



From longing to belonging:

Tracing the emotional geographies of ageing Filipina migrants in Valencia, Spain

Mari-An C. Santos

Main Supervisor: Dr. Rosa Medina Doménech (Universidad de Granada)

Support Supervisor: Dr. Aleksandra M. Różalska (University of Łódź)

Submitted to: Universidad de Granada, España

Instituto de Estudios de las Mujeres y del Género

July 2019





From longing to belonging:

Tracing the emotional geographies of ageing Filipina migrants in Valencia, Spain

Mari-An C. Santos

Main Supervisor: Dr. Rosa Medina Doménech (Universidad de Granada)

Support Supervisor: Dr. Aleksandra M. Różalska (University of Łódź)



Approved by: \_\_Rosa Medina Domenech\_\_

Submitted to: Universidad de Granada, España

Instituto de Estudios de las Mujeres y del Genero

July 2019



## Abstract

As a consequence of neoliberalism of the global economy, the feminisation of labour has resulted in a care chain that draws women from the global south to leave their homes and families for higher salaries in the global north. Worldwide, it is an increasing concern, but policies are barely in place to safeguard the conditions of migrant workers, and those that exist are poorly enforced.

The Philippines is one of the largest sending countries in the world. It is widely acknowledged that through their remittances, they sustain their families and the Philippine economy. Much literature has examined the phenomenon from perspectives of the families (specifically, children left behind) and their channels of communication, as well as what happens after they return from working overseas, but the emotional experiences of women who decide not to return but instead, build a life for themselves and their partners and families in the receiving country have been understudied.

From conversations with women from the Philippines who have lived in Spain for more than 10 years, using the decolonising methodology of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* ("Philippine Psychology"), this research gives place for their voices to be heard as they negotiate self-identity. Their narratives reflect Philippine emotional culture, particularly that of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*. Their individual life stories may be unique, but they have experienced and continue to experience similar concerns.

This research traces the trajectory of the emotional geographies of ageing Filipina migrants in Valencia, Spain by examining the church as an emotional site and the emotional strategies that Filipina migrants use in the process of be/longing.

KEYWORDS: ageing, Filipina migrants, emotions, migrant workers, domestic workers

## Resumen

Como consecuencia del neoliberalismo de la economía mundial, la feminización del trabajo ha dado lugar a una cadena de cuidados que atrae a las mujeres del sur global a abandonar sus hogares y familias por salarios más altos en el norte global. En todo el mundo, esta es una preocupación cada vez mayor, pero apenas existen políticas para salvaguardar las condiciones de los trabajadores migrantes, y las que existen están mal aplicadas.

Las Filipinas es uno de los países emisores más grandes del mundo. Es ampliamente reconocido que a través de sus remesas, sostienen a sus familias y a la economía Filipina. Existe una vasta literatura que ha examinado el fenómeno desde perspectivas de las familias (específicamente, los niños y niñas dejados atrás) y sus canales de comunicación, así como lo que tras regresar de trabajar en el extranjero, pero las experiencias emocionales de las mujeres que deciden no regresar y construir una vida para sí mismas y sus parejas y familias en el país receptor han sido poco estudiados.

A partir de las conversaciones con mujeres de Filipinas que han vivido en España durante más de 10 años y utilizando la metodología descolonizadora de *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Psicología Filipina), esta investigación trata de ofrecer un lugar desde el que sus voces, en la constante negociación de la identidad propia, puedan ser escuchadas. Sus narraciones reflejan la cultura emocional de Filipinas, particularmente la de *utang na loob* y *pag-aaruga*. Sus historias de vida individuales pueden ser únicas, pero han experimentado y siguen experimentando preocupaciones similares.

Esta investigación traza la trayectoria de las geografías emocionales del envejecimiento de migrantes Filipinas en Valencia, España examinando la iglesia como un lugar emocional así como las estrategias emocionales que utilizan en proceso de *be/longing*.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** envejecimiento, migrantes Filipinas, emociones, trabajadoras migrantes, trabajadoras domésticos

## Acknowledgements

This is a work on *utang na loob*. So, I would like to express my deepest debt of gratitude and goodwill...

To my parents, my family: I will be forever grateful for the amazing genes and the important values I learned from you. You are my lives! Thank you for being proud and supportive of me always and in all ways. *Para sa Diyos, para sa bayan!*

To my GEMMA friends Christine, Penny, Ana, Julia, Samu, Chloe, Maria, Angy Quadritos, Karen, Anabel, Jorge, Alicia, Zoe, Zumaia, Fatima, Rebecca, Jack: You have provided me with a precious circle of solidarity. Thank you for being my sounding board, for the comfort and reassurance, for the time spent together over tapas, tartas, and travel. Becoming friends with all of you has made my life so much better! You inspire me that the future is bright. See you again in another part of the world!

To my support supervisor, Dr. Aleksandra M. Rózalska: Thank you for your unwavering support and words of encouragement. To my main supervisor, Dr. Rosa Medina Doménech: Thank you for your very valuable guidance and boundless patience. I appreciate the time, the energy, and the commitment, especially considering the time constraints. I have learned so much from you!

To GRACE friends Orianna and Tommaso: Thank you for your help with sourcing forms and resource materials to help move this research along.

To the GEMMA Team headed by Prof. Adelina Sanchez Espinosa, ably assisted by Dresda and Omayra: What a journey it has been! My participation in this programme has been life-changing and I promise that I will not waver in helping to build a better world. Thank you for your help in navigating...everything!

To the members of the Filipino community in Valencia: You welcomed me (coincidentally) with a huge feast of Filipino food that made me feel immediately right at home. Thank you for being my safe haven, my stress relievers, my leisure time companions, my adoptive mothers, my friends, my second home and home away from home. You have helped me immensely in so many ways, more than words can say and more than you could ever know. *Maraming salamat po! Hanggang sa muli nating pagkikita!*

To the staff at University of Granada's Hospital Real/University Library, as well as Bar Australiano and Diplomatic, where I worked, read, de-stressed: Thank you for opening your doors and tables to me!

Finally, to the higher entity I call God and friend: *Muchas gracias por todo!*

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Resumen.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Prologue.....	1
Introduction.....	2
1.1 The personal is political.....	2
1.2 A Filipina researcher among Filipinas.....	3
1.3 The research structure.....	4
The context of women's migration in the Philippines.....	5
2.1 The labour exportation policy.....	6
2.2 The dilemma of Filipina migration.....	7
Theorising emotions for women's migratory processes.....	9
3.1 <i>Utang na loob</i> and <i>pag-aaruga</i> : Emotions that bind.....	11
3.2 Emotional geographies in the transnational field.....	13
3.3 Emotional geographies in the translocal field.....	14
Methodology.....	16
4.1 Listening to experiences.....	16
4.1.1 Introducing <i>Sikolohiyang Pilipino</i> .....	16
4.1.2 Indigenous research methods.....	18
4.2 Analysing stories.....	20
4.2.1 Narratives as medium of emotions.....	20
4.3 Notes from the field.....	21
4.3.1 Finding the Filipinas.....	22
4.3.2 Translating emotions.....	23
4.3.3 Ethical dilemmas.....	23
Catholic religious space as emotional site.....	26
5.1 The Filipino religious community.....	26
5.2 Community and emotions.....	28
Tracing emotional geographies and identities of Filipino women migrants in Valencia.....	36
6.1 Encountering the research participants.....	36
6.2 The geographies of deskilling.....	38
6.3 Transnational emotions field.....	42
6.4 Translocal emotions field.....	48
Conclusions.....	55
Epilogue.....	59
References.....	60
Appendices	
Appendix A. Letter to potential participants and consent form.....	69
Appendix B. Glossary of Filipino terms.....	71
Appendix C. Participants' profiles.....	72
Appendix D. Table of participant data.....	74

## **Prologue**

It was the 3rd of March 2019 in Valencia, Spain. I was in a queue with a plate in hand to take some food from a long table laden with various, mostly Filipino dishes in bowls and pots. They all looked good and smelled even better. Around me, people were laughing and giggling, and speaking in Filipino. I looked around at their faces, I had never met any of them before and it was my first time here, but somehow it felt familiar. I felt right at home. I took a serving spoon to help myself to some white rice.



## Introduction

The phenomenon of transnational families formed due to migration has become a fact of life in the Philippines. One member of a family leaves in order to find a job and earn more, sending back money in the form of remittances to loved ones that they left behind. This study traces the trajectory of emotions of Filipina migrants in Valencia, Spain, in their journey from longing to belonging, i.e., longing for home to belonging in the host society that eventually becomes their new home. This study aims to answer the following questions:

How do emotions shape self-identity in the migration process?

How does the passage of time living in a different country change emotional geographies?

To do this, I engaged in conversations with six Filipinas who shared their emotional experiences of migration, and then, analysed their narratives. This is the first research of its kind conducted among the Filipino community in Valencia. It shows how the Filipinas are motivated to leave the country by the lack of social protection and prospects for gainful employment in the Philippines. However, it also shows how Philippine emotions *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* bind them to loved ones back home, and to new social networks that they establish in Spain. This study seeks to effect positive changes in Philippine society so that Filipinos can freely choose where to work, live, and grow old with their families.

### 1.1 The personal is political

I am the granddaughter of a migrant worker. My paternal grandfather was among the first Filipino migrants who left their families in the Philippines to find gainful employment in another country for contracts of at least two years at a time. He was a welder who worked in Guam, Hawaii, Macau, Sri Lanka...wherever there was a job available. Eventually, he and my grandmother, with my father's seven younger siblings, left the Philippines to live in the United States of America. Some of them visited us every few years. In the interim, they would send *balikbayan* boxes (large boxes sent by ship) filled with cans of processed meat, bars of soap, canisters of coffee, and chocolates. Also, used and new clothes and shoes from our relatives. When I was growing up, I associated my American relatives with the smell of a box being opened and I imagined that that scent—a cross between newly-laundered towels and bars of soap—was what America smelled like. For many years, I only knew my cousins from letters and photos sent between the Philippines and North America. Sometimes, we would receive phone calls at Christmas or New Year's or on my father's birthday, and the phone would be passed from one uncle or aunt to another, or one cousin to another, but only for a few precious minutes, so that everyone could have a short exchange.

When I started traveling abroad, I met many Filipinos who live in the countries that I visited. In Hong Kong and Singapore, they thought I was there to work and I felt embarrassed when I replied that I was only there on holiday. I experienced hospitality from Filipinos whom I met in Rome, Florence, Milan, Barcelona, Rabat. They treated me to meals and even let me sleep in a spare room. I have many stories of how fellow Filipinos have helped me along the way, in different ways. I will not be able to reciprocate their kindness, but this research is an effort at making an impact on policy, and more importantly, actual improvement in Philippine society. I can never repay the kindness that they showed me but I can contribute to opening up what Irigaray calls "a place to be 'heard as women'" (as cited in Thien, 2005, p. 453). That is my motivation in conducting this research.

## **1.2 A Filipina researcher among Filipinas**

As a Filipina with extensive experience in conducting interviews with various kinds of people from my work as a journalist, documentarist, and grassroots organiser, I have the necessary skills to engage with other Filipinas in Spain despite our different socio-economic backgrounds. It is acknowledged that I am operating in a space of presumed privilege given that my time in Spain is one of educational pursuit and not one of financial gain. However, my status as a student in Spain is temporary and this looms over my head.

I spent at least four days each week in March in Valencia. I spent the long rides between Granada and Valencia—each way, an average of five hours—reflecting on my emotional experiences spent with the members of the Filipino community. Not only physical labour and financial cost, but much emotional labour has gone into this study, by engaging in emotional conversations with the Filipinas in Valencia. During my conversations with Filipinas who make up the community where I conducted my research, I was struck by their narratives: how the lines intersected, converged, then went off in tangents. Prior to the in-depth, one-on-one conversations I had with the six research participants, I built camaraderie (*pagpapalagayang-loob*) with them. It was not easy, despite the fact that we spoke the same language and, in some cases, lived in the same places. Some participants more eagerly shared their stories than others, who were wary that a stranger was asking them questions about their lives. But eventually, they freely shared their life stories with me. Their emotional experiences trace back to the land of their birth. They are daughters, wives, partners, mothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, grandmothers. They still feel concern for the Philippines even as they are now citizens of Spain.

In Spain, they are, as a community, bound by nationality, language, common experiences and practices, and time spent together. For all the good and the bad, they know each other. From their wisdom and wealth of experience, they help those Filipinos who arrive in Valencia with advice and companionship in order to navigate the different aspects of migration. These are done in the spirit of

*bayanihan* (working as a community), of helping each other and making sure that those who are new will benefit from the lessons that they have learned and not experience the same hardships.

I endeavoured this research mindful to avoid cultural relativism and generalisation. Culture is ever-changing and dynamic. Within Philippine culture, there are different beliefs and practices because the country is made up of different ethno-linguistic groups, and many people with their unique situatedness and positions. This is a qualitative study that uses the *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Philippine psychology) as methodology combined with studies of migration in general and of the Philippine context in particular to trace the emotional geographies of ageing Filipina migrants.

### **1.3 The research structure**

This work is divided into several sections. I first discuss the theoretical framework of the study, involving concepts related to migration: the link between feeling at-home and sense of identity, and trajectory of be/longing. I then discuss concepts of Philippine emotional culture particularly relevant to this study: *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, and how they figure in the emotional geographies—transnationally between Filipinas in Valencia and different parts of the Philippines, and then, translocally, among the Filipinas in Valencia and between the Filipinas and their social networks in Spain. Then, I provide context on the Philippines, including available data and statistics on the socio-economic situation and migration. The succeeding chapter contains the methodology used in conducting the research: based on the decolonised practice of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* and narrative analysis. Considering that the Filipino community members who attend Sunday Mass at the Catholic church in Valencia is the pool from which I identified my research participants, I devote a chapter to the church as a religious/spiritual and social space, and therefore, an emotional site. I then discuss the emotional geographies based on themes that emerged from my conversations with the research participants—ranging from their motivations for leaving the Philippines to come to Spain, to their plans for the future, i.e., from longing for the Philippines to now belonging in Spain. In the conclusions, I argue that the participants experienced ruptures in their identities upon migration but they maintain bonds with their family back home, until such time when their loved ones pass on and they establish bonds with friends and family in the host society.

## The context of women's migration in the Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelago located in Southeast Asia. It is classified as a Third World or developing country. According to the Asian Development Bank, the population consisted of 106.60 million as of 2018, 21.6 percent of whom were below the national poverty line in 2015 (ADB, 2019). As of 2013, there were 10.24 million Filipinos living overseas (CFO). In 2018, personal remittances sent by Filipinos abroad amounted to US\$ 32.213 billion—9.7 percent of the Philippines' gross domestic product (Agcaoili, 2019), which was US\$ 330.846 billion (countryeconomy.com, 2019). Meanwhile, cash remittances sent through banks amounted to US\$ 28.943 billion (BSP). The amount of all remittances has been steadily increasing in the past five years. The ratio of female workers to male workers who migrated for work was 55 percent in 2018 (Perez, 2019). This is consistent with the global migration pattern due to the feminisation of labour. But statistics are numbers that are, at best, indicative. There is hesitation in the inclusion of official statistics as it is believed that personal narratives offer more insight into lived experiences. How is the socio-economic situation in the Philippines? The research study participants say it best when they describe the poverty and lack of social protection schemes like healthcare.

In the last year, several laws to address social protection finally made it through the very long and arduous legislative system and have been signed into law: the Mental Health Law in June 2018 (Republic Act 11036), Universal Health Care Law (Republic Act 11223) in February 2019, *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program Law (Republic Act 11310) in April 2019, and Magna Carta for the Poor (Republic Act 11291) in May 2019. These laws have been lauded by political and civil society leaders for the promise of improving the national health insurance program and providing basic needs—especially for those who live below the poverty threshold—including food, housing, mental and physical health, nutrition, and education. However, in news articles, the reaction of prominent figures in Philippine society explicitly mentioned the necessity of funding allocation (Elemia, 2018, para 12; Weiler, 2019, para 3) and the necessity for efficiency in government implementation (Catholic News Agency, 2019, para 4).

Miralao (1997) points out that assistance to family members and kin are extended over their lifecourse by relatives who are financially capable and that "this may account for the low development of social services and welfare institutions in the Philippines since families serve as people's sources of economic and social insurance" (p. 209). Gonzalez and Manasan (2002) identify corruption and mismanagement as pervading, deep-seated problems that pose challenges to the proper implementation of social protection schemes in the Philippines. They mention in particular the absence of unemployment insurance and universal health care coverage. In addition, in comparing social protection in Indonesia and the Philippines, Ramesh (2014) argues that although some social protection schemes in the form of conditional cash transfer and national health insurance have been instituted, the Philippine government

suffered from several problems in terms of implementation, including a lack of coherence and coordination among small and ill-designed programmes, funding for which was insufficient. Ramesh (2014) concludes that the Philippine government allocates very low per capita spending on its social protection system and it was assessed as less egalitarian than the Indonesian system.

Aside from deep-seated structural inefficiencies and flaws, the current socio-political climate also presents a structural challenge for effecting positive social change. The current president, Rodrigo Duterte, was elected by 38.6 percent of the 41.37 million people who cast their votes (Rappler, 2016). Since he assumed office in July 2016, more than 20,000 deaths have been attributed to his so-called war on drugs (Gutierrez, 2019). Yet, this figure is an estimate, as substantial data are difficult to obtain (Human Rights Watch, 2019, p. 469).

This is the society that Filipinos leave in order to find gainful employment and better prospects for the future, in the case of the research participants, they find it in Spain. How did the situation come to this—with migration as a viable option?

## **2.1 The labour exportation policy**

In response to changes around the world brought about by neoliberalism, as well as a lack of infrastructure to support a growing population, the labour exportation policy of the Philippine government was instituted by President Ferdinand Marcos in the mid-1970s, following his declaration of Martial Law. It was meant to be a band-aid solution—to provide labour to burgeoning economies especially in rapidly developing Asian countries and to address the labour deficit in the Philippines. The long-term goal was to provide gainful employment in the country, as the economy focused on export-oriented industrialization. What Tyner (2003) calls the "Philippine state migratory apparatus" (p. 29) was then established. Even after the Marcos dictatorship was replaced by a democratic government, succeeding presidents improved and mobilised the Philippine state migratory apparatus because it provided employment for the Filipino labour force as well as income for the Philippine government. The "*bagong bayani*" ("modern-day hero") discourse was propagated to legitimise and romanticise the plight of Filipinos who left family and country to earn and send money back home. This was embraced by society as a whole: here was the Filipino sacrificing for love of nation, no longer having to die to protect freedom but to leave their families in order to work abroad to help save the economy!

However, several highly publicised incidents involving the abuse and death of Filipinos overseas—most of them, women—in the early 1990s forced the hand of the Philippine government to finally put their money where their mouth was, so to speak, through the passage of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act (Republic Act 8042) of 1995—amended in 2009 (RA 10022)—

institutionalising better structures to address the welfare of Filipinos living and working abroad. How effectively the law is implemented is another matter.

The statistics of remittances sent by Filipinos overseas back to the Philippines may only be indicative, but they show a large amount of money that is infused into the economy. Remittances have sustained the Philippine economy in the face of shocks and economic crises. So much so that what was promised as a temporary solution has, generations since, become normalised. For 2019, already, as of March, Filipinos have sent personal remittances amounting to US\$ 8,090,000 (BSP). Statistics on the number of Filipinos overseas are not updated, but figures from 2016 of Filipinos deployed for employment to Spain was 1,293 (POEA) and in 2017, there were 15,027 Filipinos registered in Spain (CFO). A request was sent to representatives of the Embassy of the Philippines in Madrid to provide data on Filipinos in Spain. The response was in the form of a referral to the Spanish Government's Immigration Portal that contains pertinent information (Philippine Overseas Labor Office, personal communication, May 3, 2019): 28,736 Filipinos in Spain bearing residence permits and from that number, 202 in Valencia (Ministerio de Trabajo, Migraciones y Seguridad Social & Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigracion, 2019). Meanwhile, an officer of the Filipino organisation in Valencia estimates that there are at least 1,000 Filipinos in Valencia, most of them female, excluding children born in Spain and Filipinos who have recently arrived in Spain from other parts of Europe seeking employment. The reasons for this disparity may be the following: the figures from the Spanish government does not include Filipinos who are now Spanish citizens, and those Filipinos who register their status do so only if it is necessary, i.e., to obtain legal documentation.

## **2.2 The dilemma of Filipina migration**

Studies about the consequences of Philippine migration cover topics that range from children left behind to stressors and coping strategies (Katigbak, 2015; Montayre et al., 2017; Parreñas, 2015). Yet in the face of global capitalism, it remains an attractive option to earn money in the global north and send it to the global south despite all other costs. Filipino women are left vulnerable.

As popular culture somehow reflects present society, many Philippine films and television shows take the transnational family as a backdrop, a taken-for-granted part of Philippine society. Migrants are the voices on the other end of the telephone line, faces in the other frame of a video call, figures that come and go as the story unfolds. There are a few films, produced beginning in the 1990s, that have tackled the stories of overseas Filipinos, and they are based on real-life tragic events that befell Filipinas working overseas: *The Flor Contemplacion Story*, *Victim No. 1: The Delia Maga Story*, *The Sarah Balabagan Story*, *The Maricris Sioson Story: Japayuki*. There are also fictional films that are based on a conglomeration of true stories: *Caregiver*, *Anak*, and *Bagahe*. All of them tackle stories of Filipinas and

follow a melodramatic story arc. Even the documentary *Sunday Beauty Queen* is saturated in emotions and follows such a narrative structure. It tells the stories of several Filipinas working in Hong Kong. It won the Best Picture award during the Metro Manila Film Festival (Rappler, 2016) and has been screened as part of several international film festivals. In the documentary, the Philippine consulate is shown lending support in organising beauty pageants for Filipinas held on some Sundays, but a non-government organisation, the Bethune House Migrant Women's Refuge, figures in providing shelter for various migrant workers, including Filipinas, who are abused or suddenly terminated by their employers (Villarama, 2016). There is no official Philippine government intervention in such cases.

From then until now, the news stories on Filipinas working overseas have been myriad, on the side of precarity: a Filipina who killed her employer after he attempted to rape her in the United Arab Emirates (AP, 1995); another forced to give birth on the airplane coming back to the Philippines from Qatar after her employer raped her (Gomez, 2010); another whose lifeless body was found in her employers' freezer in Kuwait (AP, 2018); another tied to a tree in Saudi Arabia (Murphy, 2019); another captured on video walking aimlessly up and down the roof of an elevated walkway in Singapore (Nelz, 2018); hosts of other victims of sex trafficking in Hong Kong and Sabah (Yu, 2018; Takumi, 2018); Filipinas killed in Cyprus by a serial killer (Ibbetson, 2019), among many others that actually came to public attention through various media—not to mention stories that never come to public attention or are only shared in hushed tones among close family and friends. Each time, the Philippine government's responses run a similar vein: diplomatic ties are strained and bans are instituted on deployment of Filipinos to particular countries...for a time. Meanwhile, the socio-economic situation that motivates migration has scarcely been addressed.

Beyond the numbers, figures, statistics, and headlines, there is a need to listen to and at least empathise with the emotional experiences of migrant Filipinas expressed through their life stories. These will be explored in a succeeding chapter.

## Theorising emotions for women's migratory processes

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework to trace the trajectory of the emotional geographies of Filipina migrants in Valencia, from longing to belonging, in relation to family that they left behind, and with members of their social networks in Spain. This dynamic process is facilitated by a recuperation of self-identity that is ruptured upon migration, in the quest to feel at-home and to belong.

This research begins and ends by tracing the trajectory of emotions. Emotions are more than merely embodied experiences—they are difficult to define and demarcate and "not easily observed or mapped although they inform every aspect of our lives" (Bondi et al., 2007, p. 1). Emotions involve mental and physical processes, and are socio-cultural constructs (Leavitt, 1996; Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 2010; Parreñas, 2001; Svašek, 2007). They are not only spatial but also temporal. They are "dynamic processes through which individuals experience and interpret the changing world, position themselves vis-a-vis others, and shape their subjectivities" (Svašek, 2005, 2006, 2008; Svašek & Skrbiš, 2007 as cited in Svašek, 2010, p. 868). By tracing emotional geographies, the experience of emotions as embodied, socialised, and narrated all come to bear on our understanding of research participants (Bondi et al., 2007, p. 3).

McKay (2007) argues that migrant self-identity is revealed through emotions. The migration process itself mobilises multiple emotions as embodied subjects change physical locations. There is much more involved than just jetlag or shifting geographies relative to distance travelled. The change is focused on the family becoming transnational, not merely in terms of embodied presence, but also in terms of emotions. So much so that homesickness—almost always associated with migration—reveals the disconcerting feeling of being in a foreign place, where a migrant is unaccustomed.

Martsin and Mahmoud (2012) discuss the link between sense of identity and being at-home. One feels that one belongs with certain groups in certain contexts and this leads to one feeling at-home (p. 733). However, when the context changes, as when someone leaves home in one country to take up residence in another country, there is a "rupture to one's sense of identity in relation to home" (p. 734). This also brings into stark focus the "taken-for-granted" (p. 734)—that is, the culture and society down to the climate to which one has been accustomed. When one leaves home, then one ceases to feel at-home and ceases to belong. The sense of longing to be at-home follows. However, in the case of migration for work and/or family, to feel at-home and belong again, the migrant cannot simply change the circumstances and physically go back home because, although one has agency, in this case, it is limited by resources. This, then, necessitates a renegotiation of self-identity, which works within the spatiality and temporality of emotions.



Belongingness is "a process of identification and contestation generated by migrants' struggles to understand their sense of self through place-based emotional attachments" (Christou, 2011, p. 249). Yuval-Davis (2006) identifies three interrelated yet distinct analytical levels that form the bases of belonging: social locations, individuals' identifications and emotional attachments with collectivities and groups, and ethical and political value systems (p. 199). Emotions like gratitude and care bind migrants to people who are back home as well as to people they meet in the host country, thus, allowing them to renegotiate be/longing. Philippine-based emotional culture will be discussed in the succeeding section.

Thien (2007) describes the emotional geography of intimacy and how the spatial analysis of intimacy can help us understand emotional well-being (p. 192). Such emotional geography does not necessarily depend on physical proximity, as emotions travel, and so, intimacy can and is achieved despite distance. This is related to belonging because in reconfiguring self-identity, to an extent, emotional well-being is achieved.

The ways of recuperating the sense of being at-home depend on the "qualities of familiarity, comfort, and continuity" (Martsin & Mahmoud, 2012, p. 737). For migrants, engaging in activities as they did in their homeland, contribute to this. These include buying and cooking food as close to home as possible; being surrounded by people who may not be the same as those back home but certainly are familiar and share the same culture, background, and language; and attending religious rituals. Palmberger (2016) found that a combination of "shared stage of life, shared migration history, transnational living arrangements, and similar religious, cultural and/or political ideas, and similar mother tongue" results in a sense of belonging of older migrants (p. 246). But migration is not a unidirectional series of events, instead, it is an "inherently dynamic, dialectic, and developmental" (Martsin & Mahmoud, 2012, p. 742) experience, as a result of which, it is necessary to recuperate one's self-identity. But migration also results in change in the person—proving the adage true: you can never really go home. In the temporality of emotions and in the process of renegotiating identity, change inevitably occurs, so that the familiar and taken-for-granted in the home country cannot be recaptured, but only a semblance of it, moving forward. With new eyes, informed by their emotional experiences in the host society, they view the homeland with a different perspective. "The event of migration itself can be seen as a necessary link in one's life project that meaningfully connects the past with the present and anticipated future" (Martsin & Mahmoud, 2012, p. 740). This brings us to the ambivalence migrants feel in relation to home (Martsin & Mahmoud, 2012, p. 737). In the case of the research participants, they associate the Philippines with their loved ones and still refer to it as home, however, they also view it as a place to which they can never go back, especially considering that they view the government as corrupt and the society as not egalitarian. This will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.

### 3.1 *Utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*: Emotions that bind

*Utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* have been called Filipino traits or values (Gripaldo, 2005, p. 2) and virtue ethics (Reyes, 2015). For this study, they are considered part of the Philippine emotional culture that bind Filipinos, bridging the distance between members of the transnational family, and after migration, also between members of their translocal social network. It should be noted that the translations of Filipino words that follow are best approximations in English but that they cannot quite capture the nuances of each.

Reyes (2015) calls *kapwa* and *loob* the pillars of Philippine interpersonal relationships. *Kapwa* can be translated as "shared identity" or "together with the person" (Reyes, 2015, p. 149), what Pe-Pua (2015) calls "the antithesis of the Western individual-centered 'self'" (p. 792). *Loob* is defined as "relational will' toward one's *kapwa*" (Reyes, 2015, p. 149). Reyes (2015) attributes the Filipino virtue ethics to a combination of the "Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition", forming the basis of Philippine society (p. 148).

Philippine society is relational and collectivist. The family is the basic unit of society—extending far beyond the nuclear family. It is not uncommon to have cousins living in the same big house or in the same housing complex, along with the patriarch and matriarch: the grandparents. Innumerable celebrations become occasions and locations for strengthening family relationships. Friends and neighbours are also considered family. In such a communitarian society, most Filipinos know the people in their neighbourhood and address older people by "tito" ("uncle") and "tita" ("auntie"), though they may not be blood relations. (Meanwhile, terms like "ate" and "kuya" refer to "older sister" and "older brother", respectively, and are used for people who are only slightly older than oneself.) In the most recent available results of the World Values Survey from 2012 in the Philippines, 98.8 percent considered Family as "Very important" in their lives (Inglehart et al., 2014). In relation to God, the survey data show that Filipinos have faith in God: 99.5 percent believe in God and 84.1 percent of respondents rated the importance of God in their life with a "10—Very important". These are relevant to two emotions in particular: *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, that figure in this study.

According to Dancel (2005), *utang na loob* can be translated to "debt of gratitude" or "debt of goodwill" (p. 110). It is felt when someone does something for another person and is based on feelings of gratefulness and gratitude. It relies on reciprocity, wherein a repayment is not expected by the person who performs the kindness but is viewed by the person who receives it as something that can never be adequately repaid. The dynamic of *utang na loob* involves the person who gave the kindness not expecting to be repaid and the person who received the kindness trying to reciprocate it some time in the future. In addition, the view of the impossibility of returning the kindness, since there is no measure of its breadth and depth, so that even several attempts at giving back may not suffice. This does not prevent the

receiver of the kindness from attempting to repay it, nonetheless. The obligation to repay the debt should not be imposed by the giver, but is felt by the receiver, who is compelled to return the favor. *Utang na loob* between two people does not necessarily cease after one of them dies because its weight or intensity may be viewed by children of a recipient as such that they still have this *utang na loob* toward someone who did a great kindness to their parent, and will continue to try to reciprocate. However, *utang na loob* is not without its negative side, as it can be abused, e.g., in the case of politicians and their constituents.

A great *utang na loob* is felt by Filipinos toward their parents and God (Dancel, 2005). Toward the former, for giving birth to and raising them—so much so that they will support their parents throughout their lives whenever and however possible to reciprocate. This is a strong reason for why elderly homes are not a key feature in Philippine society, because the children feel that they need to take care of their parents, just as their parents cared for them. It is a great shame (*hiya*) for children to abandon their elderly parents or leave them in the care of strangers. Many Filipinos who migrate are motivated by *utang na loob* to leave home in order to find gainful employment and send back remittances to their family, particularly, to their parents. The only time they may stop feeling this, or at least cease acting on it, is when the object of the *utang na loob*, i.e., father and/or mother, has died. This finds resonance in a study of Australian migrants who "repay parents for care given before. They do this financially where required or culturally appropriate and emotionally until their parents die" (Baldassar et al., 2007, p. 107). Yet, in most cases in the Philippines, the emotions surrounding them never dissipate. In relation to religion, Filipinos feel a debt toward God for life and all that has been given them. This is why they devote their time to prayer and resources to rituals. Research studies have shown that participation in religious services are among Filipino migrants' effective coping mechanisms in lieu of seeking help from medical professionals (Abe-Kim et al., 2004; Nakonz & Shik, 2009; Straiton et al., 2017).

*Utang na loob* also extends to other people, from kin, e.g., siblings, to non-kin, e.g., friends or even strangers. Filipinos feel *utang na loob* toward older siblings, for example, who have helped them by caring for them and providing for their needs as they were growing up. As long as there is a perceived "debt of gratitude", however big or small, *utang na loob* is felt. More than just a sense of obligation, they feel a "debt of gratitude" that they will pay for the rest of their lives but which is actually unlikely to be repaid to their satisfaction. In many cases, the giver of the kindness may release the receiver from the "debt". However, until the receiver of the kindness does not feel that it has indeed been sufficiently repaid, the attempts to repay it will continue to be made.

Meanwhile, according to Manauat (2005), *pag-aaruga* is an emotion akin to caring, and it specifically refers to care for the young or sick (p. 137). *Pag-aaruga*, then, is a concern for the welfare of younger siblings as well as extended kin like nieces, nephews, and grandchildren. It also motivates older siblings to care for their brothers and sisters. In turn, as grandparents and parents grow older and become

vulnerable, weak or sickly, they become the recipients of *pag-aaruga*. In their desire to express their feelings towards them, migrants send what Katigbak calls "emotional remittances" (2015). The sense of care and concern may extend beyond parents and siblings to other extended family members. It is also common for Filipina migrants to send money to fund the education of a niece or nephew, for example, or to help a sibling who is in need.

Depending on the family, Filipinos may or may not articulate in words their feelings toward each other. However, they show care through providing for each other's needs, helping each other when necessary even without the other person asking, cooking food for each other. These bear emotions toward each other that may not be said but are expressed and felt.

### **3.2 Emotional geographies in the transnational field**

Transnational families are formed when family members live in different countries, as when a migrant leaves home and the rest of the family remains or when some members of the family live in two or more countries. Transnational caregiving involves the reciprocal exchange of care and support between family members despite the considerable geographic distances between them which, in general, does not affect the intensity of caring for each other (Baldassar, 2007, p. 278).

*Utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* are sent between transnational families through emotional remittances that bear the emotions and intimacy felt by the sender toward the receiver and vice versa. Though migrants send material gifts, bearing the concern of the sender for the receiver/s, the family back home reciprocates, often through emotions, including *utang na loob*. This may result in a vicious cycle, for example, of migrant children sending money to their parents motivated by *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, especially when they are elderly and have limited resources at their disposal, and their parents feeling *utang na loob* for the help that their children send. I disagree when Katigbak (2015) argues that migrants' "emotional remittances are the palliative that relieves the scourge of guilt" (p. 532) because the emotions of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, that are deeply embedded in Philippine culture, and not a sense of obligation and guilt, primarily motivate Filipina migrants to send remittances, engaging in transnational caregiving. Simply put: "remittances embody their love" (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015, p. 77).

However, even if the material gifts and mediated communication through telephone calls or letters carry emotions with them, a premium is placed by members of the transnational family on visits. They desire co-presence, to see their family members face-to-face, to show them care through physical contact and intimacy in proximity. Though migration does not deter transnational relationships and emotional geographies can be traced between the home of a migrant's birth and the new home, Baldassar (2007) notes that "transnational relations are rarely maintained at a constant level across the family life-

cycle and there is always the potential for migrants to become permanent exiles from both their homeland and their homeland family" (p. 294). This is the trajectory of emotional geographies of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, that occurs with the passage of time and negotiation of be/longing.

Some previous studies conducted among Filipinos in or from Spain and Italy informed this project. Molina (1992) conducted a study among Filipino migrants in Madrid, and found that they first expected employment in Spain to be temporary, but eventually, after gaining permanent residence status, they opted to petition for their family members to reunite in Spain. Meanwhile, in a study conducted among Filipino domestic workers in Spain and Italy, Pe-Pua (2003) compared the situations of Filipinas who were separated from their families and those who were reunited with them later. Pe-Pua and her husband used *Sikolohiyang Pilipino's* method of *pagtatanong-tanong* to gain information from both men and women, some one-on-one and some in groups segregated by sex. The study excluded mixed marriages. In terms of reasons of coming to Spain and Italy, the following were the answers that she found:

(1) to earn a better income than they did or would have the opportunity to do if they had remained in the Philippines; (2) to help their families who now depend on them for their subsistence; (3) to pay for the education of the children; and (4) to save up to buy property in the Philippines. Some of them aspired to bring their families to Spain or Italy so they could live a better life (p. 161).

The first three answers resonate with my research participants. Further discussion can be found in a later chapter. In addition, a study of Filipinos of a town that benefitted from its citizens' migration to Italy, Katigbak (2015) examined the emotional geographies of transnational families through emotional remittances. She, too, worked with an extensive research sample—a mix of migrants and non-migrants. Though she hints at aspects of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, she does not identify them. She enumerated three emotions that (re)shape transnational families—love, guilt, and ingratitude—and how they figure in the community's social and moral standards.

### **3.3 Emotional geographies in the translocal field**

In the host society, Filipinas forge social networks with individuals based on different levels of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This is part of their recuperation of self-identity and negotiation towards be/longing. A common language, nationality, food, religious culture at first attracts them to fellow Filipinos. Many shared traits and values and time spent together bind them to each other, forming social networks and building community. As they forge relationships, they feel *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* toward friends, family members, and former employers and wards.

By establishing emotional relationships with people in the host country, the migrants feel at-home and reconfigure their self-identity relative to this new home, and feel a sense of belonging. It would be

convenient but inaccurate to say that they shift their emotions from maintaining transnational relationships to translocal relationships. However, as time passes and family members in the Philippines pass away or become distant, and emotions surrounding people in Spain increase in fervor, so they feel at-home in their new home. Still, they remain bound to family members back home.

Based on what has been discussed, when migrants first arrive in the host country, they feel a rupture in their self-identity because of the emotional experiences surrounding the unfamiliar. They then attempt to repair this rupture in order to feel at-home and belong. I theorise that it is in the trajectory of emotions, specifically of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, relative to migrants and family is where their journey from longing to belonging lies. In tracing their emotional geographies, how they navigate their sense of be/longing will be revealed.

## Methodology

Postcolonial feminist scholars have underscored the necessity of giving voice and place for marginalised women to be heard because of the myriad of struggles and situated experiences (Mohanty, 1988). Acknowledging that each person is unique and so, cannot be categorised, nor can generalisations be made about a particular culture, still, a great advantage of conducting research with Filipinas in Spain is that we have much in common. The methodology relied on *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, a decolonising practice that began in the 1970s among Filipino academics. For this research, grounding the work on indigenous methods felt more intuitive. Feminist research praxis has made space for the marginalised to speak...are we ready to listen? In order to shed light on the narratives of Filipina migrants, this body of knowledge that is based on Philippine society and culture, is deemed appropriate. Such a non-western methodology is compatible with the feminist research endeavour.

In turn, the migrants' life stories were analysed based on in-depth conversations with the research participants using narrative analysis: "the study of stories" (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 471). The narratives of emotional experiences of Filipina migrants must be heard. Their struggles, to borrow a popular cultural reference, are real.

### 4.1 Listening to experiences

#### 4.1.1 Introducing *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*

Virgilio Enriquez is acknowledged as the forerunner of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino psychology), an indigenous psychology that sprang from a resistance to the examination of Filipino culture and society subjected to Western lenses, leading to misrepresentation and misinterpretation. Indigenous psychology, as defined by Pe-Pua (2015), "is anchored on the thought and experience of the indigenous people, as understood from an indigenous perspective" (p. 789); the indigenous here refers to people who live in or are from the Philippines. The field has expanded over the years. Enriquez defined *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* as "the study of *diwa* ('psyche'), which in Filipino directly refers to the wealth of ideas referred to by the philosophical concept of 'essence' and an entire range of psychological concepts from awareness to motives to behavior" (as cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000, p. 51). This definition takes into account "the study of emotions and experienced knowledge (*kalooban* and *kamalayan*), awareness of one's surroundings (*ulirat*), information and understanding (*isip*), habits and behavior (another meaning of *diwa*), and the soul (*kaluluwa*) which is the way to learning about people's conscience" (Enriquez as cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000, p. 52).

Much of the strategy for discovering *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is based on assessing historical and socio-cultural realities, understanding the local language, rediscovering the dimensions of the Filipino character and explaining psychological concepts using a Filipino perspective. These

resulted in a body of knowledge that includes indigenous concepts and methods, in short, a psychology that is appropriate and significant to Filipinos (Pe-Pua, 2006, p. 111).

*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* lends itself well to this study endeavour focused on emotional experiences. Some concepts that the discipline has (re)defined following earlier Western misrepresentations are: *kapwa*, *utang na loob*, and *pakikiramdam*. *Kapwa* is "a core Filipino indigenous concept which turned out to be the antithesis of the Western individual-centered 'self'" (Pe-Pua, 2015, p. 792). It can be translated as 'shared identity', but moreso, as "treating the other as a fellow human being" (from *pakikipagkapwa*). There are two classifications of *kapwa*: *ibang-tao* (outsider/other) and *hindi-ibang-tao* (one-of-us/not-other). Upon introduction to the Filipinas in Valencia, their impressions of me determined whether they categorised me under the first or the second. If they regarded me as "one-of-us", then they placed a high level of trust in and felt rapport with me (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000)—something akin to the Spanish "confianza". I believe that the Filipinos I met—not only the research participants but members of the Filipino community with whom I interacted—indeed classified me under *hindi-ibang-tao* based on their attitude toward me, e.g., inviting me to lunch or having casual conversations with me or sending me messages to ask after my welfare.

*Utang na loob* can be translated as "debt of gratitude or goodwill": "It is a beautiful element of Filipino interpersonal relationships that binds a person to his or her home community or home country... *Utang na loob* is a calling heard by many Filipinos who go to other lands but who still retain strong ties with their homeland" (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000, p. 56). Many Filipinas referred to their *utang na loob* toward their Filipina friends in Spain who have supported them or implicitly, toward their parents for raising them—thus, their motivation to extend help to their families, nuclear and extended, by sending remittances home. The geography of the transnational emotions will be subject to further discussion in a later chapter.

Meanwhile, *pakikiramdam*, that can be translated as "shared inner perception or emotional a priori" (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000, p. 56), is an important albeit delicate aspect of Filipino culture because it operates in the realm of indirectness and non-verbal communication that includes body language, tone, and other behavior. "Among Filipinos, these are a matter of fact, taken for granted, because they are what they are born into and grow up with" (p. 57). Pe-Pua (2006) calls it:

a special kind of sensitivity to cues which will guide researchers in their interaction with group members, especially with Filipinos who are used to indirect and non-verbal manners of communicating and expressing thoughts, attitudes, feelings and emotions. It is through *pakikiramdam* that a researcher will know when to ask personal questions and when not to pursue them; when it is time to leave; or how to interpret a "yes" or a "no" (p. 124).



I employed *pakikiramdam* from the beginning of my engagement with the Filipinas. Still in keeping with the sense of *kapwa*, there is a general unwillingness on the part of Filipinos to embarrass anyone or for someone to lose face, so that they would rather keep quiet or be evasive. For example, when I explained my research project to one Filipina, she expressed her willingness to participate while in the presence of other Filipinas. Later, it became difficult to find time in her schedule, and finally, she stopped responding to my messages. In the case of a group of younger Filipinas whom I asked to meet in private in order to explain my research study in the hopes of soliciting their participation—they were evasive and would only reply: "I'll send you a message when I'm free." Eventually, they avoided me the next time that I saw them. In both cases, I chose to take their manner to mean that they did not want to participate in the research. In keeping with *pakikiramdam*, I did not confront them. I did not mention my project to them again, though I would smile and greet them when I saw them.

#### 4.1.2 Indigenous research methods

*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* identifies several research methods that are deeply grounded on Filipino culture. Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino (2000) give guiding principles for indigenous research methods: (1) "The level of interaction or relationship that exists between the researcher and the researched significantly determines the quality of the data obtained in the research process" (p. 59). This is why the distinction between the *ibang-tao* and *hindi-ibang-tao* is an important consideration. The latter categorization is preferable, because the results will be richer and more honest. (2) "The research participants should always be treated by researchers as equal" (p. 59). This is a direct condemnation of the practice previously associated with Western researchers of talking down to research respondents or presenting themselves as removed from them. When Filipinos feel that someone is at the same level, they feel more at ease to divulge more information and share narratives. This also means that any questions that the participants might ask the researcher should be addressed. In the interest of full disclosure and reciprocity, when my participants asked me questions about my family in the Philippines or where I studied or how it is living in Granada, I answered them with candor. This contributes to *pagpapalagayang-loob* (building rapport or mutual trust). (3) "The welfare of the research participants take precedence over the data obtained from them" (p. 60). This is in reference to any sensitive information that may endanger the lives or well-being of the participants or of the community being researched—an important ethical consideration. (4) "The method to be used in a research should be chosen on the basis of appropriateness to the population (and not sophistication of the method) and it should be made to adapt to existing cultural norms" (p. 60). After careful consideration of the research community, the method to be used should be

one that is chosen not based on the anticipated research paper output but on sensitivity to the unique circumstances of the community.

(5) "The language of the people should be the language of research at all times" (p. 60). This means that if a researcher does not know the language of the participants, the researcher should learn it. In other cases, a translator may be utilised for the purpose of communicating better with the participants.

Note that each of the guidelines has at its core the consideration for *kapwa*, in this case, the research participants. This is also in keeping with the Filipino core of consideration for the other's welfare.

Throughout the conduct of the research, I adhered to these guiding principles. Doing so felt instinctive, as I regarded my participants as equals, just like I would anyone I meet. The emotional bond shared with them before, during, and even at present, greatly enriched the experience because of the engagement, not mere data gathering, that occurred.

By shifting the focus on research methodology, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* "considered indigenous—not imported nor invented, but natural or existing patterns of behavior (not methods), discovered and developed as research methods" (Pe-Pua, 2006, p. 112). Aside from the Philippines, indigenous research methods have also developed in Taiwan and New Zealand, among many others.

Although they bear similarities with the participant observation method of research, the methods of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* take a more nuanced and localised approach, as relevant to Philippine society. Some approaches are: *nakikiugaling pagmamasid*, *pagdalaw-dalaw*, and *panunuluyan* (Pe-Pua, 2006). *Nakikiugaling pagmamasid* refers to the researcher's adoption of ways (in terms of mindset and behavior) of the group that one is observing, even for a short period. That is, for the duration of the data collection and interpretation of the data. In this way, the researcher may view the group according to its own context. *Pagdalaw-dalaw* involves frequent and regular visits in order for the participants and researchers to get to know each other better. In this case, the researcher immerses in the milieu, without living among the participants. Meanwhile, *panunuluyan* involves the researcher residing in the research setting, within the community of study. By doing so, one observes the daily life of the research participants.

*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* also prescribes approaches to conducting interviews. Pe-Pua (2006) cites the four major characteristics of the *pagtatanong-tanong* (from "*tanong*" meaning "question") method:

- (1) It is participatory in nature, and the participant has an input in the structure of the interaction in terms of defining its direction and in terms of time management.
- (2) The researcher and the participant are equal in status; both parties may ask questions for about the same length of time.
- (4) It is appropriate and adaptive to the conditions of the group of participants in that it conforms to existing group norms.
- (4) It is integrated with other indigenous research methods (p. 115).

Meanwhile, *pakikipagkuwentuhan* involves story-telling (from "*kuwento*" meaning "story"), and is usually used to discuss sensitive topics.

For group discussions, methods that can be used are *pakikipagkuwentuhan* (as described above) and *ginabayang talakayan* (Pe-Pua, 2006). *Ginabayang talakayan* is similar to a focus group discussion, with the topic and direction determined by the researcher in consultation with the group members. Feminist scholarship has reiterated the importance of women's situated and direct experiences (Smith, 1987). The acknowledgement of this positionality is important in engaging with a specific group of women, in this case, those at the intersections of several margins: Filipina migrants who are ageing in Spain. Mohanty (1988) reiterates the necessity of defining the contexts and not smoothing over the different oppressions that Third World Women experience, because they are not part of one homogenous category. This study leads to, or at least makes efforts towards, feminist solidarity.

## **4.2 Analysing stories**

Using *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* fostered a space of open and honest sharing of narratives between the researcher and each participant. They were not merely recorded voices but lived emotional experiences—both their own as well as, in the telling, coloured by our shared emotions. A combination of factors was taken into consideration. First, acceptance that the search was not for "the truth" but for a translation of the life stories that were (re)told. The processes of (re)telling were coloured by each participant's gestures, tone, as well as memory. Then, drawing from my subject position, the narratives were interpreted based on our common language and culture, because as Leavitt (1996) asserts: "while one cannot directly experience what other people experience, it should be possible to construct intelligible and potentially sense-able models of their experience by using one's own as material on which to work" (p. 530).

### **4.2.1 Narratives as medium of emotions**

According to Rosaldo: "Feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood but social practices organized by stories that we both enact and tell" (as cited in Boellstoff and Lindquist, 2004, p. 437). So, narratives are a way to trace the trajectory of emotional geographies of migrants. Emotions are imperceptible and immeasurable. They cannot be captured and held up for scrutiny. But in the story-telling, as expressed by those who experienced the emotions, there is much to be revealed about the be/longing of migrants. As Christou (2011) found in her study of Greek-Danes: "through their narratives, migrants express and communicate their emotional experiences in constructing a sense of self and belonging in the ancestral homeland and abroad" (p. 256).

Polkinghorne (2007) argues that narrative research takes into consideration the way "people understand situations, others, and themselves" (p. 476). Narrative analysis accords the space for the participants' life stories that "are very often saturated by emotion and constructed subjectively as portrayals of lives that illuminate certain angles of such lives by the experience of re-telling and reflection" (Christou, 2011, p. 251). Not only the content of the narratives are given primacy but also their context. Careful consideration was made not to interfere or impose upon their unique life stories in the process of organising them to make them understandable for readers.

In experiencing through conversation, then listening back to, in transcribing, and then translating the experiences—not a literal translation of the sequence of words but an approximation, a renegotiation of the meanings and feelings in their context—there is already much to be navigated. Add to that the limitations in the articulation of experiences that a participant's language and bodily comportments cannot encapsulate (Polkinghorne, 2007). I do not claim to be a medium of the messages, of the emotional experiences of the migrants who shared these through narratives. However, I admit to the co-creation of the narratives between myself as the researcher and each of the research participants. In taking care to translate for the readers while staying as faithful to my understanding of their narratives as possible, there was much reflexivity on my part. I employed empathy in the translation of the emotions in the context of our conversations, and re-experienced them during the process of analysis. (Leavitt, 1996, p. 529-531). Whereas I focused on each participant during our conversations, playing back the recordings and then translating their emotional narratives amplified different emotions as they resonated with me, e.g., I noticed a change in tone or shifting in a seat. All of these nuances inflected the analysis.

In the sections that follow, there will be a discussion on the emotional geographies of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* and their links to Filipina migrants' families, specifically, who they consider as family, to their sense of identity and of home, and ultimately, of be/longing.

#### **4.3 Notes from the field**

I used a combination of the *pagtatanong-tanong* and *pakikipagkuwentuhan* methods for this research. All of the conversations were predominantly in Filipino, with some English and Spanish mixed in, and in some cases, words from the participant's dialect. After introductions, there followed an explanation of the study, along with the goal: to give a better understanding of the migrant Filipina experience to readers. All of the participants agreed with this enthusiastically. I started with one question/statement, inviting them to engage in a *pakikipagkuwentuhan*: Please tell me about how you came to work in Spain and the way your life has unfolded here. It was not difficult to encourage them to share their stories, though at times, I would engage in *pagtatanong-tanong*. *Pagtatanong-tanong* is not merely interviewing—it requires the researcher to be fully present during the conduct of the interview

because by paying close attention to how the subject answers the question (tone and other non-verbal cues), one can decide whether to pose a follow-up question, ask for clarification, pursue where the answer is going or stop the current line of questioning. It requires sensitivity or *pakikiramdam* of the researcher.

I engaged in these in-depth conversations within the frame of *panunuluyan* or "residing in the research setting" (Pe-Pua, 2006, p. 114), which San Juan and Soriaga define as "a method where the researcher lives, sleeps in the house of, and shares food with a host who has extended hospitality to the researcher" (as cited in Pe-Pua, 2006, p. 114). My original intention was to stay at separate accommodations during the course of the research in an attempt to be an "objective observer". But one of my participants offered for me to stay in their spare room while I was in Valencia. I used *pakikiramdam* to ascertain that the invitation was sincere and that such arrangement would be beneficial for my research. I stayed in that room, ate breakfast and dinner with my host family, watched television shows and shared stories with them. Both *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* were at play. Since they refused to accept payment from me—a sure sign of Filipino hospitality—I would bring home some grocery items to share. Note that I use the word “home” because I already consider them family, as they do me, and my *utang na loob* to them will remain.

Enriquez (as cited in Pe-Pua, 2006) explains that *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is not just culturally sensitive and appropriate, but more importantly, people-oriented. Instead of using a Western lens on migrant women from the Philippines, I used the research methods prescribed by *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. By doing so, we achieved a comfortable and conducive atmosphere to the sharing of their emotional experiences. After our initial meetings, not only would the Filipinas share confidences with me during our appointments but even when we would have informal exchanges over messaging services or casual face-to-face conversations. Also, by spending the Sundays of March and some of April and May with the members of the Filipino community, I got a feel for their social spaces, where they found solace and ways of coping: in social networks and in religion/spirituality.

#### **4.3.1 Finding the Filipinas**

The snowball technique was used to identify the research participants, through an officer of one of the organisations of Filipinos in Valencia. Their ages range from 50s to 70s (median: 65.5), but more than ages, the focus is on life stage: all of them have either retired or will soon be retiring. Each has lived for at least 10 years in Spain and are all Spanish citizens. Conversations were conducted according to their convenient time and place. The conversations with some Filipinas occurred over the course of several days, and some, only two. This resulted in more than 20 hours of recorded conversations. All the participants signed consent forms to participate in the research. Each life story is different.

### **4.3.2 Translating emotions**

Without preconceived notions, the data came directly from the research participants. After transcribing the conversations, I read through them and listened to the recordings again. Then, I set about the task of translation—but not a literal translation from Filipino/Spanish/Filipino dialect to English. Instead, the translations try to capture what they said but with an ease in English, approximating the feelings behind them. Some words in Spanish were retained to illustrate how the Filipinas have now become comfortable with using Spanish words in their daily speech.

After careful thought and consideration, narrative analysis felt like the appropriate approach to analyse the data because of particular importance are the cultural context and organisation of narrative arc for the readers to better understand the life stories. Many hours were spent listening to the recordings, transcribing and translating carefully, reading and re-reading the transcripts and notes, in order to reflect on these pages as close an approximation as possible the voices of the Filipina migrants, as well as the emotions that flowed between us. Each listening, reading, and writing stirred different emotions.

### **4.3.3 Ethical dilemmas**

I wanted to make space for the voices of Filipina migrants in Valencia to be heard—but who am I to do so? Each of their narratives is unique, as are each of them. There are many emotions that bind them, based on their emotional experiences during the time that they have spent in their new home, whether these are transnational or translocal.

To this end, I wanted as much as possible for their voices to rise from the pages. But inevitably, I was pulled into the conversations and so, my fingerprint, marks of my personality, are all over these pages. Why? Because even if I tried, I could not be a casual observer recording, peering into, trying to capture parts of their lives. There are so many resonances between us, as Filipinas separated from our families back home and negotiating a sense of be/longing. Granted, I had only lived in Spain for seven months when we met. I have never lived in another country to work nor known the pain of separation from my family for at least two years up to decades. However, the emotional experiences they shared felt familiar because they touched the same chords in me as a Filipina living outside of the Philippines.

One of my participants, after a conversation that had dealt with highly emotional events, told me, she had laid awake in bed thinking about the events that she had recounted to me. She said that looking back and talking about those experiences helped her come to terms with that part of her past. Another Filipina told me a few days after one conversation that she appreciated it because she thought talking about her emotions helped her somehow.

Some participants did not have problems recounting emotional experiences, even repeating the same anecdotes on multiple occasions. But others, after having spoken about one or another painful

experience during one conversation, would avoid repeating it on another occasion. They would skip over it, saying: "Well, we already talked about that last time" or "You already know about that". How did I manage to navigate through the conversations? I used *pakikiramdam*. Being attuned to how a subtle change in expression, or a look away discouraged, or a smile encouraged me to ask followup questions. On a personal note, the conversations also helped me feel more at ease in Spain, in dealing with various emotions related to being a stranger in a strange land. Coming in close contact with people who shared my language and background was therapeutic for me as well.

Prior to embarking on this research, I was anxious about how to go about finding and engaging with my research participants. But my concerns proved unfounded, as the Filipinas welcomed me with open arms and rather than taint my research project, I believe that being involved in their lives and not just engaging with them during our conversations, enriched the research, especially as they poured their emotions out, shared them readily and freely.

Selecting which details to share so that the participants remained anonymous was a struggle. Almost all of them, when I told them that their identities would be kept confidential, gave me verbal consent to divulge their personal details because "we are just telling the truth". But I chose to adhere to ethical standards, keeping as much of the personal details from these pages. It was difficult to pare down their narratives, because I felt that doing so gave me power that I should not wield. But in the interest of brevity and clarity, I edited them, taking due care and utmost respect.

This journey of tracing their trajectory from longing to belonging is a responsibility I hold dear. Due to the sensitive and precious nature of the material, I did not want to minimise them by simply picking out quotes and clustering them into themes. I looked to the narratives to find the important emotions and points along the way of their journey that have made their lives what they are now. By taking the stories they shared with me and constructing a narrative, my own emotions and experiences intermingled with theirs. By engaging in narrative analysis, there is a tendency for my own positionality to inflect the task. Although I used my background as a writer and documentarist, I cannot claim that the narratives on these pages are identical with those that they shared with me. Obviously, the Filipinas in Valencia whom I met treated me as "*hindi-ibang-tao*". They opened their homes and hearts to share their emotional experiences with me. I feel *utang na loob* toward them to re-tell their stories as best as I can. In this way, to help draw attention to their unique situations. As many of them told me: "So that more people will understand us."

Due to time constraints, I only devoted one month to the gathering of stories for this research. Though I have a rich trove of narratives to show for it, the ideal scenario would have been to first get to know the members of the Filipino community and let them get to know me as well. In this way, the

process of determining my participants would have been more informed. Also, if I had more time, some possible participants whose schedules were tight in March may have participated, in succeeding months. I was constrained by location, too. The Filipinos that I met all acknowledge that there are many different religious sects to which other Filipinos belong. The research would have been enriched by interactions with them. In addition, I met a Filipina outside of the Filipino community as I was walking around Valencia, and I could have met more, if I had a longer research period.

Time constraints also restricted me from going back to each of the participants to go through the transcripts with them. Though most of them may be retired, they have many chores and errands that they need to fulfill each day. They have the weekends, mostly Sundays, free but they prefer to spend them as leisure time. In general, they go to church, share lunch with some members of their families and/or the Filipino community, relax, and prepare for the week ahead. Although I went back to Valencia on several occasions after I had conducted my interviews to spend days at a time there, when I was with the participants, they preferred to spend time with me (or us in a group) socially. They would ask about the progress of my research, and I would reply that I was still working on it, and they would each encourage me. I feel that many, after having shared emotional experiences with me, did not want to revisit them.

The decolonising practice *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is rooted on Philippine culture and society. This makes it highly appropriate to approach the study of Filipina migrants. In addition, narrative analysis provided the parameters that help emotions from the life stories rise from the pages. As Svašek (2010) argues: "narrative performance is clearly an area in which emotions are managed and enacted... In the case of migrant narratives of self, issues about the ambivalence of transnational belonging clearly come to the fore. Such ambivalences may strengthen or weaken the emotional bonds within migrant communities, and may complicate continuing identification with the homeland" (p. 875). This research design helped trace the emotional geographies of the research participants.

I present the narratives of the Filipina migrants' lived experiences in two sections: the stories about the community and personal stories. I only engaged in conversations with each of my participants individually (although in some cases, the space where we had conversations was open so other people could hear our conversation). I did not conduct focus group discussions because I was not sure about the nature of each one's lived experiences, and I wanted them to be comfortable to open up to me, which is also the reason why I met with them at their convenience, and I let them narrate at their own pace, sometimes going off in tangents or skipping from one point in time to another. During the course of our conversations, I identified the interweaving of the migrants' stories, forming a community. They spoke in reference to certain members and the community of Filipinos in general, and in relation to the Catholic church. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.



## **Catholic religious space as emotional site**

The Catholic Church where the members of the Filipino community in Valencia congregate is located in a quiet neighbourhood, in a nondescript building. The community has adopted the church, or it has adopted the Filipinos, since the 1990s. There is also a large concentration of Filipinos who live in the area—there are at residential buildings in the neighbourhood with many apartments that they occupy. A Sunday Mass in English is held in the church led by a Filipino priest and majority of the members of the choir as well as the readers are Filipinos. The readings throughout the Mass are in English, but the priest delivers his homily in a mix of English, Filipino, and Spanish—depending on whether he perceives that there are non-Filipinos in attendance.

The Filipino community in Valencia is composed of many Filipinos who attend the church. In this chapter, I trace the emotional geographies of the research participants because introduction to them occurred in relation to this church and each made several references to the church in two ways: as a place of worship relative to God and as a social space relative to fellow Filipinos. The church, then, is a site not only of religious activities but a space wherein various emotions move about, circulate, flow. This sets the backdrop for some of the research results. The quotes from the research participants are presented in italics.

### **5.1 The Filipino religious community**

I found out about the church and the community through a friend who is working as an English teacher in Valencia. She attends Sunday Mass and sometimes joins the activities of the Filipinos. Sunday is usually the rest day, especially if they are granted by their employers only one day off a week, of the Filipinos in Spain. That is, unless they work on weekends, as with some who work in restaurants or in elderly care, and in some cases, childcare (babysitting and/or tutorial). On the first Sunday of every month, after the "Filipino Mass", as it is sometimes called, there is a potluck lunch hosted in the social hall of the church. Whoever wants to bring a dish is encouraged to do so, and a long table is set up in the middle of the room, where various kinds of dishes as well as drinks and desserts are laid out.

I first visited Valencia on the first week of March 2019, just as the city was in the throes of the annual Fallas celebration. The spirit of merrymaking was in the air, punctuated by the distinct sounds of firecrackers throughout the day. I arrived half an hour early on the first Sunday of March at the Catholic church and observed the neighbourhood. Many older Spanish men and women started to come out of the church, as the previous Mass had just concluded. I observed an announcement just outside of the church doors, attached to a post with clear adhesive tape: a want advertisement for an *empleada de hogar*. It was the type where, under the announcement were attached small strips of paper on which were indicated the

contact number of the potential employer. There were very few of the strips that remained. On the bulletin board at the foyer, there was an announcement about a training program on skills for domestic work. Under it, there was also an appeal from the church to contact a certain representative if you found out that you were pregnant, accompanied by a photo of a very forlorn-looking young woman.

Even before I stepped into the main hall, I heard voices, laughing and giggling, and speaking in Filipino. From within the doors, I could hear guitar strings and a song being sung. I walked through the doors and saw that there were people in the choir area and on the right side of the church. No one was on the left side. I walked to the left side and took a seat in the back, and observed what was happening from a distance. No one seemed to notice me. In the cacophony of sounds, I was transported to the Philippines. Not just because I was hearing a familiar language being spoken around me, but in the general merriment as when Filipinos gather in a social setting. I closed my eyes and let the feeling linger, swirling around me... Eventually, my friend arrived and told me we should sit with the other Filipinos. "Only Spanish people sit on this side," she said. I walked with her and joined the crowd filling up the right side of the church. Most of the people in attendance were Filipinos, with a few Nigerians and Spanish.

After the Mass, people chatted as they walked to the social hall. There were different containers of food that were already set out on the long table and a queue of people had formed. They were talking in Filipino while taking food and piling them onto plates. I felt right at home. My contact person from the organisation approached my friend and I introduced myself. She told us to start taking some food and that we would talk later. The smells and sounds invoked in me a nostalgia for parties in the Philippines. I had not met any of them yet, but I was standing next to fellow Filipinos as I reached for a serving spoon to take some rice. People were recommending dishes to me and telling me to try one thing or another that they had cooked. It was the first time in Spain that I was going to have Filipino food that I did not cook! The combination of smells and sounds, and sharing it with other Filipinos, with people of the same culture and ethnicity and general experience, somehow made eating even more pleasurable for me. As I sat with my friend on a wooden bench, balancing paper plates of food on our laps, we chatted in Filipino.

After I finished eating, I approached my contact person. She was alone, so I sat with her and we started a conversation. She asked me to call her "Tita", which means "aunt", but in Philippine culture, it is not exclusively used to refer to someone who is a blood relation. This salutation is given to women who are older than oneself to show both respect and camaraderie. Respect for elders is very important in Philippine society, as it acknowledges their wisdom and experience. The older Filipinas in the community accepted this salutation from us who were younger. So, it was *Tita Aida*, *Tita Baby*, *Tita Celia*, *Tita Doris*, *Tita Edna*, *Tita Fe*, and so on. It made me feel like I was part of their circle, and they, in turn, must have felt closer to me.

One of the participants, Edna, spoke with pride about how she taught her former ward to address those who were older though not blood relations, with this salutation:

*I taught him respect. His cousins, playmates would call adults by their first names. I would say: "No, that is not 'Fe', that is 'Tita Fe'. That is not 'Gemma', that is 'Tita Gemma'." Someone told me that my former señor, his father, had said one time: "El niño es educado, no es por nuestro, por Edna." (That boy is well-educated, not because of us, but because of Edna.)*

By imparting some part of Philippine culture, i.e. respect, to her ward, Edna initiated him into a sense of belonging with her, and showed care as one who is part of her own family. She felt *pag-aaruga* toward him, and eventually, considered him as family.

My contact told me that I should just feel free to approach whoever I wanted to ask to participate in my study, because many of the Filipinos only came on the first Sunday, as they lived in faraway parts of Valencia. I asked her if she could refer me to anyone, and she mentioned a few names, pointing them out in the crowd.

I talked to some Filipinas who were prospective research participants. One of them immediately agreed to participate. When I asked her when and where would be convenient for her to have our conversation, she asked: "Why not now?" As the crowd started to thin, the officers of one Filipino organisation gathered on one side of the hall for a meeting. So, we proceeded to engage in conversation on the other side of the hall.

## **5.2 Community and emotions**

Ahmed (1999) argues that migrants create a "community of strangers" with whom they can then share experiences of living in another country. She makes the distinction between "home" as a familiar place and "away" as the strange land. It is in the migrants' estrangement, in their common experience of being in a strange land, where the community is forged and built. "Migrant bodies hence cannot be understood as simply on one side of identity or the other, or on one side of the community or the other: rather, it is the uncommon estrangement of migration itself that allows migrant subjects to remake what it is *they might yet have in common*" (p. 345-346, italics in the original). So, being in a foreign land, they seek out and reach across to others who are in the same situation. As a result of migration, the church becomes the space where they find a community of their fellow estranged—(e)strangers who are be/longing, so to speak. In the case of Filipinos, people who speak the same language and come from the same country and are experiencing or have experienced the same estrangement provide familiarity in an unfamiliar environment. In terms of community, this makes space for friendship, solidarity, hospitality, and generosity, as seen among the members of the Filipino community in Valencia. At the onset, there are many emotions of longing for community that swirl around attendance to Sunday Mass at the Catholic

church, where they find people who constitute their community of strangers. How did the Filipinas who were part of this study come to the church and find this community? Baby and her husband, Boy, deliberately sought out a Catholic church to attend almost as soon as they settled in Spain.

*When we first arrived, we looked for the closest Catholic church. Definitely, Filipinos are Catholics. In the church, you will notice if there are any Filipinos who attend Mass. We found a church, but unfortunately, there was no Filipino priest, only a Spanish one. Slowly, we got to know the Filipinos who came to church. They are friendly. And they freely give advice about different things.*

Celia, too, was first introduced to the Filipino community through attending church. When she first arrived in Valencia, accompanied by her husband Carlos, she registered at the Philippine Consulate and the consular staff told her about the Filipino Mass. Meanwhile, Aida talks about how she with her best friend, Aning, and some other Filipinos got together around religious practices.

*On Sundays, after attending Mass, we would all gather here in my small dining area, we would have almuerzo together. They would come and bring food that we could all share. When her cancer was detected, it was already very severe, and so, that stopped... after she passed away, I spoke to her husband, maybe we could continue it, but our schedules did not work out...*

Edna started attending church with the Filipinas that she met in Valencia.

*They would come to my aunt's house to fetch me and we would go out together. My aunt... She knew the Filipinos here. She attended the gatherings. I started attending Mass with them, and then, I joined them as part of the choir at the church. When I left to work in London, that stopped. Life is different in London, even among the Filipinos there. If someone does not invite you to their house, you cannot just show up [unannounced]. Here, Saturdays and especially, Sundays, are sacred. We come together. After Mass, we go to someone's house to have lunch together.*

Doris recalls how attending Mass together with the rest of the Filipinas was part of their Sunday agenda.

*On our days off, we did not have a place to stay. We would just roam around from morning until night. A typical Sunday would go like this: first, attend Mass, then, buy fried chicken to share, then spend time at the park, eating and chatting. Before 9 pm, we had to run to the bus station to catch the last bus back.*

The Filipinas identify the Catholic church with Filipinos, and Filipino identity with being Catholic. They turn to the church and attribute positive emotions of belongingness in a nation where all is strange and new, to find a familiar in the foreign, to practice customs in a place where they are unaccustomed. By doing so, they try to repair the rupture of migration. This is the shared social location and space that they choose to be/long.

Baby describes how Filipinos from all over Valencia have come to attend Mass at this particular church, at the appointed time.

*Other Filipinos find out about it by word of mouth. You go back to how you were raised. Most of us are Catholic, we were baptised as Catholics. Some people will say: "You were baptised Catholic, why go elsewhere? That is what you inherited from your parents, why go some other way?"*  
*So, they come back [to the Catholic church]. They are lost for a while, you just have to look for them.*

They associate religion, specifically, Catholicism, not only with the homeland, but with their parents, and their emotional geographies toward home are reinforced. This happens on two fronts: they miss and long for family but they are encouraged by the reminder of their motivation for leaving home. Aside from the Masses on Sundays, there are other occasions when the Filipinos come together en masse, from religious to Philippine and Spanish national commemorations. They gather to celebrate Philippine Independence Day (June 12) and Christmas when Filipinos from different organisations and religious sects join the parties—to share a meal together and perform songs and dances. The Catholic Filipinos also celebrate the Feast of the Sto. Niño/Child Jesus (on the second Sunday of January). They invite the rest of the parish church community to share aperitivo after Sunday Mass. There used to be just one organisation of Filipinos in Valencia, but now these have splintered.

Fe narrates how the practice of the monthly potluck started.

*It was years ago. We just decided it would be nice to have a reunion of the Filipinos every first Sunday of the month after the Mass. The Filipino community contributes an amount every month to the church, so we can use the social hall for that purpose.*

The increase in numbers of Filipinos who attend the Mass and the social gathering that follows on the first Sunday of every month cannot simply be attributed to the lure of free food. In a gathering around food from home, memories are stirred and in sharing stories or even just the same space with people who share the same culture and language, an emotional space is created. Just as I was transported back to the Philippines during attendance to the first Sunday Mass and the lunch that followed, the Filipinos (and for a few, with their Spanish families) constitute an emotional space, space of be/longing. Within the approximately two hours of breathing, tasting, hearing, and speaking the familiar, they ease the feeling of estrangement, their sense of identity is reinforced, and they feel at-home with fellow Filipinos. The community of strangers then become friends and even family.

There are personal and family milestones and commemorations to which some Filipinas invite members of the community whom they met through and around the Catholic church in Valencia. These range from baptisms, first communion, school graduations, and weddings. They also come together for funerals. They expand and strengthen social networks that were established in the space of the Catholic

church to build personal relationships based on emotions of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* in the process of rebuilding their own self-identity in Spain.

Yet the Catholic church is not the only space where social networks begin for Filipinos in Spain. Many of the Filipinas with whom I spoke, even those that were not research participants, bemoaned the dwindling attendance of Filipinos at the Catholic church, because they instead join different religious sects whose members are also Filipinos. Doris, for example, has been invited and sometimes attends services of Bible study sessions with Gemma.

*There are many religious sects here now: Church of Christ, Christ the Way to Salvation, Jesus is Lord... They invite us. I wonder why, when they invite us to go to their gatherings, we go. But when we invite them to come to Mass, they don't come. Sometimes, we go just to be polite. But I am Catholic, so I attend Sunday Mass regularly.*

Meanwhile, Edna does not entertain invitations. She also views the introduction of new sects as the reason for dwindling attendance of Filipinos to the Sunday Mass.

*There are so many different religious denominations here now! They invite me to attend [their services], but I never go. If I go, it is as if I am betraying my religion. I don't want to. From the time I was born, from when I became aware of the world, I have been Catholic. I will not change. Years ago, the bond among the Filipinos here was better, stronger. There were more of us together here at the church then. Now, some Filipinos attend services at Salvation, some with Jesus is Lord. Before...we were altogether, just in this one place... Now, we are separate, apart. Each to his or her own. But I will not be swayed. I will not betray my religion. That is how I feel, my own opinion.*

Whereas prior to the introduction of other religious sects, many Filipinos participated in the Mass every Sunday, Aida complains that the different sects have pulled the Filipinos apart. The community has thus become fragmented.

*It's different now. Before, there were a lot of Filipinos participating, but there are so many religious sects here now... the other Filipinos attend services there.*

The schism, so to speak, does not come from conflicting beliefs per se, but in the perception that new, different religious sects cause changes in the dynamics of the Filipino community. Celia, for example, admits that she does not always agree with the Catholic church hierarchy.

*It's not that I think that the Catholic church is perfect! There are many things about it that I do not like, that I do not agree with... I have attended services of other religious sects like Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Christ, even when I was back in the Philippines. Even Islam and Hari Krishna! My mother would ask: "So...what is your religion now?" But by going to all these different groups and getting to know them, I found out who I am. I am Catholic.*

This is a disruption that is highly emotionally-charged, as the Filipinos in this part of Valencia have come to equate attendance to the Catholic church as the definition of Filipino identity.

I was not able to have conversations with any of the Filipinos who had stopped attending Mass at the Catholic church to take part in other religious practices. However, for the research participants, the emotional geographies changed when other Filipinos started attending other religious sects. Since their social schedule on their days off started with and revolved around the Sunday Mass, a change that involved no longer seeing their former companions during the Mass disrupted their sense of community. They feel that by attending other services, the other Filipinos disrupt their sense of unity and identity as Filipinos—again, equating being Catholic and practicing Catholic rituals to Filipino identity.

Community and social life are important to Filipinos. They seek out other Filipinos when they are in a foreign country. This comes from the longing for familiarity and continuity. Montayre et al.'s (2017) work with Filipino migrants in New Zealand found that their experiences of migration necessitated holding "onto home" by eating traditional food, socialising with other Filipinos, and shopping in stores that sell Asian items. This helped them move forward while retaining ties through communities and Philippine traditions. The study was conducted among members of the Filipino community where they attended church services and social gatherings. In Van Bortel et al.'s (2019) study conducted among Filipina migrants in Singapore, they identified coping strategies that the migrants performed: managing their thoughts (by being positive or not focusing on problems), religion, and social support. The last two involve community. The research participants consider the presence of other religious sects as a threat to their unity as a community. In the sixteenth century, when the Spanish Crown colonised the Philippines, it was in the guise of converting the indigenous population to the "civilised" religion of Catholicism. It is still deeply-rooted in Philippine culture to this day. The Filipinas feel that it is important for members of the Filipino community to attend the same church, to profess faith in the same religion, to sing together, to sit side-by-side, maybe whispering amongst themselves during the homily, then after the Mass, walking arm-in-arm to someone's home to share a meal and conversation.

A common language helps make the unfamiliar feel familiar. Due to colonisation by the United States of America and subsequently, globalisation, in the Philippines, the English language is used in daily life along with Filipino (and other Philippine languages and dialects). Celia says that she prefers attending the Mass conducted in English.

*I prefer to attend the English Mass because I understand it more. I went a few times to the church in our pueblo, but I cannot understand Valenciano. When I attend a Spanish Mass, I reply quietly in Filipino or in my dialect. I feel it more that way. I don't care if some people hear me and look my way.*

Doris reflects on the same preference for religious services led by someone she relates with and the impact of the different Filipino-led sects.

*When there was no Filipino priest yet, I would attend Mass at different times. But after he arrived, I attend the Mass in English. You can see other Filipinos, you can take communion from and hear some jokes from the priest. (laughs) And you are not required to give during collection. Unlike the other sects... I think if the other sects were not here, the church would be full of Filipinos on Sundays. We used to all be together, all the Filipinos. But now, we go to different services. But on first Sunday, many of them come to eat with us when we have the potluck lunch!*

Baby talks about how attending the Mass in English with a Filipino priest makes her feel a link to the Philippines.

*The Filipino priest has been here for two years. Prior to that, there was already a Mass that the Filipinos would attend, but it was in Spanish. The Spanish Mass feels dry. We did not feel warmth from the priest. We noticed that many of the Filipinos would rather attend services with the other religious sects because they have pastors who speak Filipino. When we go to the Filipino Mass, we feel like we are back in the Philippines. You see a Filipino priest, you are among fellow Filipinos... you get to practice your spiritual upbringing. You can feel our Filipino culture.*

Palmberger's (2016) study of social embeddedness among older Turkish migrants found that this results from a shared stage of life, migration history, transnational living arrangements, similar religious, cultural, and/or political ideas, and mother tongue. I witnessed two gatherings, informal meetings really, after two separate Sunday Mass services, when representatives from among the Filipinos talked to the Filipino priest about how to encourage more Filipinos to attend Mass, because many of them, they say, were attracted to attend services of other sects whose pastors/leaders spoke entirely in Filipino. They said that even if they understood English, they did not understand a lot of English—so they asked if he could speak in Filipino instead of a mix of English, Filipino, and Spanish. The priest responded that he understood their concern, but because there were Nigerians and sometimes, Spanish, who attended the Mass, he did not want to alienate them by speaking only in Filipino. Whereas the priest feels that as many languages as can be accommodated should be accommodated—because he is first and foremost part of the Catholic church—the members of the Filipino community feel that being Filipino and Catholic are somehow synonymous. Studies of migrant communities (Borel et al., 2019; Montayre et al., 2017; Palmberger 2016) have yielded results that those who identify as being from one nation gather together in social and church activities to help them cope with estrangement and homesickness.

Nakoncz and Shik's (2009) study conducted among migrant workers from the Philippines in Hong Kong found that church attendance had two facets: the realm of the social and the spiritual. They found in church people with whom they could build a community on common ground and they found in their belief in God a way to relegate responsibility to a higher power. Abe-Kim (2004), in a study of Filipino-Americans, makes a similar distinction. Religiosity is associated with the outward, physical, observable



manifestations of religious practices while spirituality is the internalised experience of communicating/communing with a higher being.

Celia tries to attend Mass every Sunday, unless her husband Carlos is feeling unwell.

*Sometimes, I am ready to go, but Carlos suddenly feels faint or weak. So, I don't go on that Sunday. Whenever I don't, it's no real loss, of course, I can pray wherever I am... but going to church is like... it's like the home of a good friend. Because for me, God is a friend, and there are things that I can tell him, no one else. Yes, people say, you can pray directly...you can pray anywhere... But it's my way of communicating... to strengthen my faith. Attending Mass helps to strengthen my faith... so that I do not sever my relationship with the church. During the Mass, by listening, it's my offering, my presence is my offering...my attention. And that strengthens me, that encourages me, that I do not falter, that I am steadfast in my faith. I pray for patience, that I will be able to adjust, I pray for God's grace. When I have problems, I pray to God, I just...surrender it all: "Please take care of this." And it's my devotion. Even when I was back in the Philippines, I would always go to church, participate in the Mass... so it also helps me... helps me overcome loneliness. Also, when I go to church, I get some kind of renewal...because throughout my adjustments, to my relationship with my husband, other people here... if I did not have this faith, I may have already slapped someone. (laughs) And maybe, our marriage would not have lasted this long. But it's good that he lets me go to church, that I am free to attend Mass. It is a manifestation of his respect for me. An acknowledgment that going to church is part of me, part of my system. It really helps me.*

Baby shares how attendance to Sunday Mass helps her.

*I go to Mass for spiritual formation. To make me strong. You do not know everything, that human reasoning...if you are not fed by the Holy Spirit, Divine Reasoning, Divine Intervention, you will not have the strength to deal with everything that you encounter here. It's not just attending Mass that is important. It is also important to pray with the family. The family should be God-centered. If a family is not God-centered, it is weak. The people are weak. So, to make the family strong, it should be God in the middle of everything. Thinking about it... without God, we would be back in the Philippines. We would not have survived here. It is good that my husband is here [with me]. Then, I had my children here. If you don't pray, you'll be weak. You cannot deal with problems. We have a friend who is a Filipino priest. He is our spiritual director. When we have problems, we write to him, we talk to him, and he gives us advice online.*

Edna, too, says that she feels that going to Mass is an integral part of her Sunday.

*Every Sunday, as long as I don't have any appointment and as long as I am feeling well, I go to church. It is something I feel is a part of me. Not for anything else but I feel that it is my obligation as a Catholic. I feel that if I do not, my Sunday is not complete. Sure, anywhere you go, you can pray. But I like going to Mass. When I was younger, I would go all the way to the center to attend Mass. Even if I went alone. But now, because there is this church [with the Mass with Filipinos] closer to me, and I feel lazy to take a long trip, I go to Mass here.*

Fe, who works on the weekends caring for an elderly Spanish woman, still fulfills her obligation.

*The old woman and I watch Sunday Mass on the television together. That is how I can fulfill my Sunday obligation.*

*When I didn't work on weekends, before, I went to church religiously. I was even part of the choir!*

The preference to go to church in order to attend Mass rather than just “pray anywhere” shows that the church is an emotional site and being in community with other Filipinos who also attend Mass, a strong stimulant of emotions. Filipinos have been said to be deeply religious. Estranged in a foreign land, the research participants focus on a higher power with whom they feel strong emotional bonds. Whether they are moved by church-going as part of their obligation and habit, therefore, as part of their identity that they are re-negotiating in an unfamiliar place, or from a deep-seated emotional relationship with God and faith, the Filipinas in this study feel that going to church is an important part of Philippine culture.

Dancel (2005) describes the *utang na loob* felt by Filipinos toward God as "grateful loyalty" (p. 121) and this gratefulness expressed toward a higher being to which they owe their lives translates to religiosity.

We can consider the relationship between Filipino religiosity and their sense of *utang na loob* as something rather circular: Filipinos are deeply religious and have a tendency to celebrate religious occasions in a lavish fashion because of their sense of *utang na loob*. However, Filipinos feel this *utang na loob* deeply and most fervently because of their religiosity (p. 121).

They view church attendance and participation as ways for them to reciprocate. They do so by reading or singing at the front of the church, offering gifts, praying fervently. For special celebrations, they serve as organisers of events, like in logistics, marketing, and finance.

The Filipino community in Valencia is by no means a harmonious, homogeneous collective. There are issues that they share or differ over. Yet there are emotions that draw Filipinos to church: to join a community based on nationality and a community based on faith. Philippine emotional and religious culture inform an emotional geography between the Filipinos and the higher being that they acknowledge as their creator. The Church, then, is an emotional site that fosters be/longing for Filipinos. Their social relations with other Filipinos in the community form the basis for the succeeding discussion.

## Tracing emotional geographies and identities of Filipino women migrants in Valencia

After discussing the emotional geographies in the Catholic church as religious and social site of the Filipinas' negotiation of be/longing, this chapter examines the trajectory of the negotiation of self-identities in the narratives of six ageing Filipina migrants who live in Valencia.

### 6.1 Encountering the research participants

Change elicits emotions in the shift from familiar to unfamiliar. The research participants' narratives confirm Molina's (1992) assessment of the initial challenges that Filipino migrants face in Spain:

For the Filipino migrating to Europe, Spain offers some familiar ground: the Catholic religion, Spanish words incorporated into Pilipino and other Philippine dialects, extended family ties, and other customs. These, however, are not sufficient to offset the aggressive character of the Spaniards, their bluntness and direct approach, as well as the rapid pace and cold atmosphere of European society. Traditional customs and beliefs are soon brought to the test of standing up to comparison with new customs and beliefs. (p. 106)

Some background information on each of the participants can be found in Appendices C and D. Though their stories differ, they have some things in common: all of them left the Philippines as adults, have lived in Spain for more than 10 years, are at or around retirement life stage, have engaged in paid reproductive labour, and are Spanish citizens.

Following their migration, a rupture in self-identity occurs as a result of homesickness, and it may take different forms (Martsin and Mahmoud, 2012). For the research participants, sorrow in the physical form of crying accompanied the realisation of the stark difference between what was left back home and what is in the host country. Fe, whose first job was in domestic work in Spain, says:

*I was wiping the mirror in the bathroom, and I just saw tears falling down my face... It was unexpected. But I just started to cry, remembering my parents, my siblings back home...*

Aida, who worked as a teacher for 10 years before coming to Spain to work as a domestic helper for a prominent family, also shed tears.

*Tears fell from my eyes. I felt such self-pity! My God, I thought, how pitiful this is. But then, I thought: no one forced this decision on me. I decided on my own, the decision to come here was mine and I knew what I was going to do...so why am I crying? Why should I cry now? So, I accepted my situation, that there was nothing I could do. I was going to be here for two years. It was only going to be for two years... That's what I told myself.*

In a study of Filipina migrants in Singapore, one of the coping strategies that Filipina migrants utilise is managing their thoughts, particularly, in staying positive, focusing on the present, and avoiding thinking too much (Van Bortel et al., 2019, p. 8). Although Aida's embodied emotions manifested in tears, she tried to assuage her feelings by focusing on her agency. Celia, too, tried to manage her thoughts in order

to cope with the great change. She treated her leaving home as another phase of her life, so that her embodied emotions were tempered by her conviction to view the move as temporary. However, as the distance between home and host society widened, she felt a rupture and a longing for the familiarity of home.

*When I was leaving, when we were at the airport, I was reassuring my mother that we would be back after two years. I felt a little bit of anxiety, but it was nothing. It was going to be my first time to fly outside of the Philippines. But I psyched myself, I said: It will be like I am leaving for a job, and then I will be back after two years. It will only be two years. Or it was like a holiday...just an extended holiday...*

*It was only after I had arrived here, after a few weeks, that reality sank in. I would cry, especially when I was talking on the phone with my mother, with my family back home. When we would start talking, I would start crying.*

*Or sometimes, we would be watching television, and out of the blue, I would start to cry. It was like I was going crazy! (laughs) When I realized that, as I looked around, I was in a strange place, I wasn't home, I would start to cry. (sounds like she is about to cry)*

Doris, too, cried when she faced unfamiliar circumstances on her first day of work in Spain.

*I cried on my first day of work! You know why? I did not know about their mealtimes. My señora, she left. It was two o'clock in the afternoon. I was thinking: What am I supposed to do? I'm hungry! What is this? Do they cook here or not? I was in the bathroom, I started to cry. I thought: I'm so hungry, I'm seeing double! I cried so much and so hard. I didn't know what to do!*

*I finished a degree in Commerce. But I never really worked in the Philippines. I depended on my older sister. That's why, after just a week of working, I called my older sister, saying: "Please send me money for an airplane ticket. I want to go home! I'm so lonely here!" She said: "Try and do well at work. I know you are not accustomed to it, because back home, all you knew was how to play sports with your friends. Try to hold on, work hard! You can do it!"*

*I was sad, so lonely when I first came to Spain. But, what can I do? I had to work.*

*Whenever I would feel sad, lonely, I would cry and let it all out. Then the feeling would go. That's the only solution.*

Doris acknowledged that she had agency up to a point. She, after all, was working for an employer and the combination of the power relations and her economic need constrained her from changing her situation. Thus, feeling and expressing her emotions were her only options. She, too, coped by managing her emotions. Edna, who worked in a clerical capacity at a private hospital in the Philippines, quit after one week of work at the house of her first employer.

*When I came back on my day off, my aunt saw me, and she exclaimed: "Oh no, do not ever go back there! Look at yourself! You are even thinner than you were before!"*

*I found out later that the news spread among the Filipino community in Valencia: "Oh no, Mrs. X's niece started her job but she was crying so much at her employer's house!" (laughs) I did not go back there again.*

*I was traumatized but I did not have a choice. I was already here. I felt embarrassed to stay in my aunt's house without a job. So, I tried to find another employer.*

The longing for home was also apparent on their bodies, as Edna and Doris admit to experiencing extreme physical changes when they first started working in Spain.

*When I first arrived here, I was fat, because I had given birth by Caesarian section just a few months earlier. But within a month, I lost so much weight! The food was different. If you're not used to the food... the things here... you really cannot manage to eat. (Doris)*

*My waistline, when I arrived in Spain, was only about this size (motions with her hands to show about 30 cm). After my first week of work, I was even thinner! (Edna)*

Finding themselves in an unfamiliar place, dealing with unfamiliar people and situations, the research participants experienced strong emotions that manifested in shedding of tears and of weight—embodied manifestations of their unease at the changes brought by migration.

## **6.2 The geographies of deskilling**

Migrants who had professional work experience in the Philippines underwent deskilling in order to earn money in Spain. Although they knew of the change that awaited them, it still elicited very strong embodied emotions. Baby talks about a combination of faith in God and managing her thoughts as coping strategies.

*I used to work in an office in the Philippines. I was very elegant. When we came here, instead of carrying an attache case, I was carrying around a pail with a mop!... It was such a sudden, abrupt, drastic change. It was very difficult! So how will you feel? It was so...demoralising. And then, your spirit, if you don't have God to cling to... I would cry every night! You need acceptance, prayers. You have only God to depend on. And then later on, you think: it will not be like that forever...*

Celia, who was a school teacher, wanted to work in Spain. In order to equip her for the Spanish labour force, she took up Spanish lessons, driving lessons, and culinary arts lessons, but the only steady employment she took on involved tapping her skillset honed through more than 10 years of teaching school children. She worked for a family, teaching their three-year-old son English—but this also included being the nanny and cleaning lady.

*On the first day, I taught him about different colours. On the second day, Dios mio, he was already teaching me! (laughs) He took out all the pieces of crayons and said: "I know, this: azul is blue, rojo is red..." Aside from taking care of the child, I also cleaned the house. I disciplined him, making sure he would clean up after himself and organise things like socks and shoes. But I treated it all like a game. After six months, the couple separated and I worked there only for a few more months. After I left, another Filipina took my place.*

*My husband had received benefits from an early retirement package at his job [prior to meeting me], so he wanted to travel. We traveled so much during the first two years after we were married!...*

*I must admit, I miss earning my own money. Before, when I received my salary at the end of the month, I would go out alone to watch a movie, I would buy something, like a pair of shoes—nothing expensive. Just to be able to buy something with my salary. I miss that.*

Aida, Baby, and Edna observe that in the Philippines, paid domestic work is the lowest kind of work, associating it with servitude or being a servant.

*We were poor in the Philippines, there were so many relatives and we were the poorest. We were poor pero nunca, never did I ever have to become a servant back home. I felt so much pity for myself. (Aida)*

*In the Philippines, I had maids. Suddenly, I was the maid in a foreign country. It was very difficult! It was mental and physical torture. I was already in my 40s... I was no longer, physically, effective as a worker. (Baby)*

*Even if we were poor in the Philippines, I never worked as a household helper. It's not as if I wanted to work in a house. Even if you say that we know how to work around the house, I never worked as a servant [in the Philippines]. My aunt was an English teacher [in Spain]. She was never a household help. She never worked in servitude in a house. (Edna)*

The difference in their surroundings and their sources of income: from professional to domestic, from public to private, was compounded by alienation from the familiarity of home, and in their not feeling at-home, heightened their sense of longing. What Parreñas (2015) calls "contradictory class mobility" is a paradox involving a lowering of their social and occupational status but an increase in their economic status (p. 117). The process involves struggling with strong emotions of disorientation and demoralisation.

Though Celia's circumstances differ because her primary reason for migration was marriage, she still experienced strong emotions of missing being able to work and earning a salary, being a part of the capitalist market by making purchases, associating agency with money that she earned. Although she receives money from Carlos, she makes small things by hand that she sells in a small shop in her pueblo or engages in some direct selling.

*Carlos provides for everything that we need. But sometimes, I just want to have some money that I can call my own. When I do, I invite him and maybe my stepdaughter or sister-in-law out to have a meal.*

Celia was accustomed to working and earning money since she was a university student, so she wanted to regain the same familiar, empowering feeling within her new environment and circumstances.

After enduring reproductive labour for a few years, both Aida and Baby decided that they wanted to leave domestic work. It was not an easy path, even if they both had university diplomas and professional work experience. Baby explains the long and arduous process:

*Because you have a dream, you say to yourself: I cannot just be stuck here. I have to do something. That's why when I got a job in a school, I studied in my spare time... At night, I would go to school. I had to go back to school.*

*The Spanish government does not recognize our credentials in the Philippines because the curriculum here is different. You need to apply for a convalidation with the Ministry of Education. You have to translate the course description of all of your subjects from your college degree into Spanish. And just to translate that, how much money will you spend? You cannot just look it up on Google Translate [online]. They need it to be done by a legal translator. That is expensive!  
Then, it took three years [to get the result]!*

Baby was motivated to make full use of her agency, in order to regain her self-identity—ruptured by the change in her status from working in the public to the private sphere. Her desire was so strong to rejoin the public sphere that she channeled her efforts towards achieving that goal.

The Spanish Ministry of Education reviewed Baby's credentials and assessed that her Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication was short of one year to be considered comparable to a Spanish *licenciatura*. Balancing a work schedule, Baby decided to take a final year and enrolled in night classes. After she earned her degree, in order to be eligible to teach, she finished a *Master de Enseñanza en Idioma Formativo*.

*On our wall at home, we have my children's diplomas, and then mine, signed by the king of Spain! So that makes me proud. I was so happy! In truth, you can't take any of that with you when you die. You can't...but at least, you accomplished something on earth...something you worked hard for. There is such a satisfaction from gaining an achievement. That feeling...*

For Aida, it was a struggle but she was motivated by *pag-aaruga* to earn more money—to send to her ageing parents and to raise her daughter by doing the job for which she studied and trained. She, too, had to undergo the same lengthy process of convalidation. But her precarious situation, of possessing paperwork as a domestic worker, made her vulnerable to abuse by employers.

*I really wanted to work as a teacher, to practice my profession. After I worked at the summer school—thank God they liked me!—they offered me a job as a teacher in the school, I was to start in September. But they were not fair to me. After they saw that my permit to work was as *empleada de hogar*, they would ask me to do additional work. Because I had a permit anyway, they did not make any effort to change my status to "teacher". You need a convalidation if you want to work legally as a teacher, to change your status from a domestic helper. So, I was a teacher in the school, but I also worked as babysitter of the owner. Then while the baby was sleeping, they asked me to wash the child's clothes and clean the room. I tolerated all of that... But when they said that I should clean the house, I finally put my foot down. I said: "No! I don't know what my work is here anymore, I am doing everything!" They tried to pacify me and asked me to just teach and take care of their baby. Finally, in December, they said that I should also be in charge of chaperoning the students in the school bus. I turned it down because they weren't going to pay me extra for that. They said: "Remember, it's December, there are fewer school days!" I said: "Never mind!" I went back to what I knew to do: work as a domestic helper. I thought, at least there, I knew what was expected of me and I could schedule my tasks, and I knew I had my rest hours and days off. I didn't want to be exploited anymore! Eventually, I found work in a bilingual school, as an English teacher. But we were not declared as "teachers", just "helpers". There were two other Filipinos who worked there with me. When an inspector from the Ministry of Education came around, we could not be in front of the class. That's why I was motivated to get my convalidation done.*

*I needed the convalidation so that I could work as a teacher. It took four years to get it! After I submitted the requirements, it was buried under other papers, other requests. They kept telling me: just wait, everything's ok, tranquila. But at least, finally, it was done. Thank God! I had my Diplomado de Educacion General Basica en Philologia Ingles—signed by the king of Spain! After that, our salaries increased. I think up to the same level as the Spanish teachers. Our service record there was good. We were very professional. We made sure to show them that we were good teachers. There was some discrimination, sometimes, parents would challenge us on our English proficiency. I could justify my usage of English, so it was ok. And the children, oh, you need a lot of patience and a strong constitution. You need to learn to discipline them and put your foot down. Como they come from very rich families, alta sociedad. There were grandchildren of politicians, children of footballers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges. It's a prestigious school.*

Both Aida and Baby were subject to the discrimination based on the assumption that an education in a Third World country is not at par with an education in a Western country. This is a result of the primacy held for education and professional training in the West over that of the Third World. Among the research participants, Aida and Baby are exceptional—even other research participants mentioned this during our conversations—because they aspired to regain their place in the space of public work and underwent the cost, effort, bureaucracy, and emotional labour that the process entailed.

*After I came back from the Philippines, after my mother had her operation, I did not have any more savings. I found a new employer. I worked in another house. But I was looking for greener pastures. I really wanted to work as a teacher, to practice my profession. (Aida)*

*I'm a strong woman, an ambitious woman. My ambition was for a better life, greener pastures. I said: I have to reach something, not just stay in the countryside. [What motivated me was the thought that] I have to reach something. (Baby)*

Aida and Baby talk about finding "greener pastures". For them, greener pastures lay outside of the Philippines—in Spain, and beyond work as domestic helpers—in the public sphere. They underwent a process of be/longing. They regained pride, symbolised by the diploma signed by the king of Spain that they display prominently in their homes. Knowing that their skillsets and capacities enabled them to go beyond domestic work, they struggled with the unfamiliar: in a different society, with a different language and different system, to navigate their way to find work in the public space, for better remuneration as well as better status. In the commencement of their re-joining the public sphere, they could assert their agency, as well as earn more and regain what was familiar to them, i.e. not domestic work. By doing so, they reconciled their self-identity as professionals in Spain. They also repaired the rupture brought about by migration, and took more decisive steps toward belonging in their country of residence.

As mentioned, Celia is an exception because she came to Spain after marrying Carlos, a Spanish citizen, and though she admitted to missing work and earning a salary, married life for her entailed much traveling with her husband, that was incompatible with full-time work. For the rest of the participants,



however, who all have university degrees, the income from domestic work made the pain as a result of contradictory class mobility easier to bear (Parreñas, 2015, p. 119). As Doris puts it:

*When I was working, I would keep motivated from day to day by counting down to when I would receive my salary! As payday approached, that would make the work seem easier. I would forget that I was tired. If we don't work hard, no one will pay us that kind of money.*

Once she found a job that she liked, Edna grew accustomed to life in Spain, and no longer felt homesick.

*It's different than back home. In the Philippines, even if you're earning, it's different than what you would earn here. Even if you just work in a house here, the pay is different [i.e., higher]. That is why I did not want to go back home.*

Aida's earnings that she sent to the Philippines not only supported her parents but also her sister's college education; Baby's remittances supported her son's education until he finished an Engineering degree; Celia sent money home to support her parents; Doris not only supported her parents and son, but also some of her older siblings; Edna occasionally sent money to support her mother; and Fe's salary contributed to supporting her parents as well as the education of her siblings. Their capacities to earn and send home more money empowered and helped the research participants negotiate their self-identity.

### **6.3 Transnational emotions field**

There are various ways that emotions are able to travel across national borders between members of transnational families, among them, through lines of communication and emotional remittances. Yet part of nourishing the transnational family also involves visits. Usually, the migrant goes back to the homeland to visit loved ones.

Communication between the migrant and the family left behind contribute to transnational caregiving, as Baldassar et al. (2007) discuss. Doris, after her initial resistance to the change, managed her missing and longing by exchanging communications with family back home in the form of voice tapes.

*At that time, it was very popular to mail voice tapes back home. I would record my voice, talking, on a cassette tape, then send it to them by mail. They would do the same. There were no cellphones back then!*

In the 1980s, Aida says, phone calls between the Philippines and Spain were very costly, and the internet had yet to be invented. She relied on the postal system to communicate with her loved ones.

*I would write to my family back home. I think, twice a month during those early years. After they received my letter, they would write back.*

Celia timed her phone calls to her parents on Sundays, when she was sure that they would be at home and they could spend time talking.

*They do not have a computer. So, I would make phone calls to them. Carlos would know based on my reaction, who was on the other end. When I would talk to my cousin Chanda, we would end up just laughing. But if I would start to cry, he would say: "Ah, it's your mother you're talking to..." My husband would tell me: "Stop calling them!" because he did not know what to do, he felt helpless whenever I would start to cry.*

In order to cope with the longing, Filipina migrants used communication channels, approximating co-presence as much as possible to keep in touch with the family left behind.

Motivated by a feeling of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, the Filipina migrants leave home in order to earn money to send back home. Aida, the eldest among her siblings, felt a need to send all her earnings to her family.

*I earned 8,000 pesetas. That was already a large amount at that time! My mother said that the money I sent was used to help my youngest sister finish her nursing course. I sent almost all of my money back home. I left almost nothing for myself. I don't know... at that time, I wasn't thinking of myself. My motivation was to help my parents, my family. I am the eldest. I worked while I was studying to be a teacher back home too. The rest of my siblings did not finish their education, save for the youngest. My youngest sister, thank God, she is now a nurse. My sister has said: "If it were not for you, I would not have finished my education." After she had graduated, my parents told me: "Now, you can take care of yourself. If you find someone there that you love, someone you think will be good for you as a partner for life... Go ahead! Anyway, you have already helped your family. Now, think of yourself."*

It is part of the Philippine emotional culture for daughters to feel responsible for helping their parents in taking care of the family. Aida was motivated by *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* toward her parents, as well as *pag-aaruga* toward her siblings, especially her sister who was motivated to finish her degree. Parreñas (2005) notes the tendency of daughters to reciprocate the care they received from their mothers by helping care for the family. In addition, Baldassar argues that women tend to feel more responsible for their ageing parents (2008). Doris, though the youngest in a family of 11 children, felt that she needed to help her parents and siblings who were left behind because she was the only one who was working abroad. The money she sent back to the Philippines was not only used to support her son, but also to help other siblings.

*I sent almost all of my earnings back to the Philippines, to my family. I used to earn 11 mil pesetas. I would keep the 1,000 for myself, and send 10,000 back home. I thought: What would I do with the money? They need it more back there. I had food, a place to sleep, all for free [at my employer's house], I didn't have to pay for my room and board. That was enough. On my days off, I could buy some things. That was sufficient for me. I would send the money to my mother. Looking back, we wondered how our parents raised all of us. Eleven children! My father worked on the provincial bus. My mother's family had property, they had land, and we would sometimes help during harvest time. My brothers and sisters helped the rest of the family after they graduated, after they started working.*

As a daughter and the youngest sister, Doris felt *utang na loob* towards her parents and siblings who took care of and raised her. As a mother, daughter, and younger sister, she also felt *pag-aaruga* toward her son,

parents, and siblings: her son, because as a single mother, she was responsible for raising him; her parents and siblings, because they were ageing and needed money for necessities.

Meanwhile, Fe is the fifth among eight siblings, but she alone went to Spain to work, in search of "adventure". So, a responsibility to send money home.

*I worked and regularly sent money to my parents for their expenses. After they both passed away, I sent them to some of my siblings who were in need.*

Fe did not have a child, but she felt *utang na loob* toward her parents and felt *pag-aaruga* toward her parents and siblings. Later, she adopted a niece under the single parent programme in Spain, so that she could give her adopted daughter a chance at a better life.

While Edna did not send money home on a regular basis to support her family, and in hindsight, she feels guilt over it.

*I have my regrets... My siblings, even if they did not have enough money, they never asked me to send them money. Sometimes, when it would occur to me, I would send home some money. But no one obliged me to do it. Some Filipinas here have nephews and nieces who they support through their schooling in the Philippines. That never happened to me. I admit, I was remiss in that. My siblings, even if they were poor, never complained to me, never asked for money. I regret, at this age, that I was careless with money. I bought things for myself, things that I wanted. I only thought of the present. I overindulged. I was spending left and right. It took me 13 years before I first went back to the Philippines. I don't know why it took me so long. I guess I was enjoying myself. I don't know... I regret that I had the means, I had the resources, I could have sent them money, but I didn't.*

That Edna sent home money when it occurred to her and that she worried about not sending anything to her siblings means that she, too, felt *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* toward them. She falls under the category that Katigbak (2015) calls "the pragmatics", in terms of "adjusting their attitudes towards emotional remittances depending on what they feel is convenient at particular moments" (p. 531). Baby sent money back home to provide for her son who had been left behind. By sending remittances, she fulfilled her responsibility to provide for his needs until he graduated from university.

*We only send money to the Philippines for our son. Our relatives don't... They are able... They do not oblige us to send them money.*

Emotional remittances are strong bearers of love, concern, and intimacy between Filipina migrants and the family members they left behind (Katigbak, 2015). However, they still value co-presence. In the case of the research participants, all of those whose mothers have passed away put a premium on co-presence, being physically present and showing care around the time of their mothers' deaths. Baldassar et al. (2007) discuss several types of visits taken in order to fulfill the need for co-presence as part of transnational caregiving. Among them are crisis visits, duty and ritual visits, and special purpose visits. These periods of co-presence become "'key moments' in joint homeland and

migration histories, reinforcing...unity of transnational fields" (p. 138). When Fe's mother became very ill, she took a one-month holiday from work to take care of her mother at the hospital.

*She was sick, so I asked my employer if I could go home. From the airport, I went straight to the hospital and took care of her every day. My sister and I worked in shifts. After the month was over, I had to come back to resume work. And you know what? She died just after I left. I couldn't go back for her funeral. But at least I took care of her, at least she saw me before she died.*

Caring for a sick and/or ageing parent is categorised under crisis visits (Baldassar et al., 2007, p. 140). Presence at or even before the funeral of their mothers is important and Fe found consolation in having showed *pag-aaruga* to her mother before she passed away. For Aida, her mother's worsening health signaled a big change in her life plan.

*After a little less than two years of working for my first employer, I had to go home. My mother was very sick. I would have gone back in August [after finishing my two-year contract], but my father wrote to me in June, saying that my mother was bleeding and she needed to undergo an operation. I was beside myself. I didn't know what to do! I didn't know if I should wait for when my contract ended or just leave. I wanted to go home immediately, of course. I was crying, I kept crying. I consulted the employment agency and they told me that I was actually entitled to a one-month vacation each year. My employer never gave me that! So, I told my señora: "My mother is sick, I need to leave." She asked me to wait because she was going to Madrid soon. I said: "No, I need to leave immediately. I am under no obligation to wait because I am entitled to a month-long vacation and you did not let me take a vacation last year." She had no choice. I kept crying. Then, I made arrangements with the travel agency that I would buy a return ticket to Spain, and I spent for that. I thought: My plan was to go on to the USA, but it looks like that is not going to happen anymore.*

*I went back to the Philippines. My mother had her operation [and I helped to take care of her]. [The operation] was a success but I had no more savings. I started again, I started from zero. I went back to Spain. But I did not go back to that employer anymore, I found a new one. I found a household where I had more free time. I would walk around Valencia and apply for work at English language schools. Then, I was offered the opportunity to work in a summer school. The señora there was so nice, we cried when we said goodbye to each other. But I really wanted to work as a teacher, to practice my profession.*

Emotional remittances are valued by Doris not only for the love that travels with them, but for the value of the money itself. However, an important life stage, as death in the family, was a strong motivation to go back. She was also motivated by her *pag-aaruga* toward her son, who, after the death of her mother who was taking care of him, needed to be comforted as well. Doris then left him in the care of one of her sisters before she went back to Spain and resumed her work.

*It was very expensive then to travel, the prices of flight tickets, unlike these days. I couldn't afford it. I would prefer just sending the money to my family.*

*The first time I went back home was when my mother died. I had to go back for her funeral. So, it took me six years before I went back home to the Philippines.*

*I also came home for my father's funeral in 1991. And after that, also, to bury my closest sister. When she died, even if I had just been to the Philippines the previous year, I asked my employer if they would let me go home and stay for one month. The señora promised me that they would not look for a replacement for me while I was gone. I needed to go home.*

Special (purpose) visits, according to Baldassar et al. (2007), including for bereavement, "also ease the heartaches of being separated from parents/children and grandchildren and to relieve migrant homesickness" (p. 141). Edna felt regret over not seeing her mother prior to her passing, but she found some solace and consolation in being present at her funeral.

*I did not see my mother before she died. When I arrived, she was already gone. The first time I went back home, 13 years after I first left, we saw each other. It was a long time before she fell ill. Sometimes, I would write. Sometimes, I would send them something. Now, I think about it, the presents, the money I would send them... they weren't sent regularly. Just whenever I felt like it. That is why, I say, regret comes in the end. When my mother died two years later, my siblings all attended to the arrangements. They said I never even had the chance to take care of my mother. I was remiss in that respect. I made it to her funeral, though. At least I saw her at the very last moment.*

For transnational carers, Baldassar et al. (2007) argue that mere presence shows care. But what about when national policies of the host country constrain visits? *Utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* toward her parents motivated Aida to leave home. She even sacrificed her dream of moving to the USA in order to attend to her mother with co-presence when she became ill. Again, she went to her mother's side after her father died—in order to console her and help in the transition. However, a combination of factors prevented her from returning home for her mother's funeral.

*When my daughter was three years old, we went home to the Philippines, so that she could meet my family there. Two years later, we went back, after my father had died and my mother was also in serious condition. All of my siblings were there. We were there for the funeral and also to talk about who would take care of my mother. My youngest brother took on the task. The next year, my mother passed away. But our residence permits had just expired...my permit to stay, to work. Maybe we could have taken a chance, but it wasn't worth the risk, that we wouldn't be allowed back into Spain because we didn't have the right papers. That was very hard. It's not like if we were in the Philippines, we could have been by her side, just by riding a bus or a plane... That's the difficulty here. Even if you have money, it's not as if you can just pick up and go. It's difficult to manage scheduling a trip, even if, for example, you have all the paperwork. That's...life here is difficult... We offered Mass for our mother. It was sad, it was unfortunate, but we thought that our mother, wherever she is, she would understand our situation.*

Celia recalls the last time she saw her mother: at the airport in Manila before she left.

*My mother said: "Ah, we will never see each other again." And it was true. She died on January 2009. She bled from her breast... That was less than two years after I left the Philippines. I could not go home for the funeral. Those were the rules...so that my citizenship would be official, I needed to live in Spain for at least two years. I was sad. Of course, I was sad! I talked to my sister. Carlos and I talked about it. We talked about the options: if I was to go home, this would happen... if I would not go home, this would happen... We tried to find a win-win situation. If I were going to rush home, I would not see her anymore... I would see her, but not alive... But what would I do if I did go home? Cry? Bawl? I remember, when Mama turned 70 years old, I bought her the most expensive bouquet of flowers I could find. Her birthday was just before All Saints' Day, and you know how the prices go up during that time. I gave them to her and she said: "Why did you buy such an expensive gift? You could have used the money to buy a sack of rice instead!" I told her: "Ma, I am giving you this*

*now, I don't want to buy you flowers to put on top of your grave..." Also, on her last birthday, when she turned 81, we sent her some money so that she could have a big party to celebrate. Of course, I felt terrible that I would never see her again. But I also thought it was better, so that she no longer suffered. Because she was suffering a lot from her illness. I should not cry because I was not able to take care of her for the last two years. When I was with her, when we were together, I was able to show her that I loved her. When I was there, I took care of her. And before I got married—I was the last of her children to get married—she said she would feel more at peace if I were already married. That she knows that I am not alone. And when I was already in Spain, we would talk on the phone all the time. The last time we talked was in January, she said: "When are you coming home?" I said: "In June." She said: "Oh, not for a long time still." I said I would send her some money. I reassured her: "Don't worry about your children, think about yourself, because we are all grown up now."*

Among the challenges to transnational carers (Baldassar et al., 2007) are the distance between members of transnational families as well as national borders, including policy restrictions and regulations, finances, visa, job requirements. Celia and Aida were constrained by migration and residence policies that kept them from moving outside of the borders of the European Union.

Baby was constrained from attending her son's graduation ceremony by demands of her profession and in effect, financial stability.

*When we left, when he thought we left him behind, he became closed off to me. Because of work, we could not go home to attend his graduation. I was very happy, very proud of him. But if we had taken a few days off from work, my husband and I were both teaching... it was difficult, we could lose our jobs. I think my son... he was hurt because of that. There is a gap there.*

*I wasn't there to...as a shoulder to cry on when he had problems. So now, even if he has problems, he just says: "I'm OK." I'll find out from other people that he has a problem. Or if he does say something, it's just a few lines [of text]. He is close to his siblings. But he is reserved, [closed off] when it comes to me. Because he saw me as the mastermind of us leaving the Philippines. My husband actually did not want to leave, but he also wanted our family to be together. I think that's why my son is aloof toward me. But when I visit him, we go out. I'm still his mother.*

Although Baby was motivated by *pag-aaruga* toward her eldest son and other children in the decision to work in Spain, she feels guilt about giving up co-presence with the son she left behind in order to fulfill what she views as parental obligations of providing basic needs of her children. The emotional distance she feels from her son as a result of leaving him behind was aggravated by the constraints of working in a foreign country. During our conversations, when she recounted experiences with her son, her eyes filled with tears and her voice shook. When we were engaging in conversations, Baby was preparing to leave, with her husband and children, to attend her son's wedding in the Philippines the next month. She was hopeful that they would become closer during this visit.

*That is why it is difficult for members of the family to be separated. But I think, if I explain to him, that what we did [leaving with his siblings] led to their own good, then he will understand. If we had stayed in the Philippines, our lives will surely be different today.*

Doris, whose son came to live with her in Spain before he turned 18 years old, had a similar experience when she was reunited with her grown-up son, Dante.

*I realised, when your son, when your child does not grow up in your care, it's different. You don't know how to act around each other. You're not used to each other's habits, temperaments. Sometimes, you fight... For some time after he arrived, we did not get along! We used to live in the same house but now, he's married to a nice Filipina.*

As Skrbiš (2008) argues: "the emphasis here is on the difficult balance between the economic benefits of migration and the emotional costs identified largely as the loss of contact with one's own children" (p. 237). Baby found solace in co-presence with her husband and two children; Doris, in co-presence with Gemma.

#### **6.4 Translocal emotions field**

In the host society, through various levels of belonging, the migrants establish social networks. For Aida, friendships established with fellow Filipinas in Valencia eased the unease of missing and longing for family in the Philippines.

*When I first arrived in Valencia, I lived in the servants' quarters and on my days off, I would walk around Valencia. I would go back to my employers' house at night. That happened for two months, I think, until I saw a woman on the street who asked me: "Are you a Filipina?" I said: "Yes!" She asked me where I worked and who among the other Filipinas I knew. I didn't know anyone! There were just a few of us here then. After that, we would spend our days off together with other Filipinas. The first Christmas here, we spent in the room of one Filipina. We got all dressed up, we cooked a traditional Filipino Christmas dinner. It was sad because back home, Christmas is a time to spend with family. But no... there were just a handful of us. We were all single Filipinas here then. We all grew closer to each other. There was a bar in the city center, near the city hall, it was called Bar China. We would sit there when we had grown exhausted from walking around. Then, we would go to the park, take photos. There were also a lot of Filipino seafarers at that time who worked on commercial ships that stopped at the port of Valencia. It was much easier then to go in and out of the port. When our friends were docked there, they would obtain permission from their ship captain for their friends to come onboard to visit. But we would always go there in groups. We always spent time together, the Filipinas who were here back then. It was a tight-knit group. We became a family. Then as time passed, more and more Filipinos arrived, the circle grew bigger. Eventually, we rented a piso [flat] together. Some of the Filipinas who lived in their employers' houses would come and spend time there with us on our days off. We would cook food together, chat. At the end of the Sunday, they would go back. When my daughter was growing up, I looked for an apartment just for us. That is how we came to live in this place. But we still spent Sundays and special occasions together.*

Doris describes how she and fellow Filipinas spent leisure time together in Valencia.

*When we would take our days off, we did not have a place to go. We would just roam around from morning until night... That's because we didn't yet have a flat that a few people would rent, where we could spend our days off together. The Filipinas who came after us are lucky, because then, they had a place to spend their days off, because we started renting flats. And now, there is*

*someone who can meet them at the airport or bus station, then an apartment where they can stay. We did not experience that. Our employers fetched us and we went straight to their houses to work!*

Edna also found lifelong friends among Filipino community.

*While I was working in London, I was renting a flat in Valencia. I had all of my things in that flat—knick knacks! No one was living there. I would come back to Spain regularly, and every time the plane was about to land, I felt excited, I felt happy because I was coming home! I missed the people here, my friends here. My family here are the Filipinas in Valencia. Whenever we would congregate, we would eat together at someone's flat and we would talk about our problems. Not really to complain, just to vent out our frustrations about work, about our employers, even about our families back home. We would let out our feelings.*

For Aida, Doris, and Edna, the community of strangers that had become friends, which consisted of fellow Filipinas who were working in Spain, formed an emotional space, whether they were physically proximate or apart. In the time they spent together and emotions that drew them closer, they found a sense of belonging and a home away from home.

Having a child bound Aida to Spain even more. And as a single parent, the community of Filipinas lent her support.

*I raised my daughter on my own. She was the one thing I could call "mine". When she was growing up, I didn't have time to take care of her, to watch her grow up because I needed to work...I worked hard, I worked several jobs. The other Filipinas helped me. They took care of her when I was at work. Now, with my grandchildren, I am able to spend more time with them, to take care of them and watch them grow up.*

Though Edna did not have children, she feels a strong bond with her two wards, whom she cared for and practically raised. Her feeling of *pag-aaruga* toward them bound her to them, as if she were their mother.

*When the children, Pablo and Paula, were growing up, their parents would leave for work while they were still asleep. By the time they came home, the children were already asleep. That's why those children are so close to me. What is it about us? Even if someone is not related to you by blood, they become so beloved. That is why I stayed with them for 17 years, because of the children. When I was taking care of the children, I had my own room at their house. At night, they would leave their own rooms and come in and want to sleep with me in my bed. I had a very narrow bed, a single, but the three of us would snuggle in there! Once, their father came into the room and explained: "You cannot sleep in Edna's bed. She cannot take adequate rest!" But when one of them was sick, it was allowed. You know what? I never bore a child. Those children, they did not come from me. But I feel as if I am their mother. The friends of the señor and señora told me: "You did not give birth to them but you are their mother!"*



*Until now, they still call me "Mama Edna". I still talk to them, they are grown up now. We are still close. I also take care of my grandchild. Well, I am single but I have Pablo's child. He calls me "Lola" [Grandmother]. He is such a smart boy! So talkative! I just help around the house and take care of him [when they need a babysitter]. Whenever I come to see him, I stop before entering and ask: "Donde esta mi niño?" He will say: "Lola, estoy aqui!" He really makes me happy!*

Meanwhile, Doris considers home the house she shares with Gemma.

*Gemma and I divide the household chores between us. She is in charge of cleaning, doing the laundry, washing the dishes. I am in charge of shopping for groceries and cooking. So, when she comes back from work, and there are dishes in the sink, she looks at me... I say: "Ah, well, I'm not in charge of those!" I absolutely love cooking...just don't ask me to wash the dishes! Nunca!*

Celia considers Carlos and his family her own as well now.

*There are very few times...you could count on the fingers of one hand the number of times my husband and I have not slept in one bed together. I mean, he lets me do things on my own, but I always go home to him. I am able to do the things I want. I meet people through InterNations gatherings, through Ama de Casa meetings, and of course, Filipinos in church. Whatever happens, we respect each other. That is the important thing. He respects what I want to do, I respect what he wants to do.*

*I am happy that my in-laws and my stepchildren, they see... they acknowledge that I take care of Carlos. I am not remiss in my duties as a wife.*

*After I received my Spanish citizenship, Carlos and I went back to the Philippines to see if we could live there. But he did not like how everything stopped after the typhoons—you could be stranded in an island for days! Also, he tried to find out if his bank here could send his retirement money to a bank in the Philippines, and he put them in contact with each other, but they couldn't understand how to do it. So, we decided to come back to Spain. He also wanted to move to Germany, but I did not like it there. It is too cold! I like it more here in Valencia.*

*When Carlos and I talked about...death, he asked: "What do you want? Do you want your remains to be cremated or what?" I said: "Yes, of course. I will stay here." He said: "Oh, thank God!" I now consider my family to be here. They are my family.*

Baby, whose husband and two children are with her in Europe, considers her home with Boy.

*There came a point when I wanted to give up and go home. I could not take it anymore. But God knows that you shouldn't go home. I had my husband here with me, so we helped each other. If I were alone, I would probably have gone back. But because my husband was with me, I had strength, I had a will to stay, because we were both working. When Boy feels weak, I am strong. We help each other.*

*My two children are here too. My children graduated here, one of them is already married [to a Spanish man]. We didn't go back because we were already here with the family, except for my eldest son.*

*They ask me: "Why do you have to go back, Mommy? Here, you can live with dignity. You will not suffer here." The only suffering here is the cold climate. The climate itself.*

As they grow accustomed to life Spain, the migrants found ways of belonging and appreciate it.

*You know what I like about [life in] Spain? There is dignity of labour here. Poor and rich alike, we can eat the same food. Why? Is there a sign on my back that says: "I'm a domestic helper?" Poverty is not so noticeable here, unlike back home, you can immediately see it from the outside.*

*At least here, even if it is difficult, it's not so obvious on the outside... Unlike there [in the Philippines], when you're poor, you're dirt poor. (Aida)*

*Life is different here. We are not rich, but what the rich eat, we can eat as well. In the Philippines, we had good jobs but still, it's as if you cannot eat what you want to eat because you have to save your money for your children's education...or emergencies like hospitalization... Why would you go back there, when you eat well here? Here, you're able to buy the food you want, it's well within your reach. And you can even save a little money. (Baby)*

The reference to access to food, a basic necessity, and dignity, are noticeable in the narratives of Aida and Baby. The more egalitarian society, in Spain, is where they find social protection and services provided to citizens including healthcare, education, and the like. This is important to them as the migrants advance in age, the physical consequences of their years of labour take a toll on their bodies. In the Philippines, as discussed in the first chapter, there are few similar systems in place, and those that exist are mired in mismanagement among other problems.

*As part of healthcare here, we undergo regular medical check-ups. Once, they suspected [that I had breast cancer], then they asked me to come back several times for various procedures to make sure. Finally, they said that they needed to operate, to take it out. It was in December. We were in the middle of preparations for the students' Christmas programme. So, I asked the doctors if we could delay it... Then, in August, I filed for a leave from work. After the surgery, I underwent chemotherapy. I recovered after three years and went back to school. I did not have to pay anything. The healthcare scheme here is good. If I were in the Philippines, I would have gone bankrupt trying to pay off medical bills. But here, zero, I did not have to pay a single cent. (Aida)*

*In terms of healthcare, in the Philippines, you have to pay for everything: medicines, doctors... You could spend all of your savings to pay. You can see the difference! Unlike here, I had an operation twice, I didn't have to pay for anything. My thyroid had to be removed due to stress. Then, my uterus, too. Here, you have efficient healthcare services to depend on when you get sick, get old. (Baby)*

*I suffered a miscarriage a few years ago. And then... I had to have a hysterectomy. It was okay, they took care of it. [The doctors said that] it had to be done. I did not have to pay for anything. (Celia)*

*I have been operated on five times in Spain. First, it was on my throat. Then, my ear. I had a damaged ear drum—I felt it when I was at the beach one summer with my ward and we were submerging our heads in the water. I felt the sea water come in one ear, then out the other. So, doctors had to close the ear drum. Recently, I've felt something strange... sometimes, I will hear noise and it is really uncomfortable for me. So much noise! I had a check-up and they told me they needed a certain device to examine it better. I haven't heard from them yet. I also had my gall bladder removed. Prior to that, I was feeling pain for many years, sometimes, I would go to the emergency room and would spend a night at the hospital. Finally, after so many times that I was in and out of the hospital, they decided to remove my gall bladder. They said at first that they would perform an endoscopy, then they said they would have to perform surgery. I said: "Just do what you have to do to make the pain go away!" Ay, Madre Mia! Now, I don't feel*

*any pain there anymore. If that had happened in the Philippines, how much would I have had to pay? You need to have a lot of money there!*

*Also, I have cataracts. I had an operation on my left eye a few years ago. Por lo menos, I can see, but mostly light and dark. The doctors said this right eye should have been operated on when I was in the Philippines. But how should I know? I didn't know that this eye was no good. From when I was 8 years old, I was already playing softball! So how come I saw the ball if my eyesight was no good? In college, I was active in sports! I played softball, basketball, volleyball, track and field. You name it, I played it! I didn't know... I didn't experience any problems with my eyesight! It was only three years ago that I noticed something. I told Gemma: "I feel like my eyesight is getting fuzzy, getting fuzzy." She said: "Well, it's probably because you're always watching TV!"*  
(Doris)

*I underwent surgery on my knee. I don't know what it's called, but it's what football players have. I was operated on and while I was recovering, I had to use a cane. But I did not pay for the procedure. I have healthcare here.* (Edna)

*I was diagnosed with a herniated disc. It hurt when I moved. I had to quit my job so it would not get worse. My doctor told me I had to undergo surgery in order to lodge screws into my spine. I did not want to do that! I cried as I rushed out of the doctor's office. But I consulted another doctor, and he just prescribed this brace made of moulded plastic that I had to wear all the time, all day, for one year. I only took it off when I went to sleep. It was not very expensive. Healthcare here is very good. Back home, you have to pay for everything... maybe even for the gloves that the doctor will use! Here, no!* (Fe)

Aside from efficient healthcare, the Filipinas also think of expenses every day and for the future, bearing in mind their loved ones in Spain. Aida lauds the efficient Spanish pension system.

*For the 40 years that I have lived and worked in Spain, I have no money saved. I have nothing to show for it. But I live on the pension that I receive. My pension is sufficient to pay the rent for my flat and for food for every day. I want now to be able to buy the apparatus for my grandchildren's teeth. It is quite expensive. But it will be my herencia to them. Something they will remember me by when I am gone. I don't know why, but each of them has something that needs to be fixed!*  
(laughs) *I also need to have my teeth fixed, but that can wait, I am still able to eat, after all, I am still able to smile, to laugh. For me, money, that's not a problem. If it runs out, it runs out.*

Doris depends on her pension combined with Gemma's salary to pay for everyday expenses.

*We are waiting for when Gemma becomes a jubilado, then we can go back to the Philippines. When we think about how much we have to pay every month for rent, electricity, water, food here... With my pension and the money she brings in from her job, we are lucky to be able to make ends meet! If we used that money in the Philippines, we could buy much more, we could live on much less money! But we also thought about our social security here. If you get sick in the Philippines, the expenses are so high! Medicines are so expensive! Over here, when we get sick, when we need to see the doctor...everything is for free!*  
*I receive a pension here. We also advise the Filipinos here: "Save for your future, even just seguro de decesos. That way, you will not cause a problem for those family members that you leave behind." I have that. My seguro de vida was not approved because they said I am overaged. But at least I have the seguro de decesos. There have been many Filipinos in the past who died and did not have that security. They had to ask for contributions from the other Filipinos. That's why it's important to have that, to make sure you have that security for the future.*

That they invest in insurance in Spain is one proof that the Filipinas have already decided that they will live out their days in their new home. As Aida says:

*I have a seguro de deceso that I have been paying off for a few years now. Whatever happens to me, my daughter will not have to worry. She will not have to find money to pay for the funeral home or anything... But I don't know, I haven't decided yet if I want to be cremated and my ashes sent back home in an urn or... where will I end up? I don't want to think about that yet. Maybe when the time comes, I will. At the moment, I don't know. But that security, that gives me tranquility. At least I will not add to my daughter's problems when the time comes. She has enough problems to deal with. She has three children. When my best friend died a few years ago, her husband told me that she did not have seguro de deceso. He advised me: "Aida, have you thought about what will happen to you after you die? You must get that security, because after my experience when my wife died... It was so..." Even before my cancer was detected, he advised me to get it, because only those who are 61 years old and below can avail of it.*

Even in their decision to insure their future, i.e., death, they feel *pag-aaruga* for their family that they will leave behind. Their peace of mind lies in that upon their passing, they will not cause any problems for their loved ones beyond the grief upon their death.

The research participants struggled with their sense of be/longing after migration. But as time passed and emotional bonds grew in Spain and weakened with the Philippines, they established their sense of home and sense of identity. Now, they feel that they belong in Spain and feel familiarity and comfort of living with their loved ones.

*I don't think about going back to the Philippines anymore. There's nothing for me to go back to... If my parents were still alive, maybe... My siblings have died, slowly, one by one. There are now only four of us left. I'm the only one here. That's why, I told Gemma, we should just enjoy ourselves. Cook and have meals with our friends and family... If we save up money, what will happen? Who are we supposed to leave the inheritance with? Never mind, let's not make people fight over money. Let's just enjoy ourselves. Maybe we can travel around Europe... (Doris)*

*After I gave birth to my daughter and after my parents passed away, I rarely go home. When my parents were still alive, I would strive to save, even just enough to buy airplane tickets, to go home and visit them. I only have two brothers there. Here, I have my daughter and my grandchildren—why would I go back? I wouldn't bring them to live in the Philippines. I like my life now that I have retired. I am not stressed. I want to enjoy my life. I don't want to constantly be checking the clock. I don't want to be stressed. I want to be free! Just stay here, no obligation. I do what I want when I want. Sometimes, I take care of my grandchildren. They are well-behaved in general. That is a great blessing...that is very rewarding. I have good friends here, if ever I need help, they will come to my aide. It doesn't matter if you have a lot of money, you can't talk to your money. Good friends are even better than family. I have spent more than 40 years of my lifetime here. I have adapted to the way of life here. I have my friends here, that I have had for many years. I have many true friends here. My siblings in the Philippines have their own families. I will just go back there to visit them. But I am more concerned and focused on my daughter and my grandchildren. (Aida)*

*We don't think of going back to the Philippines anymore. Coming here has...widened our horizons. If we compare living in the Philippines and living here... It's really different. Living in the Philippines, it's like you're at a standstill. You just smile whatever comes to you. In the face of corruption, poverty, everything—you just accept it. Just smile. That's something about Filipinos that makes me wonder: Life is like that and they take it with a smile! My children have their own lives now. My home is with Boy. My husband being here with me helped me a lot. We pray together, we support each other. (Baby)*

*For them [Spanish], your family consists of your parents or your spouse. Siblings are separate. When you get married, that will be your family. Carlos, his children—they are my family now. (Celia)*

*After all the time that has passed, I consider Spain, Valencia, my home. I am not going back to live in the Philippines. To retire? No. What for? Para que? This is where I will die. Why? The friends I made back in the Philippines, I don't know whether they are even still alive! Or maybe they have moved to other countries, too. Whenever I am in the Philippines, I stay put in my sister's house. Here, I have freedom to move around. I can go to my friends' houses, sit with them to have tea, chat with them. We live in close proximity to each other. There [in the Philippines], where will I go? Who will I talk to? No one. I will not go home to the Philippines. I will just visit. Who would I go home for? Nobody. My siblings, they all have their own lives. I cannot just stay in one house there all day. I would not even know my neighbours. I would have no one to visit. Here, if I get bored, if I'm not doing anything, I just go to one of my Filipina friends, [and I am welcomed]. We'll eat, share stories... (Edna)*

*My parents have both passed away. I used to think about saving money and retiring in the Philippines. But you know what? I have spent more time here than in the Philippines! I hardly know anything about it anymore. My adopted daughter has been inviting me to visit her in London, but I cannot take time away from my work. Maybe after I retire, I can do that... (Fe)*

From being unfamiliar, the translocal emotional spaces that they occupy have become familiar. In the emotional geographies between and among friends and family in Spain, they have found a sense of belonging. In contrast, the Philippines is now less familiar and away from them. They now feel at-home in Spain.

## Conclusions

This study has taken up Mohanty's (1988) challenge to study they who are marginalised on many categories: as ageing, migrant, Third World women. The Filipinas in Valencia who participated in this study all have unique emotional experiences. At their present lifestage, they have experienced the trajectory of be/longing as a result of migration. This study considers and appreciates women's subaltern emotional lives as viable source of knowledge (Medina Domenech, 2013) by studying the narratives of the research participants. Their lives, then, are included in academic conversation to make sense of the emotional knowledge—instead of leaving emotions on the side—for the humanities and social sciences. Thus, heeding the research participants desire: "That more people will understand us."

Through the narratives of the migrants, their emotions are revealed (McKay, 2007). By examining and analysing their emotions, their negotiations of self-identity are mapped out. In this study, they are the emotions of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, the former directed toward God and their parents, and the latter, towards siblings, children, and in some cases, extended kin.

As a result of change of place, after feeling the determination to stay, the migrants change the location of belongingness by slowly identifying with what is physically proximate (Christou, 2011). Initially, they feel homesick. As Baby describes: "When we came here, instead of carrying an attache case, I was carrying around a pail with a mop!... In the Philippines, I had maids. Suddenly, I was the maid in a foreign country!" But after the alienation and demoralisation, they start to negotiate self-identity. They found in their estrangement a common emotion on which to build their affiliations in Spain. One of the ways they did this by finding a Catholic church—an emotional site where they found solace in something familiar. Here, too, they were sure to find other Filipinos. As Baby says: "Definitely, Filipinos are Catholics. In the church, you will notice if there are any Filipinos who attend Mass." Aida, Doris, Edna, and Fe, through their different levels of participation in the church found friendships with fellow Filipinos. Even the consular officer, when Celia visited the Philippine consulate, directed her to the Catholic church in order to find a community of Filipinos. In and through the church, they found a "community of strangers" (Ahmed, 1999) through whom they felt familiarity and comfort (Martsin & Mahmoud, 2012). As Edna says: [The Filipinas] would come to my aunt's house to fetch me and we would go out together. I started attending Mass with them, and then, I joined them as part of the choir at the church... After Mass, we go to someone's house to have lunch together... Here, if I get bored, if I'm not doing anything, I just go to one of my Filipina friends, [and I am welcomed]. We'll eat, share stories."

The interviews, particularly with Aida, Baby, and Celia, confirm what Nakonz and Shik (2009) say about the spiritual dimension of church attendance: their faith is strengthened by their belief in a divine being, resulting in spiritual support to solve problems that they encounter in everyday life. Doris,

Edna, and Fe consider church attendance as their obligation—a manifestation of their *utang na loob* toward God. The church is also where the Filipinas were initiated into the community (as this researcher was as well), and through which they have forged friendships after laughter and tears expressed while sharing meals after attending Sunday Mass (Nakoncz & Shik, 2009). The church is an emotional site where the Filipinas are able to express their religious culture and build a community. As they begin to feel at-home in the host country, they become bound to people with whom they find they have things in common, like culture, language, and religious belief. They find a place to fulfill the spiritual and the social dimensions of be/longing through their religious culture by attending Mass at the church. Aida and Doris say that they would roam around, with other Filipinas, and the church would be their constant, fixed, tangible emotional space on Sundays, their days off. Nakoncz and Shik (2009) found that, among Filipinas in Hong Kong, "organized religious structures constitute the dominant social network of their members" (p. 33).

As they all finished some level of tertiary education, all of the Filipinas encountered what Parreñas (2015) calls "contradictory class mobility" upon their arrival in Spain. Save for Aida and Baby, all of them remained in domestic work because they felt that the economic benefits in the private sphere in Spain still offered better opportunities than if they worked in the public sphere in the Philippines. Aida and Baby experienced deskilling and, despite the time, effort, and cost necessary, they were motivated to enter the public sphere in Spain as part of their negotiation of self-identity.

The Filipina migrants employ emotional strategies in their journey to be/longing. In the case of Aida and Celia, they coped by thinking of a definite time frame for their initial stay: only two years. In the case of Baby, she recuperated her sense of self-identity by going back to school to complete a Masters degree that granted her access to professional employment in Spain. And Aida was able to regain her sense of identity after she received documentation that finally allowed her to practice her profession in Spain. In the cases of Aida and Baby, certificates signed by the king of Spain, legitimized their entry into the public sphere.

In transnational caregiving Baldassar et al.'s (2007), communication through different channels as well as emotional remittances, and visits to attain co-presence, are important factors. The research participants frequently communicated by post and later, by phone, with their family members in the Philippines, specifically, their mothers and, in the case of Doris and Baby, their children. Katigbak's (2015) concept of emotional remittance is seen in their sending of cash remittances as well as other gifts, and care and support. The emotional geographies can be traced through these emotional remittances that bear the migrants' *utang na loob* and/or *pag-aaruga*, whichever is applicable. However, the narratives also confirm what Baldassar et al (2007) found, that visits play a vital role in transnational caregiving. The migrants' emotions of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* motivated the Filipinas to save money to go

back to the Philippines to take care of their mothers when they were ill (in the cases of Aida, Fe), to attend their funerals when their mothers passed away (in the cases of Doris and Edna)—and also why they felt anguish over not being able to attend their mothers' funerals due to Spanish border policy constraints (in the cases of Aida and Celia). In the case of Baby, her sense of *pag-aaruga* toward her son left her guilty for not being able to attend his university graduation ceremony and motivated her, in turn, to strive to attend his wedding.

In nurturing translocal emotions, as they are far from home and in a foreign land, and having forged a community of (e)strangers, the migrants feel *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* toward the Filipinas with whom they have shared years of various emotional experiences. So much so that Aida and Edna, in particular, consider them family, or even better than family. Doris, having found a partner in Gemma—and considering her son has started his own family—feels *pag-aaruga* toward Gemma. Baby, whose children are grown, working, and all but one have started their own families, feels *pag-aaruga* toward Boy, and they depend on each other. Celia, who now considers Carlos, and to a certain degree, her stepchildren, as her family, also feels *pag-aaruga* toward them. Fe, whose adopted daughter now has a family of her own in England, feels *pag-aaruga* toward her life partner. All of them, whose emotional geographies can be traced translocally, no longer consider going back to the Philippines. They now feel a sense of belonging and instead, look forward to spending the rest of their lives, and even have prepared for their deaths, in Spain.

In their project of be/longing, migrants' emotions of *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* shape self-identity as they reference to people (and therefore, places where those people are) to whom they are bound: during the early stages of migration, their emotional geographies trace back to the homeland, but with the passage of time, as they negotiate self-identity and build social networks in the host society, their emotional geographies grow from transnational to translocal. Their *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* do not diminish over time, but the intensity shifts as they finally feel that they belong to the host society, their new home. Meanwhile, the religious culture of *utang na loob* (grateful loyalty) towards God, expressed in different ways, persists.

In addition, through experiences in the host country, they are able to look back and feel ambivalent toward their homeland (Martsin & Mahmoud, 2012). They then build a new home in the host society. The current socio-economic situation in the Philippines, that the migrants are now able to contrast with the social protection provided in Spain, does not make it an attractive option to go back. As I was finishing this paper, a news item was released about how Philippine health agencies have withdrawn support for a mental health support hotline system that has been in place since 2016, putting in peril its continued operation. The reason given was that, in compliance with the Mental Health Law of 2018, the agencies are starting a new mental health crisis hotline. The more established hotline, initiated by a non-



profit foundation, now needs to seek funding from private corporations in order to continue to function (Losa, 2019). This once again raises questions about whether policies recently passed addressing social protection will result in positive changes on the ground. Yet, as Miralao (1997) argues, the challenges to progress in Philippine society are not the strong loyalty and attachment to family or kin nor religiosity but in the abuse of such values. She further reiterates that family, religion, and their associated traditional values serve societal functions because the Philippine government does not (pp. 209-211). So, despite concern over socio-cultural changes, Filipino emotional culture has proven resilient through centuries of colonisation, imperialism, neoliberalism... Surely, deeply-embedded values like *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga* will continue to drive positive change in society, however slow it may be.

## Epilogue

It was 16 June 2019 and I was attending the Filipino community in Valencia's celebration of Philippine Independence. It began with a Mass concelebrated by three Filipino priests, then people in attendance proceeded to the social hall where there were two very long tables overflowing with containers of food. There were more than 200 persons crowded in the hall, spilling out to the corridor. There was a cacophony of voices: laughter and chatting. Soon, the programme began. The theme was: “*Bayan...Magkaisa!*” (Nation...Unite!) Throughout the three hours, there were presentations by representatives from different organisations, different religious sects, different Philippine regions, and even individuals who lived outside Valencia. There was a constant buzz as people chatted during the programme, but when a group onstage started to sing “*Ako ay Pilipino*” (I am a Filipino), silence fell upon the hall, then some people started to sing along with much fervor. There was a great heaviness of longing still for the homeland, of the love for people and places there, of missing home.

There were people on their mobile phones who were sharing highlights of the celebration with their loved ones in the Philippines. There were greetings of “How are you?” in different Philippine languages and dialects. New acquaintances were made, old ones rekindled, friendships being enjoyed among people who shared a common language and culture, of the emotions like *utang na loob* and *pag-aaruga*, and sharing different viewpoints. The theme was in reference not only to a very divided Philippine society back home but to one in Valencia as well. In those precious four and a half hours, however, they were united as one community enjoying food and company, in love for country.

## References

- Abe-Kim, J., Gong, F., & Takeuchi, D. (2004). Religiosity, spirituality, and help-seeking among Filipino Americans: Religious clergy or mental health professionals? *Journal of Community Psychology*, 32(6), 675-689.
- Agcaoili, L. (2019, February 15). Remittances from overseas Filipinos hit all-time high in 2018. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from <https://www.philstar.com/business/2019/02/16/1893989/remittances-overseas-filipinos-hit-all-time-high-2018>
- Ahmed, S. (1999). Home and away. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2(3), 329-347.
- Asian Development Bank. (2019). *Philippines: By the numbers*. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from <https://data.adb.org/dashboard/philippines-numbers>
- Associated Press. (1995, September 17). World news briefs; Emirates sentences maid to death in retrial. *The New York Times*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/09/17/world/world-news-briefs-emirates-sentences-maid-to-death-in-retrial.html>
- Associated Press. (2018, March 03). Slain Filipina in freezer shows risks to overseas workers. *News Corp Australia*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.news.com.au/finance/economy/world-economy/slain-filipina-in-freezer-shows-risks-to-overseas-workers/news-story/df9f3e1e04f1b61e9ecba883bd80360b>
- Baldassar, L. (2007). Transnational families and aged care: The mobility of care and the migrancy of ageing. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(2), 275-297.
- Baldassar, L. (2008). Missing kin and longing to be together: Emotions and the construction of co-presence in transnational relationships. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29(3), 247-266.
- Baldassar, L., Baldock, C. V., & Wilding, R. (2007). *Families caring across borders: Migration, ageing, and transnational caregiving*. England: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. *Overseas Filipinos' remittances* [HTML]. Retrieved June 5, 2019, from <http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/keystat/ofw.htm>
- Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. *Overseas Filipinos' cash remittances* [HTML]. Retrieved June 5, 2019, from <http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/keystat/ofw2.htm>
- Boccagni, P., & Baldassar, L. (2015). Emotions on the move: Mapping the emergent field of emotion and migration. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 16, 73-80.
- Boellstorff, T., & Lindquist, J. (2004). Bodies of emotion: Rethinking culture and emotion through Southeast Asia. *Ethnos*, 69(4), 437-444.
- Bondi, L., Davidson, J., & Smith, M. (2007). Geography's 'emotional turn'. In J. Davidson, L. Bondi & M. Smith (Eds.), *Emotional geographies* (pp. 1-16). England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Catholic News Agency. (2019, May 29). Caritas head applauds Philippines new anti-poverty measure. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/caritas-head-applauds-philippines-new-anti-poverty-measure-12185>
- Christou, A. (2011). Narrating lives in (e)motion: Embodiment, belongingness and displacement in diasporic spaces of home and return. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 4(4), 249-257.
- Commission on Filipinos Overseas. *Stock estimate of overseas Filipinos as of Dec. 2013* [Excel Spreadsheet]. CFO. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from [https://cfo.gov.ph/images/statistics/stock\\_estimate/2013-Stock-Estimate.xlsx](https://cfo.gov.ph/images/statistics/stock_estimate/2013-Stock-Estimate.xlsx)
- Commission on Filipinos Overseas. *Number of registered Filipino rmigrants by major country of destination 1981-2017* [Excel Spreadsheet]. CFO. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.cfo.gov.ph/images/statistics/Emigrant/Emigrant-1981-2017-MajorCountry.xlsx>
- Countryeconomy.com. (2019, April 09). Philippines GDP - Gross domestic product 2018. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from <https://countryeconomy.com/gdp/philippines>

- Dancel, F. (2005). Utang na loob [debt of goodwill]: A philosophical analysis. In R. M. Gripaldo (Ed.), *Filipino cultural traits: Claro R. Ceniza lectures* (Vol. 4, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change) (pp. 109-128). Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.
- Elemia, C. (2018, June 21). Duterte signs Philippine mental health law. *Rappler*. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/205425-duterte-signs-mental-health-law-services-philippines>
- Erel, U. (2016). *Migrant women transforming citizenship: Life stories from Britain and Germany*. London: Routledge.
- Gomez, J. (2010, September 16). Filipina who left newborn on plane says she was raped. *The Star*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from [https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2010/09/16/filipina\\_who\\_left\\_newborn\\_on\\_plane\\_says\\_she\\_was\\_raped.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2010/09/16/filipina_who_left_newborn_on_plane_says_she_was_raped.html)
- Gonzalez, E. T., & Manasan, R. G. (2002). Social protection in the Philippines. In E. Adam, M. von Hauff & M. John (Eds.), *Social Protection in Southeast & East Asia* (pp. 171-229). Singapore: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Gripaldo, R. M. (2005). Introduction. In R. M. Gripaldo (Ed.), *Filipino cultural traits: Claro R. Ceniza lectures* (Vol. 4, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change) (pp. 1-6). Washington, D. C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.
- Gutierrez, J. (2019, April 02). Philippine supreme court orders release of documents in Duterte's drug war. *The New York Times*. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/02/world/asia/philippines-duterte-drug-war.html>
- Human Rights Watch. (2019). *World Report 2019* (pp. 468-473, Rep.). USA: Human Rights Watch. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world\\_report\\_download/hrw\\_world\\_report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/hrw_world_report_2019.pdf)

- Ibbetson, R. (2019, April 27). How many more has he killed? Cyprus 'serial killer's six-year-old victim' is pictured. *The Daily Mail*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6966233/Pictured-army-uniform-Cypruss-serial-killer-confessed-murdering-seven.html>
- Inglehart, R., Haerper, C., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano, J., . . . Puranen, B. (2014). *World values survey: Round six-country-pooled* [Data file]. Retrieved June 5, 2019, from <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>
- Katigbak, E. O. (2015). Moralizing emotional remittances: Transnational familyhood and translocal moral economy in the Philippines 'Little Italy'. *Global Networks*, 15(4), 519-535.
- Kuwait death sentences for murder of Filipina maid. (2018, April 01). *BBC Online*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43612778>
- Leavitt, J. (1996). Meaning and feeling in the anthropology of emotions. *American Ethnologist*, 23(3), 514-539.
- Losa, R. (2019, June 27). The government has stopped supporting our local mental health hotline. *Scout Magazine*. Retrieved June 27, 2019, from <https://www.scoutmag.ph/featured/doh-mental-health-hotline-roginl-20190627>
- Lulle, A., & King, R. (2016). *Ageing, gender, and labour migration*. New York: Palgrave Pivot.
- Lutz, C. A., & Abu-Lughod, L. (2008). Introduction: Emotion, discourse, and the politics of everyday life. In C. A. Lutz & L. Abu-Lughod (Eds.), *Language and the politics of emotion*. Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press and Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
- Manuat, N. G. (2005). Contextualizing the Filipino values of *pagkalinga* [taking someone under one's care], *pag-aaruga* [taking care of], *pakialam* [meddling/caring], and the feminist ethics of care. In R. M. Gripaldo (Ed.), *Filipino cultural traits: Claro R. Ceniza lectures* (Vol. 4, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change) (pp. 129-144). Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

- Martsin, M., & Mahmoud, H. W. (2012). Never "at-Home"?: Migrants between societies. In J. Valsiner (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of culture and psychology* (pp. 730-746). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mckay, D. (2007). 'Sending dollars shows feeling' – Emotions and economies in Filipino migration. *Mobilities*, 2(2), 175-194.
- Medina Doménech, R. (2013). 'Who were the experts?' The Science of love vs. women's knowledge of love during the Spanish dictatorship. *Science as Culture*, 23(2), 177-200.
- Milton, K. (2005). Emotion (or life, the universe, everything). *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 16(2), 198-211.
- Miralao, V. A. (1997). The family, traditional values and the sociocultural transformation of Philippine society. *Philippine Sociological Review* 45(1), 189-215.
- Ministerio de Trabajo, Migraciones y Seguridad Social & Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración. (2019). Extranjeros residentes en España: Principales resultados, anexo de tablas [Excel Worksheets]. In *Portal de Inmigración. Ministerio de Trabajo, Migraciones y Seguridad Social & Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración*. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from [http://extranjeros.mitramiss.gob.es/es/Estadisticas/operaciones/con-certificado/201812/Residentes\\_Tablas\\_PR\\_31122018.xlsx](http://extranjeros.mitramiss.gob.es/es/Estadisticas/operaciones/con-certificado/201812/Residentes_Tablas_PR_31122018.xlsx)
- Mohanty, C. T. (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist Review*, 30(1), 61-88.
- Molina, C. (1992). Filipino migrants in Spain. *Philippine Studies*, 40(1), 99-110.
- Montayre, J., Neville, S., & Holroyd, E. (2017). Moving backwards, moving forward: The experiences of older Filipino migrants adjusting to life in New Zealand. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 12(1), 1-8.

- Murphy, N. (2019, May 15). Maid, 26, tied to tree as punishment for leaving furniture outside in the sun. *The Mirror*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/maid-26-tied-tree-punishment-15977378>
- Nakonz, J., & Shik, A. W. (2009). And all your problems are gone: Religious coping strategies among Philippine migrant workers in Hong Kong. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 12*(1), 25-38.
- Nelz, J. (2018, June 20). Pinay OFW allegedly suffering from depression climbs overhead bridge in Singapore. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://philnews.ph/2018/06/20/pinay-ofw-allegedly-suffering-depression-climbs-overhead-bridge-singapore/>
- Palmberger, M. (2016). Social ties and embeddedness in old age: Older Turkish labour migrants in Vienna. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 43*(2), 235-249.
- Parreñas, R. S. (2001). Mothering from a distance: Emotions, gender, and intergenerational relations in Filipino transnational families. *Feminist Studies, 27*(2), 361-390.
- Parreñas, R. S. (2005). The Gender paradox in the transnational families of Filipino migrant women. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, 14*(3), 243-268.
- Parreñas, R. S. (2015). *Servants of globalization*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Pe-Pua, R. (2003). Wife, mother, and maid: The triple role of Filipino domestic workers in Spain and Italy. In N. Piper & M. Roces (Eds.), *Wife or worker?: Asian women and migration* (pp. 157-180). Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Pe-Pua, R. (2006). From decolonizing psychology to the development of a cross-indigenous perspective in methodology. In U. Kim, K. S. Yang & K. K. Hwang (Eds.), *Indigenous and cultural psychology: Understanding people in context* (pp. 109-137). Boston, MA: Springer.
- Pe-Pua, R. (2015). Indigenous psychology. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (2nd ed., Vol. 11) (pp. 788-794). Oxford: Elsevier.



- Pe-Pua, R., & Protacio-Marcelino, E. A. (2000). Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino psychology): A legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 3(1), 49-71.
- Perez, J. B. (2019, April 30). *Total number of OFWs estimated at 2.3 million (Results from the 2018 survey on overseas Filipinos)* [Press release]. *Philippine Statistics Authority*. Retrieved June 5, 2019, from <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/labor-and-employment/survey-overseas-filipinos>
- Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. *Deployed Overseas Filipino Workers by country/destination* [PDF]. Retrieved June 5, 2019, from <http://www.poea.gov.ph/ofwstat/compendium/2015-2016%20OES%202.pdf>
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). Validity issues in narrative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(4), 471-486.
- Ramesh, M. (2014). Social Protection in Indonesia and the Philippines: Work in Progress. *Southeast Asian Economies*, 31(1), 40-56.
- Rappler. (2016, May 18). MAP: #PHVote 2016 Philippine election results. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from <https://ph.rappler.com/elections/2016/results/map>
- Rappler.com. (2016, December 30). MMFF 2016: 'Sunday Beauty Queen' wins best picture. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from <https://www.rappler.com/entertainment/news/156865-mmff-2016-sunday-beauty-queen-wins-best-picture>
- Reyes, J. (2015). Loob and kapwa: An introduction to a Filipino virtue ethics. *Asian Philosophy*, 25(2), 148-171.
- San Juan Jr., E. (2006). Toward a decolonizing indigenous psychology in the Philippines: Introducing sikolohiyang Pilipino. *Journal for Cultural Research*, 10(1), 47-67.
- Semyonov, M., & Gorodzeisky, A. (2005). Labor migration, remittances and household income: A comparison between Filipino and Filipina overseas workers. *International Migration Review*, 39(1), 45-68.

- Skrbiš, Z. (2008). Transnational families: Theorising migration, emotions and belonging. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29(3), 231-246.
- Smith, D. E. (1974). Women's perspective as a radical critique of sociology. *Sociological Inquiry*, 44(1), 7-13.
- Straiton, M. L., Ledesma, H. M., & Donnelly, T. T. (2017). A qualitative study of Filipina immigrants' stress, distress and coping: The impact of their multiple, transnational roles as women. *BMC Women's Health*, 17(72), 1-11.
- Svašek, M. (2007). Moving corpses: Emotions and subject-object ambiguity. In H. Wuff (Ed.), *The emotions: A cultural reader* (pp. 229-248). Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Svašek, M. (2008). Who cares? Families and feelings in movement. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29(3), 213-230.
- Svašek, M. (2010). On the move: Emotions and human mobility. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(6), 865-880.
- Takumi, R. (2018, January 12). Pinays rescued from sex trafficking in Sabah suffer worse conditions in prison. *GMA News Online*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/pinoyabroad/news/639379/pinays-rescued-from-sex-trafficking-in-sabah-suffer-worse-conditions-in-prison/story/>
- Thien, D. (2004). *Intimate distances: Geographies of Gender and Emotion in Shetland* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh.
- Thien, D. (2005). After or beyond feeling? A consideration of affect and emotion in geography. *Area*, 37(4), 450-454.
- Tyner, J. A. (2004). *Made in the Philippines*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Van Bortel, T., Martin, S., Anjara, S., & Nellums, L. B. (2019). Perceived stressors and coping mechanisms of female migrant domestic workers in Singapore. *Plos One*, 14(3), 1-15.

Villarama, B. (Director). (2016). *Sunday beauty queen* [Motion picture]. The Philippines: TBA Studios.

Viteri, M. (2014). "I" in fieldwork. In M. A. Viteri. *Desbordes: Translating racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender identities across the Americas* (Genders in the Global South) (pp. 87-113). New York, NY: State University of New York Press.

Weiler, G. A. & World Health Organization. (2019, April 7). *Universal health care: The best investment the Philippines will make* [Press release]. Retrieved June 8, 2019, from <http://who.int/philippines/news/commentaries/detail/universal-health-care-the-best-investment-the-philippines-will-make>

Yu, S. (2018, March 29). 'I sold my body in a Hong Kong bar'. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/society/article/2071873/i-was-forced-sell-my-body-hong-kong-bar-filipinos-experience>

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(3), 197-214.

## Appendices

### Appendix A. Letter to potential participants and consent form

3 March 2019

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Mabuhay!

I am Mari-An Santos from Manila. I am currently finishing research for my thesis to complete a Masters degree in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Granada.

My project will deal with the variety of problems and emotions that Filipinas in Spain experience—from the time prior to leaving the Philippines up to the present, in their daily lives. In addition, how they cope with these experiences.

As you are a Filipina living in Valencia, I would like to conduct an interview with you for this study. It will be a conversation between us about your life, at your most convenient time. I will be recording our conversations and will take some notes as well. I do not want to disturb your schedule of priorities and responsibilities, so I will schedule the conversation according to your availability.

If you do not wish for your real name to be used in the thesis, please let me know. All that you will share with me will be used for the purposes of the study and other related studies that I will endeavour. I will not reveal them with anyone else.

If you should change your mind and decide that you no longer wish to participate in this research, please inform me, and I will not use any of the information that you have provided.

If you wish, I can show you the information that I will use for the project prior to inclusion in my thesis. In addition, I can give you a copy of the completed thesis after I submit it to the university.

If you would like to participate in this study, please read the attached consent form. If you agree with all the details on it, please sign it and give it back to me.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Mari-An C. Santos

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to participate in this study to be undertaken by Mari-An C. Santos, and I understand that the purpose of the research is to find out the different problems encountered by Filipina migrant workers before and during their migration to Spain and what activities they do to deal with these problems.

I understand that:

1. The aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me;
2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in the research study;
3. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party i.e. that I will remain anonymous;
4. If I consider information to be sensitive I may decline to share it, or withdraw consent after having shared;
5. The data collected and the analysed results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals;
6. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Participant's Signature:

Date:

The contact details of the researcher are: [mcsantos.ph@gmail.com](mailto:mcsantos.ph@gmail.com)

## Appendix B. Glossary of Filipino terms

bagong bayani	modern-day hero
balikbayan	a Filipinx who returns to the Philippines, either for a visit or for good
balikbayan boxes	large cargo boxes filled with different gifts that migrants send to their family by ship
bayanihan	working as a community
diwa	psyche
Filipina	female from the Philippines
Filipino	male from the Philippines
ginabayang talakayan	group discussion wherein the topic and direction are determined by the researcher in consultation with the group members
hindi-ibang-tao	one-of-us/not-other
hiya	shame
ibang-tao	outsider/other
isip	information and understanding
kalooban	emotions
kaluluwa	soul; related to conscience
kamalayan	experienced knowledge
kapwa	shared identity; together with the person
lola	grandmother
loob	relational will
nakikiugaling pagmamasid	adoption of ways (in terms of mindset and behavior) of the group that one is observing for a short period
OFW	"overseas Filipino worker", migrant worker from the Philippines
pag-aaruga	care for the young or sick
pagdalaw-dalaw	frequent and regular visits
pagpapalagayang-loob	building rapport or mutual trust
pagtatanong-tanong	casual interviewing
pakikipagkapwa	treating the other as a fellow human being
pakikipagkuwentuhan	casual story-telling
pakikiramdam	shared inner perception, emotional a priori
panunuluyan	temporarily residing in the research setting as a guest
Sikolohiyang Pilipino	Filipino psychology
tita	aunt
ulirat	awareness of one's surroundings
utang na loob	debt of gratitude; debt of goodwill toward another person grateful loyalty toward God

## Appendix C. Participants' profiles

*We just want to earn money, to help our family in the Philippines.*

- Aida, 72, is the eldest of 5 children. She was a school teacher before she came to Spain in 1977 to work as a domestic helper with a contract duration of two years. Her plan was to work to save enough money and then go on to the United States of America. She eventually transitioned from domestic worker to English teacher at a bilingual school in Valencia, from where she retired after 25 years. She has a daughter and three grandchildren.

*I'm a strong woman, an ambitious woman. My ambition was for a better life, greener pastures. I said: I have to get somewhere, not just stay in the countryside.*

- Baby, 59, is married to Boy, with whom she, along with her two youngest children, migrated to Spain in 2002. After a tour of Italy, they decided to stay and settle in Spain, despite not knowing anyone there. They left their eldest son in the Philippines. In the Philippines, she worked in the office of a private company; in Spain, she first worked as a live-in caregiver and domestic helper until she found a job as an English teacher—after she finished a Masters degree in Spain. She still works, although not full time.

*On my mother's last birthday, when she turned 81, we sent her some money so that she could have a big party to celebrate.*

- Celia, 53, was working as a school teacher when she met and eventually married Carlos, who is from Valencia, in 2007. She left the Philippines two years short of receiving retirement benefits from the Philippine public school system. In Valencia, Celia met her stepchildren, brothers and sisters-in-law, and people of the pueblo where they lived. She and Carlos traveled extensively around Spain and the rest of Europe. She does not have children.

*I have a son. He is the reason why I left the Philippines. I left him in my mother's care when he was only 8 months old.*

- Doris, 69, is the youngest of 11 children. She came to Spain to find work as a domestic helper in 1980. She has some relatives who also work in Spain. She has worked as a domestic helper as well as a cook at a restaurant. She stopped working four years short of retirement age because she felt exhausted. She has undergone five medical procedures in Spain. She has been living with Gemma for more than 20 years and her son, now married, lives with his wife in Valencia, too.

*I was remiss. I did not send anything regularly to my family in the Philippines. Only when it occurred to me. I only focused on myself.*

- Edna, 73, is the fifth of 10 children. She was working as an accounting clerk at a private hospital before coming to Spain to accompany her young cousins whose father is Spanish. She has worked as a domestic helper in Spain as well as in London. For one family, she worked for almost 20 years, caring for the children. They are still in close contact to this day. Even though she has retired, she sometimes takes care of their grandmother or of her former ward's young son. She is single.

*I wanted to go on an adventure...But also, I wanted to help my family.*

- Fe, 62, is the fifth among eight children. She left the Philippines right before she graduated from college in 1982 because she had found an employer in Spain. She has a few relatives who also work in Spain. She was forced to retire early from a job she held for almost 20 years as a domestic helper because she developed a herniated disc on her spine. She currently works part-time as a caregiver for an elderly Spanish woman on the weekends. She has one adopted daughter.



**Appendix D. Table of participant data**

<b>PSEUDONYM</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP STATUS</b>	<b>CHILDREN</b>	<b>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</b>	<b>RETIRED</b>
Aida	72	No	Yes	Bachelor's degree	Yes
Baby	59	Yes	Yes	Master's degree	No
Celia	53	Yes	No	Bachelor's degree	Yes
Doris	69	Yes	Yes	Bachelor's degree	Yes
Edna	73	No	No	Bachelor's degree	Yes
Fe	62	Yes	Yes	Bachelor's degree	No