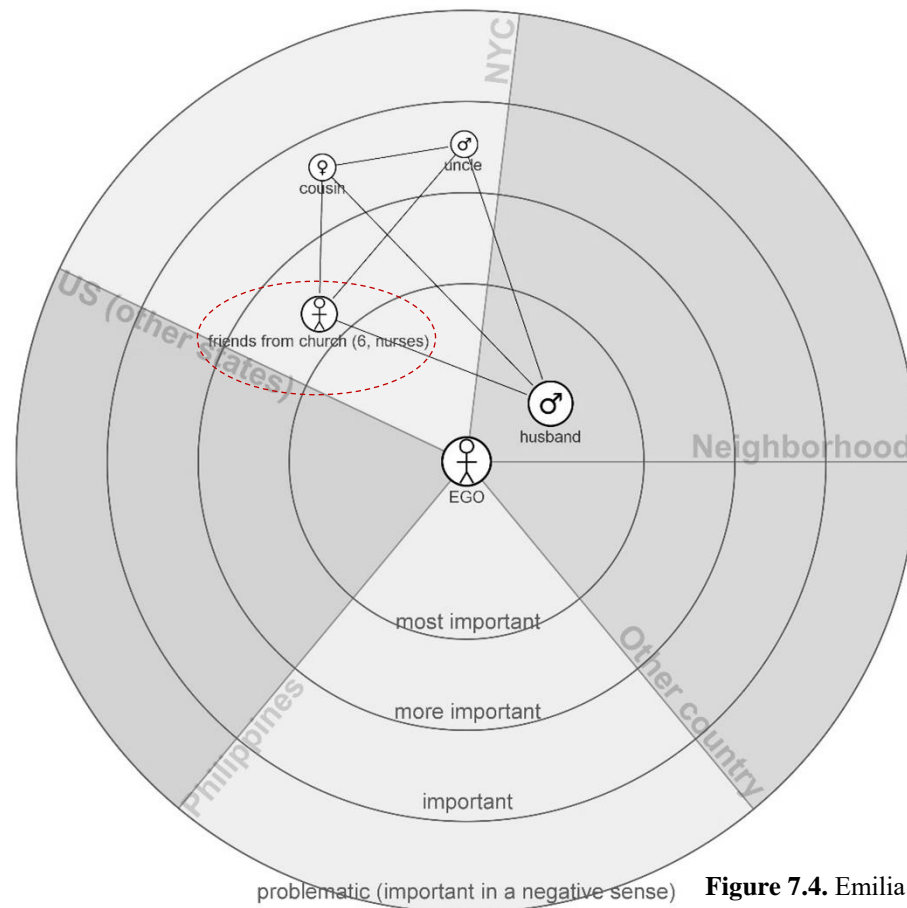
Examining how the respondents developed new ties in the place of destination, two general patterns emerged. First are those that are “formed under the auspices of some social institution” (Wellman, Carrington, & Hall, 1988: 151). Indeed, new friendships and acquaintances mentioned by the respondents were mostly established at work, church, school, and particular organization (e.g. Filipino group, migrant group, or hometown associations), as well as in defined spaces such as neighborhood and shared accommodation. This is not surprising given that these are contexts where migrants (and non-migrants) spend their time and the spaces they mostly inhabit. This also somehow relates to what Poros (2001, 2011) referred to as organizational ties – i.e. those ties that are mediated by and embedded in institutions and organizations.

As Table 7.1 shows, one significant institution where network formation takes place is church – particularly the chapters of local churches in the place of destination. As it will be apparent in the later discussions, church as a space for encounters and meetings is important for tie formation and network expansion. However, it should also be noted that church is also a space where class divisions are also maintained and reproduced. Looking at the network maps of the respondents, while they listed their churchmates as new friends or acquaintances, they tend to be of the same occupation or profession as the respondents.<sup>124</sup> For instance, Emilia – a head nurse in a hospital in Brooklyn – specified that nurses in her church were important part of her initial support network (see Figure 7.4) as they guided her and provided tips on how to adjust in her workplace. Eventually, she was able to navigate her way and get to higher positions. On the other hand, despite these groupings, more vulnerable members could also tap into their (better positioned) acquaintances within the church to assist in times of crisis. This is exemplified when Fiona and Vanessa (former

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<sup>124</sup> Attending activities of Filipino religious groups, I also observed the same pattern of interactions and groupings that are based on occupations (and social class divisions).

caregivers in a care facility in Maryland; currently nanny/housekeeper in New York) got into a legal battle with the owners of the facility where they were employed because of undue deductions in their salary. The lawyer among their churchmates was able to give legal advice on what to do – such filing a complaint and extending their visa. Friendships developed within the church also served as respondents’ constant companion and confidant, particularly among those without familial networks in London or New York.



**Figure 7.4.** Emilia’s Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

Workplace is another common setting where friendships could arise. For example, the friendships that nurse respondents developed in their initial workplaces facilitated their move to London as these friends (who transferred before them) were able to encourage and inform them about their options. Upon their transfer, these friends from work also introduced them to other nurses in London and oriented them about life within and outside of their work. In the case of domestic workers, playdates set up by their employers – usually with the Filipino nannies of their employers’ friends or colleagues – are also avenues to build more lasting friendships in an otherwise isolated work setting. However, not all playdates are also successful in this sense – as some also led to conflict and tension, bringing trouble instead of aid. I will discuss in detail other forms and dynamics of workplace relations and the support they provide to newly-arrived migrants in another section (*see Work-Based Networks*, pp. 178–188).

Apart from connections made within institutions and in particular settings, social ties were also formed and fostered through another relation (e.g. via one’s relative, friend, acquaintance, or co-worker) acting as a bridge and linking newly-arrived migrants to other ties in their networks. As Eve (2002: 401) also pointed, “who becomes a friend seems to be determined not solely by

individual attraction but above all by the potential for enriching and maintaining another relationship which is already important.” Thus, another pattern of forming new ties is by being connected to a ‘friend of a friend’ or ‘friend of a family member’ – in Granovetter’s (1973; 1983) term, one’s *weak ties*. While these ties are usually conceived of as providing assistance in finding jobs or a place to stay (which is also the case for this study), there were also accounts wherein such ties were transformed into closer friendship as respondents were yearning for the kind of relationships they had with their friends back home. This need for friends and peers was palpable among the younger and single participants. Instead of starting from scratch, they tend to foster second-degree ties (i.e. those that were introduced by their siblings or close friends).

Bernadette, for instance, mentioned the difficulty of building new friendships because of the lack of time to go out and meet new people. This is because of her private caregiving job while also reviewing for the nursing licensure examination. Thus, apart from her family, it was the sister of her friend whom she was able to call and talk to (*see* also Figure 7.5 for her initial support network).

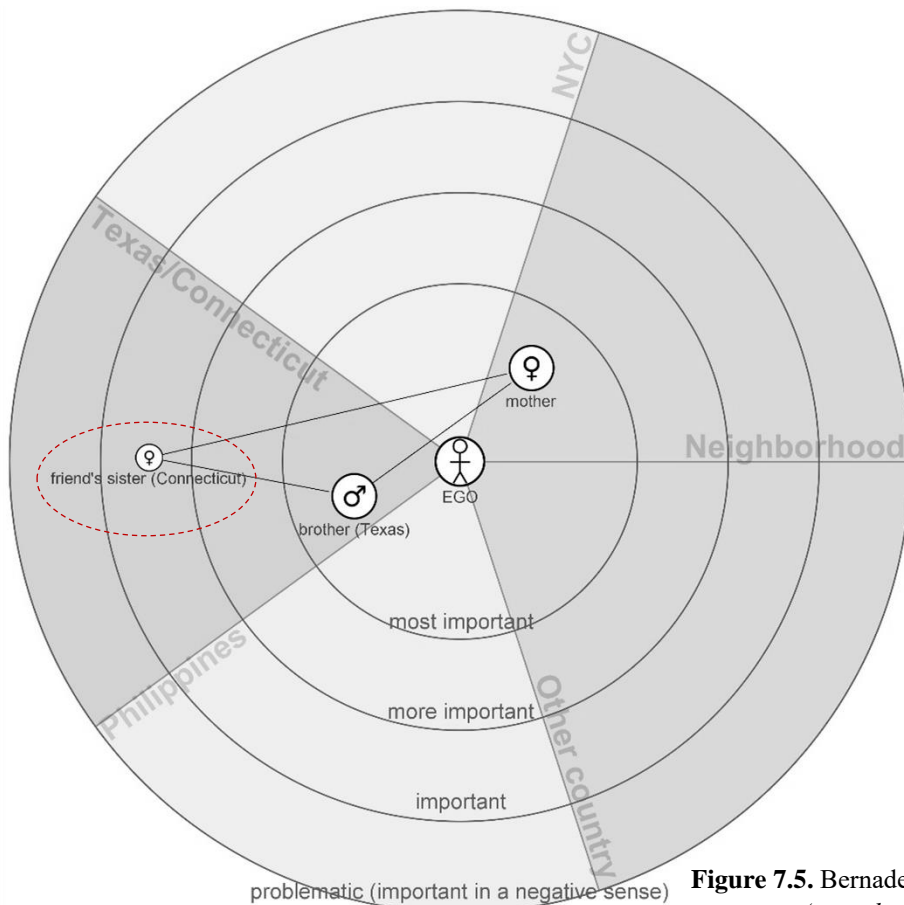
*One of our friends in the Philippines, she has a sister . . . in Connecticut, but I didn't know her sister. So, my friend said, "My sister is there." So, I called her. Of course, you want – you are also eager to have a Filipino to talk to. So, I met her. She is a physical therapist. So, she was also alone. She didn't have much friends. But, she is here [in the US] longer than me, probably two or three years. So, there. She was always giving me advice, that [life here] is really like that.*

(Bernadette, 31 years old, private caregiver – part-time,  
arrived in New York in 2005)

Bernadette also explained that starting new friendships requires time and effort for trust to develop, unlike with her friends in the Philippines who were with her for a long time, considering that they were her classmates and schoolmates. Morosanu (2013) called this ‘soul friendship’ to describe how young Romanians in London typically avoided forming new friendships in the place of destination and would mention their ‘soul friends’ back home (friendships that have come a long way) as their ideal relationship. Morosanu (2013) highlighted that mistrust and negative experiences with co-ethnics have led to such distancing and avoidance.

For the respondents in this study, it also takes sustained effort to maintain ties to new acquaintances and friendships formed in the place of destination and turned these into lasting relations. I return to the concept of dissolution of ties in the subsequent chapter, indicating the migrant networks are evolving and changing over time.

In the next section, I take a closer look at friendships and acquaintances that develop based on sharing a common national identity – being a Filipino.



**Figure 7.5.** Bernadette's Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

### *Co-ethnics and the Imagined (Filipino) Community*

With no pre-existing ties in the place of destination, most domestic workers in London who ran away from their employers had to rely on total *strangers* to survive. However, they didn't just approach anyone in the street nor the first person they encountered to help them. They were looking, whether consciously or unconsciously, for a Filipino like them.<sup>125</sup>

*Because when I escaped, I have nowhere to go. It was even raining then. I had 30 dinars in my wallet. I left all of my belongings. [. . .] I only had what I was wearing . . . So, my plan was to go to Kalayaan<sup>126</sup> but I didn't know where it is and how to get there. [. . .] I was crying. And then, [. . .] I was walking in the street, I saw someone cleaning a brass door knob. Making it shiny. I said, "Are you a Filipina?" She said, "Yes, 'day." She's Ilongga [from the province of Iloilo]. "Please help me. I escaped my employer." There. She took me in. She said, "Alright, I will bring you to our place." [. . .] I stayed with them for two weeks. When we arrived at their place, they called their friends. "Hey, we have an alaga<sup>127</sup> here. She doesn't have any clothes. Kindly bring some." Because it would be*

<sup>125</sup> While all the previously discussed ties could be labelled as co-ethnic (as they are all Filipinos), I specifically refer to connections established in the place of destination as 'co-ethnic ties' given that the basis for initiating tie formation is shared national identity – i.e. a fellow Filipino.

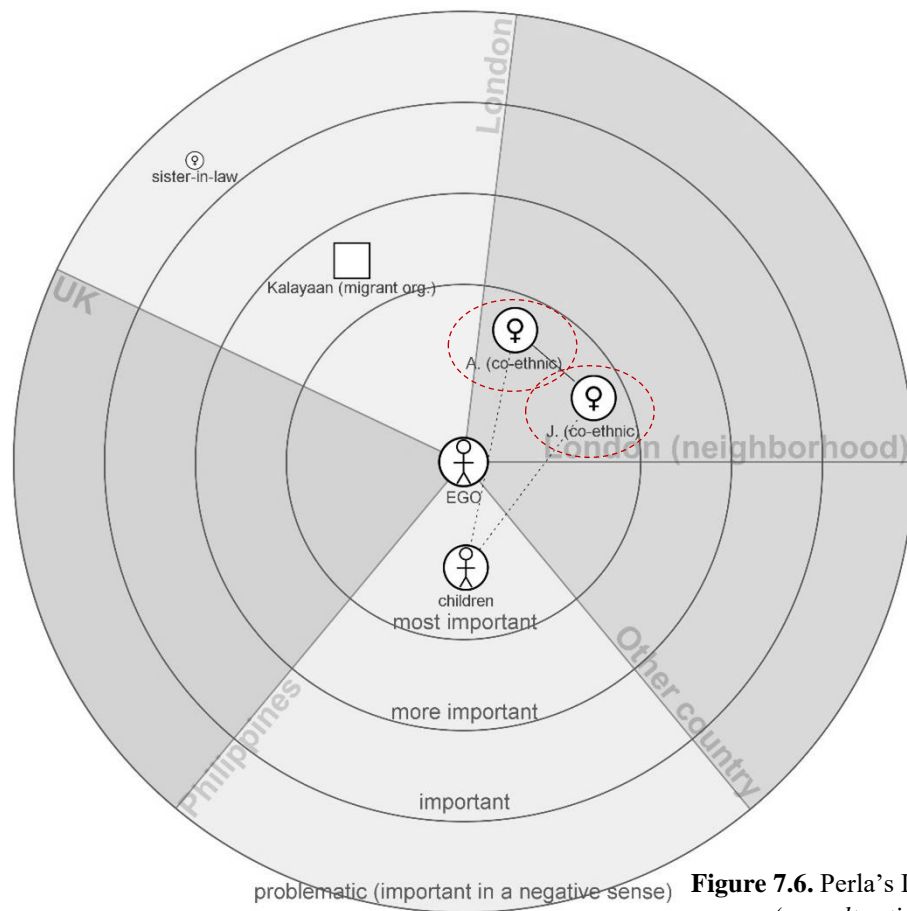
<sup>126</sup> London-based organization assisting migrant domestic workers. Refer to section *Migrant Organization*, p. 190 for a detailed discussion.

<sup>127</sup> Literally 'a person under one's care.'

*December soon, winter was coming, right? So, the next day, their friends brought a lot [of clothes]. [. . .] So, before New Year's Day, they were able to get me a job. [. . .] Until now, they are still my best friends.*

(Perla, 66 years old, retired, part-time cook, arrived in London in 1989)

As the account of Perla shows, the only thing she shared with the stranger who helped her was a common motherland. Yet, this Filipina provided for her initial needs – a shelter, clothing, and job – the kind of support one would expect from kin. Hence, Perla considered this Filipina and her friend/housemate (another Filipina) as the most important ties in her initial support network (*see* Figure 7.6). But while Perla's experience of asking help from a stranger turned out well, this is not necessarily the case for everyone.

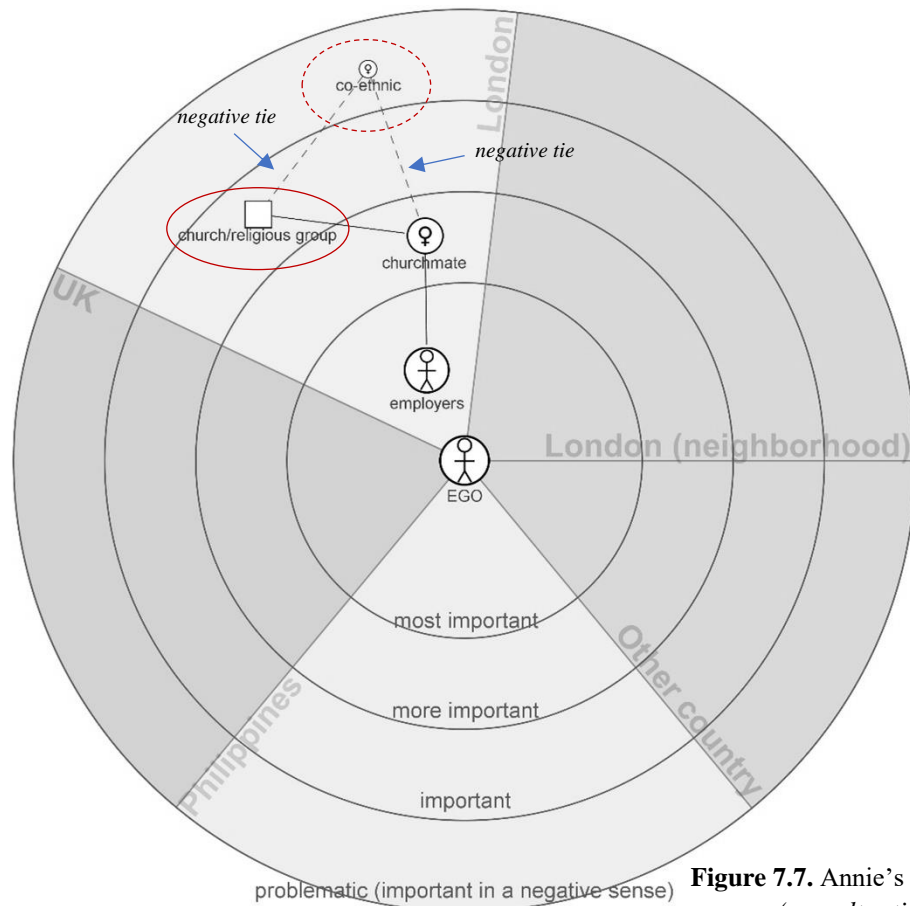


**Figure 7.6.** Perla's Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

When Annie's employer didn't pick her up in the airport after she returned from her vacation in the Philippines, she also met a Filipina whom she asked for assistance on how to use a payphone. This Filipina convinced her not to return to her employers as they were not paying her properly. She then took Annie to her place. But unlike the Filipina who helped Perla, Annie was taken as a paid domestic by the Filipina who encouraged her not to return to her employers. The Filipina told her that she would pay twice of what Annie was receiving from her employers (from £100/month to £50/week). She also told Annie that the rate in London was £200 to £250/week. So, what she promised to give her was still way below the usual salary of domestic workers in London at that time. More than that, Annie also recounted the ill treatment she received from her and her mother – from being told that she was eating a lot to being suspected of pilfering the change when they sent her to buy something, and to being accused of rumor mongering. Unlike Perla, it took Annie three months to find a job through another person – her *churchmate*. But even without a job, she was



being reminded of the rent she had to pay. Annie eventually had to move out because of a confrontation and after being told she had no shame (*walang hiya*) and had no sense of gratitude from the supposed help she received from this Filipinas. Given the two contrasting experiences of Perla and Annie, we can see how networks can both “doles out benefits and ...trouble to its members” (Bashi, 2007: 22). The case of Annie (*see* Figure 7.7) also exemplified the presence of abusive and exploitative ties in migrant’s network. Beyond the tensions and conflicts, a newcomer, who is in a vulnerable position, can be further be exploited and taken advantaged by pioneer migrants and co-ethnics (Cranford, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).



**Figure 7.7.** Annie’s Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

Co-ethnic encounters could also be fleeting, one-time meeting like those that take place in public spaces (e.g. public transportation, supermarkets, parks, etc.). These chanced encounters also rest on the recognition of each other as having something in common and such shared identity provide the basis of their interaction. In these fleeting encounters, newly-arrived migrants could also learn of available job opportunities and other practical information such as finding a money remittance center. They could also be given advice or be invited to attend a religious service.

In all of these encounters, what is common is the adherence to the notion that they all belong to a community, which transform a stranger into a *kababayan* (fellow Filipino) – for better (as in the case of Perla) or for worse (as in the case of Annie). It is perhaps in Benedict Anderson’s *imagined communities* that this dynamic can be understood. In Anderson’s (2006: 6–7) words:

It [the nation] is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. [. . .] It is imagined as a community, because, regardless of

the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.

Thus, encounters and exchanges of support among co-ethnics could be viewed as an acknowledgment of the membership of each other in the imagined Filipino community. This does not mean, however, that such exchanges and interactions (as in any other type of relations and any other migrant groups) are without conflicts and schisms. Inasmuch as respondents are drawn to ask for help and develop connections with their co-ethnics, there is also the simultaneous practice of avoiding other Filipinos out of distrust and suspicion of ulterior motives. However, as would be apparent in the subsequent discussions, seeking out or avoiding co-ethnics are also very much tied to one's occupation, socio-economic status, and legal status (Gill & Bialski, 2011; Morosanu, 2013; Roggeveen & van Meeteren, 2013). I return to the co-existence of solidarity and mistrust within the Filipino community towards the end of this chapter. Before that, I present the connections that were developed within the workplace and examine the corresponding support networks arising from the respondents' work settings in the section that follow.

## Work-Based Networks

Regardless of occupation, most of the respondents' time are spent in their workplaces and most of their initial challenges and adjustments were related to their job. Compared to other social settings and spaces (e.g. their neighborhood, associations, or church), concern and preoccupation with one's work (or finding a good one), as well as relations and interactions with one's employers or colleagues, are central to the narratives of the respondents. As their source of income and livelihood and the means to achieve their aspiration of a better life for themselves and their families, the workplace and its dynamics have been crucial in the everyday lives of the interviewees. It is therefore not surprising that ties formed within work settings have played an essential role in the respondents' post-migration experiences.

While often construed and classified as 'weak ties,' work-based contacts could also develop in strong bonds as previously discussed and as exemplified by the study of Ryan & Mulholland (2014) among the highly-skilled French migrants in London. Citing Ibarra & Deshpande (2004), they noted that "informal ties at work are not simply sources of career advancement but may also enhance job satisfaction, feelings of belonging, trust and wellbeing in the workplace" (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014: 149). In this way, the rigid dichotomy between bonding or bridging, weak or strong, and formal or informal ties may not always be as distinguishable in migrants' networking practices as they are in theory. In particular, *multiplex* ties – i.e. connections that contain more than one type of relations, such as when a colleague is also a friend and a housemate – are most visible in the workplace. Thus, work-based connections have the most potential to provide various types of support and to develop into more dynamic relations.

For this study, the comparison of low-skilled (and often isolated) migrant workers (e.g. domestics and live-in caregivers), and professionals as well as other skilled workers (e.g. nurses and support care workers in institutional settings) is an opportunity to explore varied workplaces and work relations. Though it should also be noted, as shown in Table 7.1, that work-based ties are less prominent among New York respondents.

In the discussions to follow, I examine three types of work-based ties that are prominent in the respondents' initial support networks – their employers, batchmates, and co-workers. Apart from the support and social leverage that they gained from these ties, I also look into how these connections were transformed into multiplex relations.

### *Institutional and Individual Employers*

Given the occupations and work settings of the respondents, it is necessary to distinguish two types of ties to one's employers – institutional (for nurses and support care workers in facilities) and interpersonal (for domestics and private caregivers). It is expected that the relationship of domestic workers and private caregivers to their employers is more personal – not only because they interact face-to-face, but also because they provide direct service to them. On the other hand, nurses and support care workers provide health care services to patients and clients of their employers (i.e. the hospitals or care facilities). Despite these differences, support provided by one's employer (whether an individual or an institution) to a newly-arrived migrant worker could make a lot of difference not only in the initial years but also with regard to long-term settlement. For instance, this can be illustrated with nurse and care worker respondents in London. Compared to their New York counterparts, the initial needs of nurse and support care worker respondents in London had been provided mostly by their employers upon arrival – i.e. the NHS trust or care facility where they were deployed. This means that newly-arrived nurses and care workers did not have to look for accommodation and, depending on their NHS trust or facility, they also received allowance as well as general orientation not only about their jobs but also about the place where they were deployed.<sup>128</sup>

*We had a good experience in [name of city] because they assisted us. We had hospital accommodation for two months. [ . . . ] We had food for a week, like that. So, our adjustment was okay. And then, we were given allowance. So, [it was] okay.*

(Leila, 38 years old, nurse practitioner in an NHS hospital, arrived in south east England in 2002, moved to London in 2008)

*The [representative of the] company fetched and met us at the airport. They took us in one place, like a training center. I think we stayed there for one week. They taught us all the things that we needed to do. [ . . . ] They provided really good support because we stayed in a hotel, I remember. They would teach you how to apply for your bank account, all the support was there. [ . . . ] After a week, we were brought to our workplace. In our workplace, I remember they even gave us a place where to stay. They even paid for that. They really provided very good support back then. But now, I doubt if there would be the same [support].*

(Mariel, 44 years old, former care worker in a nursing home, assistant practitioner in an NHS hospital, arrived in London in 2006)

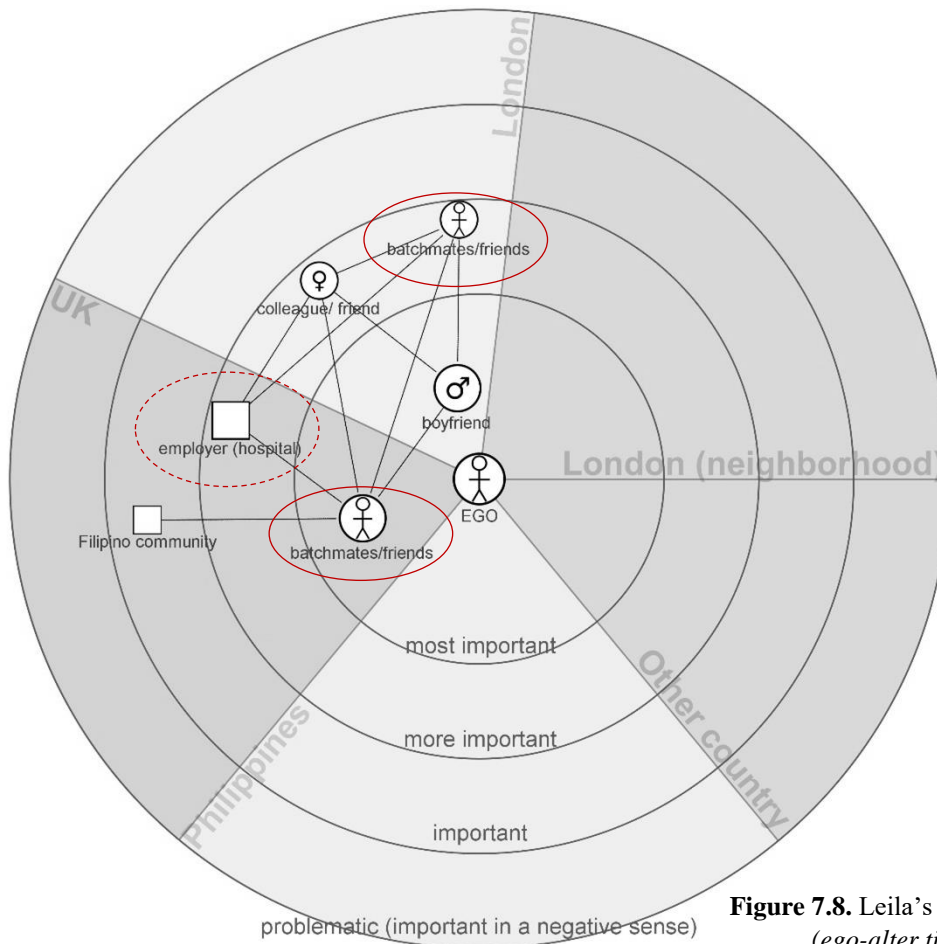
Jerry and Carlo, who were hired as support workers in a residential facility, also mentioned that the company created a 'welcome pack,' which is a detailed and practical guide about living in the city – e.g. transportation, house rules, contact numbers in case of emergencies, and even the information that the tap water is safe to drink. There was also a designated person to tour them around to familiarize themselves with the place.

Because of the level of support and assistance they received from their employers, these respondents did not have a hard time adjusting to their new lives in London, despite the lack of extensive kinship networks. It can even be argued that most family members would not have had as much resources to help as their institutional employers did. Given their positive experiences from the assistance

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<sup>128</sup> However, not all NHS trusts were able to afford the best assistance to their newly-recruited nurses – given the cuts in the NHS funding. Eliza (who was first deployed in Wales) shared that since the NHS trust that recruited her was probably trying to save money, they were first housed in a bed-and-breakfast that was supposed to be closed down. They experienced security breaches as well as unsanitary living conditions so they decided to look for another accommodation.

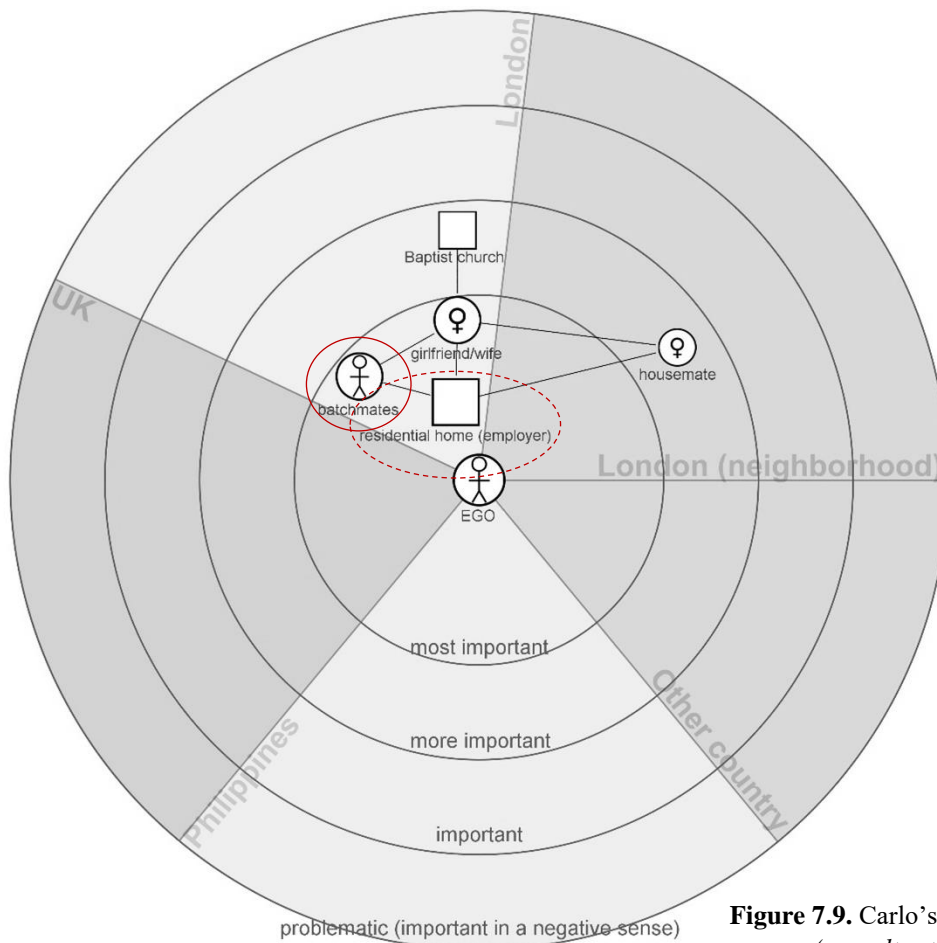
they received from their employers, these respondents considered their employers as important ties in their initial support networks (*see* Figures 7.8 & 7.9 for illustrations).



**Figure 7.8.** Leila's Initial Support Network  
(*ego-alter ties are removed*)

Such extensive support from their employers also has lasting influence in the current 'success' of these respondents, particularly apparent among support care workers. Without disregarding their human capital (educational attainment and professional training) as well as their legal status upon recruitment (having work permit instead of student or tourist visa), support care workers like Jerry and Carlo (who are now care manager and assistant care manager, respectively) tend to be in better circumstances compared to other care support workers who did not receive much help and assistance from their employers. For example, Gretchen – a senior carer in a residential facility – had to endure rendering her services for free for almost two years so that the facility would sponsor her work permit.<sup>129</sup> Though she was able to eventually find a better employer and a more stable job, she is still experiencing some financial difficulties given her initial precarious condition.

<sup>129</sup> It should also be noted that Gretchen entered the UK with a student visa. Hence, she was in a more vulnerable position as she needed employers who would sponsor her work permit. These employers (e.g. owners of care facilities) could also be exploitative as they can get away with paying so little (or none) to migrant workers like Gretchen who need a sponsor to legally stay and work in the UK. Recruiter and timing of recruitment are also essential factors. Recruiters could either connect migrants to legitimate employers or they could take advantage of the then 'popular' student visa route to earn money from unsuspecting applicants who were not informed of the restrictions and limitations of a student visa. Lastly, in 2008, the UK immigration policy has changed into points-based system, making it difficult for employers to recruit foreign workers (*see* Makulec, 2014). This confluence of factors shaped the initial and further settlement experiences



**Figure 7.9.** Carlo's Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

Being dependent on employers to ensure one's legal stay in the UK could also be expected among domestic workers whose visas are tied with the employers who brought them to the UK.<sup>130</sup> By choosing not to run away from their employers so as to avoid being undocumented, Dolores stayed with her employers who brought her to London until she got her permanent residency. She was able to wait for years because her employers moved to London permanently, unlike the employers of others whose stays were temporary. But just the same, the working conditions and salary were not ideal but she endured. With the same reason as the care workers who were former student visa holders like Gretchen – she intended to stay in the UK legally and she needed her employers to renew her visa.

*But when we were already here, they were still paying me in Hong Kong dollar. [. . .] Just because I was living with them and they knew that I could not change employer. [. . .] But when I came here, I already knew how to compare my salary with those of [. . .] my friends'. My salary was just 1/3 of theirs. [. . .] But I knew that my employer was like making me an ignorant. [. . .] Because they knew that I didn't have day off then. [. . .] I was just going to church for four years. [. . .] But I know that after four years, [. . .] "I would be able to leave you." [. . .] So, I endured that*

of the respondents, apart from the support they were able to generate through their ties. This also shows that provision of support is also dependent on larger structural contexts that could make it easier or harder for particular ties to extend assistance – as discussed in kin-based networks (Menjívar, 1997, 2000) but is also applicable to other forms of ties.

<sup>130</sup> For a detailed discussion on the historical timeline of the implementation and changes to the overseas domestic worker visa in the UK, see Mullally & Murphy (2014).

*because I didn't [want to] become an undocumented. Those who were undocumented then were having difficulty. [. . .] While their salary was higher, they could not go home [to the Philippines, for a visit].*

(Dolores, 63 years old, retired private caregiver,  
arrived in London in 1995)

Apart from low salary, she was also working more in London compared to when they were in Nigeria. This is typical for domestics who accompanied their employers in London, given that their employers could not bring the entire household staff with them.

However, there are also domestic worker respondents who stayed with their employers because they feel that they have become part of their employer's family. As Anderson (2009: 415) noted:

Domestic workers often indicated that they would like to be regarded as part of the family, and sought to develop this by giving care that they felt was appropriate to a family member. They almost invariably used the phrase as unproblematically indicating that they were treated with respect. It was never used negatively, but was considered the most desirable kind of arrangement even though it was sometimes associated with lower wages.

Norma, for instance, had been taking care of her current employers when they were still kids in Hong Kong (as she was originally employed by their parents) and she is now also looking after their children in London. As Norma would put it, "*They are family to me.*" While she knows that she is earning less compared to other domestics she knows, she also could not bear to leave her current employers.

*Another employer here wanted to get me. They were offering a big salary. [. . .] Because my salary compared to others is still low. But I am happy. [. . .] I am not complaining because I know that they know, and if I need something, they also provide. That's why I said, give and take. That's why I will take the exam for indefinite [permanent residency], maybe next week. [. . .] Maybe by then – [Rizza: If you already have an indefinite [leave to remain], you can already leave them?] Ah, that seems to be very sad for me to leave them because our lives are already attached to each other. I can still work but I want to have shorter [working] time so that I can have a rest as well.*

(Norma, 61 years old, nanny/ housekeeper, arrived in London in 2010)

Indeed, relations to one's employer could not be simply described as entirely abusive nor benevolent. Nevertheless, as Table 7.1 shows, employers were listed by half of domestic worker respondents in London as part of their initial support networks – indicating that despite the asymmetrical relations, these respondents still credited their employers for the support and assistance that they considered as useful and beneficial, particularly when they were still starting out in London. First and foremost, they were their sources of income, which allowed them to be less dependent on co-ethnics or family members. Employers could also recommend the respondents either for an extra work or as a reference when they were applying for another domestic job. For others, employers also provided emotional and practical support to the participants. For instance, Evelyn's employer arranged her playdates with other Filipina nannies so that she can have someone to talk to. Iris's first employers (after she left the employers who had accompanied her to London) referred her to their friend who was renting a studio flat. When she informed them that she cannot afford the rent, they agreed to pay half of it in exchange of one night of babysitting every week. Her employers also guided her in opening a bank account. Annie was able to share her personal

problems to her employer. In a way, he became her confidant (*see* Figure 7.7 for Annie's initial support network).

While these accounts illustrate the ambivalent relationships between the migrant workers and their employers, it is also undeniable that the varied forms of support they extended had considerable impact on the settlement experiences of the respondents.

### **Batchmates**

Apart from providing initial needs upon arrival, employers could also shape the possible ties that newcomers can develop. In the case of live-in domestic workers, employers can arrange playdates or can restrict their interactions by not allowing them to go out or to talk to other Filipinos in public places. For nurses and, to a certain extent, support care workers (predominantly in the UK), employers (and recruitment agencies) also pre-arranged access to new ties that became another source of support – albeit unintended. These are their '*batchmates*.'

In Chapter 4 (*'A Ticket to Migrate': The Recruitment of Filipino Nurses in the United States and United Kingdom*, p. 65), I have discussed how nursing staff shortages in the UK prompted the opening of its doors to non-traditional sources of foreign nurses. The *en masse* recruitment of Filipino nurses – whether in the Philippines or in intermediary countries like Saudi Arabia or Singapore – means hiring and deploying nurses in batches. This manner of recruitment created an instant *community* for the newly-hired nurses and ensured that they would not be alone – both in their new workplace and in their initial accommodation. Half of all the nurses I interviewed in London considered their batchmates as 'most important' during their adjustment period. Almost all of those who migrated through recruitment agencies listed their batchmates as part of their initial support networks. Having a batchmate upon arrival either means having a 'buddy' (as in the case of Glaiza who was deployed in the same workplace and shared the same accommodation with another Filipina) or having a 'transplanted' community (like Melissa who arrived with 49 other newly-hired nurses).

"*We had the same experiences and struggles*" was the most common reason why the respondents considered their batchmates as significant. They were viewed as fellow sufferers and fellow survivors because they went through the same period of adjustment together. Richard underlined how vital was having people who understood what he was going through while adjusting:

*And then, of course, I was telling my wife [then girlfriend] about my work, about my problems at work. She could not understand everything. Like, sometimes, part of telling your problems, I think, it's also good that the person you're talking to can also relate. So, when they talk to you, they can give advice or [share] other experiences so that you can have that sort of connection. It's also difficult to have someone who is there to only hear, listen [to what you're saying]. [...] But since we were away from each other [and] we had different worlds – she is not a nurse – she sometimes just listened. So, it's like, I already told her [my problems] but I was still sad. And, [at that] time, my friends here really became important. My batchmates.*

(Richard, 32 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in east of England in 2009, moved to London 3 months before the interview)

Hence, what amplified the importance of 'batchmates' was the feeling of disconnection from the significant people left behind – who were deemed as '*unable to understand what I'm going through*.' As we will see in the next chapter, the level of importance of batchmates decreased for most participants upon reuniting with their families or moving to a different workplace and city. But during their adjustment and initial settlement, batchmates were central in the support networks

of Filipino nurses in London. From sharing problems concerning their workplace and colleagues to sharing Friday night to eat Filipino food, sing, dance, and watch movies together, they became like a *family* – as Celeste put it – especially since they are far away from their own families.

Accommodation arrangements made by their employers also makes their bonds stronger and more intimate as they shared a flat or a house with some of their batchmates. On top of it, others are also workmates, having assigned in the same unit.

*Because one accommodation, one 12-bedroom accommodation. So, all of us are Filipinos. All of us arrived at the same time. So, that's good because your struggles were the same. You had the same concerns. So, your support system is very good because you're undergoing everything at the same time. So, our training, also the same. So, that is a very good support system. [. . .] Of course, most of the support I got is from my batchmates. [. . .] Most of them are still my friends – closest friends right now. Those who were originally from the same house. So, plus they were also my colleagues at work. So, most of that, they take – turn out to be almost family that until now, we are still together. So, they're very important.*

(Mia, 42 years old, senior staff nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in south east England in 2001, moved to London in 2014)

But despite the strong bonds they develop as their ties to their batchmates fulfill various functions (e.g. housemate, workmate, godparent to their kids, and closest friend in the place of destination), this is not to say that their relationships were conflict-free – especially in their initial years of being together. Conflicts and misunderstandings figured most prominently to those who shared accommodation because of the constant presence in each other's lives. It must be noted that they just met each other upon arriving in their place of destination. They didn't know each other in the Philippines – at most, they had seen each other while applying in the same recruitment agency – and thus, they didn't have any shared history prior to migration.

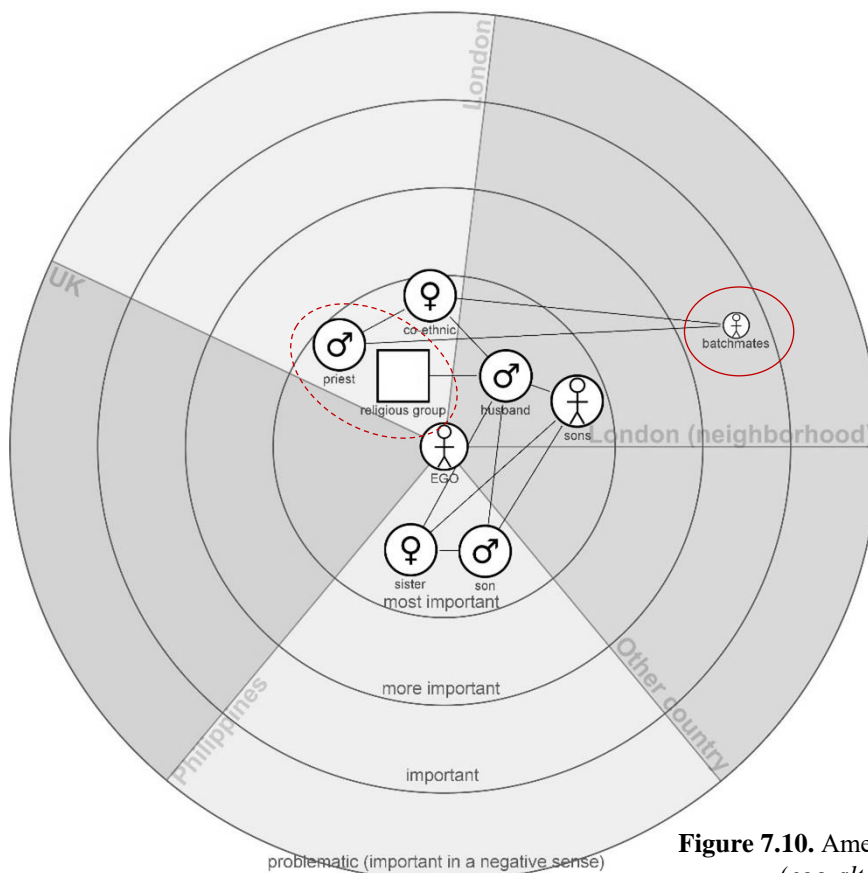
*Because they just put you together [in the hospital-provided accommodation]. You have housemates who, of course, don't get along. They have different personalities. [. . .] So, you of course need to, like anything else, [. . .] test the waters, see how it works, things like that.*

(Melissa, 41 years old, nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in south-east England in 2001, moved to London in 2007)

Having pre-dominantly ties to batchmates in the initial support networks also tend to limit the expansion of one's network – given that batchmates fulfill various roles and provide much of the support they needed that their employers could not give (e.g. companionship). This is mostly the case for nurses and support care workers in London who were recruited and deployed together with other Filipinos at the same time. It can be observed in their initial support networks that their batchmates are ranked as most to more important (for illustrations, see Figures 7.1, 7.3, 7.8, & 7.9). One of the exceptions is Amelia, a senior staff nurse in London, who, from the start, has established her ties with the church and religious group. In her network (see Figure 7.10), it can be observed that while she considered her batchmates as important, she also listed more important actors (such the priest, a co-ethnic who invited her to the church, and the church itself). Though the support given by her batchmates did not differ from those other nurses mentioned and they fulfilled the same roles similar to others, the presence of what she regarded as more significant ties made the structure and content of her network different from the others. This observation is in line with the suggestion of Ryan & Mulholland (2014: 152) “that there is a need to understand the content of ties in terms of not only the flow of resources but also of the nature of the interpersonal relationships and relative social location of the actors involved.” Following the findings in this study, I would



add that there is also a need to take into account the *perceived needs* of migrants as one of the bases of: (1) what sort of ties they intend to form and develop, and (2) how they structure their own networks given their assessment of which of type of support is more important vis-à-vis their needs at a particular point in time. In the case of Amelia, her spiritual needs took precedence over anything else. For other nurses and support care workers, the pre-arranged ties with their batchmates coupled with the assistance from their employers covered most of their needs. With regards to their jobs and work-related adjustments, some of their colleagues and mentors were also present to extend assistance and guidance. I look into this other type of work-based ties in the following section.



**Figure 7.10.** Amelia's Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

### **Colleagues, Mentors, and Co-workers**

Workplaces are not only important for migrants because of the potential ties that they can develop and alternative sources of support they can access from work-based contacts, but it is also in work settings where they can encounter (super)diversity first-hand and more intensely as their interactions with co-workers are sustained on a regular basis. This is particularly the case for those working in institutional settings – e.g. hospitals and care facilities. Thus, it is also in these settings wherein previously held stereotypes about races and ethnic groups could be strengthened or revised as they experience discrimination, conflict, or unexpected solidarity from their non-Filipino colleagues.

In London and in New York, newly-arrived migrants have to get used to dealing with people from different walks of life and who came from different parts of the globe. As Edward, a staff nurse in London, explained: “It was difficult adjusting. [. . .] Because it was multi-cultural as well. So, they

were Afro-Peruvians, there were Indians, [. . .] Spanish and Australian as well.” With this kind of environment, Michael initially had a hard time gaining the respect of his subordinates.

*We have health care assistants who are Blacks. There are also Polish. They have very strong personality that even though I am the nurse, they are bossier than me. [. . .] But, of course, that was in the beginning. When I was newly qualified. [. . .] Along the way, they were able to see that you're a credible nurse because I am proud to say that Filipinos are known to be efficient and their work is of quality. So, probably, we were able to gain their trust eventually. So, those who were bullying you at work, bossing you around, they now follow your orders. They take your suggestions into account. And then, when you get promoted, of course, they will think highly of you.*

(Michael, 29 years old, charge nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in London in 2011)

Similarly, in New York, the interviewees also shared that they had to deal with colleagues who can get upfront and appear aggressive in their interactions. In order to thrive, they mentioned that they had to learn how to hold their ground and assert themselves.

*So, my adjustment at work, at first, I was really timid, and my co-workers were bossing me around. But I'm very thankful that because of that, I became assertive. I learned how to answer in a very respectable manner. I became professional because of them. [. . .] [Rizza: So, there's also bullying at work?] Oh yes, a lot. Especially they know that you're a minority. Those who bullied me were also minorities. Asian, Indian. Majority of my co-workers are Blacks, Asians, and Jamaicans. The one who really bullied me is actually Indian. Actually, she's from Sri Lanka and . . . and Haiti. [. . .] Sorry, I don't have – I'm not prejudiced but [. . .] based on my experience.*

(Robert, 35 years old, licensed practical nurse in a nursing home, arrived in Florida in 2001; moved to New York in 2006)

*My role is a supervisor RN [registered nurse] and there are RNs and social workers reporting to me. So out of ten, 7 are Blacks, one Spanish, and 2 Russians. [...] The Blacks, I don't feel that they're respecting me. [. . .] Sometimes, they don't submit reports and I have to call their attention. [. . .] These Blacks, they are complaining that they are being discriminated but they are also discriminating other minorities. [. . .] Actually, that's my question. Is that their outlet since they cannot discriminate Whites so who's next that they can discriminate? Asians, right? So, I said, I'm really prone [to discrimination] here because I'm the only Filipino and then I am commanding them, right?*

(Arturo, 40 years old, clinical review nurse, arrived in New York in 2008)

The narratives of Robert and Arturo were going beyond the usual natives-versus-minority conflict, bringing to the fore the struggles among those in the peripheries. Arturo also mentioned his difficulties in dealing with colleagues who are Asians – Chinese, Koreans, and Indians – when he worked in a health care facility. He shared that since the Chinese and Koreans he worked with were confrontational, he learned how to shout back and answer; otherwise, “*they will never respect you. [. . .] They will look at you like you're weak.*” However, Arturo also pointed out that when he worked in retail and merchandising, he had a different experience. “*Blacks there were very friendly. Other races were very friendly.*” He suggested that how people deal with each other depends on the kind of environment they are in: “*you're dealing with costumers and then you're dictated to smile*

*always, to be friendly to the costumers” while “it’s very stressful in hospital and long-term care facility, so the dynamics are different.”*

Therefore, exposure to positive experiences concerning members of other ethnic groups allows the participants not to generalize and recognize that specific circumstances and conditions shape how people relate and behave toward each other. This does not eliminate enmity and tensions entirely but such conflicts can be seen within the confines of one’s workplace, which do not necessarily have to spill over one’s personal and civic life.

Given these challenges in the workplace, such as the conflicts that newcomers encountered at the onset, supportive *colleagues and mentors* proved to be essential. They guided them about practices in the workplace (sometimes, even practical matters concerning life in the city). For nurse respondents in London, co-workers and supervisors were instrumental during the period when they were still adaptation nurses.<sup>131</sup> They did not only welcome them as newly-hired nurses but also advise them concerning their career trajectories (e.g. moving to London for those who were initially deployed in other parts of the UK or taking up further studies). Thus, apart from batchmates, these colleagues and mentors were also listed as part of their initial support networks. For example, Gemma (*see* Figure 7.11 for her network map) – who is now a team lead specialist nurse in an NHS clinic – was encouraged, trained, and pushed by her former German manager to do more and achieve more professionally (e.g. by taking up further studies). As Gemma put it, “*To what I am now . . . I owe everything to her.*”

What the case of Gemma exemplified is that social leverage (or ‘getting ahead’; Briggs, 1998) does not only entail “access to information and resources beyond those available in their own social circle” – i.e. the benefit commonly associated to weak ties (Granovetter, 1983: 209). Emotional support, encouragement, and mentoring could lead to realization of one’s potential that make way for people to also get ahead in one’s career.

As for their co-ethnics, I have previously mentioned how conflict and solidarity can co-exist between and among Filipinos. Apart from frictions among batchmates, there were also accounts of conflicts and competitions between newly-arrived nurses and old-timers. This is not only exclusive among nurses or Filipinos. And as Melissa pointed out, this also happens in hospitals in the Philippines.

*That’s the work culture in the Philippines. [. . .] Like there’s a caste system that when you’re new, you need to go through a lot, something like that. Prove yourself before you get accepted. It’s like Filipinos brought that [culture] here as well.*

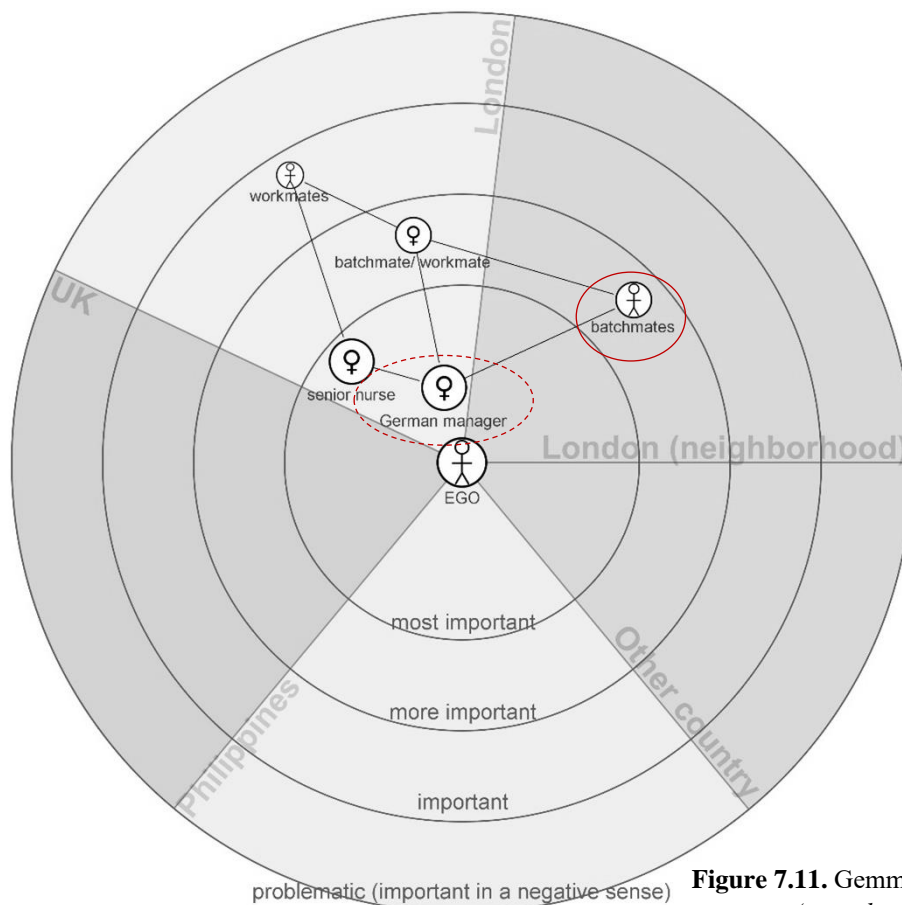
(Melissa, 41 years old, nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in south-east England in 2001, moved to London in 2007)

Melissa also mentioned that it seems like there are Filipinos who have elitist thinking. They are those who came from supposedly best hospitals in Manila and they tend to have preordained judgments for both Filipinos and non-Filipino newcomers. Hence, they can also be discriminating, especially when they have been in the same unit for a long time. In situations like this, some of their Filipino colleagues also served as a bridge for them to get ‘accepted’ as part of the group. This is mostly the case for those who moved to London from the countryside as they no longer had their

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<sup>131</sup> Aliyah, an adaptation nurse who arrived in July 2014, explained that before getting their registration number (meaning that they are registered to practice as a nurse in the UK), they need to undergo an adaptation programme that can last between 3 to 12 months depending on the decision of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). As adaptation nurses, they are supervised in the ward where they work and they also need to attend an Overseas Nurses Programme course at an approved university in the UK for few weeks.

batchmates and they were entering a workplace (alone), where friendships and camaraderie had already been formed prior to their arrival.



**Figure 7.11.** Gemma's Initial Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

The arrival of new batch of recruits could be seen as a threat by old timers in the workplace. For instance, Carlo's Filipino colleagues in the residential facility were not welcoming nor helpful, which was not what they were expecting from fellow Filipinos.

*Discrimination, not really. But more on, we became like a threat [...] to other Filipinos. [...] Because they came here years before [us]. [...] They were from Israel. [...] So, we really didn't know why. [...] Perhaps, during that time, there were a lot of overtime [work]. [...] They lost that because [...] there were already new staff. Because they used to be short staffed before.*

(Carlo, 40 years old, asst. care manager in a residential home, arrived in London in 2007)

Later on, Carlo found out the primary reason for the cold reception he initially received from his fellow Filipinos. Apart from the threat of losing their extra income from overtime work, they also felt threatened that they would be replaced by the new batch of care support workers the company recruited. In 2006, the immigration law changed concerning the application for permanent residency – from four years, it became five years of continuous residence in the UK. Earlier batches of care workers were given four years of work visa so they also felt threatened that they would not be given an extension and would be replaced instead. It was only after their fears were assuaged (i.e. after being given the extension and eventually being able to apply for permanent residency)

that their attitudes and relationships toward the new batch of Filipino care workers improved. This shows how insecurity about one's legal status can affect relations and exacerbate mistrust among co-ethnics.

Thus, relationships to Filipinos and non-Filipino colleagues were described by the respondents as both conflictive and rewarding. This suggests that inasmuch as support could be generated from ties in their workplaces, such relations could also spell troubles and difficulties – especially to a newcomer.

In the last part of this chapter, I expand the discussion of initial support networks to include ties to institutions, groups, or organizations that newly-arrived migrants were able to forge and establish beyond their interpersonal relations.

## Relevant Institutional Actors

Apart from institutional employers, three institutional ties are also prominent in the respondents' initial support networks – church and religious group, Filipino groups and communities, and migrant organization, particularly *Kalayaan*. While migrant institutions such as recruitment and placement agencies<sup>132</sup> predominantly figured in their pre-migration networks that enabled their movements, these three institutional ties became sources of valuable assistance for newly-arrived migrants – particularly in the context of vulnerability and lack of (initial) access to supportive interpersonal ties such as kin, friends, and co-workers.

As what has been emphasized in the case of institutional employers, organizational ties have the potential to provide immense support given the resources at their disposal. However, it must also be noted that institutions have also different levels and capacities to support newcomers (as in the case of the different experiences of nurse respondents in the UK with regard to their initial NHS trusts). Limitations and constraints concerning the provision of support could also be induced by changing immigration policy as what will be shown in the case of migrant domestic worker organization, *Kalayaan*. Nevertheless, the help generated from these institutions have undoubtedly changed the lives of some respondents, especially when the assistance has been focused on regularizing their legal status and right to stay and work in the place of destination.

### *Migrant Organization*

Apart from chanced encounters with co-ethnics, my interviews with some Filipino domestic workers in London who escaped their former employers have been consistent in their references to an organization that they heard were supporting escapees like them. The organization, *Kalayaan* (a Filipino term for *freedom*), has its roots on the migrant domestic worker organization, *Waling-Waling* (a Philippine orchid endemic to Mindanao<sup>133</sup>, a major island in the southern region of the archipelago), and was established in 1987 through the efforts of migrant domestic workers themselves and their supporters (Anderson, 2010; Mullally & Murphy, 2014).<sup>134</sup>

In my interview with *Kalayaan*'s Community Advocate staff, Catherine Kenny, she summarized how recently arrived or recently escaped migrant domestic workers found their way to their office or even became aware of the presence of the organization.

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<sup>132</sup> As shown in Table 7.1, some respondents still listed their recruitment agencies post-migration as providing or arranging initial accommodation, indicating that t also listed – there are still placement agencies

<sup>133</sup> Mindanao is located in the southern region of the Philippine archipelago.

<sup>134</sup> For a more detailed history of these organizations, see Anderson (2010).

*I suppose the name is out there and sometimes we have situations where clients come and . . . they've met somebody in the street, they've met this other Filipino on the street, and that Filipino had said, "There's an organisation called Kalayaan. You should try them." Or sometimes, . . . they're working in a household and the domestic worker that's there already knows about Kalayaan or . . . they make friends somehow and they know through that. [. . .] Although the Home Office supposedly give out this leaflet with our name on it . . . the majority of people coming to us, telling us . . . that they know about Kalayaan, 'cause we ask them that question, "How do you know about Kalayaan?" and they all say through friends. So, whether those are friends as in somebody that they know a long time or an acquaintance or whatever, that's how they know us.*

Indeed, those domestic worker participants who listed *Kalayaan* in their support network maps were referred to the organization in the ways Catherine mentioned. Perla, who arrived in London in 1989, became active in the campaign for the regularization of undocumented migrant domestic workers and for their rights as workers to be recognized (see Anderson, 2000, 2010; Figure 7.6 for her network map). Others sought advice and information concerning their legal status and were assisted in regularizing their stay in the UK. For Myrna, it was the first place she went to after running away, a safe place as Catherine would call it. Hence, for Myrna, it is also where she made her initial contacts and connections who helped her by providing initial accommodation and employment. Manuel also found his initial connection through the job postings on *Kalayaan*'s bulletin board. Through that, he was able to contact a placement agency for domestic workers that was being run by a Filipina. This Filipina, in turn, not only provided him with job opportunities but also linked him to her family and church. As a safe space, the organization also allowed migrant domestic workers to connect to each other and share resources and information.

From a self-help, self-organized group that was primarily focused on mobilizing and campaigning for migrant domestic workers' rights, "Kalayaan had become a professionalized registered charity offering 'advice, advocacy and support' and widely recognized both inside and outside government as able to provide expert advice on issues around the migrant domestic worker visa" (Anderson, 2010: 69). While *Kalayaan* has provided community support such as English classes, legal advice, and dissemination of job opportunities, Catherine also mentioned that recent changes with the immigration policy concerning the domestic worker visa also limit what they can do vis-à-vis what the migrant domestic worker needs:

*I mean, there are other things that they really need that we cannot provide. I mean, in terms of their legal status, nobody can really do anything about that now since the law has changed. So, they end up, you know, hoping to come to the UK, hoping to work here in the UK, support the families back at home but unfortunately then they . . . after they, you know, they ran away from their employer or after the end of 6 months, that's it. They can't do anything else. So, since it's like that, we can give them some legal advice but basically, it's telling them, "You don't have much of a hope, to be honest," you know that? That kind of thing. [. . .] We can do very, very little for them if they ran away from that employer. [. . .] In terms of their legal situation, they can't renew their visa. [. . .] There's a few roundabout things. We can refer people who're victims of trafficking to the national firm mechanism but it's the kind of roundabout process that doesn't really lead to a lot. It's kind of a sticking plaster rather than any permanent solution for, for them. So, you know we have people coming in and... and it's quite... it's quite a desperate situation.*

Thus, while the organization could assist those who entered the UK prior to the implementation of the changes in the domestic worker visa<sup>135</sup> (such as assistance with the renewal of visa or application for permanent residency), they could not do so much for those who arrived after the changes had taken place. This situation illustrates how immigration policies could undermine the capability of organizations to support migrants, in addition to the adverse impact of such policies on the migrants themselves.

### ***Church and Religious Group***

Another presumed safe space and refuge for migrants are churches and faith-based groups. In particular, newly-arrived migrants who did not have extensive support networks in the place of destination and were in vulnerable (at times, desperate) circumstances found sanctuary in churches and in participating in religious activities. As Table 7.1 shows, domestic worker respondents tend to include churches in their initial support networks. Indeed, church and religion can be seen as part of migrants' coping strategies to manage loneliness, insecurity, and dislocation that comes with migration and separation from one's family back home (Ahmed, 2010; Ley, 2008; Parreñas, 2001; Sheringham, 2013). The account of Sara (*see* Figure 7.12 for her network map), a domestic worker in London who recently escaped her former employer, captures this role of the church in the survival of newcomers:

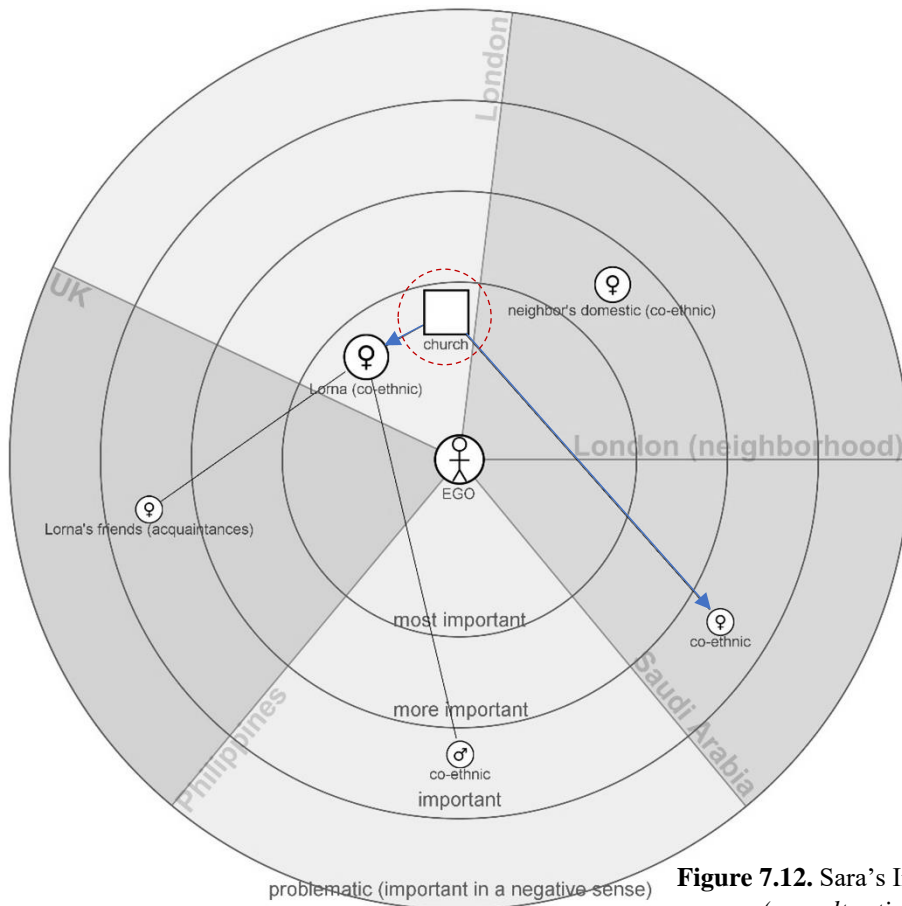
*Of course, important, that is most important [church] because of course, if you have problems, you just go there, you just pray that you will not be forsaken. Like that. [Rizza: Were you like that in the Philippines? Or [are you] more [religious] here?] More here because at least in the Philippines, you have a lot of people you can turn to [in case you need help]. Here, you will really find it difficult because it's your first time. So, you have no one, but then if I go to church, somehow, you're able to let out [what you're feeling]. Because every time I was able to get out of the house [of the employer], I felt like a bird out of a cage [both laugh]. The first place that I would really go to was really the church, as in. I really wanted to pray first there and then if ever I would be able to meet other friends there, then, that's okay, right?*

(Sara, 42 years old, part-time housekeeper,  
arrived in London in Mar 2014)

It is not unusual for migrants to become more committed to practicing their faith after migration (Sheringham, 2013), especially in the context of isolation and vulnerability. On the other hand, there are also respondents who were already committed to their local church prior to their migration and, thus, seeking connections with their church in the place of destination could be seen as a continuation of such commitment and practice.

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<sup>135</sup> Mullally & Murphy (2014: 412) summarized these changes as following: "A series of changes to the Immigration Rules applicable to domestic workers came into effect on 6 April 2012. Against the trend of expanding human rights norms for migrant domestic workers, the reforms introduced significantly increase the precariousness of the migrant domestic worker's position. Domestic workers are now permitted to enter and stay in the United Kingdom for a maximum period of six months only. Critically, the right to change employer was removed, as was the possibility of sponsoring dependants and seeking longer term settlement in the United Kingdom."



**Figure 7.12.** Sara’s Initial Support Network<sup>136</sup>  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

Churches and religious groups also became spaces where migrant domestic workers can expand their networks and be a part of a community. For instance, Sara and Lorna, another domestic worker in London, got to know each other while attending a mass. They became close friends and each other’s constant companion afterwards. Churches, in this sense, acquired a practical function for migrant domestic workers. Their role as a space for interactions and building relationships have become vital in the lives of these participants in addition to the support and assistance that they provide (see, for example, Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003; Ley, 2008; Nakonz & Shik, 2009; Kivisto, 2014). They also attend masses and activities in churches and religious groups regardless of their religions. Lorna and Sara considered themselves as Catholics but they also attended an evangelical Protestant church “to socialize.” While there are migrants who would totally convert into a different religion or denomination given exposure to new beliefs and space to question old ones (Constable, 2010), there are also those like Sara and Lorna who straddle between participating in a different denomination and maintaining their Catholic belief. Such flexibility allows migrants to have diverse uses of different denominations (and of religion and church) depending on their needs (Sheringham, 2013). Most common among those who are attending and participating in the activities of different denominations and religious groups is the need to socialize and meet other people. Others were introduced to a new religious group or denomination by co-ethnics who took them in after running away from their employers.

<sup>136</sup> The two co-ethnics currently located in the Philippines and Saudi Arabia were fellow Filipinos that Sara met in London. The one went back to the Philippines for good while the other one returned to Saudi Arabia together with her employers.



Aside from feeling of belongingness and companionship, ties to church and religious group could also help migrants access practical support such as job leads and regularization of legal status (*see also* Holgate, 2013). For instance, Geraldine (a domestic worker in London), whose mother is a member of Jehovah's Witnesses, also considered her mother's church as important as they helped her to find jobs, recommending her to possible employers. Ester (a private caregiver in New Jersey) was sponsored by her church as a religious worker – regularizing her stay in the US. In this way, churches and faith-based groups have become one of the important institutional ties for newly-arrived migrants as they serve various roles and provide diverse types of support that go beyond their intended (religious) function.

### *Filipino Community*

Newly-arrived migrants may also find established Filipino communities, either as formal organization or informal groups, in the place of destination. These communities could also be tied to religious institutions, such as parish churches or other faith-based groups, and has extended similar support – a place where respondents could develop new connections and learn new information such as job opportunities. For instance, a couple Luis and Marie (both nurses) have been assisted by the Filipino group that was introduced by their aunts when they moved to New Jersey from New York. It could also be recalled that Nicole (earlier in this chapter, *Old Friends in New Places*, p. 169) who came to New York as a toddler, shared that their lives got better when they moved from Queens to Staten Island, where her father's classmate from the Philippines introduced them to an extensive Filipino community that provided various supports from babysitting to companionship. Likewise, newly-arrived nurses in London mentioned that Filipino groups in their place of deployment gave them practical tips about the place or where to buy Filipino food and ingredients. They also organized welcome parties for them. However, for Filipino nurses in London, their worlds tend to revolve around their work and batchmates. Their batchmates served as their transplanted community and provided most of their initial needs as their main support network. Thus, they mostly did not develop stronger connections with the larger Filipino groups and communities in their areas of deployment. Some also mentioned avoiding rumors and conflicts, which can be prevalent in such groups.

On the other hand, some domestics in London also expressed a certain level of hostility toward other Filipinos, often nurses, whom they perceived as snobs who act as if they were above them. Comparing their experiences with fellow Filipinos in Hong Kong or in the Middle East, they were often surprised when their friendly greetings were not returned. Those who are undocumented were often told not to talk too much and get too friendly with other Filipinos as they might cause trouble.

*I was told [by my aunt and her friends] not to tell my situation [as an undocumented] because that would get me to trouble. Because they said, the cause of trouble here is envy. Because they would think that you have a job and those who have papers here do not have work. It is difficult for them to [find] work. I said, "why would it be difficult for them to find a job if they are not choosy?" Because there are those who do not want to do housekeeping [. . .] and would rather do a nanny job since your focus is just the kid and you would not clean [the house].*

(Patricia, 33 years old, nanny/housekeeper/part-time cashier, arrived in London in 2014)

However, mistrust and suspicions as well as distancing are relational dynamics not exclusive among Filipinos. Morosanu (2013) had similar observations among young Romanians in London and Gill & Bialski (2011) found the same dynamics among Poles in the UK (*see* Chapter 2, *Conflictive and Exploitative Migrant Networks*, p. 26). One can say that social divisions and cleavages in the country of origin are carried over in the place of destination, especially in places like London and

New York that attract migrants in both low-status and high-status occupations. Morosanu (2013) highlighted that mistrust and negative experiences with co-ethnics have led to such distancing and avoidance. Similarly, Filipino care workers in New York also articulated conflicts and mistrust within the Filipino community (and even within their families, as I have discussed in the first part of this chapter):

*You should be careful on whom to trust. Especially, you're in a Filipino community. Sometimes, in Filipino communities, there's crab mentality. They're talking good about you in front, but once you step back. [. . .] I only found out that sometimes, Filipinos, whenever something good happens to me, they're not too happy for me. That they also wish they get the same achievement, like jealousy. [Rizza: But is it within your own family, relatives?] No, it's from a different crowd. My co-workers and other Filipino people that I met [at] work and church as well.*

(Marvin, 25 years old, student, part-time home health aide, arrived in New York in 2014)

*My friends are limited because I am not too friendly. I am friendly but before becoming friends with someone, I first need to get to know them well – since, you know, sometimes people from the Philippines can be envious, there are those. That's why I first look closely, especially since I don't have papers, right? That's why it's difficult. [. . .] Sometimes your fellow Filipinos would lead you to trouble. That's why I am also very cautious.*

(Nora, 54 years old, private caregiver in Long Island; part-time nanny and housekeeper in Manhattan; arrived in New York in 2010)

Marvin also qualified that conflict is a feature of Filipino communities in other parts of the world as well, just like in Saudi Arabia where he grew up. The only difference he found is that Filipinos in New York are more stressed out and, thus, the potential for and intensity of conflicts are greater. Likewise, Efren also pointed out that in any ethnic group, one can always encounter people who have undesirable habits and behaviors. Arguing against idealizing the ethnic community, Werbner (1990) emphasized the internal divisions and power struggles within them. In the case of Filipino communities overseas, the overlapping existence of solidarity and conflict has been noted by Liebelt (2011) among Filipino elderly caregivers in Israel as well as by Hosoda (2013) among various Filipino groups in the United Arab Emirates. As previously mentioned, solidarity and conflict co-exist within Filipino communities in the same way that migrant networks, in general, can be supportive, exploitative, and conflictive (Bashi, 2007; Menjivar, 2000).

As Catherine (from Kalayaan) pointed out, while “*there's much more support in the Filipino community [. . .] in a way that wouldn't happen in other communities,*” but, at the same time, they have also documented cases of exploitation and abuse within these communities, where pioneer migrants would take advantage of the vulnerable position of newcomers (*see* Cranford, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).

The last point that should also be put forward is that while respondents in all occupations would mention wanting to avoid interacting too much among their co-ethnics and larger Filipino community because of mistrust and the possibility that such relations could be abusive or overbearing, those who are the most vulnerable and in lower position (e.g. undocumented are also the ones who have no choice but to associate with their co-ethnics (Gill & Bialski, 2011). In this study, nurses could afford not to interact and get involved with the Filipino community because they are in a better financial situation, have regular immigration status, and other sources of support they can access. The articulated hostility or wariness of some domestics toward nurses

(characterized as ‘snobs’) also creates strong segmentation along old and new cleavages, such as socio-economic (Gold, 2001) and legal status (Roggeveen & van Meeteren, 2013). In this way, apart from social support and leverage (Briggs, 1998; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003), migrant networks could also reproduce inequality through exclusionary mechanisms – i.e. as network members keep outsiders out (Portes, 1998), while non-members avoid the networks of higher status co-ethnics for fear of discrimination (Gold, 2001).

## Summing Up: Survival, Mobility, and Ambivalent Connections

Post migration, newly-arrived migrants had to contend with difficulties associated with resettlement and, depending on their mode of entry, had to activate and mobilize pre-existing ties or establish new ones that could provide or assist with their needs.

It has been shown how initial challenges and available resources were shaped by respondents’ migration pathways (e.g. direct or onward migrants; accompanied by employers or recruited by agencies) and pre-migration networks (pre-dominantly kin-based or institutional ties). For instance, those who entered the US or the UK with work permits did not have to worry about regularization of one’s legal status compared to those who entered through tourist or student visas.

However, it has also been emphasized throughout this chapter that networks do not exist as a given and that it is not always the case that migrants can readily access existing ties to generate support and assistance. This is most apparent in kinship ties in the place of destination. Reliance on *familial ties* as sources of initial support upon arrival is expected given the strong sense of obligations regulating the dynamics of kin-based relations. As mentioned, assistance and support from relatives in the place of destination are considered as ‘natural,’ expected, and automatic. But this is assuming that relatives have the capacity and are in the position to provide continued support to newly-arrived immigrants (Menjivar, 1997, 2000). Assistance from kin can also be discontinued due to familial conflict and can therefore exacerbate the hardships for those in more vulnerable positions – in this case, domestic worker participants and private care workers. Accounts of participants in New York and London also illustrated that familial ties can also be abusive and exploitative. Norms of reciprocity as well as Filipino notions of *hiya* (embarrassment or sense of propriety) and *utang na loob* (commonly translated as debt of gratitude) were also shown to exert considerable pressure on respondents to give back and not to overburden their relatives.

For participants in London, who mostly did not have pre-existing familial ties there, the initial settlement experiences diverged considerably from their New York counterparts. For nurse participants, the contrasting experiences of those in London and New York centered on the difference between migrating through the assistance of a recruitment agency and those who migrated through familial ties in the US. While most nurses in New York had to look for a job and initially stayed in relatives’ places, those in London were recruited by hospitals or nursing homes before moving to the UK, and had pre-arranged accommodations upon arrival. Nurses in London were also recruited and deployed in batches, and thus they also had instant communities or groups who were their constant companions in their initial years in the UK. With regard to domestic worker participants, those in London were mostly accompanied by their employers, and those who ran away from these employers either relied on total strangers or former co-workers (who escaped before them) for help as they tried to get by in their initial years in London. Being in this vulnerable position, recently escaped migrant domestic workers can stumble upon supportive co-ethnic ties who would ensure their survival, or abusive ties who can exploit them further. Institutional actors – such as organizations assisting migrant domestic workers and churches or religious groups – were vital not only for the instrumental support that they provided, but also for serving as a social space where domestic worker respondents were able to meet other people and, therefore, expand their

networks. Lastly, care workers in London employed in various settings exhibited diverse settlement experiences and support networks. Those who were recruited and deployed in residential and nursing homes had the same settlement pattern as most Filipino nurses in London. Their employers provided for most of their basic needs and their batchmates became their constant companions. Those who entered the UK through student visas experienced difficulties in maintaining their visa or converting it to work permits. Having limited networks, they had endured harsh and abusive working conditions to stay legally in the UK. The third group is comprised of former domestic workers who transitioned to care work and thus shared similar settlement experiences with other domestic worker participants in London. Apart from those who had extensive familial ties in London, these care workers had also relied on co-ethnics and former co-workers when they left their employers whom they accompanied to the UK.

Thus, in instances when familial support cannot cover all the help needed by the participants, migrants had to activate other connections or build new ones. In this context, assistance from other actors like friends, colleagues, acquaintances, employers, and institutions became vital not only for survival but also for improving one's social and economic conditions as they provide better employment opportunities and ways to regularize their immigration status. This is not to say that support from familial ties could not lead to upward mobility – as in when family members relieve migrant mothers of their domestic duties so that they can pursue further studies or career advancement. Furthermore, well-connected and strategically positioned relatives could also connect migrants to opportunities and other beneficial social contacts, highlighting the importance of the social position of one's ties (Lin, 1999). Therefore, besides the potential of weak ties to connect migrants to new contacts or provide novel information, the social position of ties, whether weak or strong, could also generate social leverage for migrants. This suggests that solely focusing on the type of ties or size of the network could miss the dynamic process of networking strategies and mobilization of support from one's networks. Following the concept of network complementarity (Uzzi, 1999) and recognizing the particularities of migrants' circumstances (e.g. human capital, socio-economic status and occupation, or legal status), the focus should be on how migrants combine support generated from different ties vis-à-vis their (perceived) needs at a given time. Indeed, their attempts at sustaining and forging ties could also lead to support, leverage, or even troubles and abuse.

In addition, it should also be emphasized that forging new ties requires effort both on the part of the migrants and those that they are intending to build relationships with (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014; Schapendonk, 2015). However apart from the willingness, resources, and agentic actions, network formation also depends on the social spaces that migrants can access and where they could interact with potential connections. As Ryan & Mulholland (2014: 152) noted:

Building new relationships requires opportunities. These processes of network formation do not occur in a vacuum, but reside in specific social structures and locations. [ . . . ] Migrants cannot always or easily access networks of their choosing. They may encounter unexpected obstacles. Opportunities to access networks may be limited to particular areas of social life.

Constraints on networking strategies and practices of newly-arrived migrants has been exemplified among those who are tied to strictly enforced obligations governing familial support exchanges. As newcomers try to reciprocate familial support received, they can also lose opportunities to create new ties (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003). Likewise, it has been shown that initial connections made could also limit subsequent tie formation – as in the case of nurse respondents who had primary connections to their batchmates, or those domestic workers who were taken in by their co-ethnics (and became embedded in the networks of these co-ethnics). In this sense, network formation also exhibits some sort of path dependency. But, as what subsequent chapter will also discuss, changes

in life circumstances of migrants could also change their networks (e.g. relocation, job changes, or marital dissolution).

Overall, this chapter illustrates and reiterates what has been emphasized in the previous chapters – the *undesirable effects of social capital* (Cranford, 2005; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes, 1998; Portes & Landolt, 2000; Portes, 2014); *conflictive* and *exploitative migrant networks* (Bashi, 2007; Gill & Bialski, 2011; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Morosanu, 2013; Menjivar, 1997; 2000; Offer, 2012); and, *differential* and *unequal access to resources* (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Gold, 2001; Hagan, 1998; Roggeveen & van Meeteren, 2013). As what had been emphasized throughout this chapter, solidarity, tensions, and mistrust can co-exist within Filipino communities, and at the same time, familial ties and kinship networks can be supportive, conflictive, and exploitative. It is therefore necessary to articulate and flesh out these ambivalences in discussing support networks to avoid overly emphasizing and romanticizing migrant networks. In the next chapter, the attention shifts from how migrant networks operate to the changes in migrant networks over time. Inasmuch as we cannot simply assume that resources automatically flow between and among ties, it is also necessary to examine and look closely into how these ties are maintained or transformed under varying contexts and circumstances.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# On the Pursuit of ‘Success’ and Network Evolution: *Future Imaginaries and Changes in the Networks of Filipinos in New York and London*

### Introduction

It has been discussed and emphasized in the preceding chapters how migration is seen as a means and representation of having a good life. This theme is intimately intertwined in the participants’ pre-migration narratives as they imagined their future selves in the places of destination. In this chapter, I take stock of continuities and discontinuities in how notions of ‘success’ and ‘good life’ were articulated and constructed as participants stay longer in these cities. To what extent can they say that they are satisfied with how their migration trajectories and settlement experiences turned out? I discuss how financial stability, career mobility, and job satisfaction could be shaped not only by the kind of occupation but also by legal status, family situation, and opportunity structures in their workplaces and in society, in general.

Apart from economic integration, it is also interesting to find out to what extent participants feel a sense of belonging in what they considered as their ingroup. Ingroup can be as exclusive as pertaining to family and relatives, or to close friends and colleagues. This can be seen as the migrants’ current networks, which can transcend national borders and include actors in one’s country of origin or elsewhere in the globe. However, ingroup may also refer to organizations and groups that they are a part of, formally or informally. These can include church and religious groups, as well as ethnic-based and professional organizations in New York or London (*see*, for example, Min, 2001; Zhou, 2001; Hirschman, 2004; Cordero-Guzmán, 2005; Foner & Alba, 2008; Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009; Ryan, 2011). On a much larger scale (and a much less defined boundaries), becoming and being part of American or British ‘society’ while maintaining connections to one’s homeland is another dimension of belongingness that participants’ narratives touched on. These narratives revealed interesting issues pertaining to belongingness, exclusion, and civic life of immigrants – such as a sense of belonging and feeling of exclusion that is rooted in one’s work, financial security, and legal status.

The second part of this chapter examines the formation and dissolution of ties in migrant networks over time. Such shifts in the participants’ networks are discussed in conjunction with the changes in migrants’ circumstances, particularly life course events and transitions. The impact of immigration policies and migration pathways on network development is also explored as they foster particular connections and limit others. Occupations and legal status are also explored as possible factors that may hinder networking as they restrict spaces that migrants can access. Finally, the persistence and maintenance of transnational ties are discussed in relation to familial obligation and imaginaries of eventual return to one’s homeland. Examining migrants’ transnational ties also shows the importance of going beyond the sending-receiving countries framework to include intermediary destinations. The flow of various forms of support from one’s homeland as well as from other countries where relevant ties are located suggests a more complex picture of transnational engagements.

## Continuities and Discontinuities in Future Imaginaries: What, Where, When, and With Whom?

“That’s why you came here – you want to earn more, have a business, and be able to invest [in the Philippines].” How the future has been imagined by most Filipino migrants, my interviewees in particular, can be captured by this statement of a nurse participant in London. Indeed, as has been discussed throughout this dissertation, the image of a good life that can only be attained if one leaves the homeland figures predominantly in the narratives of Filipinos in New York and London. However, for migrant and non-migrants alike, economic prosperity as a legitimate goal in one’s lifetime (and for the next generations) is deeply embedded in cultural scripts. For instance, the American dream is emblematic of such culturally-defined goal and its pursuit is internalized and normalized.

Although the goal of monetary success or financial security may be overemphasized as the central feature of the American Dream, it is undeniable that visions of economic opportunity can be a powerful lure for those whose legitimate opportunities are limited or, simply, those whose imaginations are captured by it. (Hauhart, 2016: 258).

As mentioned, the lure is strong for Filipinos as overseas migration has been a foremost representation of attaining economic success and upward mobility – concretized by the ability to consume desired goods and services. As Guevarra (2010: 115) puts it, “if the ‘American dream’ is supposed to represent the ‘good life,’ what it seems to ultimately promise Filipinos is a life of materialism and conspicuous consumption.” Desires and fantasies related to the pursuit of the American dream are reproduced and internalized through the images of ‘success stories’ in various forms of media and shared by migrant returnees (*balikbayan*). Gorospe (2007: 296) summarizes the intersections of the perpetuation of the American dream, Filipino migration, and the desire for eventual return:

Because of the colonial experience, the impact of Western media, and the reports of those who have gone overseas and have come back loaded with the trappings of consumerism, Filipinos have been shaped by the story of the American dream. Thus, they continue to leave in droves in pursuit of economic prosperity, upward mobility, and the freedom to buy what they want. In the pursuit of this dream, they go back repeatedly to work abroad, and if an opportunity opens, decide to settle permanently outside the country, despite their longing to go home. Moreover, they perpetuate this story by their glowing reports of life overseas, which brackets out their humiliating experiences, and by sending home the symbol of success—US dollars and foreign-made consumer items.

Sociologically, (present) actions are seen as oriented toward desired goals (i.e. constructions of the future). In this sense, future imaginaries structure current actions as they provide meanings and directions. Take the case of sending money in the Philippines to build houses that migrants, for the most part of their lives, are unlikely to live in. As Aguilar (2009) points out, this might seem an irrational action at the onset. However, the said action becomes meaningful and purposeful if we take into account the aim of attaining social mobility in one’s hometown and the future image of oneself returning home fulfilled and successful. Thus, while future orientations and representations are under-researched in migration studies (Boccagni, 2017), examining them makes for fertile ground in advancing our understanding of migration trajectories as well as of migrants’ lived experiences and current practices.

In this section, imaginaries of the future are presented in three dimensions. The first part deals with the commonly-held goal of chasing success and seeking good life in the context of migration. This answers that ‘what’ and the ‘where’ of imagined futures – typically, a life of comfort and prosperity back in the Philippines. I argue that this view of the future is consistent and, by and large, structures current actions and immediate plans as well as provides meaning for the continued presence in a ‘foreign’ land. What is subject to change is the means and details pertaining to this future – particularly, deferred return or onward migration. Thus, the second section deals with the question of ‘when’ they see themselves returning. Several ambiguities and tensions are evoked in the narratives of the participants concerning the ‘right’ time to go back and whether such return is provisional, permanent, or cyclical. The last section concerning future imaginaries pertains to the question of ‘with whom’ they see themselves in the future. Here, the centrality of the family is discussed in relation to old age, retirement, and care needs. Given that all of the respondents are migrant workers in the care sector, it is also important to problematize not just the care that they provide but also their ideals of care that they want to receive. The struggle in choosing between the perceived better (institutional) care that they can get in host (more advanced) country and what is deemed as safe, comfortable, and more affective care that their kin and community can provide in the home country is palpable in the narratives of most respondents.

These nuanced images of (and hopes for) both immediate and distant future are presented first so as to give context to the current life and work situations of the participants. Present experiences of satisfaction, belonging, and exclusion as articulated by the respondents are then discussed in the subsequent section.

### ***Constructing ‘Success’: The Prospect of ‘Good Life’ as a *Balikbayan****<sup>137</sup>

The intimate connection between moving overseas and attaining a good life, as elaborated in the previous chapters, is central in every migrant’s narrative. Filipinos leave their homeland in search for ‘success’ and a better future for themselves and for their families. In this sense, pre-migration narratives locate the future *outside* of one’s country, serving as the main motivation for migrating (see Chapter 5). In the post-migration narratives, however, the research participants predominantly locate their distant or even immediate future *inside* their home country. Such ideal return, coupled with material and symbolic achievements of one’s hard work, represents the completion of one’s journey. But while this endpoint is widely shared by most respondents as their ultimate aim, how they construe ‘success’ and fulfillment, and articulate plans for the imagined future vary in terms of their occupation, current city of residence, length of stay, immigration status, and family situation – among other circumstances.

For one, the narratives of Filipino *nurses* in both New York and London are laden with the immediate goals of career advancement and better pay, which are usually accompanied by plans to move – within London, UK, or in another country. Those who explicitly stated that they do not aspire for higher positions tend to be married and/or have children with them, and have expressed their desire to slow down and have more time for their families or avoid pressure and stress from work. Typically, they are also the ones who are more rooted in one place and whose future movements are imagined after retirement.

Professionally, ‘success’ is not only seen through moving into higher positions but also in moving away from bedside nursing or the direct involvement with patients and their bodies. As discussed in Chapter 4, *bodywork* is associated with dirt and low-status work that blurs the line separating nursing from caregiving and domestic work (Amrith, 2010; Huang et al., 2012; Twigg, 2000).

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<sup>137</sup> *Balikbayan*, from the words *balik* (return) and *bayan* (homeland), means a Filipino who has been outside of the country is *returning home*.



*And it's physically tiring, my dear. [. . .] Nurses are the only ones whose job covers all the aspects of patient [care]. [. . .] You give them medications, that's obvious. You observe them, that's obvious. You feed them, sounds easy but it is not. You bathe them, also not easy. Uh, when they defecate, you take care of the waste. We call that gold. Uh, you think your role ends there, but it doesn't. Their family is your customers too. So, you need to deal with as well. The doctors, their orders, they themselves, they're customers, so you're acting as an advocate for the patient because not everything that the family and doctor want is good for the patient. [. . .] Uh, on top of that – what else do we do we do? Oh, after care. When they're about to go home, you arrange for – make sure they have appointment, they know when they're going, if they can go, all of those. So, think of any job that is like that. Doctor's job is not like that. The doctor will only make the orders but he will not be the one doing them. I thought of stewardess, but at least the stewardess does not need to mind the the passenger when he pees, that's not her area anymore. But for us, we have to do all of that. When the patient arrests, you revive him. If he dies, you clean him up. So, for me, physically, it's draining. And for me, you can't be just half hearted when you do things. You have to be all out so you can experience all. So, when you say that, if you're half-hearted in doing nursing, the quality [of your work] is poor. So, give it all. But when you give it all, you sacrifice a lot. You sacrifice your back, you sacrifice your time with your family.*

(Richard, 32 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in east of England in 2009, moved to London 3 months before the interview)

The account of Richard explains in detail the difficulties of doing bedside nursing and why he is aiming for managerial position. In this sense, for Filipino nurse participants, 'success' does not only mean earning more than what they can earn back home, it also entails not being involved in direct patient care. In the subsequent section on job satisfaction, I will go back to this point in the context of devaluation of care work and reproductive labor.

Apart from these shared desires, there are also striking differences between nurses in London and New York in their pursuits of 'success' and their hopes for a better future. There are nurses in London (as opposed to no one in New York) who mentioned their intention to move to another country – such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.<sup>138</sup> Some have existing applications in the US while others are looking for a more rewarding career and personal life in terms of salary, cost of living, and suitability to start a family. Not only is London expensive in terms of cost of living but they also learned from their former colleagues and friends in the countries mentioned that pay is higher in those countries and/or that they have better quality of life. In addition, changes in the UK immigration law are an important source of uncertainty and anxiety about one's future. A newly-arrived nurse in London, Aliyah, has reservations concerning her stay in the UK given that the requirement to apply for permanent residency has become more stringent. She is considering moving to Australia (where she has an aunt) or the US (where her brother currently resides). It should also be noted that while other nurses in London also considered moving to another country, having children deterred them from doing so. Thus, while they dream of reuniting with their kin in the US or Canada, where most of their overseas relatives are located,

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<sup>138</sup> While potential onward migrants are considering Canada, Australia, or New Zealand – their primary motivation is cost of living and more favorable immigration law for family reunification. The dream to go to US has been articulated as 'wanting to see America' or 'to be able to see America' – which can be construed as expressing one's desire to see something for its own sake.

onward migration is more difficult for them to accomplish compared to those who are single and without children.

Albeit to a lesser degree, moving to another country has also been mentioned by the care workers and domestics in London and New York as an option or as an initial consideration. Like the nurses who are living with their children in London, it was a future that some had to give up for the sake of providing stable environment for their children. Gwen, a home care worker in London, also explained that she was thinking of moving to Canada when her legal status in the UK was still uncertain, but it was an option that she did not pursue because of the stringent requirements that migrating to Canada entailed. This is contrast to Nora, an undocumented private caregiver and part-time housekeeper/nanny in New York, whose move to Canada could be an eventuality given that her daughter might petition her to move there. As in initial migrations, subsequent move to another country are also shaped by pre-existing networks in the next country of destination. However, onward migration for US respondents is more of an exception than a viable and desired future. Those who are undocumented, instead, hope to have their stay in the US regularized. Those with legal papers are considering moving to other states where it is ideal for family, cheaper to buy a house, and have favorable weather similar to the Philippines, before retiring in their homeland.

As in previous discussions, Filipino care workers – particularly in London – are stratified in terms of their work setting and immigration status. Those who entered the UK through work permits as they were recruited from the Philippines or elsewhere and are employed in institutional settings can be comparable, to a certain extent, with the trajectories and experiences of Filipino nurses. Filipino care workers in London who are working in institutional settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities were usually recruited as senior carers or support care workers. In nursing and residential homes, care workers can also move up and get promoted to become managers, while those in NHS and private hospitals can also move to higher positions after finishing further study and training. As in the case of nurses, career advancement means moving away from dealing with the elderly residents and patients. Thus, Filipino care workers in institutional settings aspire to move up in the career ladder not only for higher pay but also for higher occupational prestige. Some also see themselves as being able to practice their profession in the future – as nurses, midwives, or physical therapists – mostly in hospital setting. The same thing can be said of care workers in New York, both in institutional and private care settings.

*Liesel: If there is an opportunity that I can practice my profession [midwifery], I will grab that but for the time being, comme ci, comme ça. It's not yet [possible] because of my situation [single mother of three]. I am happy [with my work] but my friends are pushing me, "Why don't you apply in the hospital even as a carer?" I said, "Easy for you to say that because in my situation, if only someone can stay with my children or if they can already be on their own at night, I will work but that's not allowed." That's not allowed here because I will be charged with neglect. [ . . . ]*

*Rizza: Do you still plan to practice your profession?*

*Liesel: Yes, in the future. Yeah, still. Still hoping.*

*Rizza: It's still there? Your aspiration to –*

*Liesel: It's still that, yes. Because here, there's no age limit that even in your forties, there's no discrimination if apply for a job. As long as you are capable or you can do that job.*

(Liesel 42 years old, divorced, care support worker in a residential home, arrived in east of England in 2002, moved to London in 2004)

Unlike their London counterparts, however, more care worker participants in New York are in the process of studying for their licensure exams or finishing their degrees while simultaneously doing care giving jobs rather than deferring it in a distant future. In this sense, career advancement is not within the caregiving job but in moving away from it to become nurses, physical therapists, accountants, or film makers.

On the other hand, those who are working in private settings in London, and to a certain extent in New York, are more akin to the circumstances of Filipino domestic workers. As previously mentioned, they can also be former domestic workers who shifted to caregiving jobs or maintaining additional housekeeping work and nanny jobs (as in the case of New York respondents). Like the domestic worker participants, they are mostly professionals in the Philippines who found themselves doing low-status jobs in both global cities. Not only are they experiencing contradictory mobility (*see* Chapter 4, p.75), they also cannot see themselves advancing in their careers but are mostly imagining themselves to be doing the same job until their eventual return or up to their retirement. Thus, they are more concerned with being able to accumulate ‘enough’ resources (through savings and investments) as they build their image of ‘good life’ – mostly in the Philippines, but also in the US or UK for some. This is not exclusive among private caregivers and domestic workers. Most Filipino nurses and care workers in institutional settings also share the same goal and desire. But while attaining economic and social mobility remains significant in how nurses and institutional care workers view their futures, domestic workers and most private caregivers (especially undocumented) tend to imagine their futures as revolving around economic gains and financial security in one’s homeland and in some distant future. This is hardly surprising given that hoping for a better career or moving away from private caregiving and domestic work can be a long shot, particularly for those without legal papers or have children and families to support. Upgrading one’s qualifications through further studies and trainings is already out of the question as it competes with supporting the education of children and other relatives, repairing or building a house, or providing for the medication and hospitalization of family members. But as Boccagni (2016: 301) suggested in his study on migrant women working as live-in care workers in Italy, foregoing one’s needs in favor of the needs of their families back home does not ensure that the “expected beneficiaries (not to mention the “providers”) will really get better as a result.”. As what will be discussed in the later section on this chapter (*The Dilemma of Care: Who Will Care for the Carers?*, p. 210), supporting their families back home does not also guarantee that their imagined future of being cared for by their ‘indebted’ relatives in their old age will be realized.

Apart from financing the education of their children and/or other relatives, building or repairing houses is also one of the major ‘projects’ of most study participants back home. As previously mentioned, the completion of one’s dream house embodies and concretizes what ‘success’ and ‘good life’ look like, not only for the migrants themselves but also for the families and communities they left behind – perpetuating the desirability of overseas migration (Aguilar, 2009). The ideal future then is for would-be returnees (*‘balikbayan’*) to enjoy the fruits of their labor in their home – either permanently or with regular visits. While participants have expressed various intermediary goals (as discussed above) and possibilities for onward migration, the image of a ‘successful’ return to one’s country remains constant for most participants. Interestingly, those intending to return – or at least seeing that as a possibility – tend to make a distinction between London or New York as a place of work and the Philippines as a place to rest and enjoy (i.e. a home).

*Enjoy life, [in the] Philippines. [. . .] There's a lot of life in the Philippines. You no longer need to wear coat. It's summer every day.  
<laughs>*

(Gemma, 38 years old, team lead specialist nurse, arrived in London in 2002)

*I want to go home for me to enjoy and relax. [Rizza: Ah, it's not relaxing here?] No, because when you're here, you want to earn money, so you have to work, work, work, right?*

(Dolores, 63 years old, retired private caregiver, arrived in London in 1995)

*Of course, if I can no longer work, then I would go home there [in the Philippines]. What else will I do here? [. . .] My reasoning is that as long as I can still work, I will work first.*

(Milagros, 61 years old, private caregiver, arrived in London in 2005)

*I am just here to work. Oh, then perhaps, when I already have – [Rizza: Savings?] savings and I can already put up a business – [Rizza: Then you will go home?] Mm.*

(Sheila, 49 years old, cook/housekeeper, arrived in New York in 2009)

Since most of the research participants (for now) see themselves as eventually returning to their homeland, whether with certainty or with hesitations, their immediate plans and current practices (such as investing and saving money) are directed toward the realization of that good life back home. Thus, this particular image of the future (whether attainable or not) provides meaning to their continued stay overseas despite the difficulties and discomforts that they are encountering – such as being separated from their families, doing low-status work, having multiple jobs, or living in cramped and uncomfortable housing units. Thus, the future imaginary of ‘successful return’ frames the everyday experiences and challenges encountered by the respondents in New York and London. As Boccagni (2011: 471) noted in his study of Ecuadorian migrants in Italy:

Return migration is significant even when it remains only a projection into the future in an almost mythical form. It provides Ecuadorian migrants with a valuable construct with which to make sense of their life experience and endure it better. For most of them, it would make little sense to put up with difficult working and living conditions, as well as separation from significant others and emotional isolation from their past lives, unless the sacrifice before returning home had seemed worthwhile.

For most Filipino migrants, their past and present difficulties can be considered as *sakripisyo* (sacrifice) since such hardships are viewed within the prospect of the ‘good life’ as a *balikbayan* (returnee). Someday, they will be with their families, enjoying what they worked hard for. However, when is the ‘right’ time to do so is subject to the (changing) realities and circumstances both at home and in their place of destination. This point is examined more closely in the subsequent section.

***Liminal Existence and Permanent Temporariness:  
Conditional or Deferred Return?***

As previously stated, for most Filipino migrants – whether in New York or London; documented or out of status; with family in the Philippines or in the host country – the image of one’s return to motherland is how they see their future as the ideal completion of the migration project, regardless of the pathways they took to reach their destination. But while that is the case, it is important to explore the meanings and temporalities of such return.

For one, migrants do not simply return – even for a visit – without feeling that they have achieved something that people back home may recognize as exemplary or ‘acceptable’ for someone who works overseas. This conditional return to one’s country can be captured by the narrative of Brian, who only visited the Philippines once since coming to the US in 2009. When asked if he plans to come home more often, he replied:

*Right now, no. [. . .] Because every time that I would come home, I am seeing myself at the bottom. [Rizza: Ah, really?] Because, of course, I still don’t have any achievements. And then all my classmates, they already have their professions or something. [. . .] But I am not at the lowest.*

(Brian, 28 years old, line cook, former caregiver in a nursing home, arrived in Portland in 2009; moved to New York in 2011)

Brian was petitioned by his father in the US before he was able to finish his nursing degree in the Philippines. Without his father’s support, he found out that continuing his schooling in the US would be very expensive. While still struggling financially and without a stable job, even regular visits are not ideal and could even be embarrassing. One does not come back as a ‘failure,’ especially when those who stayed behind are able to better their lives. Furthermore, this can be viewed not only as an individual failure but also as the failing of the whole idea of attaining good life through overseas work. In this case, it invalidates the whole idea of the American dream and the representations associated with chasing that dream. Such failings, therefore, go against the commonly-held belief that ties overseas employment to economic prosperity and upward mobility (*see* previous discussion, p. 199).

Given that upward mobility is oriented toward the home country and within the class relations of Philippine society, Filipino migrants tend to locate and position themselves in relation to stayers and, to a certain extent, among Filipinos in the diaspora. This is most visible in the shared assessment of the host country as more equal compared to the Philippines – where it is deemed that class markers or display of class position are most conspicuous.

*I can say the difference between rich and poor in our country. [. . .] the gap is too wide.*

(Iris, 40 years old, nanny, arrived in London in 2003)

*What is good with what I saw here is that it’s like everyone is equal. Unlike in the Philippines where [...] you can really see who are [...] rich, [. . .] who are powerful.*

(Evita, 57 years old, housekeeper, arrived in London in 2007)

*Because here, as long as you have work, the things that rich people can buy, you can buy as well. [. . .] Financially wise really, you can say that we can be equal.*

(Alan, 51 years old, private caregiver, arrived in New York in 2007)

*That's the difference between Philippines and here. About the society here and the society in the Philippines. Because in the Philippines, [. . .] you only belong if you're wealthy. [. . .] If you're rich, you're included. You're part of the in-group. They recognize you. There is nothing like that here. [. . .] Here, people don't care.*

(Lucy, 62 years old, private caregiver and part-time housekeeper in Manhattan, arrived in New York in 2005)

The point here is not whether they are right or wrong with their assessment about the class structures and relations in the Philippines and, in this case, New York or London. But through these mental representations and self-positioning, the research participants are not only able to survive being confined in low-status job but also direct most of their efforts toward improving their social and economic status in the home country – where it counts, where it matters. Thus, in their imaginations, not only they are living with the view of themselves in the future (temporal dimension), they are also inhabiting a place on the other side of the world while simultaneously living in the place of destination (spatial dimension). Coupled with the desire to eventually return to the Philippines fulfilled, successful, and ready to enjoy the comforts of life they built, Filipino migrants defer their return until such time that they are able to realize that image of the future (see, for example, Carling, 2004; Boccagni, 2011; Sinatti, 2011 for similar findings on other migrant groups). This deferment and conditional return (e.g. ‘I will return when I have already saved enough’) put the future on hold and allow the timeline to be flexible.

The dream of eventual return to homeland is referred in the literature as ‘myth of return’ (Anwar, 1979; Guarnizo, 1996; Bolognani, 2007; Carling, 2015).<sup>139</sup> However, in his earlier work on Cape Verdean migrants in the Netherlands, Carling (2004: 120) asserted that since the intention to return is important regardless of whether it will take place or not, “it is more appropriate to speak of an ‘ethos of return’ than of a myth or an illusion.”<sup>140</sup>

Carling (2015: 1) also noted that “migrants can keep postponing their return with the justification that the time is not ripe for a successful return, even if it increases the likelihood that return might never take place at all.” In the case of the research participants, there is then the question of how much is enough for one’s successful homecoming? Consider Joanna’s narrative of deferred and ambiguous return.

*I just wanted to pay the debts and then come home. [Rizza: But why did you continue with your stay?] That's because more things are adding up. I thought it was only the debt, but then I started a project [building a house], and then financing education. But I said, these should be, in two years <chuckles> [Rizza: Be finished] yes. But if they would send me home now, I have accepted [that possibility] because I know the situation.*

(Joanna, 46 years old, live-in caregiver, arrived in east of England in 2007; moved to London in 2010)

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<sup>139</sup> Guarnizo (1996: 15) also mentioned other terms used in the literature such as “ideology of return” (Brettel, 1979; Rubenstein, 1979) and “return illusion” (Hoffmann- Nowotny, 1978),

<sup>140</sup> Bolognani (2016: 197) also contends that “the label ‘myth’ has...a patronising attitude as it implicitly states that the observer is more aware than the subject that return will not take place.” She instead utilized the term ‘return fantasy’ as it “affords the return imaginary some degree of legitimacy without any implicit judgement on its outcome.”

The ‘situation’ that Joanna is referring to is her lack of legal papers to stay and work in the UK. By virtue of that, her return to the Philippines is expected to be imminent and her stay in the UK is expected to be temporary. But while that is the case, she is also taking the opportunity to earn more while she still can, thereby postponing her homecoming to a later (still undecided) time in the future.

Because of the higher income that they are able to earn in New York or London, it is indeed enticing to stay (regardless of one’s legal status). For instance, Valerie and her husband have their own house, apartment, and car in the Philippines. She could already follow her husband who returned to the Philippines. But being able to earn that much from baby-sitting, she finds it difficult to simply walk away and leave her job to go back home.

*Supposedly, after one year I would go home. But then I get enthralled by what I am earning. Baby-sitting is ah . . . has higher salary compared to office work. [ . . . ] When I was at the accounting [office], I was earning \$350 a week. [ . . . ] Now, that’s double in baby-sitting. [ . . . ] Even more than when you have overtime. [Rizza: That’s why you would be really enticed to stay.] Because one dollar is 47 [Philippine] pesos.*

(Valerie, 59 years old, nanny, arrived in New York in 2003)

However, Valerie recognizes that staying is of course not without a cost, as undocumented migrants are not only in the state of limbo in the host country but they also cannot visit nor take their families with them for reunification. Like Joanna, her return is deferred and conditional. Commenting that she might stay longer given the salary that she is receiving, Valerie explained that it’s all God’s will.

*If God would really want me [to return]. [ . . . ] We are not the ones running our lives. God has the plan for you. [Rizza: What sign are you looking for your continued stay here?] I just feel that . . . for example, you lost your job and you cannot find a new one, [ . . . ] then I would go home by then. It means God wants me to go home already.*

(Valerie, 59 years old, nanny, arrived in New York in 2003)

Thus, Valerie who is torn between staying and returning, rely on her religious beliefs in coping with her liminal existence. In this way, religion, as a system of beliefs, provides not only meaning and purpose but also stability and certainty, among other functions. In social psychological literature, religious beliefs and practices are suggested to provide sense and source of certainty when other internal and external sources of meaning and control are not available (*see*, for example, Hogg et al., 2010; Kay et al., 2010).

Because of being constantly tug between staying and returning, Filipino migrants are in a state of ‘permanent temporariness.’ As discussed, this state becomes more acute for undocumented migrants as they exist in a state of limbo. The temporariness of their stay by virtue of their immigration status and the perpetual need to earn for the comfortable, would-be life in the Philippines later on shape the way they live their lives and the hazy futures they can imagine. While ‘liminal legality’ (Menjivar, 2006) and ‘permanent temporariness’ (Bailey et al., 2002) had been used to capture the ‘in-between’ legal status of Salvadorans and Guatemalans in the United States, the case of Filipino migrants in New York and London points out to another form of liminal existence – one that is not only rooted in the migrants’ future imaginary of successful return to their families. This can be exemplified by the predicament of Rebecca, who has been working in New York/Jersey City for 9 years. She explained that regardless of the kind of work, as long as you work in New York, you will be fine. But her children are not with her and she cannot visit them in the Philippines given her irregular status.

*I want to go home but I'm afraid. [. . .] If you go back there, no matter how much you saved, that will only last for few months. Then after that what?*

(Rebecca, 50 years old, part-time housekeeper in Manhattan, nanny in New Jersey, arrived in Texas in 2006; moved to New York in 2006; New Jersey in 2010)

While undocumented migrants are in a precarious situation in London and New York – and elsewhere – the reality is that going back to the Philippines will not also give them a secure future. That's why they left in the first place. As most respondents put it, “*life is still better in the Philippines as long as you have money.*” However, documented and undocumented migrants both experience this state of ‘being caught in between’ given that most of them see themselves returning sometime in the future – when they have already attained financially secured for themselves and their families. Deferment and conditional return then creates a state of permanent temporariness – viewing one's stay as temporary (“I will eventually come back”) while indefinitely postponing one's return such that temporariness becomes a permanent state of affairs. Because of this state, migrants experience *double liminality*.<sup>141</sup> I use the concept of double liminality to refer to both spatial and temporal aspects<sup>142</sup> of ‘indefinitely pending return.’ Deferred return is not only suspended in time but also locates the migrants both in place of destination and homeland. As previously discussed, the research participants orient themselves both in New York or London and the Philippines. While they need to survive and adapt to their day-to-day lives in a global city, they maintain connections to their homeland through contacts, visits, remittances and balikbayan boxes. In view of their eventual (successful) return, they invest materially (savings and investments) and non-materially (relations and care) in place and people they left behind. This ‘dual frame of reference’ (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995; see Chapter 4, p. 64) also creates another conceptualization of double liminality discussed by Aguilar (1999: 103) – one that is focused on ‘social and spatial dislocation’:

Relative to the society where the contract worker finds employment, the labour migrant is a liminal person... The contract worker is no more than a passing stranger whose individuality does not really matter, an object of state control, and a member of the international underclass outside and underneath the national-racial-class structure of the country of employment while yet a contributor to global capitalist productivity. Moreover, relative to the homeland, the labour migrant is also in a liminal transition until the stipulated time of work overseas is completed and a successful return to the homeland is staged. In the course of overseas employment, the migrant worker thus undergoes a period of double liminality.

It is important to note that Aguilar (1999) was referring primarily to particular type of Filipino migrants – those who were overseas contract workers (OCWs). This means that for most of them, their stay in the country of employment is determined by their contracts (unless they find ways of staying legally or illegally). They are also usually deployed in countries (such as the Middle East or other Asian countries) where they have no recourse to permanent residence and citizenship. Thus, the case of most research participants in this study is different. They are mostly permanent residents or citizens in the US or the UK. Even for those who are currently undocumented, most of them are

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<sup>141</sup> As defined by Victor Turner (1979: 465), liminality “literally ‘being-on-a-threshold,’ means a state or process which is betwixt-and-between the normal, day-to-day cultural and social states and processes of getting and spending, preserving law and order, and registering structural status.”

<sup>142</sup> In their study on Indian bachelors in Amsterdam, Kirk et al. (2017) also utilized the concept of *double liminality* to refer to its spatial and temporal dimensions. However, they conceptualized the liminal period as pertaining to the life phase – that is, being a bachelor and before having a wife.



hoping or exploring ways on how to regularize their status. In this sense, the eventual return is not dependent on their contract and actual return may or may not take place. Hence, the state of permanent temporariness is more palpable in their case. But why do they want to go back, in the first place? We now look into the Filipino migrants' future imaginaries in terms of 'with whom' they want to be in the context of care and old age.

### *The Dilemma of Care: Who Will Care for the Carers?*

The idea of retiring and growing old in New York or London does not appeal to most of the respondents, stemming from the fear of staying in institutional facilities (such nursing homes) rather than being taken care of by family members. Apart from attaining financial security, most especially when they could no longer work and earn, to be surrounded with family is considered as a form of security since kin-based relations are built on strong sense of obligations and, therefore, expected to provide care and support in old age. Olivia, who was able to get her husband in London but not her children, shared:

*It is difficult to grow old in this country... No one will take care of you. The old people I see, they are pitiful... You will take care of yourself, especially if you don't have family [here] – husband, children. You will be pitiful.*

(Olivia, 46 years old, nanny, arrived in London in 2006)

But does being with their children and immediate family in the place of destination make the image of return untenable? The answer is not so simple. On the surface, it is not surprising for those who raised their children in the US (or in the UK) to express their intent to remain.

*I don't want to go back to our place [in the Philippines], my children are here. What I want is to be here. [...] I want to be with my children, I don't want to leave them even when they are already grown-up. <laughs>*

(Monica, 47 years old, head nurse in a hospital in Queens, arrived in New York in 1990)

While the prospect of leaving their children in the US or in the UK makes the image of 'going home after retirement' unfeasible for settled migrants like Monica, there are still those who cling to this image and willing to pursue a future in the home country even away from their children. Edith is one of those who still desire to go back to the Philippines though her only son is not too keen on letting her go.

*I still want to grow old there [in the Philippines]. [...] I still want to go back there. Just few more years. [Rizza: Why do you not like to grow old here?] Based from I saw, since I was also taking care of elderly here, even though that we are Filipinos, they are still busy with their work, they could not take care of you that much. When you're sick, when you're old, of course you want to be in the Philippines rather than here. [...] It feels nice there. <laughs> Because frequently, I go home, yearly. I like it there more. With my siblings, nephews and nieces, like that. [...] Because here, it's like... you don't have freedom [...] like you're just inside the house. Well, I could go out here if I want to. But when I'm already old, I will not be able to go out that much. There, however, when you're a bit old, your siblings are there.*

(Edith, 70 years old, former private caregiver in New Jersey, arrived in New Jersey in 2001)

From Edith's narrative, we can ascertain that she could not rely on her son (and his family) to give her the kind of care she wants. For her, life in America is different and the 'Filipino way' of caring for the elderly cannot be enforced in this country. Thus, even though her son feels that she should stay in the US because of the health insurance and better medical care, this is not how she wants to be taken care of as an elderly. She prefers the companionship and physical care of her family members who can spend time being with her while, at the same time, having the freedom to move around in a place that is familiar and accessible to her.

For those who are relatively younger and whose retirement and old age do not loom yet in the immediate future, it remains to be seen whether they will eventually stay in London or New York or if they will realize their view of their future in the home country – old but surrounded by kin and at the same time financially secured. For the latter scenario, respondents do not only invest on material and physical assets. They also invest on emotional and future care they expect to receive from their families and relatives back home. Lorena, 46 years old who has been living in Jersey City for 16 years, has two sons. She is uncertain as to where she will be as she is admittedly worried that she can never be sure of the future wives of her sons despite reminding them of their duty to care for her as a mother. The possibility of being in a nursing home for her is a future she doesn't want to be in so she is thinking of growing old in the Philippines where she might be taken care of by her nieces, whom she financially supported in their schooling. Iris, 40 years old and living in London for 12 years now, couldn't bear her own kid. She and her husband plan to go back to their hometown when they retire. Like Lorena, she also paid for the schooling of her nephews and nieces and they consider her as their second mother. She said, "*we feel that we will be safer if we grow old there [in the Philippines].*" The security attributed to the relatives they left behind and the kind of culture in the home country that they are relying on, in a way, brings the concept of global care chain (Hochschild, 2000; Yeates, 2004) into a full circle. The care that migrants have provided in the First World must now be sought by them in the Global South – the country they left behind.

However, it remains to be seen whether the remittances, gifts, and affection that migrants like Iris and Lorena 'invested' in their left-behind kin in the Philippines will be reciprocated upon their return as elderly who need care and companionship. For instance, in her ethnographic research on Filipino caregivers in London, McKay (2016) shows that kinship-based moral obligations may also be challenged by migrants' relatives back home. What had been done and given may not always tally from the lists of both sides. Migrants may feel that they had provided enough to secure the care from their relatives in their old age but those relatives may also feel that they too had to sacrifice a lot to do things on behalf of the migrants (e.g. as caretakers of their investments in the Philippines).

Renovations, managing teams of workmen, renting equipment, complex planning approvals, and legal procedures – transfers of deed, court cases, and so forth – were all required when trying to safeguard her investments in real estate. Conyap's family had found her plans and investments a burden. Her projects had seemed underfunded or overly ambitious and their success, limited as it was, had relied on unrecompensed donations of time and labor. In Conyap's kinship networks, new ideas about migrant debt transformed Filipino kinship and its norms of age hierarchy and deference. The younger generation of caretakers was, at best, ambivalent about the return plans of elders abroad (McKay, 2016: 119).

It is therefore also important to problematize the meanings of familial obligations and norms of reciprocity from the perspectives of both migrants and non-migrant kin. The migrants' imagined future of growing old in the Philippines and being cared for by their relatives could also be incompatible with how their relatives are imagining their own futures and life trajectories.

Interestingly, care in one's homeland is not just confined among families and relatives but also include paid care. This is exemplified in Rina's narrative:

*I could have, what, three maids, whatever that I could pay. [...] Because here, you will never have a maid. It's very expensive. In the Philippines, that is really possible.*

(Rina, 40 years old, ward manager, arrived in south-east England in 1999; moved to London in 2001)

Rina has two sons in London but, like Edith, she would rather have the care she prefers in the Philippines. Not only because of the presence of an extended family, but also because that is where she can afford the comforts she desires in old age. In this sense, migrants may also diversify their possible sources of care and support that go beyond the confines of their kinship networks. However, this also presupposes that they have the necessary resources to invest on alternative sources of care and to nurture other types of ties and relations.

So far, I have discussed staying in the place of destination or returning to the one's country as two separate future options. However, there are respondents who are trying to be (physically) in two places and imagining themselves doing so – as long as they can. For those who spent considerable part of their lives in the host country, companionships, physical co-presence, and meaningful ties are to be found in the place of destination. Consider the cases of Imelda (87 years old) and Perla (66 years old) who are both retirees, although Perla continues to do part-time work with her employer. They were not able to get their children in London but they have integrated themselves well in the Filipino community and Filipino religious group. For Imelda, who has been living in London for 37 years, the exact time to go back to the Philippines is uncertain because she doesn't know until when she is healthy and she intends to spend her 'healthy years' in London. "*I don't want to go home yet. I am still enjoying my life here in London.*" If she can no longer walk, maybe it would be the time for her to go home to the Philippines. Perla, who has been in London for 26 years now, plans to stay until she is healthy. "*I feel that I cannot do anything much there as I only stay at home most of the time.*" For the two of them who are no longer sending as much money to their families in the Philippines as they used to, this is the time to enjoy life in a place where they are able to nurture relationships in a community – something they don't have in the Philippines. But it is also important to note how they described their conditional return to their home country – when they could no longer walk or when they are no longer healthy, that is, when they already need caring. In this sense, care is still imagined as located in the homeland and among those they left behind. As one respondent put it, "*I was born there, that's where I will die.*"

Finally, there are also those who still cannot see where they would be in the future – torn between staying or returning. The prospect of having better medical care in the US or the UK as opposed to the personal care, security, and comforts one can have in the Philippines makes it a difficult choice. Thus, the future remains open and uncertain.

In the next part of this chapter, I elaborate on the current circumstances of Filipino migrants in New York and London in the light of the various future imaginaries discussed so far.

## Lived Experiences and Predicaments of Filipino Migrants in Global Cities

The views of the future – whether a fixity or fraught with uncertainties – can be considered as useful heuristics to make sense of current circumstances and frame of mind of the research participants. Present realities and past experiences do, of course, serve as feedbacks to update future imaginaries (Boccagni, 2017). However, as previously asserted, attaining ‘good life’ remains as the foremost goal, albeit contours and specifications of it might change due to those feedbacks. Such perceived continuity provides what Giddens (1991) calls ‘ontological security’ – allowing individuals to maintain a sense of order in their everyday lives and stability of their self-image. This becomes critical for migrants as they deal with current contradictions and ambiguities in their relations and social positions in both host and home countries.

In this part, I present two dimensions of the present life circumstances of Filipino migrants in New York and London – one pertains to economic situation and the other to feeling of belongingness. As the research participants ascertain the conditions where they are embedded, we can see how they also strengthen their belief in their ability to ‘make it.’ This belief, in turn, enables them to maintain hope for a better future and endure in the face of imperfect and, for some, dire situations. In this sense, it enables these Filipino migrants some forms of agentic actions despite structural constraints (Bandura, 2001; Richardson, 2015).

Building on the previous chapters, we now continue where we left off from the participants’ period of adjustment and initial year(s) of settlement. What has changed and how do they think they are currently faring? To what extent do they feel satisfied with their job and income? How far (or near) they are from achieving the ‘good life’? I conclude this part by exploring the intersections of feeling of belongingness in the place of destination and transnational engagements in the home country.

### *Financial Stability, Familial Obligations, and Job Satisfaction*

Parallel to the themes of deferred return and continuing pursuit of ‘success’ in the participants’ narratives, satisfaction toward their job and income can also be described as conditional. While most Filipino migrants I interviewed (particularly, the relatively younger ones) talked about how they are in a financially better position compared to when they were in the Philippines, they also expressed that they are not yet completely satisfied with what they are earning. There are several reasons given for this lack of satisfaction. One relates to their desired future of economic prosperity and successful return to their home country. Given that they have yet to attain both material and symbolic markers of success (as discussed in the first part of this chapter), the participants still do not feel fulfilled and financially secured despite saying that they are earning enough for their needs.

*But like I said, it would be better to get more because if what you’re earning is just enough, it takes so long [to attain what you want]. The economy is moving. The price of the house now will not be the same price tomorrow.*

(Richard, 32 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in east of England in 2009, moved to London 3 months before the interview)

*I still have a lot of things that needs to be accomplished. [ . . . ] Have my own house in the Philippines. I want my own car. [ . . . ] I want to have a lot of money in the bank . . . that would support my retirement. [ . . . ] It’s [income] not enough [ . . . ] if I have so many things that I . . . wish to accomplish . . . because . . . it will take longer . . . to fulfill those dreams.*

(Irene, 58 years old, private caregiver and certified nursing assistant, arrived in New York in 2005)

For others, their income is simply not enough for their needs and for their obligations to their families both in the place of destination and home country. Apart from the investments they still want to make and the properties they still want to have, participants are also thinking about their children's education as well as the support that they are expected to provide for their families in the Philippines.

*Because my children are already grown-up. Before, it's [income] still fine because they are still young. Now, I am thinking, they are about to go to college. [ . . . ] It's like their needs are multiplying. It's not enough. So, I said, I will try to take the exam again, and if ever, get lucky and pass [the physical therapist licensure exam]. [ . . . ] [Rizza: So that [working as a physical therapist] would be really enough for you needs?] Hopefully, yeah. From what I'm hearing, it's a bit okay. They no longer need to struggle on where to find [additional money]. They don't need to have double jobs or get overtime. Things like that.*

(Hazel, 38 years old, certified nursing assistant in a nursing home in New Jersey, arrived in New Jersey in 2001)

*Income, not yet [satisfied] because I want to send more to them [in the Philippines] but I don't want to get stressed out. I don't want to get sick because if I will get sick, I also will not be able to send money to them. So, I'm dreaming of more. [Rizza: Better pay?] Better pay.*

(Paulina, 31 years old, nurse manager in a rehabilitation center, arrived in Texas in 2008; arrived in New York in 2013)

Aside from wanting to get better pay to afford the life that they have now and the life that they want in the future, participants also feel unsatisfied with their earning as they feel that it does not commensurate to the kind of work that they are doing and the effort that they are giving to their employers, patients, and clients. Unsurprisingly, domestic workers feel that their employers should pay them more because of the services they render and the amount of time and work being required from them. They are also aware of how other domestics are being paid and the possibility of having higher salary. Private, live-in caregivers, especially in London (and as mentioned in previous chapters), think that their per hour rate is way below the minimum wage. The lack of freedom to have another job, to engage in other activities, or even to live with their husband and children as they are confined inside their client's home are seen as not properly compensated given what they are receiving (Denti, 2015; Kontos & Bonifacio, 2015; Vahabi & Wong, 2017). Nurses, particularly bedside nurses, and care workers in institutional settings also view that they are receiving less compared to physical and emotional work and risks their job entails (McHugh et al., 2011). Robert, a licensed practical nurse in New York, shared how extremely distressing his work environment is.

*Because my experience with nursing is that the stress is too much. Not only 100% but I would say 200%, in my job. [ . . . ] To the point that they will call you names that are very offensive. [Rizza: Who are these? Patients? Co-workers?] Patients. Patients. HIV patients who would throw, who will spit at you, who will slash their . . . chest to get you infected. [ . . . ] That's why I said, this job is very stressful for me that I have to file a three-week vacation just to have peace of mind. [ . . . ] My main problem in my field is the alcoholics and drug addicts. I mean drug addicts [ . . . ] actually because they are the troublemakers in our job. They will get to the point that they will have you fired if they don't like something.*

(Robert, 35 years old, licensed practical nurse in a nursing home, arrived in Florida in 2001; moved to New York in 2006)

The dissatisfaction of migrant workers doing care work and their feeling of not being recognized and rightly rewarded are meant to underline how care work (or reproductive work) has been devalued and how those directly providing physical care are classified both at the lowest rung of the occupational prestige ladder and compensation structure (or pay bands) – i.e. in both subjective and objective status. On a larger scale, Kofman & Raghuram (2015: 183) contextualized the devaluing of care work through the privileging of production over reproduction as states retreat from providing social care and welfare services:

On the whole, reproductive work does not make the same claims on the state as productive work because the state is increasingly envisaged in the contemporary moment as a vehicle for economic growth and production rather than welfare and citizenship. In particular the pursuit of competitiveness within the global economy has led many states in the Global North to privilege the globally valued and transferable forms of embrained knowledge. As a result, social reproduction is devalued and migrant's work in these sectors becomes doubly devalued.

Thus, the previously discussed goal of the participants to move away from care work can also be understood as a shift to regain one's identity outside of the often ethnicized image of care work (*see* Chapter 4). For those who cannot escape care work, Filipino migrants then direct their focus on attaining the general image of a successful *balikbayan* in terms of financial security and economic prosperity.

### ***Belonging, Exclusion, and Transnational Connections***

Apart from work and employment, another aspect of Filipino migrants' lives in London and New York pertains to their relations to people and institutions as well as to their degree of rootedness and feeling of belongingness in spaces they inhabit and communities where they participate. Yuval-Davis et al. (2006: 2) defined belonging as “about emotional attachment, about feeling ‘at home’ and . . . about feeling ‘safe.’” They also emphasized the diverse articulations of belonging that go beyond the nation-state and fostered through various affiliations and communities. Belonging can also be constructed (and contested) through boundary-making and exclusionary practices based on social class, gender, religion, ethnicity, and immigration status (among others). Antonsich (2010) referred to these two dimensions of ‘belonging’ as *place-belongingness* and *politics of belonging*. In this section, I examine place-belongingness in the context of place of destination (i.e. feeling at home in New York or London) as well as in the continued ties and attachment of the participants to the Philippines (both through imaginations and actual transnational engagements). I also look into the instances when Filipino migrants encountered or practiced exclusion in their everyday lives as they interact with various actors in different social settings.

In the participants' narratives, one articulation of belonging is tied to what they are able to *give* or *contribute*, most especially through their occupation. Nurses feel that they are able to *make a difference* in this part of the world and that they matter because the system cannot properly run without them – the Filipino nurses. Care workers consider themselves as valuable part of the society because of the support and care they give to the elderly and the vulnerable.

*Because we are in health care. Health and social care. Those we are supporting are, let's say, vulnerable individuals. So, we are the ones protecting them. We are there so that they are not abused or get exploited. We are there. So, we are integrated. As in we have a role, we have a role in the community. We are not just maids. We are not just paid to clean [the patients]. It's like, we are essential part, valuable part of this society. That's why they recruited there [in the Philippines], right? Because that's what they lack here, right? Although the view of some is*

*that we are being paid to clean, bathe the patients, and that's it. But behind that, you have a higher purpose, of what you are.*

(Carlo, 40 years old, asst. care manager in a residential home, arrived in London in 2007)

*Because the UK cannot function without us. I think. Because the truth of the matter is, the reason why they are hiring Filipino nurses is not only because it is cheaper to do so but simply because no one [from here] wants to be a nurse. [ . . . ] Very few of them. If you would go to our unit, and that of [name of batchmate], our units are just beside each other, 80% are born outside of the UK. Everybody's from another place. And then, from those 80%, 40% are Filipinos. That's how many.*

(Richard, 32 years old, staff nurse in an NHS hospital, arrived in east of England in 2009, moved to London 3 months before the interview)

What is interesting in these narratives is how the participants carve their 'rightful' place in the context of (perceived) underappreciation for the kind of (care) work that they do. It is as if they need to assert and legitimize their sense of belongingness and recognition as migrant workers. They do not just refer to themselves as individuals but as a collectivity – as Filipinos, as migrant care workers – as they make a case for the contribution of the presence of this particular group in the 'host' country. In the same way, domestic workers also establish their sense of belonging in New York or London by highlighting their invaluable role – they feel that without them, their employers will also not be able to work properly:

*Because if not for us, our employers will not be able to work properly. So, in that sense, [ . . . ] we are also helping the economy because they are able to work well. [ . . . ] And the reason why they are hiring us is because no employer would do the work that we are doing.*

(Rebecca, 50 years old, part-time housekeeper in Manhattan, nanny in New Jersey, arrived in Texas in 2006; moved to New York in 2006; New Jersey in 2010)

Given these articulations, belonging can be seen as being construed as something that one must earn and deserve. The research participants positioned themselves as valuable and important thereby, differentiating themselves from the stereotypical image of migrants who are just after the benefits they can get from the 'host' country.

*Rizza: Do you see yourself as part of this society?*

*Mariel: Yes, of course because we share the tax and all. Yes, we work. We are not asking benefits from the government, no? We pay our own taxes.*

(Mariel, 44 years old, former care worker in a nursing home; assistant practitioner in an NHS hospital, arrived in London in 2006)

This feeling of belongingness is also validated by the recognition that participants get from their work and is embedded into the larger narrative underscoring that Filipinos are deemed as 'good' workers and are valued for the quality of their work. Nurses feel accepted by their colleagues and do get promoted (albeit, not without issues). Being trusted by their employers and being treated 'like a family,' domestic workers get a sense of acknowledgment of their presence and contribution. These constructions of belongingness are more akin to the notion of citizenship, wherein acknowledgment and recognition are deemed as definitive markers of belonging. Such narratives of belonging also include concurrent obligations of paying tax and following rules and law of the country. The need to claim for the 'right to belong' and 'deservingness to be here' becomes more acute for undocumented research participants who highlight that they are not being a burden in this

country and are not breaking any law. However, the feeling of being ‘at home’ and safe greatly comes from their participation and membership in organizations such as faith-based groups and hometown associations. For instance, extant research on the role of religion and religiosity in the lives of migrants highlight how churches and ethnic faith-based organizations serve as safe spaces and havens (especially for undocumented migrants), while also providing assistance (such as finding job and accommodation) and serving as places to meet other people (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003; Odem, 2004; Lorentzen & Mira, 2005; Ley, 2008; Nakonz & Shik, 2009; Watson, 2009; Ahmed, 2010). Efren, an undocumented migrant in New York, made similar reference to the importance of the church:

*You know why? Like why you feel that you belong? At church. The church is there. Perhaps, if the church is not there, then you'll feel weak. You would have given up a long time ago.*

(Efren, 52 years old, former private caregiver, physical therapist assistant, arrived in Washington D.C. in 2009, moved to New York in 2014)

Like the other respondents, he also mentioned that the presence of a lot of Filipinos around contributes to the feeling of belongingness since they could feel that they are ‘at home’ – that is, as if they never really left the Philippines. As Benedict Anderson (1983) would put it, the nation is an imagined community and it may, apparently, exist outside of the borders of a country. However, physical presence cannot be ignored either. In this case, participants also talked about the need to ‘make yourself at home’ – which means to adapt to and adopt the practices and lifestyle that they deemed to be the cornerstone of American or British culture (though, at the same time, retaining what they considered as the Filipino culture) since ‘you are here.’ Being in London or in America also allowed them to realize their dreams, provide for their families, or even feel free from economic and cultural constraints. Thus, another form of belongingness is articulated through the opportunities and freedom that they were able to have by being here.

*Rizza: Do you feel that you belong here? That you're part of this country?*

*Erica: Yes, of course.*

*Rizza: In what do you feel that you are no longer an outsider?*

*Erica: In every way because here in New York, you have freedom here. You're free to do whatever you want.*

(Erica, 41 years old, currently unemployed, non-practicing certified nursing assistant, arrived in New York in 1990)

*What I like here is that I was able to accomplish my promise to my parents [to support them]. But if I was in the Philippines, I wouldn't be able to do that.*

(Glenda, 49 years old, nanny and medical assistant nanny, arrived in New York in 2007)

*Rizza: In what way do you feel that you belong here?*

*Linda: Of course, the life that you have now here, you're not rich, but as I have told you, what is good here is that . . . what the poor can do, what the rich can do, you can do that as well. You are able to go to the shows, everything! Like, there is no discrimination. You are able to eat, you are able to do everything. [. . .] You are not being looked down upon, whatever kind of person you are. Even though you're poor and regardless of your educational background.*

(Linda, 58 years old, housekeeper in Manhattan, arrived in New Jersey in 2003)



*I think if I did not come here, I would not go this far. I don't know. [Rizza: And you see yourself as part of this country? Like you feel that you already belong here?] Yeah, I think so. [. . .] Because we are already well-adjusted here. We have stable jobs already. [. . .] There is no hindrance to attain your dream, if ever you have a dream. It's available. It's up to you to grab it.*

(Marie, 41 years old, nursing director in an assisted living facility in New Jersey, arrived in New York in 2000, moved to New Jersey in 2001)

The financial security that they were able to attain as nurses, care workers, or domestics in London and New York allow them not only to become a part of the host society but, more importantly, of their home country. Being able to afford the 'good life' means that they are not (or no longer) located at the periphery in their homeland – a feeling that is reinforced through visits and symbolic presence. As Aguilar (1999) discussed, overseas employment not only transformed the lives of migrants and their non-migrant kin. They also acquired 'new sense of self' and an elevated status back home. "Regardless of the type of work, the migrant worker attains a prestigious new self in the place of origin, with the status of a generous financial saviour to the kin group and becomes an enviable role model to others" (Aguilar, 1999: 105).

As the study of Gelatt (2013) on Asian and Latino immigrants in the US shows, most migrants maintain a 'dual frame of reference' – they tend to foster reference groups and assess their social positions in both countries of origin and destination through transnational practices and engagements. In New York or London, as in other places of destination, Filipino migrants reproduce certain forms of Filipino way of life. They participate in activities that commemorate religious and national celebrations (Oracion, 2012; Saint-Blancat & Cancellieri, 2014; Tondo, 2010). They eat Filipino food and consume products from the Philippines (Law, 2001; McKay, 2006). It is relatively easy to find these products in New York or London as Filipino stores and shops abound, just like in other foreign cities where there are considerable number of Filipinos. They watch Filipino shows and keep abreast of 'what's going on back home' by subscribing to Filipino television channel or other forms of 'polymedia' (Bonini, 2011; Madianou & Miller, 2012). On the other hand, by sending *balikbayan* boxes,<sup>143</sup> they also send a piece of America or Britain to their families in the Philippines. Sending home furniture, accessories, and appliances for their houses in the Philippines from the place of destination as they also have something from the Philippines in their current place of residence create an intimate connection between the two homes that they simultaneously inhabit.

However, despite these various forms and different layers of belonging, there are also research participants who feel that they remain as an outsider in the place of destination – and, to a certain extent, in their home country. The most apparent articulation of being excluded is rooted in one's immigration status. Having no legal papers does not only render undocumented migrants as ineligible for benefits and social protection provided by the host country, they also feel unsafe and insecure because of their irregular status.

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<sup>143</sup> "As is the custom in the Philippines, a *balikbayan* [someone returning home] typically brings gifts for family and friends. Overseas Filipinos who cannot visit home can send a balikbayan box packed with gifts and sundry items for their loved ones. The shipment cost is per box, regardless of weight, and this is delivered to the doorstep of the intended recipient" (Camposana, 2012). For some of the interviewees, however, the contents of the boxes they are sending are not the 'usual' goods or gifts that most authors would describe (e.g. second-hand clothing, canned goods, and toiletries). While they do send these, they also include items for the houses that they are building or have built in the Philippines.

*That's [lack of legal papers] the main essence why I am not happy. [ . . . ] I feel like you're a second-class citizen and you have nothing to be proud of.*

(Vicky, 53 years old, former private caregiver, administrative assistant in a clinic, arrived in New York in 2006)

*Rizza: Did you ever feel that you don't belong here [even] after 8 years [of being here]?*

*Evita: Yeah, because that's [legal papers] really a very big [factor] because staying here without legal papers means I am always in an uncertain position.*

(Evita, 57 years old, housekeeper, arrived in London in 2007)

Owing to their irregular status, undocumented migrants also tend to voluntarily exclude themselves from civic participation and in building meaningful relationships so as to remain invisible and not risk being exposed. As one respondent put it, “*you avoid getting involved and being recognized in the society.*” Their involvement is usually limited within their intimate networks and organizations (such as religious groups and ethnic associations) where they feel safe and secured.

Another source of feeling of exclusion is the kind of low-status work that one does. Inasmuch as care work allows participants to see themselves as deserving to be in the place of destination given their contribution, being employed in what is deemed as low-skilled, low-status job can also make migrants feel that they are living on the margins of the ‘host’ society and that they do not really belong. Viola, who was previously employed as a registered nurse in Vienna and currently works as a nanny in New York, shared: “*I do not feel that I belong here. [ . . . ] My self-confidence has gone down here. [ . . . ] Perhaps it's because of my work.*” In this sense, belonging pertains to being part of one’s reference group. Since to say that one is a part of something also means creating distinctions and making boundaries apparent, it is inevitably exclusionary and, thus, political (Anthias, 2016). However, since migrants also position and orient themselves in their home country – where most of them eventually intend to return – ensuring ‘success’ in that context remains a top priority.

## **Persistent Ties, Evolving Networks: Accounting for Changes and Stability in Migrant Support Networks**

Over time, migrants encounter old and new challenges as some of the initial difficulties they faced were eventually resolved, while others continue to persist. In the same manner, their existing connections are also subject to possible dissolution, transformation, or substitution by new ties. Thus, it is also important to account for possible changes in the composition of migrant networks given the concurrent shifts in the circumstances of the respondents and their relations. For one, social relationships and networks are not static (Lubbers et al., 2010; Mollenhorst et al., 2014; Schapendonk, 2015; Ryan & D’Angelo, 2018). Since networks are often conceptualized as sources of support, changing networks reflect changing needs of migrants. For instance, ties can be discontinued or dissolved when particular assistance was no longer needed or can be replaced by other ties that migrants have developed over time. Some ties can become more (or less) significant as time passed by. It has also been discussed in the previous chapter that networks can be conflictive and such conflicts can lead to fragmentation in migrant networks.

To elaborate on the dynamic nature of migrant networks, I examine the changes in participants’ support networks over time through the factors that significantly shaped their stability or evolution. For this manuscript, I specifically look into the roles of life course events and transitions that re-

structured migrant networks. In addition, I examine how immigration policy and migration pathways contributed to the path-dependent formation of ties and relations. Finally, I re-visit the stability of transnational ties of the respondents that go beyond the sending and receiving countries framework. I utilize the typology provided by Feld et al. (2007) that describes changes in network over time, particularly changes in the existence and nature of ties (*see* Chapter 2, *Conceptualizing Dynamic Migrant Networks*, p. 22).

### ***Life Course Events and Transitions***

Geographic mobility, as a significant life event, alters the support networks of the movers as they encounter challenges in the place of destination as newly-arrived migrants. However, other life course transitions can also happen within the context of overseas migration, which can further impact the evolution of migrant networks over time. For instance, changes in the family, such as marital status, and household composition, often occur after migration (Geist & McManus, 2008). As Jang & Snyder (2015: 46) noted, “although most studies consider mobility as a consequence of other life course events, moving also motivates other life changes.”

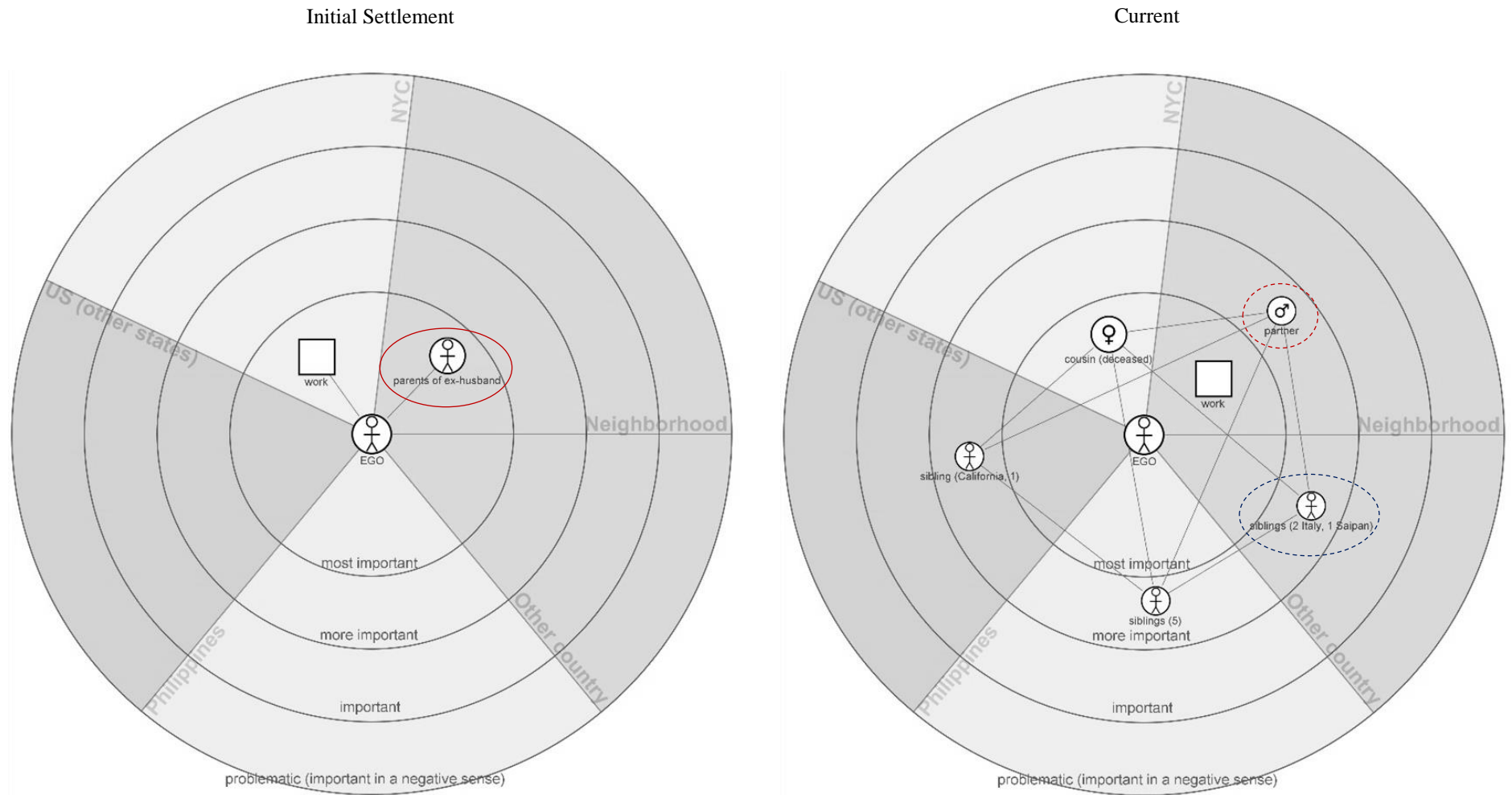
In the case of the research participants in this study, divorce and separation not only have considerable impact on the life trajectories of the migrants but also on their current support networks. Consider the changes in the network maps of Tessa (Figure 8.1) and Leonora (Figure 8.2). Tessa was first deployed as a staff nurse in Northern Ireland together with her then-husband. Leonora, also a nurse, had to relocate to New York upon marrying her former husband. In their current support networks, Tessa and Leonora not only cut ties with their ex-husbands, but also those ties associated with them. In the case of Leonora, these previous ties were her in-laws who helped her in adjusting in New York. Tessa, on the other hand, had to sever ties with some of her batchmates and friends from Northern Ireland because she felt that they were on the side of her former husband.

With the dissolution of ties connected to their former husbands, Tessa and Leonora forged new ties and strengthened their kin-based relationships. Menjivar (2000: 191) noted that “women sometimes stood to benefit, just as often they experienced losses as their unions dissolved and were rearranged after migration.” Losing potential sources of assistance that comes from ties connected to their former husbands, immigrant women are forced to find other sources of help outside the kin and close relationships that can be more beneficial for socioeconomic mobility (i.e. weak ties and institutional ties). It must be emphasized, however, that women’s economic and social status allowed them to mitigate potential losses and to take advantage of opportunities to establish their own networks. Unlike the impoverished Salvadoran immigrants from Menjivar’s research, Tessa and Leonora are professionals who were in a better economic position to deal with the dissolution of ties and to establish new ones. For respondents who were in a more precarious situation, entering partnerships in the place of destination could mean survival. Unable to rely on her brother in New York for sustained assistance as a newly-arrived migrant, Alma found an Indo-Guyanese partner who assisted her since then. She has been planning to send her husband in the Philippines a divorce paper so she can get married in the US and regularize her status. While ambivalent about the long-term prospect with her current relationship, she considers her partner as one of her most stable and important ties in New York although she is no longer as dependent on him now (Figure 8.3).

For those who got married and had children (or reunited with their spouses and children), network composition and structure also changed to accommodate the centrality of establishing one’s family in New York or London. Friendship ties developed during their adjustment period (such as with batchmates or colleagues) may become less important as respondents focus more on their family life (*see* Figure 8.4 as an illustration).



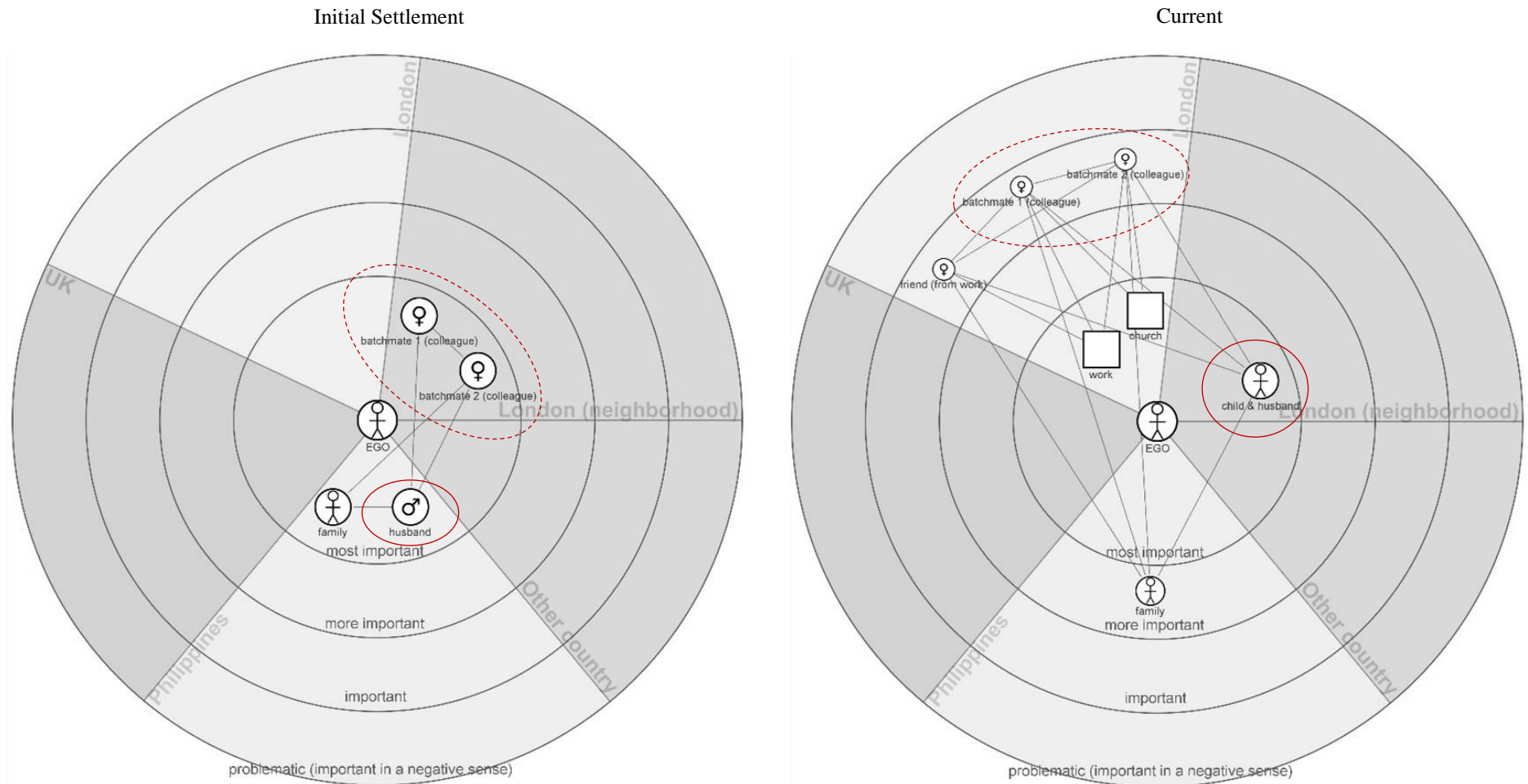
**Figure 8.1.** Tessa's Initial and Current Support Networks  
*(ego-alter ties are removed)*



**Figure 8.2.** Leonora's Initial and Current Support Networks  
(ego-alter ties are removed in the current network)



**Figure 8.3.** Alma's Initial and Current Support Networks  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



**Figure 8.4.** Angela's Initial and Current Support Networks  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

Having kids also shaped the physical spaces where migrant parents spend most of their time. For instance, schools where their children go allow them to meet and interact with other parents. It is also not a surprise that research participants with children (especially those in school-age years) in the place of destination are less likely to move somewhere else (Michielin & Mulder, 2008; Trevena, McGhee, & Heath, 2013). Thus, these participants were also able to interact more frequently with the same people in their neighborhood and parish church. In time, these ties may develop into stable and important friendship networks, especially in the absence of kin-based networks in the place of destination. As Rina, a nurse in London, explained:

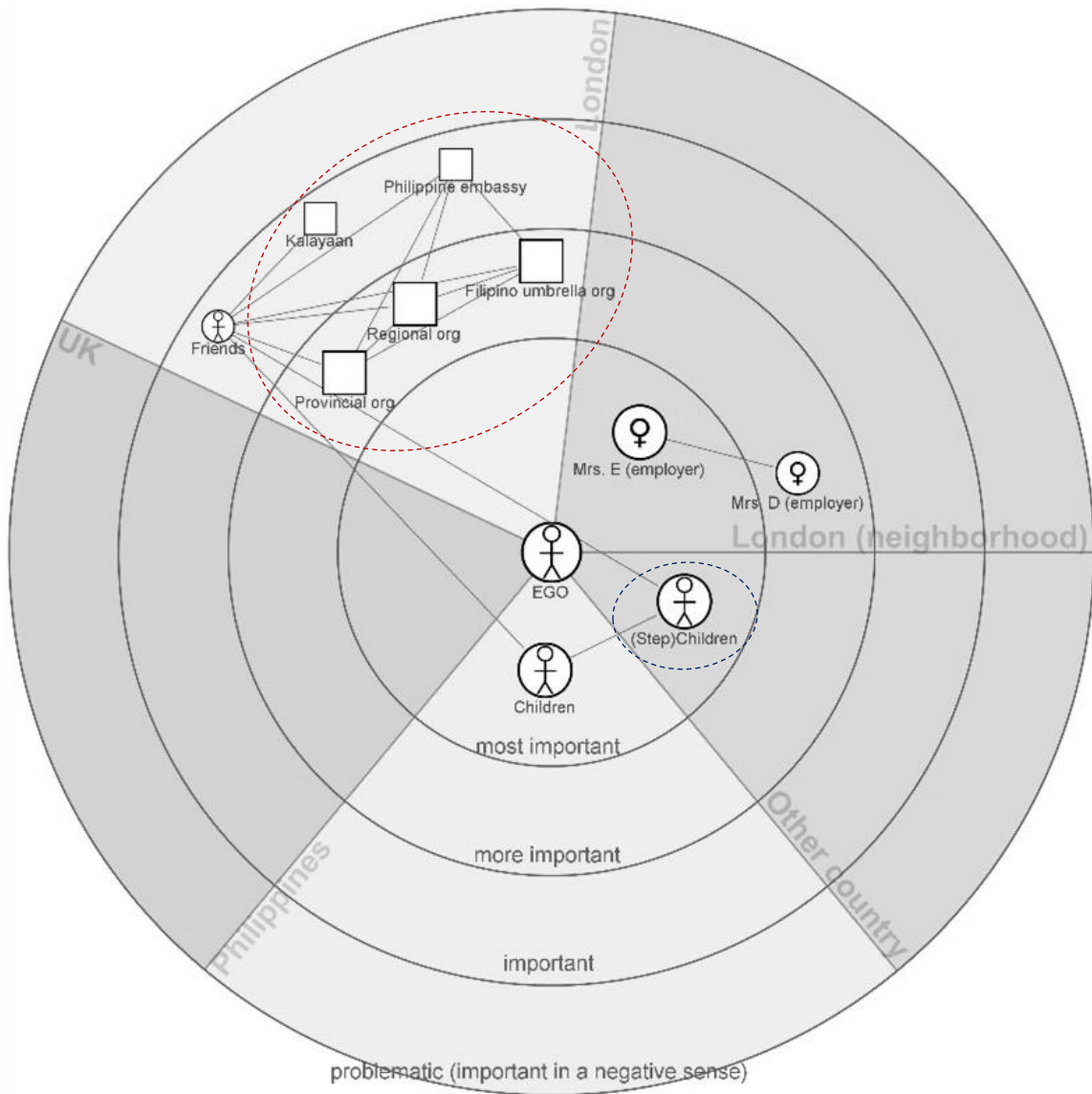
*How you acquired friends when you were young will be different from how you acquired friends when you mature and have a family. [ . . . ] It's like you don't have [ . . . ] siblings here, so [ . . . ] they [friends] become like your siblings.*

(Rina, ward manager in an NHS health center, arrived in south-east England in 1999; moved to London in 2001)

Apart from changes in family life, job change can contribute in the dissolution or weakening of old ties as well as in the formation of new ones. Nurses and care workers who moved to other departments, facilities, or even cities may have lesser contacts with their previous colleagues and batchmates. As a result, these ties may weaken over time or even become fragmented. As mentioned in Chapter 7 (p. 183), batchmates tend to become less important as participants (or their batchmates) reunited with their families or moved to different workplaces. Some respondents also chose to maintain ties with selected few with whom they developed stronger bonds or because of conflict with others. As Ryan & Mulholland (2014) and Schapendonk (2015) noted, building and maintaining ties takes time and sustained effort. As participants adjusted and came to meet other people, especially at work, they may spend more time with these people and less on their previous connections. Other similar events include joining another religious group and severing ties with organization or community because of conflict.

Finally, retirement and old age can also shape current support networks. Domestic workers who retired but continue to work (either full-time or part-time) listed their employers as relevant ties not only because they continue to provide income at old age but also because these employers have been their stable ties. For instance, Juanita, 65 years old, stayed with the same employer since she came to London in 1976 while Perla, 66 years old, continue to cook for a family (also in London) that employed her for 16 years. Old age and (semi-) retirement also allow most research participants time to engage in other groups and activities outside work. I have discussed previously in this chapter (pp. 206–208) the reasons for respondents' deferred return to the Philippines. One of those reasons is that most (active) ties that they fostered are located in the place of destination. Perla, for instance, has been engaged in various organizations (Figure 8.5) in London, so that she feels she 'can do more things here' compared to just staying at home in the Philippines. Older participants also shared that they engage and participate in religious groups and activities such as going on pilgrimages in other countries given that they now have the time and money to do so. On the other hand, other elderly participants continue to work not only to be able to support themselves but also because they have to support family back home. I will return to this point in my discussion on transnational ties toward the end of this chapter.





**Figure 8.5.** Perla's Current Support Network  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

### ***Immigration Policy and Migration Pathways***

As individual life events and trajectories influence changes and stability in respondents' ties over time, constraints posed and opportunities provided by immigration policies and ways of access into destination countries could also shape migrant networks. As discussed in Chapter 2, the predominantly kin-based networks and chain migration model in the US have been encouraged by the immigration policy that emphasizes family reunification and sponsorship (Boyd, 1989). In the case of Filipino respondents in the US, the emphasis on family reunification (coupled with longer migration history as a former colony) creates pre-migration networks as well as subsequent support networks based almost exclusively on kinship ties. This is the most striking difference between the participants' networks in New York and London. Unlike in the US wherein married and adult children as well as siblings of US citizens can be petitioned, the UK immigration law restricts sponsorship for children under 18 and spouses or partners.<sup>144</sup> Thus, it is not surprising to find more extensive familial ties among the US research participants.

While the previous discussion focused on the changes in the lives of the respondents and in their ties over time, it is equally important to show that migrants also maintain certain ties across their life course. For most Filipino respondents in the US, the pre-dominantly familial ties have been a stable feature of their networks. This is especially the case when resources to share are not scarce and kinship ties have been proven to be consistently supportive. For instance, the sister of Lucy, Irene, and Cynthia remain to be their foremost source of support from the time they relocated to New York until now, especially when it comes to financial support and temporary accommodation in case of emergencies. This is because their sister, a pioneer migrant and an accountant, is the most financially stable and established in the place of destination. Expectedly, in cases when family members fail to provide reliable support because they are also in precarious situation, migrants have to explore other sources of support outside the kin-based networks (Menjivar, 1995, 1997, 2000). This is illustrated in the case of Alma (discussed in the previous section, p. 219) who had to rely on her current boyfriend when her brother failed to provide necessary help.

In addition to emphasis on family reunification in immigration policies, the recruitment of 'desirable' labor also channels particular type of migrants and networks in places of destination. The continuing relevance of familial ties for the US respondents can be observed even when the manner of entry was through occupational immigrant visa (such as in the case of recruited Filipino nurses). Consider the support networks of Luis (Figure 8.6), who was recruited by a nursing home in New York in 1999. His motivation to take up nursing and apply in the US came from the encouragement and financial support of his aunts who were also nurses in New Jersey. After Luis finished his contract, he moved to New Jersey to live near his aunts who also introduced him and his family to their own networks in the area. Just like Luis, other participants in New York have familial ties in other states but are in New York because that is where they were recruited (in the case of nurses) or that is where they found better work (in the case of domestics and private caregivers). This points to a broader conceptualization of chain migration that does not necessarily channel kin in the same location of pioneer migrants (*see* Chapter 2, p. 23; also Figures 8.2 & 8.5). In the context of increasing immigration restrictions and controls, migrants and their kin find ways on how to continue their search for a better life through overseas work. For instance, since Perla (Figure 8.5) cannot take her children to the UK, she instead supported their migration elsewhere (e.g. in Canada). Onward and stepwise migrants also had to move to intermediary countries before reaching the US or the UK when direct migration was not possible (*see* Chapter 2, pp. 20–21;

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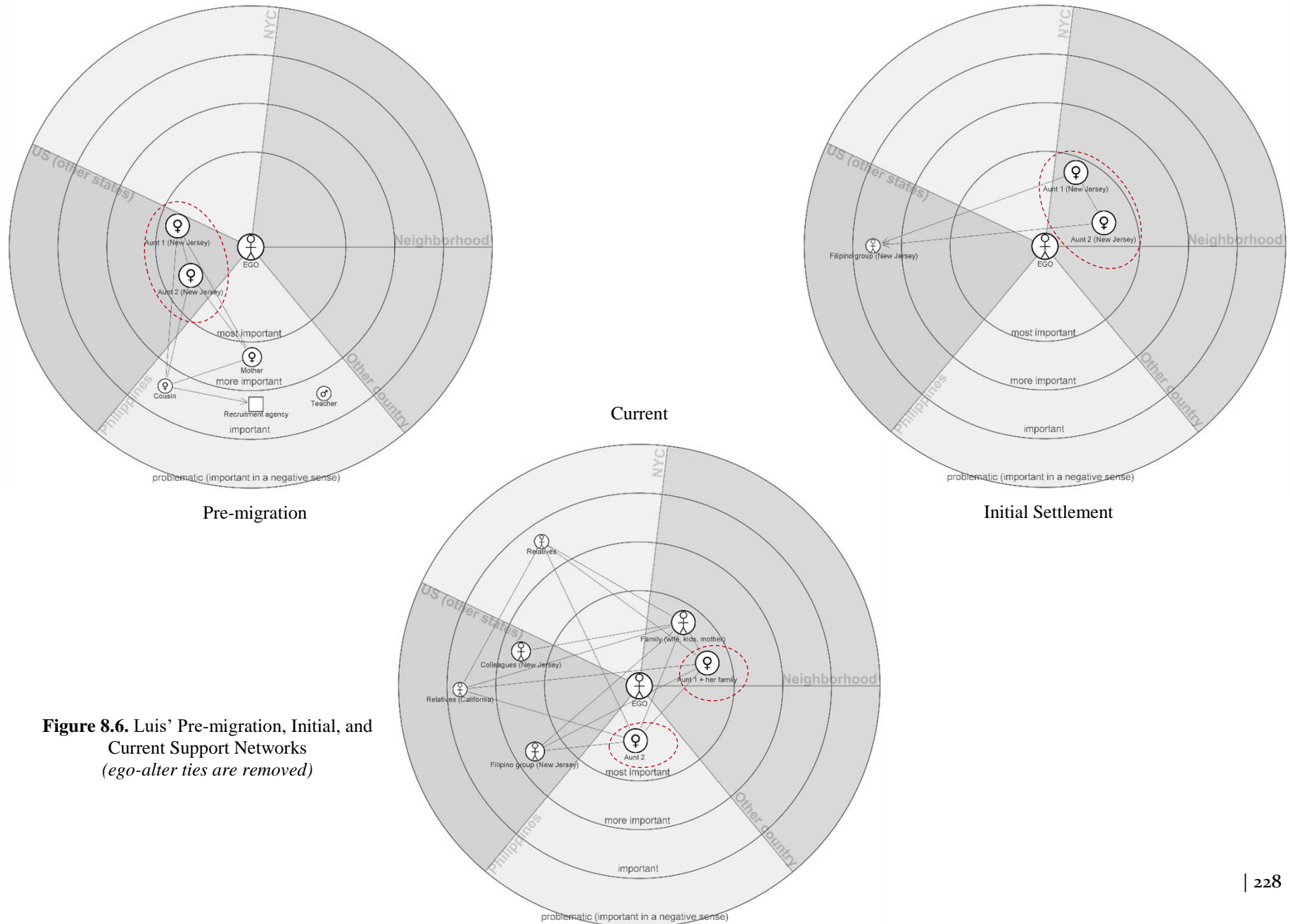
<sup>144</sup> Siblings, parents, grandparents, and adult children are allowed to join family members in the UK only under 'special circumstances.' Such circumstances mean only when they need long-term care from relatives who are citizens, permanent residents, or have refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK. (*see*, <<https://www.gov.uk/uk-family-visa/adult-dependent-relative>>, accessed 03 October 2017).

Chapter 6, pp. 118–122). In the subsequent section on transnational ties, I will elaborate more on this practice. Suffice it to say at this point that familial ties remain important but their role and support they can offer may change given the constraints posed by changing immigration policies (Chelapi-den Hamer, 2008; Collyer, 2005).

For most research participants in London, the lack of familial ties in the place of destination and the less conducive immigration policy for family reunification meant reliance on other actors such as recruitment agencies and employers in their pre-migration networks. While ties to such actors did not continue post-migration, the mode of entry they created also shaped subsequent network formation for the London respondents. The foremost example is the ties of nurses and care workers in institutional facilities to their batchmates. While previous discussion emphasized changes in those ties (e.g. becoming less important over time), it is also necessary to remark their persistence in migrant networks. While participants may no longer be connected to all of their batchmates, they may maintain ties to few with whom they developed deeper bonds. This is usually the case for those who lived in the same accommodation, attended the same church, and became godparents of each other's children. Such *multiplex ties* are usually stronger and may even develop into a more familial-type of relations over time (i.e. 'fictive kin,' see Chapter 2, p. 23).

For domestic workers and caregivers who ran away from their former employers, ties to people who initially helped them could also persist over time, especially if such ties didn't become conflictive or exploitative. For one, they may share the same networks as the then-newcomers were introduced to the ties of those who initially helped them. Equally important is that such relationships are often predicated on the notions of *hiya* (sense of propriety) and *utang na loob* (commonly translated as debt of gratitude), similar to norms of reciprocity and obligations found in familial ties. Though these ties are not free from conflict and abuse (see Chapter 7, pp. 176–177; 193–194), such connections may continue over time – whether or not participants considered them as relevant as they were in the beginning.

It is also important to note that occupations and workplaces both enable and constrain network formation and maintenance. There is a tendency for individuals to be connected to people similar to them – known as the general principle of *homophily* in social networks (McPherson et al., 2001). Thus, participants' networks are mostly composed of ties similar to them – in terms of occupations and ethnic background. However, since nurses work in an environment where they can meet and interact with more people of diverse background, it is more likely for them to also form meaningful ties with non-Filipinos. Live-in domestic workers and private caregivers, on the other hand, have limited opportunities to develop heterogeneous and extensive networks given the privatized nature of their work (Hagan, 1998). Lastly, legal status poses another constraint for network formation, particularly among undocumented migrants. The irregularity of their status meant that they must remain invisible and this can impede forming and maintaining ties outside of few that they can trust. In this sense, having more diverse ties (e.g. weak and strong ties; heterogeneous and homophilic ties) and expansive networks are shaped by historical, structural, and policy contexts as well as by the migrants' legal and socio-economic circumstances in the place of destination.



**Figure 8.6.** Luis' Pre-migration, Initial, and Current Support Networks  
 (ego-alter ties are removed)

### *On the Stability of Transnational Ties*

Another type of ties that were generally persistent in the network maps of the research participants are their transnational connections, particularly involving the families they left behind. This is not surprising given that respondents (and Filipinos in general) migrated in search of better lives not only for themselves but also for their families (*see*, for example, Asis, 2002; Espiritu, 2003; McKay, 2016). Thus, a strong sense of familial obligation is the most apparent form of transnational connection for most of the research participants. As Espiritu (2003: 89-90) elaborated in her study on Filipinos in the United States, the duty to help one's (extended) family in the Philippines (by sending remittances) intimately connects the lives of the migrants to their homeland post-migration:

When my respondents speak about their connections to the Philippines, it is their ties and obligations to their family “back home” that weigh most heavily on their minds and in their hearts. In this sense, migration is not necessarily—or at least not always—an act of leaving. For the majority of the people I interviewed, their departure was a move designed to improve the lot and status of their families back home, and not only or primarily about the pursuit of personal success. It is in the shouldering of the various obligations of their extended, transnational family that they attempt the near-impossible task of “leaving [home] but staying there.”

These intimate connections can also be seen in the persistence of ties back home in the networks of the research participants. While the presence of familial ties in the Philippines may not be as visible in their initial settlement networks (compared to their pre-migration networks), these ties re-appear as relevant ties in their current networks (e.g. Leonora's and Alma's networks, Figures 8.2 & 8.3). It may also not be as common as migrants sending assistance back home but the direction of support may also come from the Philippines, especially for newly-arrived and adjusting research participants. This dynamic has been also discussed in the works of Mazzucato (2011) and Boccagni (2015) on reverse remittances, highlighting that the support migrants received from home should also not be ignored. For instance, Amelia, a senior staff nurse, recalled how financially challenging it was when her family joined her in London. When they were still starting to get settled, her eldest sister in the Philippines was supporting them financially and helped them with their mortgage. As might be expected, this presupposes that relatives back home are in better economic position. For most participants, however, their families back home primarily gave them emotional support to get through the difficulties they encountered overseas. These exchanges of emotional support sustain familial ties in the context of international migration and also provide continuous sense of belongingness for migrants and non-migrants alike (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). This is best captured by the account of Francis on why his extended family remained important:

*Rizza: Why do you consider your extended family important when you were adjusting?*

*Francis: Well, it keeps you grounded. It's like . . . it puts into perspective where I came from and what is important to me. [. . .] Because it's easy to – especially when my family was not yet here – it's easy to . . . lose track of your goal here, so to speak.*

(Francis, 43 years old, staff nurse, arrived in London in 2002)

Apart from providing financial and emotional support, participants also talked about practical help from kin and non-kin in the Philippines. Practical support comes in the form of advice and valuable information. For instance, the father of Lorena offered her advice on how to deal with the complicated relationship with her mother-in-law and guided her on how to regularize her status. Family and friends back home also connected the research participants to individuals and groups

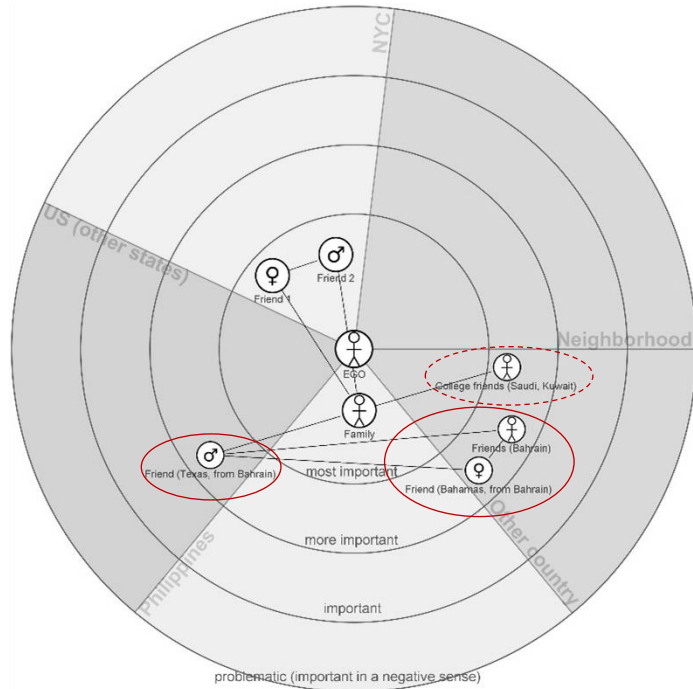
that could potentially help them find jobs or accommodation. Some were able to form friendships because another friend or family member in the Philippines virtually introduced them to people they know in the place of destination. In this sense, it is also important to pay attention not just to the remittances that migrants send back to their families but also to the forms of support that they receive from home (Boccagni, 2015). Even visits take place in both directions – that is while respondents would visit the Philippines, their families and friends also visit them in New York or London. Again, these practices are shaped by economic resources, suggesting that social divisions, such as social class, influence the forms and extent of transnational engagements (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017; Fresnoza-Flot & Shinozaki, 2017; Gold, 2001). Furthermore, sustaining ties back home is also intimately connected with the participants’ future imaginaries of ‘successfully returning’ as they invest not only on upward mobility in the home country but also in relationships that can possibly provide care in old age (*see* p. 210 of this chapter).

However, transnational ties of the research participants are not only located in their home country. As previously illustrated (*see* Figures 8.2 & 8.5), respondents also have ties in other countries where their family (and close friends) relocated – sometimes, even through their help. As there is a need to re-conceptualize the notion of chain migration, it is also necessary to include intermediary countries in studying the transnational fields and spaces.<sup>145</sup> Given the increasingly restrictive immigration policies in the ‘top tier destinations,’ onward and step migrants first moved to intermediary countries before reaching their preferred destination (Paul, 2011, 2015). They may also maintain ties they developed in those countries and those ties may also provide support for the research participants. For instance, migrant organizations, Filipino community leaders, and government officials in Hong Kong connected Evelyn and Norma, domestic workers, to their organizational ties in London. Thus, even when their employers took them to London, they were still able to continue their active involvement in Filipino communities and migrant organizations. It is also important to note that, in the case of domestic work, the temporary or permanent movement of employers (in high-status occupations, such as diplomats, businessmen, and highly-skilled professionals) is intricately connected to the parallel movement of domestic workers (low-status occupation). However, the tied-visa of domestic workers to their employers who brought them to the UK indicates not only asymmetrical relations but also a form of ‘differential inclusion’ discussed in Chapter 4 (p. 53).

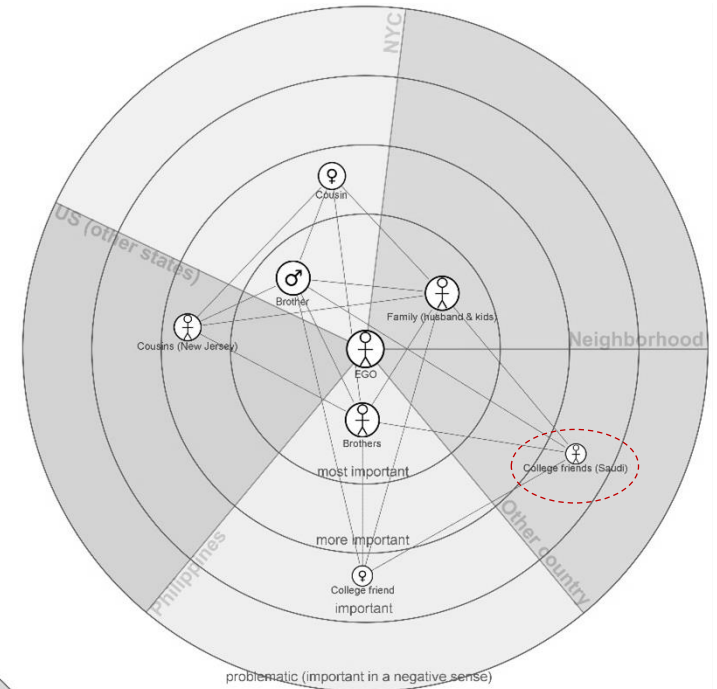
The global dispersion of Filipino nurses can also be observed from the transnational ties of nurse participants that encompassed links in other places apart from the countries of origin and destination. Consider the current support networks of Julia, Dahlia, and Mia (Figures 8.7, 8.8, and 8.9, respectively). All three of them listed their college friends – also nurses – as relevant ties in their current support networks. The spatial expanse of these ties in various countries could provide a glimpse of the large-scale international migration of Filipino nurses. Overall, examining transnational ties that go beyond the sending and receiving countries framework allows for a more complex picture of transnational engagements and a more dynamic conceptualization of migrant networks.

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<sup>145</sup> Applying social network analysis on transnational studies, Molina et al. (2014: 4) differentiated between transnational field and transnational space. The former pertains to the ‘egocentric level’ (“the ensemble of individual ties of particular persons”) and the latter to the ‘sociocentric level’ (“transnational places and regions connected by social networks of people”).



**Figure 8.7.** Julia's Current Support Networks  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



**Figure 8.8.** Dahlia's Current Support Networks  
(ego-alter ties are removed)



**Figure 8.9.** Mia's Current Support Networks  
(ego-alter ties are removed)

## Summing Up: Future Desires, Present Dilemmas, and Dynamic Networks

This chapter examined the narratives through which the interviewees imagined and constructed their desired future. The dominant was a narrative of ‘successful’ return to the Philippines, albeit the timing of such return was left for the ‘future to decide’, which made the respondents exist in a state of “permanent temporariness”. It was clear from most of the interviews that an idea of ‘better life’ is oriented toward a nonspecific future in the home country with a hope of being taken care of by the relatives they have been supporting throughout their stay overseas. In this manner, the pathways taken to reach New York and London are just intermediary steps as the dream destination is actually an upward social mobility in the home country.

Given this future imaginary, current circumstances are focused on attaining such imagined future. Thus, despite improvements in their financial situation through overseas work, research participants (particularly the relatively younger ones) tend to express that they are not yet fully satisfied and would want to earn more. While trying to have a comfortable and secured life in the place of destination, Filipino migrants simultaneously create their desired future in their home country through investments – both financially and emotionally. They build or intend to build houses as a testament and recognized symbol of their social and economic mobility. They also maintain meaningful relationships with relatives they left behind in view of their eventual return and future needs for care. The dilemma with the ideal and desired care in old age was also explored as participants considered the better medical care they think they can get in the US or the UK and the more personal and physical care they long in the home country.

Satisfaction (or lack of which) with their current job in the care sector was also explored. Though considered as a source of belonging in the ‘host’ society, doing care work is also seen as a basis of feeling of exclusion. While participants see their work as contributing greatly to overall functioning of the system in the US or the UK, they also feel that care work is underappreciated and that their efforts to do their job do not commensurate to the remuneration they receive. Given that the concept of belonging is multi-layered and that individuals can be embedded in various contexts, the participants’ narratives of belonging are framed within the contours of the American or British society and that of the Philippine society. Thus, research participants engage in transnational practices as they orient and position themselves with regard to the reference group in both home and host country. However, lack of legal papers limits wider participation and intensifies feeling of insecurity.

Migrants’ present circumstances – occupation, legal status and transnational engagements, among others – and future imaginaries (e.g. ‘successful return’) also shape and impinge upon the formation and maintenance of migrant support networks over time. As Menjivar (2006: 1023) emphasized: “The material and physical conditions – shaped largely by the immigration laws that govern their lives – have deeply affected the dynamics of their [migrants’] social networks.” The manner of recruitment, for instance, created default networks for nurse respondents (ties with their batchmates) that persist over time (albeit changes in their level of importance). The persistence of pre-dominantly kinship-based networks for most respondents in New York is largely influenced by historical and colonial ties between the Philippines and the US, as well as the emphasis of US immigration law on family reunification. Changing needs and life transitions such as divorce and separation, having kids, career advancement, and further mobility also shaped the development of migrant networks (e.g. dissolution of ties and formation of new ones). Lastly, given that most research participants imagined their future as a ‘successful’ return to the Philippines, they continuously ‘invest’ in and maintain their transnational connections. However, their network maps also revealed that there is a need to expand the concept of the transnational fields and spaces to include intermediary countries and ties to kin and non-kin beyond the sending and receiving countries.



# CHAPTER NINE

## Synthesis and Future Directions: *Networks and Filipino Migration*

### Postscript

By mid-April 2016, I officially ended my fieldwork for this research project. However, I remained in touch with some of the respondents and the people who know them. I came to know that two of the nurses I interviewed in London decided to move to the US. Remembering our interviews and informal conversations back then, they were more inclined to stay in London and hesitant to move again. Indeed, these exemplify how certain migrants continue with their onward journeys even after reaching some level of stability in a particular destination (e.g. acquired citizenship or permanent residence and career advancement). It makes one wonder, though, what would happen to their ties in London? To what extent would they remain in contact to these ties? How would they forge new relations and what would be their experience in re-connecting with pre-existing ones in the US?

I also learnt that a care worker respondent in New York was able to pass her nursing licensure examination and started working as a full-time nurse. The petition of the spouse of one domestic worker respondent (also in New York) got approved. I was told by a common friend that she was then able to visit the Philippines and attend to her ailing grandfather. On the other hand, there are also those who continue to remain in London or New York despite their plan to go back to the Philippines or move somewhere else. Others continue to remain in limbo because of their undocumented status.

In the background, important events also took place in the US, the UK, and the Philippines after the data collection: the US and Philippine presidential elections, and *Brexit*. Would these events change the lives of overseas Filipinos in New York and London? Would Filipinos in New York (considered by respondents as friendly to undocumented migrants) feel threatened by the anti-immigrant sentiments, similar to what is happening in the UK? While recently-arrived respondents in London had expressed uncertainty over their future in the country given the changes in the immigration policy, would Brexit exacerbate such feeling? Finally, given that an overwhelming number of overseas Filipino absentee voters voted for Duterte (Cook & Salazar, 2016), would they have more favorable prospect in the country?

Given the shifts and changes within the lives of migrants and the contexts where they are located, continued research to account for such changes is warranted.

## Key Findings

In the introductory chapter, I briefly outlined the research questions that this study aimed to answer:

1. Which kinds of ties facilitated the movement of nurses, domestics, and care workers to their places of destination? To what extent were their paths to places of destination similar and/or different?
2. Which kinds of ties serve as resources, and which act as constraints, as migrants adjust with the initial conditions they experience upon arrival in London / New York? How do 'old' and 'new' ties facilitate or impede their adjustments and settlement in the place of destination?
3. In which ways are Filipino nurses, domestics, and care workers in London and New York similar or different in terms of network formation, composition, and evolution? How do individual attributes as well as socio-economic and policy contexts shape the ways migrants form ties?

The goal of the first question was to examine the kind of ties that propel the movements of the respondents in the US or the UK. The ubiquity of 'network' in migration studies points out to the usefulness of the concept in explaining mobility and immobility. However, migrant networks are also subject to the influence of the very process that they aim to explain. To a certain extent, particular migration pathways pre-condition subsequent network formation. To ask which shapes what is a rather too simplistic of a question to ask given that both network and migration are dynamic and processual.

The second question covered another prominent function of the migrant networks – that is, their role in adjustment, survival, and settlement in the place of destination. But as what extant research has also highlighted, contexts and spaces of reception also impinge upon the ability of one's connections to provide help and assistance. Thus, the last question addressed not only how migrants in different occupational status develop and sustain ties, but also how changing immigration policies and life transitions may enable or limit networking practices and resource mobilization.

Each of these questions also roughly corresponds to the three phases of the migration process that was used to allow temporal comparison. The last question, however, focused on exploring how networks evolve over time instead of just examining the current support networks of migrants. Such decision was borne out of the emphasis of this study on problematizing how ties are formed, how connections are sustained, and how networks operate rather than simply assuming that they are 'out there.' In the following sections, I expand on these questions through the main findings discussed in the previous chapters.

### *Migrant Networks as Aspiration-Forming Structures*

Continued large-scale international migration of Filipinos is not just about the receiving countries' demand for migrant labor and the role of the Philippine state in deploying its citizens as overseas workers. It is also about reproducing the desires of Filipinos to go abroad. Images of attaining 'good life' and securing 'better future' for the would-be migrants and their families through migration (Asis, 2002, 2006; Aguilar, 2009, 2014; Galam, 2015; McKay, 2012, 2016) thus create and sustain a strong 'culture of migration' among Filipinos. Rather than simply stating that a culture of migration exists, it has been suggested that examining how such culture is being perpetuated and sustained is necessary to understand how it shapes migration aspirations and to what extent can it stay relevant in the case of Filipino migration.

In this study, images of the desirability of overseas work are explored. It has been illustrated how such images are reproduced in varied ways and channels – such as ties to and engagements with Filipinos overseas (Aguilar, 1999), mass media (Frei, 2013; McKay, 2008, 2010), and the Philippine state itself (Guevarra, 2010). The findings in this study show that aspirations to go abroad (or at least the idea that it brings 'good fortune') are tied to the personal memories of the respondents – of seeing their relatives or neighbors with 'imported' goods or they themselves receiving something from the *balikbayan* boxes. Such personal experiences of 'social remittances' (Levitt, 1998), intersect with the media that they consume (e.g. television shows, movies, novels, and, more recently, digital media). In turn, as migrants, they continue to reproduce the desirability of overseas work in the eyes of those they left-behind as they send their own *balikbayan* boxes to their families and friends, regular visits and conspicuous consumption, as well as photos that they share in the social media platforms.

Institutional actors also participate in sustaining a culture of migration among Filipinos. For one, migrant institutions (Goss & Lindquist, 1995) such as pertinent government agencies, recruitment and placement agencies, as well as educational and training institutions contribute in 'advertising' opportunities abroad. Given that these institutions profit from large-scale migration, it is to their interest that labor migration continues unabated.

In this sense, migrant networks (conceived as interpersonal and institutional ties) are also networks of reproducing hopes and aspirations for a better future through migration. While extant literature such that of de Haas (2010) and Timmerman et al. (2014) pointed to the 'negative migration-undermining feedback mechanisms' that can deter migration to a particular place and weaken the said culture of migration in the home community, this study on the migrant networks of Filipinos in New York and London has shown that there is a tendency for those negative feedbacks to be concealed and not disseminated. Research participants, for instance, tend not to tell their families back home of the difficulties they were experiencing in the place of destination. Visiting their home country, they exude the image of 'successful' migrants, staying in line to the script of the desirability of overseas work. Migrant institutions continue to promote overseas work as both recruitment agencies and the Philippine government have kept on exploring other destinations when traditional routes become untenable. Similarly, relatives abroad could also channel and finance the migration of their relatives back home in other destinations when they could not sponsor to join them in their current destinations (e.g. in the US or the UK), suggesting another form of chain migration (Chelipden Hamer, 2008). It is therefore important to consider place-specific aspirations and negative feedbacks that only pertain to particular destinations. In this way, migrant networks continue to be relevant in the persistence of the culture of migration as they don't invalidate the overall image of migration as the means of attaining a better life.

### *Migrant Networks as Opportunity Structures*

The first two research questions that this study set to answer centered on the role of migrant networks as sources of social capital (Lin, 1999). Apart from *normative influence* (i.e. as aspiration-forming structures), migrant networks also have *social facilitation* function (Garip & Asad, 2015, 2016) – pertaining to the resources derived from networks. Such role of migrant networks can be further specified before and after migration: selective or channeling, and adaptive functions (Gurak & Caces, 1992). Pre-migration, migrant networks channel would-be migrants to particular destinations and facilitate their eventual movements. Thus, networks serve as opportunity structures through which migration aspirations are realized. Post-migration, networks' function becomes adaptive as migrants rely on their networks to adjust, survive, and get ahead.

In Chapter 6, pre-migration networks have been examined as to how they enabled the respondents to reach the US or the UK – considered as top-tier destinations in the hierarchy (Paul, 2011, 2015). It has been shown how pre-existing ties and immigration policies conditioned the manner of entry and arrival of Filipinos in New York and London. In New York, familial ties played an almost exclusive role in facilitating and supporting the movement of Filipino migrants given the emphasis of the 1965 US immigration law on family reunification and the long-standing relationship of the Philippines with its colonial master. This was not the case in London. While family members and relatives shaped the decisions of some to move to London instead of another destination, most of the interviewees relied on former employers (in the case of domestic workers) or recruitment agencies (in the case of nurses and support care workers in institutional facilities) to enter London (or the UK). Thus, institutional ties had been more crucial in the case of most nurses and support care workers in London compared to those in New York, especially those who did not have pre-existing networks in the UK. Following Poros' (2001, 2011) typology, we can mainly refer to those in New York as kin-based *chains* (migrated through predominantly interpersonal connections) while those in the UK as *recruits* (through institutional ties).

Domestic workers and live-in caregivers in London without pre-existing ties in the place of destination can be considered as *solitaries* given that their move to London was largely dependent on their former employers whom they accompanied. They had no or very little control concerning their destination though almost all of them escaped and ran away from these employers. But while their entry to this destination was by chance, escaping and settling here required deliberate action on their part – surmounting the risks and uncertainties from running away from their employers. Poros (2011: 162) noted that solitaries are uncommon: “A lack of ties leads to little or no migration because international migration is costly and risky. Accounts of individuals migrating without the help of interpersonal, organizational, and composite ties in the home or host countries are rare.” However, ties do not necessarily have to be confined in the home and host countries, especially in the context of onward or stepwise migration.

There were also pre-migration networks that are composed mainly of non-kin and weak ties. To a certain extent, friends and acquaintances had provided information, advice, and practical support that helped respondents without pre-existing ties familial ties in the US or the UK nor access to migrant institutions. Bashi's (2007) *hub-and-spoke* model is a particular type of pre-migration network wherein a 'hub' (usually from one's hometown) acted as sponsor to encourage and support the mobility of would-be migrants. Though non-kin (and for some, a weak tie), the dynamic of this type of pre-migration network is somehow similar to that of familial-based network, which rests on strong obligations and mutual support.

However, it has also been shown that there are migrants who relied on various types of types to facilitate their migration to the US or the UK. Utilizing Uzzi's (1999) concept of network complementarity, this kind of pre-migration network (one that combines diverse interpersonal and

institutional ties) has been found to be beneficial in balancing the advantages and disadvantages that are tied in particular social relations.

Upon arrival, migrants had to contend with new sets of challenges and difficulties. It has been illustrated that the manner of entry as well as pre-migration networks shaped initial challenges and provided, as well as restricted, the space in which migrants can forge new connections and relations. As shown in Chapter 7, the situations of those who were recruited through work permits and immigrant visas (predominantly nurses) are expected to differ from those who overstayed their visas (mostly domestic workers) – pointing to the importance of one’s immigration status and occupation in determining what form of support and assistance migrants need post-migration.

In terms of network composition, the pre-existing kinship ties of most respondents in New York were crucial in their initial settlement. Reliance on *familial ties* as sources of initial support upon arrival is not surprising given the strong sense of obligations regulating the dynamics of kin-based relations. Therefore, exchanges of support and assistance among family members are considered as ‘natural,’ expected, and automatic. But this presupposed that family members have resources to help (Menjivar, 1997, 2000) – highlighting also the significance of the position of one’s ties in the social hierarchy (Lin, 1999). Thus, it is not enough that familial ties are present, it is more important that they have the capacity (and willingness) to provide continued support to newly-arrived migrants. Therefore, in cases when expected support from kin was inadequate or lacking, newcomers forged new connections to generate the assistance they needed. This is best illustrated by domestic workers who ran away from their former employers. Their reliance on strangers or acquaintances is considered a gamble (though they did not have any choice but to do so) since they could have either stumbled upon supportive co-ethnic ties who would ensure their survival or abusive ties who would exploit them further. Similar to kin-based networks, however, these initial ties provide not only instrumental support but also serve as bridges in connecting migrants to other individuals, groups, and networks. In addition, institutional ties such as organizations assisting migrant domestic workers, religious and ethnic groups, and churches had been shown to be important as they provide a familiar and safe space to meet other people and build new relations.

In the case of nurses and institutional care workers who migrated through recruitment agencies, being deployed together with other nurses (or care workers) at the same time created ‘instant’ or transplanted communities for these migrants. Expectedly, their context of reception was more favorable compared to domestic workers and live-in caregivers who were in a more vulnerable position (e.g. after escaping one’s former employer and having no ties in the place of destination). While these nurses and care workers did not have pre-existing ties in the place of destination, the initial assistance provided by their hospitals or care facilities (institutional employers), as well as the presence of their batchmates made their adjustment and settlement relatively easier and less problematic.

Support and assistance from both kin and non-kin (or strong and weak) ties are found to be crucial not only for coping and survival but also for upward mobility (Briggs, 1998; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003). All in all, while access to diverse types of ties is ideal (network complementarity), having strategically-positioned alter could also propel social mobility.

### ***Ambivalent Connections: Supportive and 'Problematic' Ties***

It has been shown in this study that inasmuch as support and assistance flow within networks, so are conflicts, tensions, and exploitations. Ties may be important but are also not necessarily wholly supportive. In the case of those domestic workers (and live-in caregivers) who escaped the employers whom they 'accompanied,' their pathways to London are not conventional but also not uncommon. Their relations to these employers – the ties that made their migration to London possible – were mostly exploitative. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account of the ambivalent ties that cannot be neatly categorized as either positive or negative. In the context of geographic mobility, the ties that were the most instrumental in reaching a particular destination could also be the most abusive. This has been illustrated also in the case of those who were cheated and scammed by their recruiters (e.g. those who paid exorbitant fees). Thus, notions of 'support' and 'assistance' should also be problematized and critically examined.

Post-migration, the presence of ambivalent ties was most apparent. For instance, expected support from family members and relatives in the place of destination could be withheld and withdrawn because of familial conflicts (Menjivar, 1997, 2000). In such instances, differences between occupational groups become palpable. While nurses were able to rely on their own (human) capital for survival, undocumented domestic workers and private caregivers usually ended up in worse situations because of the precariousness of their situations. This point emphasizes that we cannot also ignore the *differential* and *unequal access to resources* within migrant groups (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Gold, 2001; Hagan, 1998; Roggeveen & van Meeteren, 2013).

There were also cases when relatives, instead of providing support, gave more trouble and problem (e.g. tipping undocumented migrants to immigration officers) or took advantage of newly-arrived migrants (such as making them work for free). In more ambivalent terms, while familial support was extended, obligations and norms of reciprocity could also limit the freedom to form new connections and access to ties that could potentially lead to advancement and leverage (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003).

Likewise, co-ethnic ties and Filipino community could also be supportive and, at the same time, conflictive or abusive. This has been exemplified in the case of domestic workers who ran away from their employers and found themselves relying on the goodwill of their co-ethnics. While such encounters have led to favorable outcomes for the migrants (e.g. when co-ethnics took these domestic workers under their wings), there were also cases when the outcome was detrimental to the well-being of the migrants who were already in a precarious situation (obliging them to work in the household in exchange for accommodation and limiting their opportunity to look for better-paying job).

Paying attention to these ambivalences in the pre-existing and newly-formed relations of migrants is necessary so as to avoid romanticizing the benefits and support that can be derived from migrant networks.

### *Changing Ties: The Stability and Evolution of Migrant Networks*

The last research question highlights the possibility of accounting for changes in migrant networks. Apart from emphasizing the processual and relational nature of migration, this study also aimed to illustrate how networks – embedded within changing social contexts – are temporally, spatially, and relationally dynamic (Ryan & D’Angelo, 2018). As Granovetter (1983: 229) asserts:

The most pressing need for further development of network ideas is a move away from static analyses that observe a system at one point in time and to pursue instead systematic accounts of how such systems develop and change. Only by careful attention to this dynamic problem can social network analysis fulfill its promise as a powerful instrument in the analysis of social life.

There is then a need to deviate from the static conceptualization of networks (i.e. ‘networks as a given’) in order to avoid “falling into a trap that we might call network determinism” (Schapendonk, 2015: 817). It has been shown in this study that ties can be maintained, dissolved, or weakened, and new ones may be forged over time. In Chapter 8, shifts in the respondents’ networks were examined vis-à-vis life course events and transitions. It has been illustrated, for instance, how divorce and separation have altered migrant networks as ties to and connected with their former partners tend to be discontinued or have lost their relevance. Getting married, having kids, and career advancement (among other life events) have been shown to enable and constrain networking opportunities given that such events and circumstances restrict the physical and virtual spaces that migrants can inhabit. Furthermore, forming and nurturing ties require time and effort both on the part of the migrant and their connections (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014; Schapendonk, 2015) – emphasizing how structure and agency intersect in networking practices.

Apart from life events and transitions, immigration policies and migration pathways were also discussed as influencing network formation, maintenance, and dissolution. To some extent, this point has already been addressed in answering the previous two questions. For instance, the predominantly kin-based ties of respondents in New York can be attributed to both the historical and colonial ties of the Philippines to the United States and to the emphasis of the US immigration law on family reunification. In the absence of pre-existing (familial) ties, the mass recruitment of nurses in the UK created default networks for nurse respondents (i.e. ties with their batchmates) that persist over time (albeit changes in their level of importance). In the same way, connections of domestic workers and live-in caregivers (who ran away from their former employers) to people who initially helped them could also persist over time, especially if such ties didn’t become conflictive or exploitative.

It has also been shown how transnational ties were maintained in relation to strong familial obligations and commonly-shared view of the future – that is a successful return to one’s homeland. Examining the network maps, however, also revealed that respondents also maintained ties to other places apart from the home and host countries – connections they had developed in intermediary countries as onward migrants as well as ties that are geographically mobile. Therefore, it is also necessary to expand the scope of transnational field and spaces to include destinations apart from sending and receiving countries.

## Mapping the Wider Implications for Migration Research

Examining the networks and networking practices of Filipinos in New York and London does not only enrich the literature on Filipino migration. The key findings in this study also have implications on larger debates in migration research, particularly on studies on migrant networks. This section outlines these substantive contributions – highlighting how these findings can be positioned within extant research and existing scholarship. I draw on both network and non-network findings to illustrate the depth and breadth of research utilizing social network and comparative perspectives – building on the discussion in the previous section.

### *Multiplicity of Ties*

It has been emphasized throughout this manuscript that migrant networks should go beyond its conventional conceptualization – that is centered on interpersonal ties (Massey et al., 1993) – to include varied actors pre- and post-migration. For instance, Krissman (2005) and van Meeteren & Pereira (2016) criticized this narrow definition of ‘migrant network’ as it fails to take into account important and relevant actors – e.g. employers, smugglers, and internet contacts – that shape migration process and outcomes. Poros (2001; 2011) utilized interpersonal, institutional, and composite (both interpersonal and institutional) ties to account for different migration flows of Gujarati Indians in New York and London. This study provides further empirical evidence on the multiplicity of actors involved not only in facilitating movement but also in adjusting and settling post-migration.

The case of Filipino migration draws our attention to the brokering role of the state (Guevarra, 2010; Rodriguez, 2010) in exporting labor overseas. Thus, while the Philippine government was not mentioned by the respondents as relevant in their pre-migration networks, its active role in the migration industry could not be ignored (Spaan & Hillmann, 2013). In particular, government agencies oversee and regulate the private recruitment agencies that figure prominently in the network maps of nurses and institutional care workers.<sup>146</sup> In addition, it has been shown that institutional ties such as recruitment agencies (and the corresponding employers in the destination country) also shaped post-migration networks as they create ‘transplanted communities’ (e.g. ‘batchmates) of nurses and institutional care workers through mass recruitment.

While it is often the professionals (in this case, Filipino nurses and, to a certain degree, institutional care workers) who depend more on institutional ties, as Poros (2011) suggested, considering the role of recruitment agencies on the deployment of domestic and care workers in intermediary countries provides a more nuanced picture. In this sense, limiting the span of migrant networks in sending and receiving countries fails to take into account other forms of migration pathways (e.g. onward or step migration). In turn, this tends to ignore relevant ties in intermediary destinations and, therefore, limits a better understanding of how migrant networks operate.

### *Heterogeneity of Migrant Group*

Comparing Filipinos in New York and London brings to the fore the similarities and differences within a specific migrant group – highlighting the often-overlooked schisms among migrants from the same country of origin and the ‘crucial past’ they all share. While it is expected to observe differences between highly-skilled and low-skilled migrants, as well as regular and irregular ones, documenting such differences in adjustment experiences, settlement patterns, and support networks shows that not all irregular migrants and low-skilled workers have similar experiences and available

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<sup>146</sup> In the context of onward migration, recruitment agencies were also instrumental to the relocation of migrants from intermediary countries to top-tier destinations like the US and the UK – pointing at the *detrterritorialized* process of recruitment and deployment of Filipino workers.



capital. In particular, the findings in this study suggest that destinations (New York or London) and immigration regimes intersect with individual attributes and resources (e.g. educational attainment, pre-migration social status, strategically located ties) in shaping post-migration experiences and future imaginaries. It should be noted, however, that fundamental changes in immigration policies could have an overriding influence on certain aspects of immigrants' lives as in the case of those who applied for domestic worker visa in the UK after April 5, 2012. These migrant domestic workers could no longer apply for indefinite leave to remain (permanent residency) nor bring their partners and children (under 18) to the UK. This change in the immigration policy leaves little space for the said migrants to maneuver – that is if their goal is to remain in the UK – regardless of their ties, connections, and capital.<sup>147</sup>

Comparing Filipinos in two global cities also contributes to extant cross-Atlantic research on particular migrant group (e.g. Foner, 1979, 1985, 1998, 2005 on Caribbean migration; Poros, 2001, 2011 on Gujarati Indians). The contrasting migration histories of Filipinos in the US and the UK provide an opportunity to examine how historical antecedents shape migration streams and pre-existing migrant networks – emphasizing that relations between sending and receiving countries cannot be ignored and simply taken for granted. While contexts of reception (Menjivar, 2000) or structures of incorporation (Foner, 2005) matter, historical and colonial ties should also be critically examined in accounting for post-colonial migration streams and outcomes (Espiritu, 2003). Considering the historical and contemporary relations between the Philippines and the US and the Philippines and the UK is necessary in understanding and explaining the differences between the types of Filipinos in New York and London (in the same occupation) and their lives overseas. While it has been observed that Filipinos migrant workers tend to be concentrated in the care sector in both the US and the UK, the findings in this study suggest not only the contrasting characteristics of Filipinos migrants in the two cities (e.g. in terms of educational background or pre-migration socio-economic status), but also their varying pathways and different types of support networks. This means that in order to understand migrant lived experiences, in general, and networking practices, in particular, it is necessary to recognize the heterogeneity of migrant groups in relation to the micro, meso, and macro-level contexts.

### ***Expanded Transnational Field and Networks***

That migrants simultaneously exist and engage in both host and home countries is widely-recognized, often encapsulated within the concept of transnationalism. However, as Boccagni (2012: 128) argues, a more meaningful endeavor lies not in categorizing migrants and their practices as 'transnational,' but in "exploring specific aspects of migrants' daily lives, on which a transnational lens enables a better understanding." The findings from the participants' narratives provide insights and empirical evidences on how their lived experiences and future imaginaries are shaped by a 'dual frame of reference' (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). For one, how 'good life' and 'success' have been constructed illustrate that while attaining 'good life' is tied with 'going abroad,' measuring one's success (and social mobility) is oriented towards the home country (and to a certain extent, the Filipino 'community' in the host country). Thus, transnational practices such as sending remittances, building houses and investing in the home country, as well regular visits are not only about sustaining connections but could also be viewed as ways of tracking and ensuring one's success for those who matter. This is also the case for those who shared that they could still not go home, even for a visit, because of the shame associated with returning empty-handed (Baldassar, 2007; Mortensen, 2014; Rulikova, 2012).

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<sup>147</sup> As a response, some domestic worker respondents are looking at the prospect of marrying a permanent resident or a UK citizen in order to remain legally in the UK.

Examining the simultaneous engagements of migrants in the host and home countries should also take into account experiences of dislocations. In this study, I have focused on the concepts of liminality and permanent temporariness to explore spatial and temporal dislocations - particularly in the context of deferred or conditional return. The ‘betwixt-and-between’ existence in the case of Filipino migrants in this study pertains not only to their legal status (i.e. for irregular migrants), as in the studies of Bailey et al., (2002) and Menjivar (2006) on the ‘in-between’ legal status of Salvadorans and Guatemalans in the United States. For Filipinos I interviewed, the goal of ‘materially successful return’ (Olwig, 2012) shapes the state of permanent temporariness as they deferred their return indefinitely until they are able to realize such goal (Boccagni, 2011; Carling, 2004; Sinatti, 2011). In migration literature, this dream of eventual return has been referred to as ‘myth of return’ (Anwar, 1979) – alternatively, ‘ethos of return’ (Carling, 2004) or ‘return fantasy’ (Bolognani, 2016). Following Carling (2004) and Bolognani (2016), regardless of whether actual return migration will take place or not, the intention to do so is more important. In this study, such intention frames the present lives and experiences of the interviewees given their future imaginaries.

The desire to return could also be examined in relation to another form of dislocation – one that pertains to ‘contradictory class mobility’ (Parreñas, 2001, 2015) or ‘transnational status paradox of migration’ (Nieswand, 2011). That migrants orient their notions of ‘success’ and ‘good life’ in the home country is also a function of their status and position in the host society. For migrants employed in low-status jobs (and to a certain extent, even professionals and highly-skilled migrants), being able to move up and afford life’s comforts could be seen as more possible back home.

Finally, the need to expand the transnational field and engagement has been most apparent in examining the networks of Filipino migrants. The findings in this study show that relevant support and assistance are not only located in the origin or destination country, but also in intermediary countries. There is a need to also pay attention to other forms of pathways and routes (i.e. onward and step migration) apart from direct migration.

## Methodological Notes and Future Directions

While the role of migrant networks in migration processes and outcomes has been established in the literature (Boyd, 1989; Gurak & Caces, 1992), the systematic application of the concepts and tools of social network analysis is rather limited in migration research until recently (Bilecen, Gamper, & Lubbers, 2018; Ryan & D’Angelo, 2018). This study is an addition to the emerging works that utilized social network methodology in migration studies.

To elicit migrant networks, network visualization tool had been used as part of data collection strategy. However, as Ryan & D’Angelo (2018: 4) also noted, network maps (or *sociograms*) should not be treated as “visual representation of an objective reality, but as a ‘visual narrative’” – that is, part of the accounts of the respondents. Thus, these network maps were embedded within the participants’ narratives and elicited within the in-depth interview rather than before or after it. Embedding the elicitation of these networks in the participants’ narratives of departure and adjustment helped in remembering what they considered as relevant ties given that those events are by themselves salient and more likely to be easily recalled (van der Vaart & Glasner, 2011; as applied to retrospective migration histories, *see* Carling, 2012; Smith & Thomas, 2003).

Similar to the experience of Ryan, Mulholland, & Agoston (2014), utilizing network maps and visualization tool during data collection also provide a space for interviewees to reflect and evaluate their relations. The design of the map (e.g. dividing by places and levels of importance, as well as incorporating ‘problematic’ ties) also shaped how participants constructed their networks. Future research could alter the layout of the *sociograms* to emphasize the information and topic of interest

(e.g. dividing by types of support instead of places). Integrating the maps within the interviews also created space for dialogues between the interviewer and interviewee – making network elicitation interactive.

Comparing migrant networks in different phases highlights not only the types of support that migrants received (or not received), but also how they form and maintain relationships in various places – mitigating the tendency for networks to be conceptualized as static. However, future studies can benefit from re-interviewing the respondents to collect additional data points and to continue tracking the development of their networks since their circumstances will also continue to change over time. Some may move to another country or return to the Philippines. They may also change jobs or regularize their status. Furthermore, data for this study had been collected prior to important events that may shape and influence the lives (and networks) of the research participants – namely, *Brexit*, the 2016 US presidential elections, and the 2016 Philippine presidential elections.

Another strategy that could enrich the findings of this study is to also interview and map the networks of the alters that the respondents listed (both in the place of destination and country of origin). In this way, we can further examine the flow and exchange of support in both directions. And indeed, with virtual social networks that allow people to cross oceans in seconds came a rather exciting prospect of exploring online behaviors of uprooted individuals.

Social network analysis provides both the perspective and tools for studying not only the links that connect migrants and non-migrants alike in different locations, but also the processual and relational nature of migration. This study is but another attempt at reinterpretation of how people construct and reconstruct the world that they inhabit and the relations that they forge and maintain.

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# LIST OF APPENDICES

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## Appendix 3.1. Informed Consent Form

### *About the study*

This study aims to gain a better understanding of the everyday lives and social networks of Filipinos working and living abroad, specifically in London and New York City. Particular focus will be given on migrants' support system and how their networks facilitate or constrain movement, adjustment, and integration.

### *Interview proper*

The respondent is free to answer or refuse to answer any questions posed by the interviewer. Hence, the respondent has the control over what he/she intends to share to the interviewer. It is also important to stress that there are no right or wrong answers and that the researcher is interested in understanding the experiences and thoughts of the respondent on the subject matter of this study. Thus, the interviews are expected to be as free-flowing as possible.

All interviews will be audio-recorded. The interviewer will ask the respondent if he/she will assent to this before starting the interview.

It is not necessary to finish the interview in one sitting. There could be more than one interview session and both the respondent and interviewer will agree to end the interview process – that is if the respondent feels he/she already said everything he/she needs to mention and if the interviewer feels that she can work with the information that the respondent shared.

### *Voluntary participation*

All respondents will be asked if they are willing to participate in this study. It must be emphasized that their participation is completely voluntary and taking part (or refusing to take part) will not affect them in any way, negatively or positively.

All respondents must explicitly agree to participate in the research and their expressed consent must be recorded. This will take place the signing of a document to express their voluntary participation as signing a document may be uncomfortable to the respondents.

The respondent may also terminate the interview session anytime or withdraw their participation from the study if they no longer feel comfortable about it.

### *Confidentiality:*

Any information that will point to the real identity of the respondent. Pseudonyms will be used instead of the real names of the respondents.

The recorded interviews will be transcribed. In this case, transcribers will be asked to destroy their copy of the audio file of the recorded interviews and delete their files of the transcriptions after submitting them to the researcher. Copy of the audio files of the interviews will be securely kept within a year after the research ends and will be destroyed after one year.

### *Researcher:*

#### **Rizza Kaye C. Cases**

*PhD Candidate*

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University of Trento, Italy

[rizzakayecases@gmail.com](mailto:rizzakayecases@gmail.com)

## Appendix 3.2. Interview Guide

*The interviewees are free to ask to any question to the researcher/interviewer before, during or after the interview process.*

1. What are you engaged with at present?
2. How about your spouse and your children (if you have any)? How is your family doing now? Your parents?

### **BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF THE INTERVIEWEE**

*Could you please tell me some details of your childhood and family?*

3. From which city in the Philippines were you from? Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
4. Could you describe your life back when you were growing up?
5. As which kid have you been born? Are you the firstborn, the second, ... etc?
6. What did you want to be when you were growing up? What led you [or constrained you] from taking/finishing your degree? What job did you do after finishing it? What other jobs did you do while you were still in the Philippines?
7. Did any of your parents ever work overseas? How about your relatives? How about your neighbors? Do you know anyone from your neighborhood who tried their luck abroad? Back then, did you ever think of working abroad? What/who gave you that idea?

### **MIGRATION EXPERIENCE AND RELEVANT NETWORKS**

*I will now ask some details about your experiences moving to London/UK (or NYC/US).*

#### ***Pre-Migration***

8. Prior to moving here in London/UK (NYC/US), did you work in any country outside the Philippines? Where? For how long? What jobs?
9. What are your main reasons for coming here in London (NYC)? Would you say that coming here was easy or difficult (based on your experience)?
10. What were your expectations before coming here? How did you imagine your life would be? What were your aspirations? And what did you actually experience and achieve now that you're here?
11. Looking back, I will now ask you who influenced you the most, both positively and negatively, in your decision to move to London (NYC)? Who helped you or facilitated your move? Whom will you consider instrumental? These can be your family members, your friends, colleagues, acquaintances, or even agencies or organizations.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO ELICIT PRE-MIGRATION NETWORK:**

Imagine yourself as the dot in the middle of the circles, kindly place these people around you depending on how important they are in your decision to move to NYC/US. The closest they are to you, the more important they are. You can also place those whom you consider as important in a *negative* sense (problematic). Kindly place them also depending on where they are currently located (geographically).

Just give them a nickname or whichever name so it would be easier for you to remember them. After placing them inside the circles, connect those who know each other by drawing a line connecting two people together. Please label the connection as: close to each other, acquaintance, or negative relationship. If you listed an organization/institution/ group, connect those people you listed if they belong/working/ related to any of those organizations you listed.

**NOTE:**

Respondents will be asked the following information concerning the people/organizations they named: (1) age; (2) gender; (3) educational attainment; (4) occupation; (5) religion; (6) relationship with the respondent; (7) still in contact/frequency of contact; and (8) role in facilitating/constraining their movement to London/UK (NYC/US) (e.g. financial, emotional, advice, etc.).

***Initial Adjustment***

**12.** Could you kindly describe your life when you first arrived (initial months/ years) in NYC/US? What are the biggest adjustments and challenges you encountered? What were your needs back then? Did you know anyone?

**13.** What were your previous jobs? Was it difficult to find work in the beginning?

**14.** At that time, who are the people and/or organizations that you know or have come to know whom you consider important and made a great impact in your life then (positively and negatively)?

**Prompt:** These could be those who helped you with housing, job, papers/documents, showed you around, taught you the things you needed to know, gave you emotional and material support...

**INSTRUCTIONS TO ELICIT INITIAL ADJUSTMENT NETWORK:**

Again, imagine yourself as the dot in the middle of the circles, kindly place these people around you depending on how important they are in your initial years in London/UK (NYC/US) – when you were still new to this place and were still adjusting. The closest they are to you, the more important they are. You can also place those whom you consider as important in a *negative* sense (problematic). Kindly place them also depending on where they are currently located (geographically).

Just give them a nickname or whichever name so it would be easier for you to remember them. After placing them inside the circles, connect those who know each other by drawing a line connecting two people together. Please label the connection as: close to each other, acquaintance, or negative relationship. If you listed an organization/institution/ group, connect those people you listed if they belong/working/ related to any of those organizations you listed.

**NOTE:**

Respondents will again be asked the following information concerning the additional people/organizations they named: (1) age; (2) gender; (3) educational attainment; (4) occupation; (5) religion; (6) relationship with the respondent; (7) still in contact/frequency of contact; and (8) role in their post-migration (e.g. accommodation, finding a job, financial, emotional, advice, etc.).

### Life Now

15. Let's think of your life here in London (NYC) now, how will you describe it?
16. Whom do you consider important and influential in your life now? These can be people and/or organizations. To whom do you discuss your concerns and other important matters?

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO ELICIT CURRENT SUPPORT NETWORK:

Again, imagine yourself as the dot in the middle of the circles, kindly place these people around you depending on how important they are in your life now. The closest they are to you, the more important they are. You can also place those whom you consider as important in a *negative* sense (problematic). Kindly place them also depending on where they are currently located (geographically).

Just give them a nickname or whichever name so it would be easier for you to remember them. After placing them inside the circles, connect those who know each other by drawing a line connecting two people together. Please label the connection as: close to each other, acquaintance, or negative relationship. If you listed an organization/institution/ group, connect those people you listed if they belong/working/ related to any of those organizations you listed.

#### NOTE:

Respondents will again be asked the following information concerning the additional people/organizations they named: (1) age; (2) gender; (3) educational attainment; (4) occupation; (5) religion; (6) relationship with the respondent; (7) still in contact/frequency of contact; and (8) role they played in the respondent's life now.

### SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

17. Looking at these people you listed, please tell me if there are people/organisations here whom you ask for the following. If you haven't listed anyone yet, you can add them:
  - A. *If you needed help for some house work (i.e. moving furniture, painting walls, etc.) or if you're transferring to another place of residence, who could you ask help from?*
  - B. *\*If you needed help with your child (i.e. looking after your child), who could you ask help from?*
  - C. *If you needed someone to accompany you in the hospital/doctor or go to government offices, who could you ask help from?*
  - D. *If you needed to borrow some hundreds or thousands of pounds for an unexpected expense (i.e. house repair, hospitalisation, or other emergencies), from whom could you ask help?*
  - E. *If you needed an advice regarding a personal problem (i.e. health, love, personal relations), who could you ask help from?*
  - F. *If you needed an opinion regarding the management of your savings, life insurance, or investment (including house/lot, gadgets, cars), who could you ask help from?*
  - G. *If you needed a place to stay (in case of major house repairs or eviction), who could you ask help from?*
  - H. *If you wanted to change jobs or to ask about other possible work opportunities, who could you ask help from?*

18. In turn, what sort of help and assistance can you willingly provide? Were there instances that you did provide these help/assistance? Can you tell me about those instances?
19. Are you sending money or balikbayan box in the Philippines? To whom? What proportion of your salary? How often? Can you tell me about the importance of this practice to you and to those receiving it (money/balikbayan box)? Does this practice affect you in any way, both positively and negatively?

### **LIFE IN LONDON (NYC): SATISFACTION AND SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES**

20. Are you satisfied with your life here? Why or why not? In what way?
21. How about with your current job and income? Is it enough for your and your family's needs?
22. What are your present concerns?
23. Would you say that you have been changed as a person by coming and staying here? In what way? In what aspects?
24. Do you see yourself as part of this society? In what way?
25. Did you vote in the last election? Who did you vote? How about in the past? (If the respondent cannot vote, ask the question hypothetically) How about elections in the Philippines? Did you participate? Will you participate? (If the respondent cannot vote, ask the question hypothetically)
26. Are your friends mostly Filipinos? How about other nationalities? What do you usually do with your Filipino friends? How about with your non-Filipino friends? Would you say that your friendship with Filipinos compared to non-Filipinos is the same? Different? In what way?
27. Do you attend Filipino gatherings here? How was it? Can you tell me about your experience?  
Do you get involved in Filipino associations? How's your experience?

### **HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY SITUATION**

28. \*Who are you with in your current residence? How did you end up living with your current housemates? How is your relationship with them? (\*In case of a house share)
29. In terms of your neighborhood, what particular things do you like in this area? How about the things that you don't like?
30. Given a chance, would you like to transfer to a different place? Why/why not? Where?

### **IMMIGRATION STATUS AND FUTURE PLANS**

31. What was your immigration status at the time when you have first arrived in the UK (US)?  
How about your current status?

#### ***For UK (US) citizens/Naturalized:***

- A. Could you please tell me your story of how you become a UK (US) citizen?
- B. Did you apply or plan to apply for dual citizenship to become Filipino citizen again? Why or why not? How was the process?
- C. Do you plan to stay and permanently live here? Why or why not? When? What will make you come back? How about moving to another place or country?

***For Permanent Residents/ Green Card Holders:***

- A. Could you please tell me your story of how you become a permanent resident?
- B. Did you apply or do you have plan to become a UK (US) citizen? How was the process?
- C. If you were to become a citizen here in the UK (US), will you also apply for dual citizenship to remain as a Filipino citizen? Why or why not?
- D. Do you plan to stay and permanently live here? Why or why not? When? What will make you come back? How about moving to another place or country?

***For Those Holding a Working Visa or Other Types of Temporary Visa***

- A. Given the chance, would you apply for indefinite leave to remain/stay and become permanent resident here in the UK (US)? Why or why not?
- B. Given the chance, would you like to apply to become a UK (US) citizen? Why or why not?
- C. If you were to become a citizen here in the UK (US), will you also apply for dual citizenship to remain as a Filipino citizen? Why or why not?
- D. Do you plan to stay and permanently live here? Why or why not? When? What will make you come back? How about moving to another place or country?

***For Overstayers:***

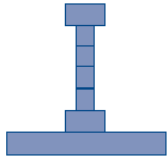
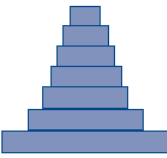
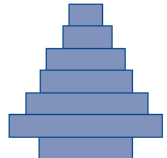
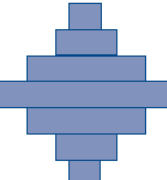
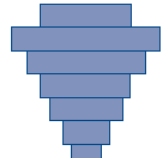
- A. What do you intend to do now?

***For all respondents:***

- 32.** What are your plans for the future? Where do you see yourself 5 years to 10 years from now? With whom do you see yourself with? What are your aspirations? Do you think you will achieve/fulfill these? What could hinder you? What could help you?

**LIFE CHANCES AND SOCIAL POSITIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE US**

- 33.** Let us consider the picture below. In your opinion, which of these best fit the Philippines? How about the UK (US)?
- A. *Before coming to London (NYC), where would you place yourself within the Philippine society?*
  - B. *When you moved to London (NYC), where would you locate yourself within the UK (US) society?*
  - C. *Considering your life now, where would you place yourself in the Philippines? How about here in UK (US)?*
  - D. *Thinking of the future, say five years from now, where would you locate yourself by then?*

<p><b>Type A:</b> A small elite at the top, very few people in the middle and the great mass of people at the bottom.</p>	
<p><b>Type B:</b> A society like a pyramid with a small elite at the top, More people in the middle, and most at the bottom</p>	
<p><b>Type C:</b> A pyramid except that just a few people are at the bottom.</p>	
<p><b>Type D:</b> A society with most people in the middle</p>	
<p><b>Type E:</b> Many people near the top, and only a few near the bottom</p>	

### CONNECTIONS TO “HOMELAND”

34. How often do you go to the Philippines?
35. Do you communicate with family and friends in the Philippines? How often?
36. Do things happening in the Philippines concern you? To what extent? How about things happening here in the US?
37. Do you consider Philippines as your “home” or do you consider UK (US) as your home now? In what way?
38. Given the chance, will you help friends and relatives to get here? Why or why not? Do you inform them about possibilities and opportunities of migrating here?
39. Would you encourage or discourage people to come here?
40. Are you investing in the Philippines (businesses, real estate, etc)? Why or why not?



## PERCEPTIONS AND RELATIONS TOWARDS FILIPINOS

41. How would you describe being a Filipino in NYC from your own experience? How about those you observed?
42. Did living in London/UK (NYC/US) change your attitudes towards other Filipinos? In what way?
43. In your opinion, how are Filipinos being received and treated here in London (NYC)? Do you think being a Filipino is an advantage/disadvantage here? In what way?

## PERCEPTIONS AND RELATIONS TOWARDS OTHERS

44. Living in London (NYC), you experience meeting people from other countries and from different backgrounds. Do you like it or not? In what way?
45. Do you think this will work out in the Philippines now? How about in the future? What will make it work?
46. Would you say that Filipinos are tolerant to those coming from other countries? In what way?
47. Does skin color matter to how one is being treated here? To what extent?
48. For the last part, respondents will be asked to name particular situations or ask what does s/he feels given a particular situation.
  - A. *Are there any instances wherein you somehow felt embarrassed being a Filipino? What are those instances? Why did you feel embarrassed?*
  - B. *You meet someone whose parents are Filipinos but was born and raised here in the UK (US). He doesn't know how to speak any Filipino language; would you still consider him as a Filipino? Why or why not?*
  - C. *Someone resigned from your work and will be replaced. What would be your preferred workmate? A Filipino or someone from another country? Why?*
  - D. *If you are to work for someone, do you have a preferred nationality for an employer? Why?*
  - E. *You've learned that your brother or sister/ child is currently dating, do you prefer a Filipino or non-Filipino? Why? How about someone from a different religion?*

## ON DOING CARE WORK

49. What are the challenges you encountered with your job?
50. How about the benefits/advantages?
51. Did you have hard time adjusting in the beginning?
52. Providing care is often associated with women but did you meet men doing these jobs? Would you say that it is more difficult for them?
53. Would you say that the expectations are the same (or different) for women and men doing care work? In what way?
54. Would you say that women doing care work are more compassionate and caring compared to men?
55. Would you say that it's more difficult for men or for women to find work here in London (NYC)?

**Do you have anything else to add? How do you find the interview?**

**Thank you very much for your time.**

## Appendix 3.3. List of Research Participants

### *Nurses (London)*

<b>Fictive name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Year of Arrival</b>
Aliyah	25	2014 (London)
Amelia	58	2002 (London)
Andrew	38	2009 (East of England); 2013 (London)
Celeste	41	2001 (East of England)
Edward	39	2001 (London)
Eliza	37	2004 (Wales); 2014 (London)
Francis	43	2002 (London)
Gemma	38	2002 (London)
Glaiza	39	2004 (East of England); 2005 (London)
James	30	2010 (London)
Janine	42	2002 (London)
Leila	38	2002 (South East England); 2008 (London)
Lydia	54	2007 (London)
Marissa	58	2002 (London)
Melissa	41	2001 (South East England); 2007 (London)
Mia	42	2001 (South East England); 2014 (London)
Michael	29	2011 (London)
Richard	32	2009 (East of England); 3 months (London)
Rina	40	1999 (South East England); 2001 (London)
Tessa	42	2003 (Northern Ireland); 2006 (London)

*Nurses (New York)*

<b>Fictive name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Year of Arrival</b>
Amanda	55	1985 (New York)
April	32	2012 (New York)
Arturo	40	2008 (New York)
Camille	29	2014 (New York)
Clare	45	1996 (New York)
Clarissa	42	2015 (New York)
Dahlia	54	2000 (New York)
Dennis	30	1990 (California); 1991 (New York)
Emilia	45	2006 (New York)
Ethel	33	2001 (New York)
Hannah	30	2004 (New York); 2009 (New Jersey)
Julia	33	2015 (New York)
Katie	27	2011 (New York)
Leonora	48	1996 (New York)
Luis	45	1999 (New York); 2001 (New Jersey)
Maria	48	2001 (New York)
Marie	41	2000 (New York); 2001 (New Jersey)
Mary	58	1990 (New York)
Monica	47	1990 (New York)
Nicole	26	1991 (New York)
Paulina	31	2008 (Texas); 2013 (New York)
Rita	46	1995 (New York)
Robert	35	2001 (Florida); 2006 (New York)
Rosalia	52	1989 (New York)
Sophia	28	2009 (New York)
Tracy	26	1991 (New York)
Yvette	55	1989 (New York)

***Domestics (London)***

<b>Fictive name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Year of Arrival</b>
Anita	59	1994 (London)
Annie	50	1993 (London)
Carol	45	2007 (London)
Evelyn	48	2014 (London)
Evita	57	2007 (London)
Geraldine	40	2009 (London)
Imelda	87	1976 (South East England); 1978 (London)
Iris	40	2003 (London)
Juanita	65	1976 (London)
Leah	53	2007 (South East England); 2010 (London)
Lorna	55	2013 (London)
Manuel	41	2012 (London)
Margaret	36	2001 (London)
Miranda	54	2012 (London)
Myrna	65	1995 (London)
Norma	61	2010 (London)
Olivia	46	2006 (London)
Patricia	33	2014 (London)
Perla	66	1989 (London)
Sara	42	2014 (London)

***Domestics (New York)***

<b>Fictive name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Year of Arrival<sup>a</sup></b>
Aurora	59	2000 (New Jersey); 2008 (New York)
Brenda	49	2010 (New York)
Carmela	31	2004 (New Jersey)
Charlene	42	2001 (New Jersey)
Danica	30	2009 (New York)
Diana	56	2007 (Florida); 2010 (New York)
Fiona	44	2007 (Maryland); 2008 (New York)
Glenda	49	2007 (New York)
Janice	47	2007 (Maryland); 2013 (New York)
Jessica	38	2010 (California); 2011 (New York)
Julie	45	2001 (New York)
Lilia	57	2002 (New Jersey)
Linda	58	2003 (New Jersey/ New York)
Lita	67	2008 (New York)
Lorena	46	1999 (New Jersey/ New York)
Priscilla	60	1999 (California); 2001 (New York)
Rachel	36	2011 (New York)
Rebecca	50	2006 (Texas); 2006 (New York); 2010 (New Jersey/ New York)
Ruth	44	2006 (New Jersey); 2009 (New York)
Sheila	49	2009 (New York)
Stella	46	2002 (New Jersey)
Suzie	64	2002 (Virginia); 2012 (New Jersey/ New York)
Valerie	59	2003 (New York)
Vanessa	40	2007 (Maryland); 2008 (New York)
Vilma	65	1996 (New Jersey); 2000 (New York)
Viola	60	2011 (California); 2011 (New Jersey/ New York)

<sup>a</sup> *When New Jersey and New York are listed as one, the first one pertains to the respondent's place of residence and the other to the place of work.*

***Care workers (London)***

<b>Fictive name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Year of Arrival</b>
Angela	37	2006 (London)
Carlo	40	2007 (London)
David	45	2008 (London)
Divina	63	1992 (London)
Dolores	63	1995 (London)
Donna	39	2004 (London)
Gretchen	42	2009 (London)
Gwen	36	2008 (East Midlands); 2012 (London)
Jerry	40	2006 (London)
Joanna	46	2007 (East of England); 2010 (London)
Liezel	42	2002 (East of England); 2004 (London)
Maricel	47	2009 (London)
Mariel	44	2006 (London)
Melanie	50	2008 (London)
Mercy	46	2000 (London)
Milagros	61	2005 (London)
Natalie	44	2006 (London)
Zenaida	56	1990 (London)

*Care workers (New York)*

<b>Fictive name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Year of Arrival<sup>a</sup></b>
Alan	51	2007 (New York)
Alma	52	2008 (New York)
Beatrice	27	2010 (New York)
Bernadette	31	2005 (New York)
Brian	28	2009 (Portland); 2011 (New York)
Cynthia	67	2006 (New York)
Edith	70	2001 (New Jersey)
Efren	52	2009 (Washington D.C.); 2014 (New York)
Emma	58	1996 (Ohio); 2011 (New York)
Erica	41	1990 (New York)
Ester	56	1996 (New Jersey)
Hazel	38	2001 (New Jersey)
Irene	58	2005 (New York)
Jonathan	26	2006 (California); 2011 (New Jersey/ New York)
Julius	29	2010 (New York)
Lucy	62	2005 (New York)
Mario	71	1971 (New York); 1977 (New Jersey)
Marvin	25	2014 (New York)
Nora	54	2010 (New York)
Pamela	46	2009 (California); 2010 (New York)
Regina	40	2014 (New York)
Ron	26	2008 (New York)
Vicky	53	2006 (New York)

<sup>a</sup> When New Jersey and New York are listed as one, the first one pertains to the respondent's place of residence and the other to the place of work.