

ECCENTRIC NETWORKS: PATTERNS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION,  
ORGANIZATIONAL PARTICIPATION, AND MASS MEDIA USE AMONG OVERSEAS  
FILIPINO WORKERS

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This dissertation presents a framework on the transnational communication and media use of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) using data from a survey of 320 OFWs in 15 countries and sea-based operations. The framework depicts the eccentric nature of OFW networks across communication levels, demographic attributes, and territories.

Interpersonal communication was highly complex, with constant mediated and non-mediated correspondence inside and outside the host country. Almost as expansive were mass media networks, which often became a direct link with the homeland and sometimes served as a surrogate venue for interacting with the host country. Despite the global reach of groups for OFWs, as explained by 16 organizational informants, networks of institutional participation were the least complex. Few of the respondents joined organizations, and those who did were not active members.

Across demographic groupings, men and higher-income professionals— with their regular connection to the Philippines, culturally diverse workplaces, greater organizational membership and heavy media consumption— had more expansive transnational networks compared to their counterparts. Regardless of gender and occupational profiles, younger respondents were more likely to harness newer media, indicating the eventual shrinking of the digital divide in the general sample. Parent-respondents were very positive about the role of media in their family, but their media

use patterns were similar to respondents without children, largely because of their smaller disposable income.

Across territories, the home country is still a pivotal body. The Philippines remains central in the discourse of OFWs, especially with the entry of Philippine media companies in their host countries. Within the host country itself, women, who supposedly labored invisibly in private workspaces, were more publicly social in parks, malls, and churches during weekends compared to men. Indeed, the extensive media use of men and their lack of friendly relations in the host country, suggested they could be living in expatriate bubbles that were tethered to the Philippines and existed quite invisibly from the host society.

The networks of the respondents were thus mainly transnational between the home and the host countries, except for those of higher-income professionals whose communication and media use patterns suggested an emergent globalism.

Key Words: Overseas Filipino Workers, OFW, migrant labor, transnational communication, Philippines, simultaneity, network, organizational participation, interpersonal communication, mass media, survey, textual analysis, interviews

Approved:

Drew McDaniel

Professor, School of Telecommunications

*When I was nine years old,  
Just before my father went to Saudi,  
He told me I was now in charge of our family,  
I said yes...*

*A year later,  
Upon his return,  
My sister jumped over the airport fence  
To welcome him back...*

-----

To the millions of OFWs,  
320 of whom responded to this research,  
And for whom these images are still a reality...

To the many organizations for OFWs,  
16 of which informed me in this study,  
And the help of which makes a big mark on that reality...

To my family,  
For sharing with me this transnational experience,  
And for remaining strong through that reality...

I humbly offer you this dissertation.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

APMRN	-	Asia-Pacific Migration Research Network
BSP	-	<i>Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas</i>
CFO	-	Commission on Filipinos Overseas
CIA	-	Central Intelligence Agency
CIIR	-	Catholic Institute for International Relations
CMA	-	Center for Migrant Advocacy
CRS	-	Communication Research Society
DFA	-	Department of Foreign Affairs
DOLE	-	Department of Labor and Employment
EDSA	-	Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
ILAS	-	International Labor Affairs Services
ILO	-	International Labor Organization
KDA	-	Key Demographic Attributes
LABAT	-	Labor Attaché
MFA	-	Migrant Forum in Asia
NCR	-	National Capital Region
NCT	-	New Communications Technologies
NSCB	-	National Statistical Coordination Board
NTC	-	National Telecommunications Commission
NGO	-	Non-governmental organization
OFWs	-	Overseas Filipino Workers
OPAP	-	Overseas Placement Association of the Philippines
OU	-	Ohio University
OWWA	-	Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration
PASEI	-	Philippine Association of Service Exporters, Inc.
PDOS	-	Pre-departure orientation seminar
PLDT	-	Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company
POEA	-	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
POLO	-	Philippine Overseas Labor Offices
PSOC	-	Philippine Standard Occupational Classification
SMC	-	Scalabrini Migration Center
TFC	-	The Filipino Channel
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-MOST	-	UNESCO-Management of Social Transformations
UWA	-	United Workers' Association

## Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

When my father started working in Saudi Arabia in 1983, he became part of what would become the diasporic community of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). For more than ten years, he worked under a contract that entitled him to an annual month-long vacation in the Philippines. Thus, during the 11 months he was away, we were in contact primarily through letters, pictures, and cassette tapes that could be sent only through the inefficient postal system or through his friends who came home. It would take at best a full month before he would get our reply to any of his questions.

Telephone calls then were rare. In the late 80s, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) opened phone booths in their offices for long-distance calls. However, international calls were expensive. Each three-minute call cost US\$13.40, which was even bigger than the daily income of US\$8.25.<sup>1</sup> Beyond the cost, calling my father meant having to queue during office hours. Because of the time difference, it meant we had only a two-hour timeframe to talk to him. We wanted a phone line of our own, but so did one million other households not served by PLDT. It took eight years before we got a landline phone in 1997. By then, we already had a mobile phone which we used to communicate with my father just before he returned home for good.

With the mobile phone, contact with my father suddenly became fast and affordable—which meant he could monitor us more closely. The deregulation of the telecommunications industry both in the Philippines and abroad helped lower the price of

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<sup>1</sup> I used the 1989 exchange rate of Philippine Peso (PhP) 22.40 for every US\$1 to arrive at the price of an international phone call (Wong, 2000). I computed the daily income by dividing the 1989 Philippine Gross National Income Per Capita, Purchasing Parity (GNI PC PPP) of US\$3,010 by 365 days (World Bank, 2004).

a mobile phone call from the Philippines to anywhere in the world to US\$0.50, or five percent of the daily income in 1996.<sup>2</sup>

My father thus worked abroad as our telecommunications industry went through major changes (see Paragas, 2003). Though we exchanged letters weekly and swapped numerous Polaroids, we did not have “the anytime, anywhere” contact that I now have through the mobile phone as I study in the United States. In a study I completed in 1999, just a couple of years after the introduction of the mobile phone, I met a mother working in Hong Kong who stopped writing letters altogether as she could simply and perpetually contact (Katz & Aakhus, 2003) her children via the mobile phone. Mobile phone cameras now enable not only the exchange of voice, but also of images and sounds. Indeed, telephone calls have become the dominant means of contact among members of transnational families, serving as a virtual umbilical cord.

The increasing number of communication technologies available to OFWs comes at a time of expanding issues, products, services, organizations, and institutions for them. For example, organizations of transnational migrants—contracted by Schiller (1999) into transmigrants—have emerged in Hong Kong, United Kingdom and Italy to espouse worker benefits and legal rights as well as to create diasporic communities. Likewise, the export of Philippine media products in foreign networks—from the Web editions of newspapers, the export of DVD movies, to the cable broadcast of “The Filipino Channel”—is bringing Philippine media content directly to Philippine expatriates.

While communication is an important linkage between OFWs abroad and their families in the Philippines, studies on OFWs have historically focused on economic linkage. Recent studies on OFWs have looked primarily into the social meanings of the

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<sup>2</sup> In 1996, GNI PC PPP was US\$3,905, which meant daily income was US\$10.70 (World Bank, 2004). In December 1995, the exchange rate was PhP26.21 = US\$1 (Wong, 2000).



increasing number of women in the migrant workforce and the political nuances of a widening base of transnational citizens. Communication has only received a cursory and anecdotal mention across these studies. Thus, while migrant work and telecommunications systems now represent dominant discourses in the Philippines, their different, yet interlinked, trajectories in the last three decades have not been the subject of extensive scholarship.

### The shared histories of telecommunications and migrant employment in the Philippines

As an introduction, I trace the confluent histories of telecommunications and migrant employment in the Philippines in the last one hundred years. I divide this discussion into three sections:

1. The beginnings of emigration and the establishment of telecommunications networks during the American colonial period (1901-1946);
2. The state sponsorship of migrant employment, and the pseudo-nationalization of telecommunications services during the post-Independence and Marcos era (1946-1986); and,
3. The deregulation of the telecommunications industry amid the changing demographic profile of migrant workers.

#### *Colonial roots, 1901-1946*

Migrant employment became a government project only in 1974 with the passage of the Philippine Labor Code, but its roots could be traced to a century ago. In 1908, the Hawaii Sugar Planters Association imported 141 Filipinos to work for them (Mateo, 2001; San Juan, 1994; CIIR, 1987). Between 1909 and 1934, over a hundred

thousand Filipinos, of whom 7.5 percent were women and 5.9 percent were children (Kitano & Daniels, 2001), went to work in sugar plantations in Hawaii and the U.S. mainland (Lasker, 1931 in Krinks, 2002).

The U.S. colonial rule (1901-1946) also saw a transplantation of U.S. systems over the Philippines—from public education and health to infrastructure, including telecommunications. In 1903, a trans-Pacific cable connection was installed between the Philippines and San Francisco in California. Two years later, the country's first telegraph-telephone company, the Philippine Islands Telephone and Telegraph, started its operations with 500 subscribers. In 1928, a fifty-year franchise was given to the Philippine Long Distance Telephone (PLDT) Company to develop the country's telecommunications backbone in an arrangement patterned after the AT&T's government-sanctioned monopoly model (Cabanda, 2002; Serafica, 1998).

#### *Post Independence, 1946-1986*

The end of World War II left a strong imprint on Philippine migration and communications. In 1946, the U.S. recognized Philippine independence. As a result, the movement of labor between the two countries became constrained since they were no longer part of a commonwealth (San Juan, 1994). Communications also became difficult from and across the Philippines. The war heavily damaged PLDT's telecommunications backbone and it took seven years before the number of telephones in service exceeded pre-war figures of 28,579 lines (Aquino, 1992).

Two decades later, migration and communications again had pivotal developments. In 1968, PLDT became Filipino-owned, as a local group headed by Ramon Cojuangco acquired shares from the General Telephone and Electronics Corporation of New York (PLDT, 2005). Also around this time, a new wave of Filipino

migrant workers—mainly medical and education professionals bound to the U.S.—emerged (Francisco, 1989; Gonzales, 1998), with most of them eventually becoming permanent residents or citizens of their host country.

The steady flight of doctors, nurses and teachers to the U.S. indicated to the government the viability of sending Filipino workers abroad, especially at a time when the government needed to find employment opportunities for its citizens. Since the Philippine economy had become a shambles with a devalued peso by the time President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972, a dollar income became particularly attractive for Filipinos (Kelley, 2000; Tyner, 2000; Goss & Lindquist, 1995). Exporting workers not only increased the inflow of foreign currency through the migrant workers' remittances to the Philippines, it also helped ease civil unrest due to increasing unemployment (Tyner, 2004).<sup>3</sup>

Beginning in 1974, the state managed migrant employment through three agencies: The National Seaman Board, the Overseas Employment Development Board, and the Bureau of Employment Services. In 1982, they were merged to form the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), an agency attached to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). POEA remains as the main overseer of migrant labor (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004; Sassen, 2003; Tyner, 2000).

The current movement of labor thus started as a Marcos initiative. It is differentiated from previous labor outflows by its transitory and expansive nature. Workers operate under fixed contracts (Tyner, 2004; Rafael, 1997; Tyner, 1997) that

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<sup>3</sup> The state-sponsorship of migrant employment has resulted in two diasporic Philippine communities. The first is composed of Filipinos who have emigrated abroad to become citizens in their destination countries. These Filipinos and their offsprings are collectively called as "balikbayan" or returnees. The second is composed of OFWs who shuttle between the Philippines and their countries of employment.

Since balikbayans live permanently abroad, and most of their immediate relations have emigrated with them, they are not included in the study.

range from six months to two years with little opportunity for permanent resettlement in the host country, a key goal in the first two waves of emigration (Francisco, 1989; also in Gonzales, 1998). Abella (1979) noted that the largest portions of permanent and temporary emigrants were professionals, and construction and production process workers respectively.

The first and dominant wave of migrant workers in the Marcos program comprised male workers in the construction industry of oil-rich but manpower-deficient countries in the Middle East (Krinks, 2002; Abella, 1979). From this diaspora evolved the first and lasting image of the OFW: A male blue-collar worker toiling in the desert and bringing home “Katas ng Saudi” [Juice of Saudi].<sup>4</sup> So strong was this impression that it obscured other emergent trends in deployment.

By the late 1970s, an increasing number of women began to leave for the Middle East and Europe to work as domestic workers (Abella, 1979). The public did not take notice of the deployment of women until reports of abuse against female domestic helpers surfaced in the Middle East. Apparently, the women were accused of subverting Islam culture by teaching their wards English and Christianity. In reaction, President Marcos instantly banned Filipinas from working abroad. However, he eventually relented following a protest by the Saudi government against the ban (Lycklama, 1989; Francisco, 1989). The temporary ban and the reports of abuse, however, did not dissuade Filipinas from seeking employment abroad. By 1984, they accounted for 60 percent of total land-based<sup>5</sup> migrant workers (Huang, Yeo, & Jackson, 2004), which shows the increased hiring of women since 1981 (Lycklama, 1989).

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<sup>4</sup> This is a popular way of referring to the profits of migrant work (San Juan, 1996)

<sup>5</sup> Almost all sea-based workers, except those who work for luxury cruises, are male. Their experience is peculiar because they have little contact with host governments as they spend most of their deployment at sea.

The year 1981 is particularly important for the employment of female OFWs as the Japanese government started issuing “entertainer visas” (Javate de Dios, 1989), which facilitated the entry of Filipinas as singers, dancers and musicians—jobs associated with sex work (Tyner, 2004). This trend actually resulted from widespread protests across East and Southeast Asia against Japanese male tourists who had become synonymous with sex tourism (Muroi & Sasaki, 1997). Since the Japanese were not welcome any more outside their country, their entertainers abroad went to Japan instead. Nevertheless, male OFWs remained the dominant group across all land- and sea-based workers with the continued demand of Middle East countries for laborers, transport operators and production workers. Further, industrialized nations required seamen for their burgeoning container transport industry. A 1984 survey showed that men accounted for over 70 percent of all OFWs (Francisco, 1989, p. 155).

However, by the time Marcos was ousted from office in 1986, gendered stereotypes of migrant worker occupations had taken root. On the one hand were male construction workers in the Middle East. On the other hand were women who worked as domestic workers in the Middle East and Europe (Anderson, 2001), and as entertainers in Japan (see the studies of Tyner).

Marcos’ dirigisme (Toye, 1993; Lal, 1985) was also evident in his efforts to harness telecommunications for nation building. Executive Order No. 546, which established the Ministry (now Department) of Transportation and Communication (MTC) in 1979, stated, “the accelerated pace of national development requires the effective, purposeful and unified implementation of public works projects and the effective control and supervision of transportation and communications facilities and services.” The slow development of the telecommunications industry, however, belied this rhetoric. Not only did the first National Telecommunications Development Plan (NTDP) take three years to

be drafted by the MTC, it was never implemented because of the political turbulence that preceded Marcos's ouster in 1986. Likewise, since PLDT, the key player in the telecommunications industry, was under the control of Marcos cronies, it was free from government intervention. It remained as a private firm despite the nationalization of many utility agencies during Marcos' time (Cabanda, 2002; Ure & Vivorakij, 2001; Serafica, 1998).

#### *Post-Marcos, 1987-present*

In 1987, a year after the People Power Revolution that ousted President Ferdinand Marcos, teledensity was only one phone unit for every 100 Filipinos. Further, there were over a million unfulfilled applications for landline phone services (Alampay, Heeks & Soliva, 2003; Chua, 1998; Serafica, 1998). A revised NTDP became operational in 1989, as part of the many reforms initiated by the administration of President Corazon Aquino. It was then that PLDT realized the government was keen on opening its industry to new players. PLDT immediately launched its "zero backlog program" to satisfy unmet phone applications (Smith, 1995). However, actual subscription to these lines has remained low because of user cost considerations and the country's weak economy following the 1997 Asian crisis (Table 1).

The Philippines' deregulation of its telecommunications industry was part of a trend that swept Asia (Cabanda, 2002; Fink, Mattoo & Rathindran, 2001; Singh, 2000; Yan & Pitt, 1999) and the world (Gutierrez & Berg, 2000). Similar to the experiences of Japan and Malaysia, policy reforms in the Philippines in the 1990s took its telecommunications industry from its traditional state-owned monopoly to privatization and competition (Cabanda, 2002). The deregulation of the industry and the resulting competition have resulted in increased access and lower costs for the public,

developments similar to those of other countries (Gutierrez & Berg, 2000). The number of phone lines in the country rose from half a million in 1987 to nearly seven million in 2002. Further, mobile phone services, introduced only in 1989, saw strong growth with over 11 million subscribers (Table 1.1.).

Year	Landline phones		Mobile phones	
	Count (in millions)	Growth rate (in %)	Count (in millions)	Growth rate (in %)
1997	5,776		1,343	
1998	6,641	15.0	1,733	29.0
1999	6,812	2.6	2,849	64.4
2000	6,906	1.4	6,454	126.5
2001	6,938	0.5	12,159	88.4
2002	6,914	-0.3	15,383	26.5

Source. Philippine National Telecommunications Commission. (2004). *Consumer Information* [Data in PDF format]. Available from <<http://www.ntc.gov.ph>>

The mass media industry underwent a similar trajectory. Within the first 25 years of American rule, new newspapers, film, and radio were introduced. Television was introduced after the Second World War. The dominance of privately owned media, however, came to a halt when President Marcos declared martial law. All media organizations were closed and resumed their operations as government-owned outfits (Ables, 2003). Likewise, “editors were charged with libel, forced to resign or arrested . . . and some women editors were ‘invited’ to a military camp” (Ables, 2000, p. 155).

In 1987, a new Philippine Constitution was ratified. Its provisions highlight the importance of mass media in the reinstated democratic government. The bill of rights protects freedom of speech and of the press, while other sections provide for the exclusive Filipino ownership and management of mass media organizations, and the 70 percent Filipino ownership of advertising agencies (Ables, 2003).

Radio remains the most popular medium. More than 81 percent of Filipinos at least 10 years old listen to any of the country’s over 350 AM and nearly 300 FM radio

stations. Half of all households own a TV set with which to watch any of the six networks that operate over 75 stations across the country. Circulation figures for daily newspapers in 1997 showed that 66 copies are published everyday per 1,000 inhabitants.<sup>6</sup>

The number of Internet users, however, is difficult to estimate since internet cafes, schools, and offices provide the main modes of access, while households more than individuals use personal computers. The International Telecommunications Union (2002) put the figure between half a million to two million (Minges, Magpantay, Firth & Kelly, 2002; Srivastava, 2002), while others put it between 3.5 million (Torral, 2003; Lugo, 2003) and 4.5 million (CIA, 2003).

Alongside the growth in the communication industry was the intensification of labor emigration. The Commission of Filipinos Overseas estimates that as of December 2004 there were 3.5 million OFWs (in POEA, 2006).

President Corazon Aquino was quick to proclaim OFWs as the nation's "*Bagong Bayani*" [New Heroes] (San Juan, 1996). The rhetoric meant migrant employment was to continue at a time when the government either stopped or downplayed Marcos' projects. It also imbued pride in migrant work. For a long time, migrant work was seen as a source of embarrassment because it showed the government's inability to generate employment and because OFW occupations were predominantly menial in nature (Maranan, 1989; Medel-Anonueva, Abad-Sarmiento, & Oliveros-Vistro, 1989).

Though deployment of migrant workers rose during the first years of the Aquino administration, it declined following improved economic conditions. However, the investment-driven growth that started in 1986 reached a plateau in 1989 because of massive electric power shortages and persistent military takeover attempts. In 1989, a

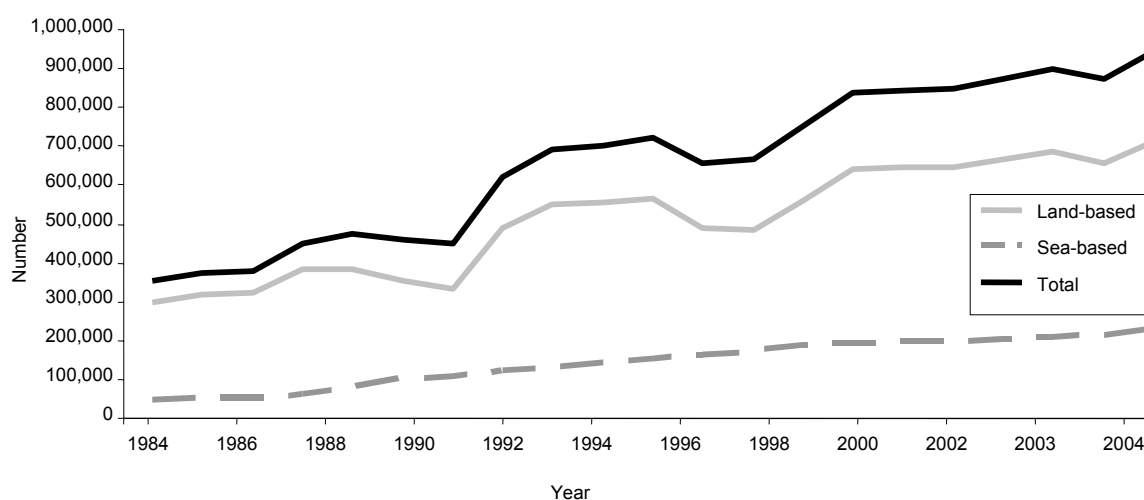
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<sup>6</sup> The circulation density is lower than the 74:1,000 statistic in Thailand, which also has an adult literacy rate of at least 93% (UNESCO, 2005). The oral nature of Philippine culture is usually cited behind low circulation figures.



coup d'état almost toppled the Aquino government. In 1990, the northern Philippines suffered a massive earthquake. In 1991, ash fall and mudflow from the Mount Pinatubo eruption covered central Luzon. That year, the number of deployed OFWs rose by over 37 percent (Figure 1.1.).

Figure 1.1. Annual deployment of overseas Filipino workers, 1984-2002



Source. Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. (2005). *Overseas Employment Statistics* [Data in Microsoft Excel files]. Available from <<http://www.poea.gov.ph>>.

In 1992, Aquino's last year in office, nearly 700,000 OFWs left for jobs abroad. Two years earlier, the Philippines became a signatory to the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families in an effort to protect its citizens (Tyner, 2004). However, subsequent events involving the abuse of migrant workers would reveal the toothless nature of this policy. Globalization had become a byword in the Philippines by the time Fidel Ramos assumed office in 1992. And the Philippines' competitiveness in the international arena was demonstrated in particular by the increasing demand for OFWs who satisfied "globalization's requirement of flexibility" (Rodriguez, 2002, p. 346) in the mobility of

labor. Indeed, the Philippine economy depended as much in the export of labor as it did on commodities. This discourse on OFWs and globalization continued into the term of Joseph Estrada, who, in 1998 during his first foreign trip as president, thanked OFWs for their contributions to the national economy. "We are pro-market and shall continue to be a market-driven economy. We are pro-investment and pro-competition and shall not impede the way to international integration," he said (in Kelley, 2000, p. 160).

Such pronouncements provided the utopian perspective of migrant employment. Just as OFW deployment decreased in the first half of Ramos' six-year term, the number of physical, verbal, and emotional abuses against OFWs continued to rise. While reports of such abuses have been recurrent since the time of Marcos, they became more urgent because of a vigilant free press. Increased attention on the plight of migrant workers helped impel the government to initiate Resolution 38/7 on "Violence Against Migrant Workers" before the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (Huang, Yeo, & Jackson, 2004; Tyner, 2004).

Passed in 1994, the resolution was immediately tested. In 1995, Flor Contemplacion and Sarah Balabagan became icons of the OFW as martyrs. A domestic worker in Singapore, Contemplacion was charged with the murder of a Filipina colleague and the four-year-old son of her employers in 1991 (Tyner, 2004; San Juan, 1996; Kelley, 2000). Despite diplomatic requests by the Philippine government for clemency, she was executed in Singapore and her body, on its return to Manila, "became the object of public mourning. Media coverage and President Ramos' eulogy ensured that, like in the case of Ninoy Aquino and Jose Rizal, this perceived victim of injustice and cruelty quickly became a martyr" (Ileto, 1998, p. 248).

Balabagan, meanwhile, was a 15-year old minor who entered the United Arab Emirates on a forged passport. Alleging that the 85-year old employer whom she had

killed had raped her, a UAE court initially sentenced Balabagan to seven years in jail but she would receive US\$27,000 for the rape. A second trial sentenced her to death, but the UAE president intervened following an appeal from the Philippine government. She received 100 lashes with the cane but the slain employer's relatives got US\$41,000 in compensation (Tyner, 2004, p. 173).

### Trends in migrant employment

The high-profile cases of Contemplacion and Balabagan, while surely not representative of the OFW experience, reflected two incipient trends in migrant labor: its increasing feminization and the strengthening of organizational networks to protect migrant workers. At the same time, the two cases obscured another development in migrant employment: its professionalization, with the increase in the number of Filipinos who worked abroad in the same professional capacity that they had in the Philippines and whose salaries approximated the income of the host country's citizens themselves.

#### *Feminization*

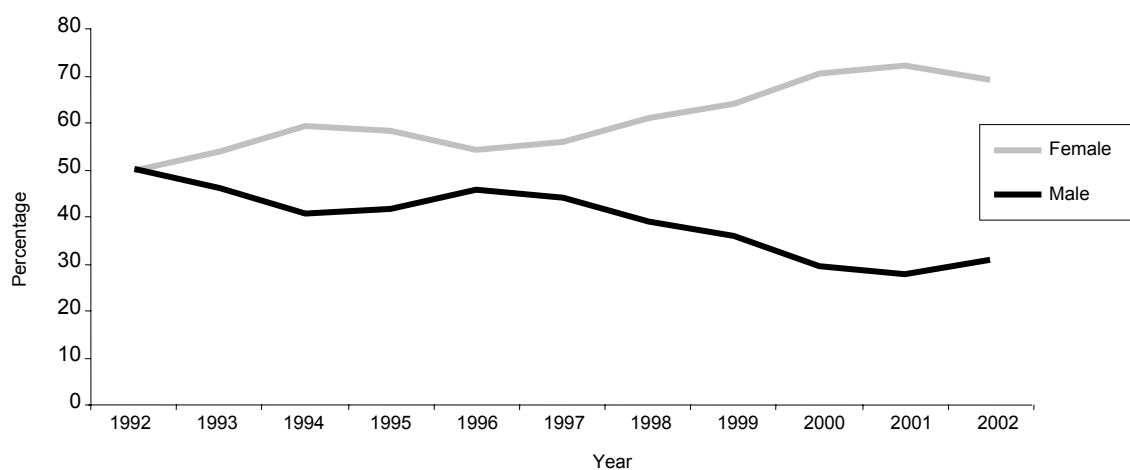
From an equal distribution between genders in 1992, women accounted for nearly 70 percent of all OFWs ten years later (Figure 1.2.). The nature of work of a majority of these women makes them prone to abuse. Domestic workers live in isolation (Anderson, 2003; Sassen, 2003) while entertainers may engage in illicit gender work (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003). Women are particularly vulnerable to culture shock, psychological, physical and sexual abuse, and contractual violations (Tyner, 2004; Gonzales, 1998; San Juan, 1996).

The deployment of women also has an impact on the dynamics of traditional Philippine society where men are the breadwinners and the women are the caregivers.

With women themselves working abroad, the economic power and its attendant influence on familial decision-making become theirs exclusively (Alcid, 1989). Parreñas (2003) asserted that the increase in the number of female OFWs has linked transnational families with “broken homes.” However, the influence of migrant work on the changed gender roles of women is not limited to female OFWs. Women whose husbands work abroad are imbued with “a clear appetite for a more diversified role leading to a greater space for self-determination and a freer decision-making process” (Cruz & Panagoni, 1989 in Tyner, 2004, p. 168).

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Figure 1.2. Gender distribution of overseas Filipino workers, 1992-2002



Source. Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. (2005). *Overseas Employment Statistics* [Data in Microsoft Excel files]. Available from <<http://www.poea.gov.ph>>.

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The same gender-stereotyped occupations among OFWs that had earlier been noted during Marcos' time hold true among current OFWs. The majority of men are in agricultural and production jobs, while the largest group of women is in clerical, sales, and services jobs such as domestic work and entertainment (Tyner, 2004; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003).

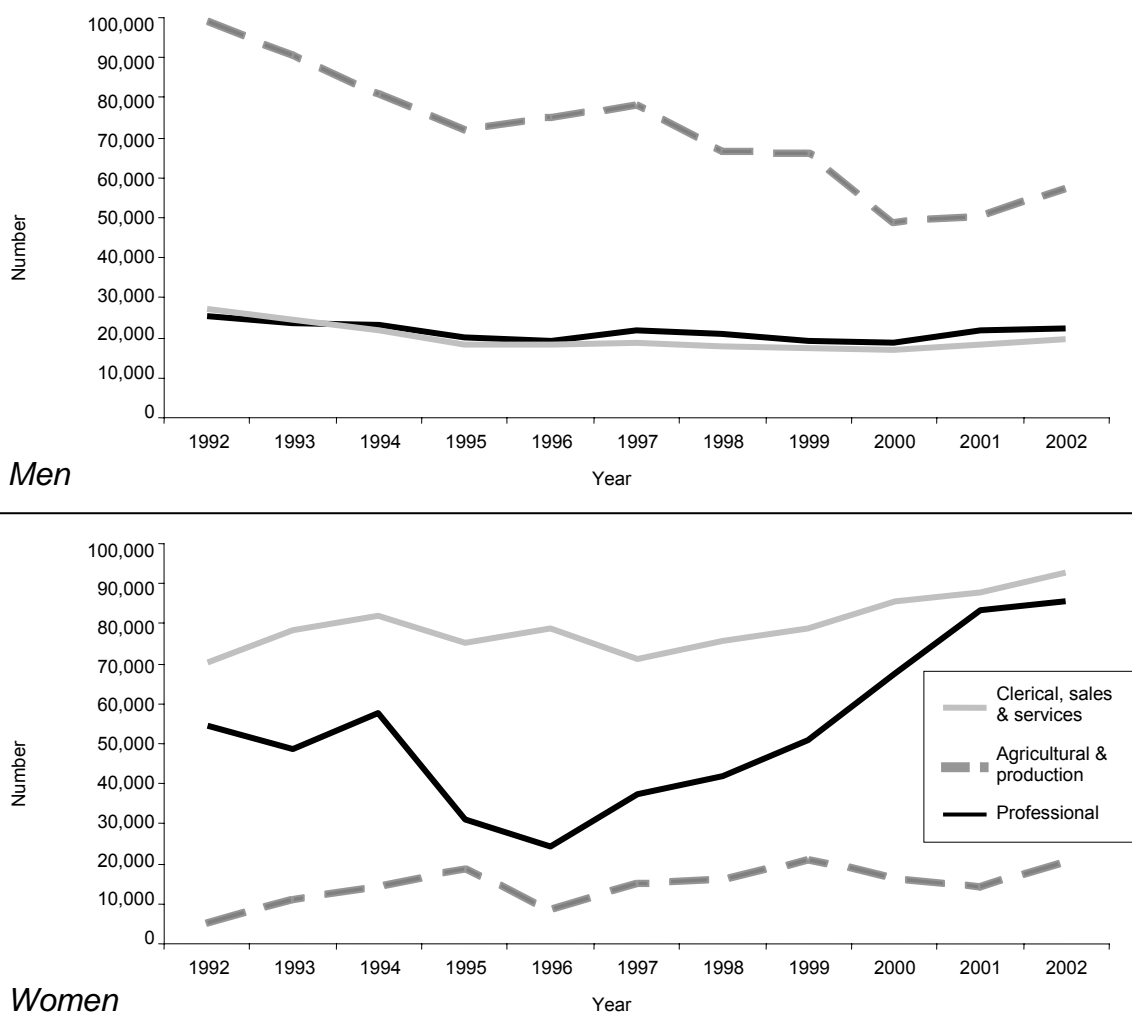
### *Professionalization*

It should also be noted that women than men are engaged in more diverse occupations, particularly with the marked increase in the number of new OFWs in professional, technical, or managerial jobs beginning 1996. This is a departure from what Piper and Ball (2001) observed was the narrow range of occupations for female OFWs since the jobs for female OFWs reflect the general departure of doctors, nurses, health care givers, and teachers to work abroad (Figure 1.3.).

The deployment of professionals raises concerns that the country is shifting from the original brawn to the emergent brain drain (Krinks, 2002; Gonzales, 1998). However, this development transcends Philippine policy. For instance, the passage of the Immigration Nursing Relief Act of 1989 that allowed foreign-trained nurses to work in the U.S. helped the export of nurses (Sassen, 2003; Kitano & Daniels, 2001). Likewise, the continued depreciation of the Philippine peso following the Asian crisis has made an income in U.S. dollars even more attractive.

Thus, while blue-collar workers in the margins of Philippine society found migrant work to be viable, even those from the center, the professionals themselves, now find it similarly appealing. With migrant work nipping at the core of its human resources, the viability of Philippine development from within thus becomes suspect. As it is, the country's progress depends upon the demand for, and the remittances from, migrant workers. As Alegado (2003) pointed out, "contrary to widespread perceptions, immigrants go to the wealthier nations less because they want to than because they are needed" (p. 3). What happens then to OFWs and the Philippine economy once these host countries no longer require them?

Figure 1.3. Gender & occupational categories of newly-hired overseas Filipino workers, 1992-2002



Source: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. (2005). *Overseas Employment Statistics* [Data in Microsoft Excel files]. Available from <<http://www.poea.gov.ph>>.

Note: The employment data are distributed across seven skills categories: 1) Professionals and technical; 2) Administrative and managerial; 3) Clerical; 4) Sales; 5) Services; 6) Agricultural; and 7) Production. For this chart, I merged categories as follows: items 1 and 2 into the professional category; items 3 to 6 into the clerical, sales, and services category; and items 6 and 7 for the last category.

Various events have displaced OFWs from their usual places of deployment.

These include strife ranging from the Gulf War in 1991 to the ongoing chaos in Iraq, and

the Asian financial crisis which forced middle class households to tighten their household budgets and let go of their domestic workers.

#### *Growing revenues*

OFWs, most of whom are in the peripheries of their host countries, are increasingly becoming the core middle class in the Philippines. In 2003, it was reported that OFWs remitted an average of US\$575 a month,<sup>7</sup> nearly five times the US\$120 minimum wage mandated in the Philippines (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004) and above the average monthly household of US\$416 in Manila and US\$225 in the whole country.<sup>8</sup> Despite the continued increase in the number of OFWs since 1996, remittances dipped at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century following the 1997 Asian economic crisis. However, remittances have since recovered. In 2004, they rose to US\$8.5 billion, which is equal to nine percent of the Philippine Gross National Income or a fifth of its annual export earnings (Table 1.2.). The steady stream of OFW remittances accounts for the largest share of foreign currency inflows into the country (Weekley, 2004; Parreñas, 2001c), helping keep the Philippine peso afloat and the trade deficit in check (Carlos, 2002).

#### *Changing demand*

Traditionally, Filipinos have been as migrant workers because of their fluency in English, one of the two official languages of the Philippines and a medium of instruction in schools even from the pre-elementary level. In Singapore, for instance, Filipinas were

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<sup>7</sup> While this is the best and most recent estimate from literature, it is not evenly distributed across destinations as remittances from OFWs in the United States and Canada accounted for half of the total amount (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004). This can be verified from the [BSP Web site](#) (2004).

<sup>8</sup> From the Philippine National Statistics Coordination Board. (2005). *Annual Per Capita Poverty and Food Thresholds*. [Data available in table format]. Available from <<http://www.nscb.gov.ph>>.

the “most popular choice as maids” because of their ability to speak in English<sup>9</sup> and to learn fast (Huang, Yeo, & Jackson, 2004, p. 346).

Year	GNI In current US\$ ('000)	Export Earnings In current US\$ ('000)	Remittances		
			In current US\$ ('000)	As percent of GNI	As percent of export earnings
1998	79,207,870	33,987,720	7,367,989	9.30	21.68
1999	78,154,500	39,196,700	6,794,550	8.69	17.33
2000	78,757,620	42,056,840	6,050,450	7.68	14.39
2001	80,327,480	35,009,590	6,031,271	7.51	17.23
2002	81,641,150	38,147,060	6,886,156	8.43	18.05
2003	85,398,640	39,211,040	7,578,458	8.87	19.33
2004	95,084,990	43,557,430	8,550,371	8.99	19.63

*Source.* GNI and export earnings data from World Bank (2006). *World Data Online* [Data in Microsoft Excel format]. Available by subscription from <<http://web.worldbank.org>>. OFW ratings data from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) (2006). *Overseas Filipino Workers' Remittances* [Data in HTML format]. Available from <<http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/spei/tab11.htm>>

Filipinas had also been in demand as domestic workers as they complemented the “perceived affluence” of their employers (Tyner, 1999b, p. 199). Mr. Wang, a respondent in Lan’s (2003) study said of his Filipina household help:

Our maid looks classy, not like some others. They look just like a maid. Ours is not. So she’s a good match for our family. My children are all college graduates, although not as high as you to study abroad, but all well-educated. Our maid has to match our social status. (p. 140)

Another main work channel for female OFWs was in the entertainment industry, in jobs such “as dancers, singers, and musicians . . . jobs [which] are often associated with sex work” (Tyner, 2004, p. 164). In 1997, the 28,500 Filipina entertainers in Japan accounted for 95 percent of all female OFWs in that country and 99 percent of all female entertainer-OFWs in the world (Tyner, 2004, p. 165). These women were part of the

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<sup>9</sup> English and Filipino, which is primarily rooted in Tagalog, are the two official languages of the Philippines. They are the medium of instruction in schools, beginning from pre-school. As such, all high school graduates can speak and understand English.



“Japayuki-san” community of Southeast Asians who worked in Japan’s entertainment industry (Mackie, 1998).

More recently, Filipinos are increasingly being tapped to work as doctors, nurses, and caregivers in developed countries whose healthcare workers are not enough to meet the requirements of their ageing citizenry (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004).

### *Networking for OFWs*

Because of the increasingly complex nature of migrant work and the uproar over Flor Contemplacion’s fate, the Philippine legislature passed Republic Act 8042, “The Migrant Worker and Overseas Filipinos Act.” Passed in 1995, the law refocused POEA’s mission from market promotion to management of migration. However, as Tyner (2004) explained, this hastily passed legislation has many failings. He said it does not address (a) the deployment of professionals as overseas workers; (b) the assignment of Labor Attaches<sup>10</sup> in more locales; and, (c) the promotion of migrant worker “unions” and the optimal use of remittances. Nuqui & Josue (2000), meanwhile, noted how government agencies have not fully shared their databases yet as prescribed by RA8042.

Similar attempts to promote the welfare of OFWs, such as the “International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and the Members of their Families” and Resolution 38/7 have had little impact on improving the plight of OFWs. Tyner (2004) wrote that “host countries object to the establishment of bilateral agreements [because OFWs] are subject to the same laws and regulations that nationals receive [and] terms of employment are negotiated between the migrants and employers, hence the state should not become involved” (p. 172). The government could

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<sup>10</sup> Labor attaches are Philippine representatives—usually as part of the Embassy mission, but sometimes as a free-standing office—in host territories. They are specifically tasked with all labor-related matters. Please see Chapter 7 for an extensive discussion on labor attaches and their dealings with OFW communities.

not pressure these host countries for fear of retaliation since they can easily hire from other states. If that were to happen, the Philippines would experience increased unemployment and loss of foreign earnings (Francisco, 1989).

The limited coverage of the Philippine policy umbrella means workers are generally left to their own resources, though the government recently has been quick either to stop deployment to or to repatriate OFWs from problem areas. The government has also been cracking down on illegal recruiters who leave OFWs in vulnerable situations. However, it still has a lot of work towards protecting its OFWs, especially since they could now be found in over 170 countries (Figure 1.5), up from only 80 in 1977 (Abella, 1979, p. 10).

If the government were to assign a labor attaché in each country with 100 OFWs or more, it would have to do so in 72 countries, more than the current number of Philippine embassies. Likewise, the top 10 destinations reflect peculiar situations and requirements that perhaps no single legislation can address.<sup>11</sup> The predominantly male construction workers in Saudi Arabia, female domestic workers in Hong Kong and female entertainers in Japan, for example, experience different work conditions and problems which should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Tracking the welfare of OFWs thus appears to be nearly impossible for a government with few resources or policy muscle, even more so tailoring the services that their situation in each location requires. Vigilant monitoring of the embassies and the eager networking of formal and informal civil society groups currently help to address the limitations of the government (Asato, 2003; Ogaya, 2003; Tsujimoto, 2003; Alunan-Melgar & De Jesus-Maestro, 1989). For example, organizations of domestic workers in Hong Kong have become

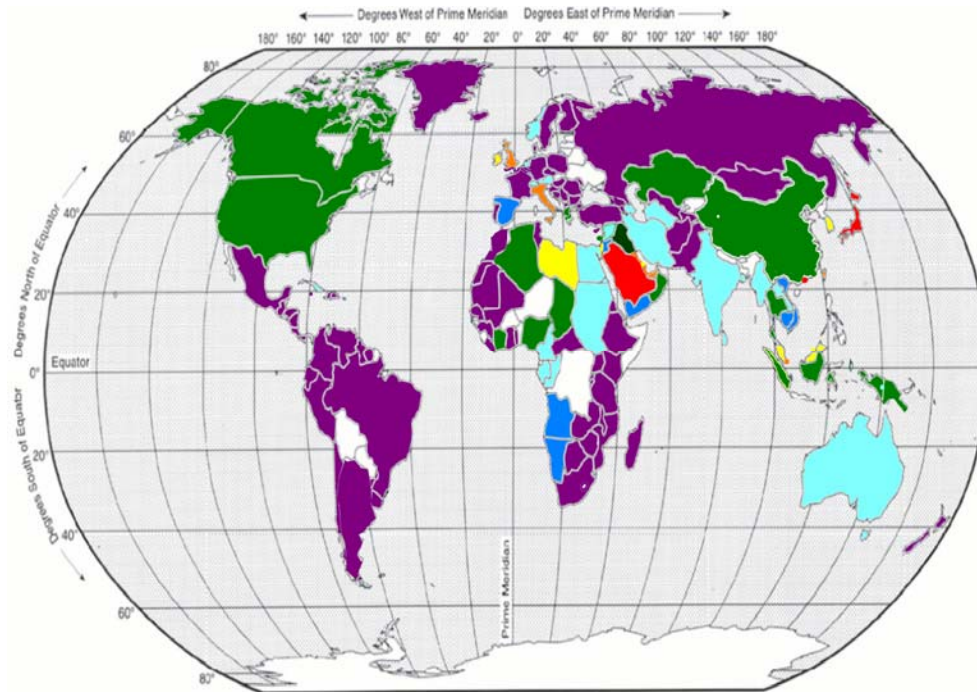
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<sup>11</sup> Because of time and resource constraints, studying the policies on migrant workers of these 10 countries was not included in this study. While doing this would have been very helpful in understanding the context of OFW communication, it would have been an entire study on its own.

Figure 1.4. Stock estimate of overseas Filipino workers in the top 31 destinations, 2004

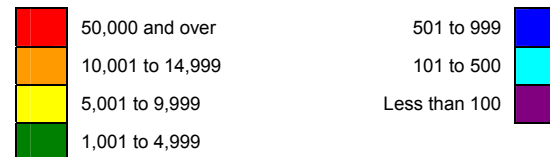
1.	Saudi Arabia	976,134
2.	Japan	238,522
	<i>Seafaring</i>	229,002
3.	Hong Kong	194,241
4.	United Arab Emirates	185,562
5.	Taiwan	154,135
6.	United States	101,249
7.	Italy	85,527
8.	Kuwait	80,196
9.	Singapore	64,337
10.	Qatar	57,345
11.	United Kingdom	56,341
12.	Malaysia	52,337
13.	South Korea	33,285
14.	Bahrain	33,154
15.	Canada	32,766
16.	Lebanon	28,318
17.	Brunei	21,762
18.	Oman	18,941
19.	Macau	17,391
20.	Greece	17,058
21.	Marianas Islands	16,753
22.	Israel	14,051
23.	Nigeria	11,750
24.	Germany	8,346
25.	Switzerland	7,025
26.	Spain	6,960
27.	Jordan	5,885
28.	Libya	5,440
29.	Papua New Guinea	5,030
30.	France	4,866

\*Primarily seamen or cruise workers.



Destinations of OFWs, 1999-2003: 170 countries

Legend of Deployment in 2004



Data source: POEA, 2005

important arbiters for wage regulations and the protection of their members against abuse.

An emergent power block in organizational networks for OFWs that has not been studied intensively is composed of Philippine media outlets that now reach international audiences. Philippine TV shows are broadcast abroad over cable networks through “The Filipino Channel” and “GMA PinoyTV,” broadsheets such as the “The Philippine Daily Inquirer” and “The Philippine Star” are published online, and movies and recordings are available in VCD and DVD formats in places where OFWs congregate. These broadcast networks and Web sites work with OFWs to develop content as well as mediate between OFWs and government and other private organizations.

#### Research questions and dissertation outline

Key changes in two sectors of Philippine society have been pivotal in the country’s contemporary history: the constant deployment of Filipinos for overseas employment and the privatization and deregulation of the telecommunication industry after more than a decade of nationalization and regulation. Both developments have transpired across, as well as contributed to, an increasingly transnational environment where technologies facilitate both the movement of people and the exchange of information across territorial boundaries. In the Philippines, the volume of temporary labor emigration is increasing alongside the expanding global coverage of Philippine media organizations and the growing use of personal interactive media such as the Internet and the mobile phone.

This study thus determined the contemporary transnational practices of OFWs by surveying their patterns of interpersonal communication, organizational participation, and mass media uses. At the same time, it explored the support mechanisms provided by

governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private corporations through interviews and an analysis of their brochures and other materials.

The dissertation begins with a profile of my survey respondents and organizational informants. While the government has macro data on OFW deployment, the variables included in this database are limited. Thus, while they give a general picture of OFWs, they do not allow for the exploration of key OFW attributes relative to their transnational practices. Most studies on OFWs have focused on specific destinations, occupations, and organizations. My survey of OFWs thus addressed this research gap by giving an extensive profile of the migrant labor community. I also tested the relationships among variables such as gender, marital and parental status, work and income, and region of deployment since previous studies argued about the gendered occupational and income flows of OFWs to particular destinations. I looked into parental status as transnational parenting arguably influences the way migrant workers communicate transnationally. Thus, the dissertation's first question was:

RQ1: What is the demographic profile of OFWs? How are key demographic attributes (KDAs) such as gender, age and parental status, work and income, and region of deployment significantly related?

The ability of current transmigrants to network simultaneously within the host and with the home countries distinguishes contemporary transnationalism from previous labor flows. On one level, they live physically in their host country, and interact with its citizens, residents, and fellow migrant workers. On another level, communication technologies virtually connect them to family members, friends, and events within and outside the host country. Previous studies thus argued that OFWs, as transmigrants, maintained multiple frames of references and avenues of mediated and non-mediated communication as they led transnational lives. Further, they indicated that the gendered

occupational stereotypes in particular host regions relate to the socialization of OFWs.

My subsequent discussion thus pertained to the multi-stranded interpersonal communication practices of OFWs:

RQ2: How do communication practices with peoples and organizations within and outside the host country compare and contrast? What impact do KDAs have on these practices?

Studies on organizational stakeholders in migrant employment focused on particular groups. These efforts revealed the increasingly expansive reach and intensive work of organizations that advocated OFW rights and provide services to OFWs. However, because of their focus, they did not compare the approaches and activities of public and private, and profit and non-profit organizations. My interviews with organizational representatives addressed this gap. Further, to provide a complete picture of the institutional dynamics within the migrant labor community, I looked into OFW participation in these organizations:

RQ3: Who are the institutional stakeholders in the OFW community? How are their interactions with OFWs? How do OFWs regard them? How do key demographic variables relate to OFWs' affiliation with them?

Perhaps the least explored of the communication patterns of OFWs pertains to their use of mass media. Indeed journalistic coverage and mediated discussions and portrayal of OFWs had served as context for several studies on OFWs. However, OFWs' consumption of media products from both within and outside the host country had not been studied intensively. This deficiency must be addressed, particularly with the increased complexity of media consumption because of new communication technologies and the export of Philippine media products. Scholars also argued that it

was through their media use that transmigrants built frames of reference for their local and extra-territorial interactions. Thus, my fourth question was about mass media usage:

RQ4: How do OFWs consume various mass media within and outside the host country? What variables influence this consumption?

I answered these questions using data from my 320 survey respondents and 16 interviewees, as well as the print materials from the organizational participants. I used the literature on OFWs and other transmigrants to locate these findings amid the changes in Philippine and international polity and economics, changes in communication technologies and the shifts in the demographic profile of migrant workers.

I then arrayed the findings in a framework that shows the eccentric, or non-concentric, nature of the multi-level, multi-media, and multi-territorial communication practices of OFWs and stakeholder organizations. The framework provides a model of transnational networks as the interplay between the personal, the institutional, and the mediated and as they are constructed and enacted by OFWs. In so doing, it expounds on the dynamics between identity and territoriality and indicates ways to improve communication with and among migrant workers.

## Chapter 2

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The extent and diversity of labor migration from the Philippines has received widespread attention among scholars.<sup>12</sup> Most studies, however, have focused on the dominant occupations in specific pairings between home (the Philippines) and host (destination) countries. Considerable research has been done on domestic workers in Hong Kong (Asato, 2003; Constable, 2003; Ogaya, 2003; Alcid, 1989; Medel-Anonuevo, Abad-Sarmiento, & Oliveros-Vistro, 1989), Singapore (Yeoh, Huang, & Devasahayam, 2004; Huang, Yeoh & Jackson, 2004; Ogaya, 2003; Yeoh, Huang, & Gonzales, 1999; Low, 1995; Alcid, 1989; Medel-Anonuevo, Abad-Sarmiento, & Oliveros-Vistro, 1989), Taiwan (Cheng, 2004; Lan, 2003; Lan, 2003b), and Italy (Tacoli, 1999; Parreñas, 2001b; Parreñas, 2001); entertainers in Japan (Javate de Dios, 1898; Mackie, 1998; Mateo, 2003; Muroi & Sasaki, 1997; Piper & Ball, 2002; Tyner, 1997, 1996, 1996b); nurses, domestic workers, and caregivers in the United Kingdom (Anderson, 2001) and the United States (Hochschild, 2003; Menjivar, DeVanzo, Greenwell & Burciaga, 1998; Parreñas, 2001b; Parreñas, 2001); and seamen in Holland (Sampson, 2003).

Cross-country studies have been limited, and most of them have also focused on comparisons within occupational groupings, as Parreñas (2001, 2001b) has done with domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles. By drawing on a geographically diverse pool of respondents, this study satisfies the need for a comparative analysis of experiences of not only OFWs, but also of transmigrants in general (Portes, 1997).

Still, previous studies on OFWs provide a vivid understanding of the profiles, plight, and practices of OFWs, as well as the attendant issues. This chapter integrates

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<sup>12</sup> In fact, an annotated bibliography on the topic from 1975 to 1995 by Joyce Yukawa lists 605 studies (Tyner & Donaldson, 1999:218). A subsequent publication by the Philippine Migration Research Network builds upon this bibliography and includes international migration studies as well (Perez & Patacsil, 1998).



what we know about OFWs, with particular attention to the role that communication plays in their position as transnational workers.

### Profile of overseas Filipino workers

Chapter 1 provides the macro perspective of the distribution of migrant workers across gender, destinations, and remittances using government statistics, as well as the issues that attend the current demographic profile of OFWs. This section draws on the literature on OFWs to show the qualifications behind this profile.

#### *Age and marital status*

Age and marital status are key variables in this study because they relate to the use of technologies that enable mediated transnational conversations.

Goss and Lindquist (1995) said over two-thirds of OFWs were between 25 and 35 years old, since the relative youthfulness of OFWs was important in their usually short-term and labor-intensive jobs. Goss and Lindquist explained host countries which employed OFWs within that age group got the benefits of an “immediately productive” workforce without having had to invest in its “socialization, education, and training,” prepare for its retirement, and worry over sustaining “the labor force through forces of decreased demand” (p. 324).

In particular, young women were integrated into the transnational labor pool because of the absence of opportunities in the Philippines (Tyner, 2000b) and their capacity to perform “women’s work” or “reproductive labor”<sup>13</sup> (Tung, 2000). Though

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<sup>13</sup> Female OFWs “are involved in what is stereotypically considered “women’s work,” or that which is built upon women’s “natural” inclination toward caring and relational thinking. Feminist scholars have worked to redefine this “natural” inclination as labor, specifically as social reproductive labor, or what Evelyn Nakano Glenn defines as

these primarily single women originally planned to work abroad only temporarily to support the demands of their family (e.g., sending siblings to school), a number of them ended up staying overseas because of the financial independence they achieved through migrant work.<sup>14</sup> By remaining single they were able “to go abroad and `see the world,” even while saving part of their income and supporting family needs (Tacoli, 1999, p. 668).

By comparison, women who became OFWs at a later age did so usually to support their children after separating from their husbands. Tacoli (1999) wrote:

The proportion of widowed and separated migrant women who were not employed prior to their departure from the Philippines is higher than the sample's average (27 percent against 8 percent), suggesting that international migration is one of a very limited range of options, especially for mature women who would find it extremely difficult to get jobs in the Philippines (p. 669).

Constable (2003) also noted how migrant employment had become an opportunity for separated women to gain financial stability as well as regain “a `respectable' marital status” (p. 163), which is important because divorce is not allowed in the Philippines. She wrote, “In contrast to the common assumption that women marry foreign men in order to migrate or primarily for material gain, [I argue] that—in at least some cases—migration can also serve as a means to attain the valued goal of (re)marriage.”

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the "array of activities and relationships involved in maintaining people both on a daily basis and intergenerationally" (Tung, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> In this study, the majority of the respondents have been abroad for five years or less. The average number of years is abroad is seven, though the range of deployment is from one year to 30 years. No other studies have cited a statistic on the length of tenure abroad.

### *Region of origin*

Similarly related to the ability to use technology for transnational conversations was access to communication facilities. In the Philippines, there was an intersection between migration and communication as the National Capital Region (NCR)<sup>15</sup> had the country's most advanced communication network and its largest portion (37 percent) of OFWs (Tyner & Donaldson, 1999). Further, Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon, the regions that adjoin the NCR, also had more OFWs (Tyner and Donaldson, 1999) and better telecommunications systems than the rest of the country. Tyner (2000b) thus argued that with the scope of the Philippine migrant labor force, Manila, its capital, had assumed "a spatial centrality" in the global economy (p. 65).

### *Income and remittances*

Communication and remittances, the primary links between OFWs and their family and relatives in the Philippines, have a reflexive relationship. Income and remittances finance communication expenses, while, at the same time, it is through communication that OFWs and the recipients of their remittances discuss expenditures or negotiate requests for more money.

In 2003, OFWs remitted an average of US\$575 a month (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004), nearly five times the mandated minimum wage in the Philippines. The pursuit of higher income, even at the risk of downward social mobility,<sup>16</sup> indeed drove migrant employment (Tyner, 2004; Parreñas, 2001; Tacoli, 1999; Mackie, 1998 Rafael, 1997; San Juan, 1996).

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<sup>15</sup> NCR, also called Metro Manila, is the geographically contiguous area of 13 cities and four municipalities which include the capital city of Manila.

<sup>16</sup> I discuss social mobility in detail in Chapter 3

The amount of money remitted to the Philippines was not solely dependent on disposable incomes. On the one hand, regulations had required seabased workers to remit 80 percent of their basic wage to the Philippines through the banking system, though many of them sent all of it since their cost of living was shouldered by their shipping companies (Sampson, 2003, p. 269). On the other hand, socio-demographic variables had influenced remittance patterns. For example, a study of Filipino and El Salvadoran migrants in the United States discovered that Filipino remittances were more likely to be influenced by age, family income, education in English, and living arrangements than those of their El Salvadoran counterparts (Menjivar, DeVanzo, Greenwell, & Valdez, 1998). Tacoli (1999, p. 672), meanwhile, observed:

Among young single migrants, women's remittances are on average more than double the amount sent by their male counterparts, regardless of whether the decision to migrate was made personally or by other family members. In addition, young women also tend to provide more consistent financial support to their households, with over two thirds sending money on a monthly basis against less than one third of young single men.

However, a cross-country study by Semyonov & Gorodzeisky (2005, p. 45) contradicted Tacoli's findings:

Contrary to popular belief, men send more money back home than do women, even when taking into consideration earnings differentials across gender. Further analysis demonstrates that income of households with men working overseas is significantly higher than income of households with women working overseas and that this difference can be fully attributed to the earnings disparities and to differences in amount of remittances sent home by overseas workers.

Remittances were the main source of income for ten percent of all families in Manila (Tyner, 2004, p. 168; Tyner & Donaldson, 1999, p. 220). Comparatively, “cash receipts, gifts and other forms of assistance’ from abroad” were the primary income for seven percent of all Philippine households (Huang, Yeo, & Jackson, 2004, p. 336). While the portion of households that thrived on remittances was small, it indicated the concern over growing dependence on “migrant-generated” income by “small, non-industrialized countries incapable of economic autonomy” (Levitt & Schiller, 2004, p. 1005).

Some social scientists, however, argued that remittances not only ensured the prominence of migrant workers in the Philippine nation-state (Rafael, 1997), these monies also allowed women “to produce, appropriate and distribute surplus labour in innovative ways” (Gibson, Law and McKay, 2001, p. 365). Thus, remittances “progressively rework gender relations, support education and the acquisition of professional skills and facilitate local community development” (Vertovec, 2001, p. 575) and enable “the stimulation of change within a variety of sociocultural institutions” (Vertovec, 2004b, p. 985).

However, how remittances were spent defines these social transformations. Tacoli (1999) noted that her respondents, both males and females, had little say on the use of their remittances. After all, remittances were used primarily for basic needs (Vertovec, 2004b; Anderson, 2001), with the rest going to housing and healthcare (Vertovec, 2004b; Sampson, 2003), the education of children or siblings (Vertovec, 2004b; Sampson, 2003; Krinks, 2002; Tacoli, 1999), and the repayment of debts incurred before or during the recruitment process (Krinks, 2002). Gonzales (1998) thus observed that, as such, remittances were non-productive. Vertovec (2004b), however,

argued that they were inherently transformative since they gave people and villages more resources than they would otherwise have.

#### *Investments and reintegration*

Many OFWs saw migrant employment as a temporary arrangement, and most of them sought to return to the Philippines permanently and start their own business (Martin, Abella & Midgley 2004; Tyner, 2004). Tacoli (1999) noted that young couples turned to migrant work to save enough business capital.

Usual investments included the purchase of public utility vehicles such as jeepneys<sup>17</sup> and shuttle vans (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004), agricultural land (Sampson, 2003), and other small scale businesses. Promoting entrepreneurship among returning OFWs had been central in the government's reintegration program and the projects of organizations such as the Asian Migrant Center and *Unlad Kabayan* [Progress Compatriot] (Weekley, 2004; Gibson, Law & McKay, 2001).

#### *Gendered occupational flows*

The gendered occupational flow of migrant employment (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2005) means the gender and host destinations of OFWs may also affect communication patterns. The majority of OFWs in the Middle East were men who worked in heavy production and construction jobs, while the majority of OFWs in other host regions were women who were employed in the entertainment and service industries (Tyner, 2004; Parreñas, 2001c).

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<sup>17</sup> Jeepneys are the main mode of public transport in the Philippines. The first jeepneys were actually converted U.S. military vehicles from the Second World War. They are now produced by Philippine manufacturers.

Female OFWs, according to Tyner & Donaldson (1999) “tend to be more spatially and occupationally channellized than their male counterparts” (p. 217; also in Piper & Ball, 2001). These channels involved female OFWs who went to the Gulf States and Southeast Asia as domestic helpers, to Japan as entertainers in Japan, and to North America and Europe as nurses, teachers, and maids (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004).

This limited range of OFW occupations had led activists to say that their jobs mostly fell within the “3D” range: dirty, difficult and dangerous (Law, 2003; Yeoh, Huang, & Devasahayam, 1999). Among these 3D jobs, domestic work and entertainment attracted much attention, especially after the high profile cases of domestic helpers Flor Contemplacion and Sarah Balabagan (Rodriguez, 2002; Tyner, 2000; Grandea & Kerr, 1998), and entertainer Maricris Sioson, who died in Japan due to suspected foulplay (Tyner, 1997).

While their sheer number had rendered them visible, scholars had argued that domestic workers and entertainers had remained invisible as they labored within households and clubs hidden from the public eye (Tung, 2000). Grandea & Kerr (1998) described the situation vividly:

Lack of privacy, loneliness, and isolation are conditions that erode domestic workers' mental health. Domestic workers often do not have keys to their own rooms, or to their employer's house. There have been many instances when their right to privacy is not respected, with employers going through their personal belongings or having guests stay in the domestic worker's bedroom. There have also been cases when domestic workers are locked out of the employer's house when they do not come home at a designated time. (p. 10)

Entertainer-OFWs further suffered from preconceptions that excluded them from the mainstream society. Tyner (1996, p. 78) said that in Japan, four images were used to

represent Japayuki-sans: as the Other who is different; the prostitutes “who choose to engage in vulnerable occupations” (p. 78); the willing victims “who are saving an ailing economy through their patriotic sacrifices” (p. 78); and the heroine. Mackie (1998) also wrote how Filipina migrant entertainers “are often constructed as the ‘other’ to law-abiding, family-centered Japanese citizens” (p. 48). Such a construction gave Japayukis “the terrible feeling of isolation and alienation compounded by the racial discrimination they experience in Japanese society” (Javate de Dios, 1989, p. 147).

Japayukis, however, were not the only ones considered as the “Other.” Domestic workers, too, suffered from this construction since they were seen “as aliens (noncitizens), as contract workers (performing “unskilled, menial” tasks of low value), and as Third World women (often seen as in a conflated fashion as “exotic,” “erotic,” “vulnerable,” “hapless,” or necessarily confined to the private sphere)” (Yeoh, Huang, & Gonzales, 1999, p. 124). Likewise, the presence of domestic workers in their households had forced Taiwanese women to compare “their understanding of domesticity, womanhood, and motherhood” relative to these “other” women (Cheng, 2004).

Efforts to render these workers visible, however, have had both positive and negative effects. Organizations had been established to advocate for migrant workers rights and to provide various services for them. But this organization of labor had resulted in the replacement of Filipinas by other nationals who were perceived to be more docile (Cheng, 2004; Lan, 2003). Invisibility was not exclusive to female OFWs as male construction workers in the Middle East stayed in camps far from city centers (Tyner & Kuhlke, 2000, p. 238).



## OFW Communication

OFWs maintain links with their family and relatives through communication and remittances. However, while there has been much interest in their remittances, their communication patterns have received little attention as these have been subsumed in specific discussions of transnational parenting, mediated representation, organizational affiliation, and telecommunications use. From this rich—if, for my purposes, fragmented—research base, we get a preview of OFW's communication habits and appreciate their transformative potential.

This section reviews findings from previous research about the interpersonal communication, organizational participation, and mass media representations and use of OFWs. It also discusses how these studies inform the effort to integrate the multi-level and multi-territorial nature of OFW communication.

### *Interpersonal communication*

Its multiple facets—local, national, and transnational; mediated and non-mediated—differentiate OFW interpersonal communication. In these interactions are embedded the OFW experience within and beyond the host country.

#### *In the host country*

Communication within and beyond the host country related with an OFW's work. Sampson (2003) said seamen were at sea “between eight and ten months” with peer co-workers. Though living in the same ship for long periods, they “tend to occupy different spaces and have separate communal, working, and, sometimes, recreational areas.”

The experiences of seamen might seem peculiar. However, other OFWs also appeared to work in a metaphorical ship because they live with their employers 24 hours

a day. Studies had reported that some employers would lock their domestic help in the apartments or keep their maid's documents to prevent them from running away (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004; Gibson, Law & McKay, 2001). They were therefore perpetually on call at their job.

In the United Kingdom, many domestic workers stayed with their employers to save money, but they ended up working from sunrise to midnight (Cueva, 1995, p. 56). Domestic workers thus rendered unpaid overtime, as Grandea and Kerr (1999) noted in Canada. In Hong Kong, housemaids were considered as *amahs* [household helpers] who not only stayed with their employers, but also had limited privacy and personal freedom (Gibson, Law & McKay, 2001, p. 371). In these three situations, the power imbalance between the maids and their employers was clear (Yeoh, Huang, & Devasahayam, 1999, p. 19). Parreñas (2001) said a reading of reader contributions to an OFW newsmagazine revealed "migrant Filipina domestic workers are often at the behest of their employers" (p. 1148). This situation was not exclusive to household help. Caregivers could also feel like they were a "caged worker" as they attended to their patients' constant needs, even during weekends (Tung, 2000). While taking a day-off meant over US\$150 in lost overtime income, Tung said this was not their main reason for working endlessly. Caregivers instead expressed concern for their patients' health and the difficulty in finding replacement workers.

Despite their constrained daily set-up, however, women still found time to get together (Anderson, 2001). Sunday days-off, for instance, would draw hundreds of domestic workers to parks in downtown Hong Kong and in Singapore (Parreñas, 2001). The gatherings in Singapore had been particularly important because its government does not allow any organized activity for migrants (Alcid, 1989). Meanwhile, during her data gathering in Taiwan, Lan (2003) said she joined her respondents on "shopping

trips, birthday parties, disco dancing, karaoke singing, picnicking in parks, and lunch at fast-food restaurants.” Indeed, work flexibility and autonomy had become important status markers among service workers, as Parreñas (2001) described:

Providers of elderly care generally believe that they hold the most respected job because of their greater autonomy and the special medical skills required of them. Live-in housekeepers, while they may not like the social isolation of domestic work, often claim to be averse to elderly care or the added pressure of part-time work—running from one job to the next—and prefer this job for the opportunity it gives them to save money. Finally, part-time workers claim to have the most rewarding job of the three because of their higher earnings and freedom from the social isolation of live-in work. (pp. 154-155)

Isolation due to work, a problem in itself, was related to problems commonly associated with migrant work. While many OFWs are relatively fluent in English, many of them associate with people who cannot speak it. Some of Sampson’s (2003) seamen respondents felt they were in the margins of Dutch society because they could not speak Dutch.

That domestic workers stayed in environments where private and workspaces were the same also made them prone to abuse (Asata, 2003; Tyner, 2000). Their presence would transform a household into a venue of female solidarity or an arena for the contestation of femininity. Cheng (2004) said Taiwanese female employers felt their domestic workers threatened their status as good mothers, while Parreñas (2001b) said the maids provided their bosses companionship and care.

Indeed, reports of abuse against migrant workers had been discussed in literature for over a decade now. In separate studies in 1989, Francisco and Alcid

reported such abuses as sexual harassment, rape, and physical harm against OFWs in the Middle East.

Other studies noted how OFWs, particularly domestic workers, suffered the following from their tenure abroad: psycho-social stress and culture shock (Anderson, 2003; Piper, 2003; Gonzales, 1998; San Juan, 1996; Cueva, 1995); physical abuse, sexual harassment, molestation, and rape (Tyner, 2004, 2000; Anderson, 2003; Piper, 2003; Parreñas, 2001c; Gonzales, 1998; San Juan, 1996; Cueva, 1995); contract violations and poor working conditions (Tyner, 2004; Piper, 2003; Parreñas, 2001c; Grandea & Kerr, 1998; Gonzales, 1998); homesickness (Parreñas, 2001b); and, prejudice and discrimination (Piper, 2003). While these problems were usually reported in the Middle East and East Asia, they were also noted in Europe (San Juan, 1996; Anderson, 2003) and North America (Parreñas, 2001 & 2001b).

Constrained communication channels due to the “invisible” nature of their labor were seen as a reason for these problems. Communication thus was seen as the solution to them. Organizations had been established to advocate migrant rights and to protect their welfare, though their work had been marked with success and failure.

Parreñas (2001c) said migrant workers helped solve each others’ problems through an imagined sense of community. She cited “*Tinig Filipino*” [Voice Filipino], an OFW newsmagazine, as a venue for this virtual gathering. She earlier said that coping mechanisms to address homesickness and the transnational nature of OFW families included the commodification of love, the rationalization of distance, and the use of regulation communication (Parreñas, 2001b).

OFWs also solved their problems simply by being steadfast in their decision to work abroad. For instance, migrant women in Beirut wanted to stay there despite living in harsh conditions (Huang, Yeo, & Jackson, 2004:333-334), an example of San Juan’s

argument that OFWs seem “incapable of learning the lesson of refusal” (1996, p. 172). A sense of helplessness was evident in this approach to problem solving, as Parreñas (2001) explained:

As Tinig Filipino informs domestic workers of their low employment standards, it also reminds domestic workers of their limited economic and political power.

Thus, the passive attitude of “we know we are abused, but we cannot do much about it” that is found among the writers of Tinig Filipino stems from the consciousness of their limited power as isolated migrant domestic workers (pp. 1148-1149).

### *Beyond the host country*

Three features had distinguished the OFW experience and other contemporary diasporic discourses from previous migrations. These features included the availability of new communication technologies that enabled perpetual and affordable border-crossing communication (Levitt, deWind & Vertovec, 2003; Tyner, 1999b), the volume of participants, and the normative tendency of such movements (Alegado, 2003, p. 16; Portes, 1997, p. 813).

Among these characteristics, the primacy of communication technologies had been discussed the most. Vertovec (2004) said it was the cheap international calls that served as the “social glue” of globalization (p. 219). Law (2003) wrote that “advances in technology and changing immigration laws have been important in consolidating long-distance relationships” (p. 238), while Levitt (1998) said communication was one of five factors<sup>18</sup> that “heighten the intensity and durability of transnational ties among

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<sup>18</sup> These factors were “1) ease of travel and communication, 2) the increasingly important role migrants play in sending country economies, 3) attempts by sending states to legitimize themselves by providing services to migrants and their children, 4)

contemporary migrants” (p. 928). Sampson (2003, p. 254), meanwhile, provided an equation: Transnational communities = diasporas + technology. Finally, Tyner & Kuhlke (2004), drawing on similar arguments by several scholars on the importance of global communication technologies in bridging time and space for transmigrants, argued how these mediated systems facilitate transnational social networks. Vertovec (2001), however, cautioned that technological determinism on its own was not enough to explain contemporary transnationalism.

Thus, the key to understanding transnational communities was in appreciating the personal use of these global networks, rather than the other way around. Levitt and Schiller (2004) wrote, “without a concept of the social, the relations of power and privilege exercised by social actors based within structures and organizations cannot be studied or analyzed.” Meanwhile, Roudometof (2005) said, “transnational interactions involve such routines as international calls, faxes, emails, satellite TV broadcasting, simultaneous media access through Internet sources and TV stations,” among others (p. 119). While studies considered everyday practices as a core of transnationalism, most of them focused on specific communities and destinations (Tyner & Kuhlke, 2004). Thus, the multi-directionality and multi-modality of transnational communication had not been fully explored.

Previous studies showed how OFWs in specific countries and occupations used technology to keep in touch with their families across the miles. Sampson (2003) noted how seabased workers, even while offshore, would call the Philippines twice a month. The seafarers also valued letters sent through the post office even if these contained old news because these provided a tangible link with the Philippines. The letters, she said,

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the increased importance of the receiving-country states in the economic and political futures of sending societies, and 5) the social and political marginalization of migrants in their host countries” (Levitt, 1998, p. 928).

represented “the packaging and sending of love and affection” (p. 268). In 1987, the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) reported an OFW’s sentiment about letters:

My homesickness somehow disappears whenever I receive letters from you. . . .

It really feels good to at least have something to read upon returning to our barracks. Please write a longer letter next time. . . . Send pictures of the kids and, most especially, of yourself. Homesickness really strikes strong out here! (p. 8)

Recent studies, however, revealed the shift from letters, photographs and taped messages sent by post (CIIR, 1987) to phone calls as the primary means of contact between OFWs and the Philippines (Alegado, 2003; Parreñas, 2002). Caregivers in the United States, for example, would often call their families in the Philippines since flying home was expensive.

Thus, they mothered their children through the phone —at a monthly bill that ranged between US\$150 and US\$400. The high bill, which respondents felt was a necessary expense, was due to their conversations with other relatives to verify the stories of their children (Tung, 2000). Parreñas (2001b) found the same transnational mothering sentiment among the female OFWs she interviewed in Rome and Los Angeles, noting how “the pain of family separation creates various feelings, including helplessness, regret, and guilt for mothers and loneliness, vulnerability, and insecurity for children” (p. 361). However, in her subsequent study, Parreñas (2002) said children who realized the sacrifices of their mothers were “less likely to feel abandoned and more likely to accept their mother’s efforts to sustain close relations from a distance.” Asis (2004) said children from two-parent families were able to cope with migration better than those of single mothers who go abroad to work. She qualified that while her survey depicted a generally positive image of migrant work’s impact on children, the focus

groups she conducted revealed some emotional difficulty among adolescent participants. The debate on whether children could be considered as abused by transnational parenting was thus recurrent among migrant workers, as Parreñas (2001c) inferred from her analysis of “Tinig Filipino” articles.

The underlying belief among domestic workers was that their job abroad is an extension of their mothering. Aside from merely nurturing their kids emotionally, even if from a distance, they also earned money to improve their station in life (Cheng, 2004; Tung, 2000). By serving as breadwinners, female domestic workers thus realigned traditional family dynamics from a distance. Kelley (2000) said “the cultural impacts of overseas employment include: the reworking of gendered, sexual, and class identities in families and communities in the Philippines,” among others (p. 43)

Among new media, the Internet had not been noted as an interpersonal communication medium among OFWs, though it had been used for recruitment purposes (Tyner, 1999b, 1998). In 1999, Tyner said the inaccessibility of the Internet to migrant workers who lived with their employers prevented it from becoming a viable medium for communicating with them.

### *Organizational communication*

Organizations are common among diasporic communities. Filipino-American associations that build upon their common ancestry, shared interests, and regional connections abound in the United States. They are representative of how permanent emigrants bond together to maintain links with the motherland.

OFWs, however, are temporary migrants whose residences change depending upon their job, and whose home country is permanently the Philippines. This, together with the fact that they are employed in diverse and gendered occupations in nearly all



countries around the world, entails a reconfiguration of diasporic organizations or the foundation of numerous issue-specific associations.

Indeed, many groups had been established to look after the conditions of OFWs, from the official Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (see Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2004; Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004; Yeoh, Huang, & Devasahayam, 1999) to various voluntary non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As early as 1989, Alcid identified "more than 30 Filipino organizations on the basis of region/province of origin, religion, interests, and principles. There are mutual support systems, both informal and formal" (p. 266).

Such NGOs advocated for migrant rights (Piper, 2004) and protected the welfare of OFWs (Weekley, 2004), especially women (Piper, 2003). They also provided counseling, legal assistance and temporary shelter for migrant workers (Asato, 2003). With these activities, "NGOs highlight the ways in which domestic workers are denied access to participation in the wider society, are beholden to employers who control their bodies and daily routines and appear to be politically demobilized" (Gibson, Law & McKay, 2001, p. 371).

Many NGOs have increasingly become transnational and coalitional, with members, operations, and linkages in countries where there are big OFW populations, and the rights to assemble are guaranteed. Most studies about NGOs, however, are case studies on their activities.

In Hong Kong, organizations such as the United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-HK) (Alcid, 1989), the Mission of Migrant Filipino Workers (Weekley, 2004), and the Asian Migrant Center (AMC) (Weekley, 2004; Gibson, Law & McKay, 2001) had been studied. Founded in 1985 to petition against the forced repatriation of OFW salaries, UNIFIL-HK is a coalition of over 14 organizations. AMC, meanwhile, was established in

1989 to provide counseling and legal assistance, though it changed its mandate to grassroots organization of migrant groups in 1995 (Gibson, Law & McKay, 2001, p. 378).

In London, Anderson (2001) studied United Workers' Association (UWA), whose members come from different countries, though the largest group comes from the Philippines. She cited UWA's successful advocacy for changes in immigration policies as an example of transnationalism from below (p. 673). Bound by their shared experiences as domestic workers, Anderson said UWA members empowered each other through their activities in the organization.

Multi-territorial and coalitional organizations have also been researched. Rodriguez (2002) looked into Migrante International, which sought to harness the political clout of migrant workers. Weekley (2004) studied Unlad Kabayan, which aimed to develop entrepreneurial skills among women. Alunan-Melgar and De Jesus-Maestro (1989) noted that *Kaibigan* [Friend] (The Friends of Filipino Migrant Workers, Inc.) did research and documentation, publication and information, and education and welfare assistance (pp. 170-171). Law (2003) observed that the 260 members of Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) used telecommunication networks to strengthen "transnational solidarities" (p. 234), while Parreñas (2001c) essayed the advocacy work and transnational connections of Kanlungan Centre Foundation in the Middle East and East Asia.

These studies previewed the internal dynamics of OFW NGOs. Anderson (2001) depicted how each meeting of UWA began with an ecumenical prayer and continued with an open discussion where members were encouraged to participate actively. English was its primary language, though Tagalog was spoken intermittently because the sizeable number of Filipino members. Translators helped those who were not familiar with either language. MFA also used English as its "language of solidarity," and in its e-mail correspondences around the world (Law, 2003, pp. 244-248). E-mail,

meanwhile, facilitated increased participation among MFA members in discussing strategies and organizing activities (p. 222).

A sector within the NGO community is comprised of labor recruiter organizations. Labor recruiters are offices that procure contracts, and recruit and deploy workers with the permission and guidance of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) (Tyner, 1996b, 2000b). While the activities of labor recruiters—from their relationship with POEA to their recruitment strategies (Tyner, 1999, 1998b)—had been studied, their trade organizations had not been researched as a stakeholder in the NGO community. The role of recruitment agencies in migrant employment is important. One study noted that most of the 1,200 recruitment agencies in the Philippines, which have annual revenues of US\$400 million, belonged to either the Philippine Association of Service Exporters, Inc. (Pasei) or the Overseas Placement Agencies of the Philippines (OPAP) (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004).

Another important type of NGOs in the migrant community involves those with religious affiliations. Levitt, deWind and Vertovec (2003) asserted that religious practices were integral in the daily narratives of diasporic communities, but that they had been generally neglected in literature. Still, Levitt and Schiller (2004) noted three main tracks in the existing literature on transnational migrants' religious practices: the kinds of religious institutional connections produced by transnational migration; the ways that religion facilitates transnational membership; and the changes that take place in the relationship between religion and politics when their participants are located transnationally (p. 1027).

Religious organizations had been documented as important partners for OFWs. Catholic churches and NGOs in Taiwan (Lan, 2003) and Hong Kong (Ogaya, 2003) offered legal assistance and counselling. Korea's Filipino Catholic Center (Tsujiimoto,

2003) and the Japan's Centro Simbahan (Mateo, 2003), meanwhile, helped maintain Filipino identity among OFWs through various organizational activities that linked the Philippines and the host countries.

Even as they attended to OFW problems, both NGOs and government agencies were beset with their own problems. NGOs, according to Tyner (2004) were "often understaffed and underfunded" (p. 172). Piper and Ball (2001) reported the government had only one Labor Attache for every 16,000 workers. They noted how OWWA officers were on call 24 hours a day, and how many embassy employees were trained on consular and diplomatic work, but not on counseling OFWs about their problems.

OFWs were difficult partners in the advocacy work for their own rights as transmigrants. Politically, Levitt and Schiller (2004) explained that new migrants "appear to be quite conservative with respect to struggles for rights and recognition." Economically, efforts to make OFWs save part of their income for future investments had been slowed down by the desire of OFWs to remit all their money to the Philippines (Weekley, 2004). OFWs must thus change this perspective for them to avail themselves of the projects that promote entrepreneurship (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004).

The apprehension of some migrant workers to organize was due to fear of losing their jobs. In Taiwan (Cheng, 2004; Lan, 2003) and in Hong Kong (Piper, 2004), Filipinas were replaced by some employers with other nationals who were perceived to be more docile, less vocal and organized. The turnover of migrant workers not only weakens their organizations but also raises their concern about the undue consequences of being formally organized. This research thus explored the extent of and the reasons behind the organizational and institutional affiliation and participation of migrant workers. In doing this, the confluences and divergences in the agenda of OFWs and advocacy groups could be discussed.

### *Mass media*

Transnational uses of mass media by OFWs are perhaps the least studied aspect of their communication patterns, though several studies have discussed mediated representations of OFWs. However, the emergent interest on the increasing number of movies, TV and radio shows for and about OFWs, the OFWs' use of new communication technologies, and the export of Philippine media are motivating researchers to bridging this gap.

Media content on OFWs has had three themes thus far: 1) journalistic coverage of OFW abuses and, to a smaller degree, successes; 2) the discussion of OFW issues on TV and radio public affairs shows, sections in mainstream publications, and Web sites and special interest publications for, by, and about OFWs; 3) Web- and print-based OFW recruitment; and 4) cinematic portrayal of OFWs. In this research, I use these themes to explore how OFWs use mass media during their deployment abroad.

#### *Journalistic coverage*

Media coverage of OFWs usually reached fever pitch during sensational cases such as those of Flor Contemplacion, Sarah Balabagan, and Maricris Sioson. This media attention, in turn, motivated researchers to study domestic workers and entertainers.

Studies on media framing of OFWs revealed that it tended to focus on abuses, such as a 1992 investigative article in "The New Yorker" which exposed the plight of women in Kuwait (San Juan, 1996). Physical abuses against sex workers also received widespread media attention (Piper, 2003), as with the Sioson case which had "all the elements that sell: sex, violence, organized crime, hints of a conspiracy and cover-up"

(Tyner, 1997). While such reporting drew public attention to the problems that attended migrant work (Piper, 2003, p. 740), it nevertheless usually vilified the abused as having been disobedient and the government for being unable to protect its citizen/heroes.

Being vilified, however, was not the exclusive domain of abused OFWs. Parreñas had repeatedly decried the double standard between male and female migrant women. She said that since female OFWs transgressed the “mother-nurturer, father-breadwinner” stereotypes (2001b), they were constructed contradictorily as economic heroes and bad mothers. Parreñas wrote, “media reports generally claim that children in transnational families fare poorly and receive inadequate care due to the absence of their mothers. Such children are often considered social liabilities and are said to be prone to ‘drugs, gambling, and drinking’” (2003b, p. 30). She also asserted that both media and government implied that mothers who worked abroad were abandoning their children who would inevitably become a bane to society (2003, 2002).

#### *Media for, of, and by OFWs*

As migrant work has become integral in Philippine society, it has increasingly found a niche in mainstream media and developed its own body of mediated materials. Parreñas (2001c) studied *Tinig Filipino*, a monthly magazine published in Hong Kong and Italy and edited by a former domestic worker. *Tinig Filipino* drew its contributions solely from migrant workers, and Parreñas said that reading it was like hearing a conversation among them. Because of this, *Tinig Filipino* gave a preview of the labor diaspora. This was not evident in a similar publication called “*Diwaliwan*” which focused on entertainment news in the Philippines. Published in Hong Kong, the cover of *Diwaliwan* featured its price in different currencies, underscoring its transnational audience (Parreñas, 2001).

Interestingly, newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV shows about OFWs, especially with the transnational expansion of Philippine broadcast networks in places with big migrant communities, has not been studied in-depth. Thus far, there has been cursory mention of the export of Philippine media in the literature about migrant workers (Tsujiimoto, 2003, p. 158; Alegado, 2003, p. 8).

#### *Web-based recruitment*

Tyner, through a couple of textual analyses of recruitment-related Web sites, argued that the World Wide Web had become an important venue not only for the hiring of migrant labor, but also in reinforcing “global patterns of gendered, racial, and occupational segregation” (1998, p. 331). He said these Web sites commodified workers (1999b) and played upon gendered occupational stereotypes (1999). He noted how the Philippine government packages its citizens as “ambassadors of goodwill” with “able minds + able hands” (1996b, p. 410). Another example he gave was *Juan Kaunlaran* (Johnny Progress), the embodiment of Philippine modernization which POEA interpreted as “an empowered, globally competitive migrant worker” (2000, p. 148). This rhetoric is aligned with earlier proclamations of OFWs as “*Bagong Bayani*” [New Heroes], though it has not been as popular.

#### *OFWs on the big screen*

Several films on OFWs have been produced by Philippine movie companies and shown to big audiences within and outside the country. Among the earliest ones were movies about the abuse stories involving *Contemplacion* (Lamangan, 1995; Aguiluz, 1995), *Balabagan* (Lamangan, 1997), and *Sioson* (Romero, 1993). Recent movies have been about prototypical migrant experiences: “*Anak*” [Child] (Quintos, 2000), where an

OFW mother comes home to children who feel some sense of abandonment due to her stint abroad; “Milan” (Lamasan, 2004), where a young Filipina struggles and survives the difficulties of being an all-around service worker in Italy; and, “Dubai” (Quintos, 2005), a love triangle among OFWs in the United Arab Emirates. These movies, along with several others, have not been discussed academically, except for brief mentions in literature (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004; Tyner, 1997).

### *New media*

Studies on OFWs as audiences of these mass mediated messages have been scant, and the few research papers on this topic focus on the Internet. This is an important oversight since it is in the personal uses of global networks that transnational communication can be observed. For example, Parreñas (2001) inferred OFW experiences from a textual analysis of OFW contributions to *Tinig Filipino* (2001).

Still, a couple of studies noted OFW uses of new media. Rodriguez (2002) discussed the transnational political participation of OFWs during the impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada in 2001. The OFWs, she wrote, joined the Web site <[www.elagda.com](http://www.elagda.com)><sup>19</sup> to support Estrada’s ouster and to call for absentee voting. Further, they “called into radio and television stations, and wrote to newspapers to register their opposition to the president” (p. 351).

### Synthesis

This review reveals that while communication practices and technologies have been repeatedly considered as factors that distinguish current transnationalism, they have not received specific scholarly attention. Instead, what we know of the

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<sup>19</sup> Lagda is the Filipino word for signature. Absentee voting was legalized in 2003. The Web site is no longer operational.



interpersonal, organizational, and mass media networks comes from studies that discuss other migrant issues such as transnational parenting, institutional advocacy, and mediated representations. Thus, even if we can infer the dynamics of OFW communication from these researches, we fail to get a holistic understanding of it. This research, by exploring the transnational, multi-level, and multi-media communication practices of OFWs, addresses this oversight. It provides the quantitative complement to the many qualitative studies on OFWs, and contributes to the empirical evidence about how the personal and organizational uses of local, national and border-crossing media actually differentiate contemporary transnationalism from previous ones.

Further, by using a multi-country approach, this study provides a nuanced picture of the multi-territorial nature of migrant labor from the Philippines. Its coverage thus distinguishes this research from the many studies that explore links between specific home and host pairings. Likewise, by drawing respondents from the general base of migrant workers, the study embraces the diversity of the OFW population.

## Chapter 3

### STUDY FRAMEWORK

From the extensive literature on Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and other transnational migrants, or transmigrants (Schiller, 1999), have emerged concepts, approaches, and categories on how individuals and organizations negotiate their multi-territorial landscape. This chapter explores these perspectives and typologies in four sections and proposes a framework for OFW communication networks. The first section explores how the practices of current migrants define transnationalism and differentiate it from other multi-state activities and processes. It then looks into how conceptualizations of social spaces have produced and been produced by changes in local and global orders. The second section discusses networks—more specifically, social networks—and their transformative nature.

Transnationalism implies the crossing of state boundaries. Thus, the third section explores how national governments seek to discipline migrants, particularly OFWs. Since transnational practices are ultimately rooted in the personal, this section also talks about how global flows and mobility have been linked to identity concepts such as feminization, bifocality, and simultaneity. Finally, a network model for OFW communication is presented to address Portes' (1997) argument that the emergence of these many concepts has not resulted into a real theorization of transmigration.

#### Transnationalism

Transnationalism, often used interchangeably with globalism and sometimes linked with cosmopolitanism, has become a byword in studies on global linkages (Vertovec, 2001, p. 573). Vertovec (1999, p. 447) referred to transnationalism as the “multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-

states” (as cited in Law, 2003, p. 238). Schiller (1999) defined it as the “political, economic, social, and cultural processes that extend beyond the borders of a particular state, include actors that are not states, but are shaped by the policies of and institutional practices of states” (p. 96). As such, she distinguished it from globalism, which, she said, referred to multi-state processes across the world.

Transnationals, therefore, are individuals and organizations who maintain regular relations in more than one state and, in the process, regularly cross state boundaries physically and virtually. Increasingly, their transactions and movements had become work-related (Hannerz, 1990 in Sampson 2003). Alegado (2003) gave a vivid account of the wanderings of Filipino transmigrants:

The Filipino diaspora of the late twentieth century has given rise to the emergence of transnational Filipino family households whose members make their way “home,” meeting hundreds of other Filipinos at various airports throughout the world. . . . In the two weeks or a month that they are “at home,” they will share stories with their loved ones about life “abroad”. . . . Their stories will inspire the imagination of their kin and acquaintances who will follow their trail to the new Filipino communities now taking root in more than 120 countries and hundreds of cities and towns throughout the world (p. 7).

Alegado’s use of the term diaspora raised a problematic in terminologies. Schiller (1999) distinguished between transnational and diasporic communities. “Diasporas,” she wrote, “are understood most usefully as dispersed populations who attribute their common identity, cultural beliefs and practices, language, or religion to myths of a common ancestry but whose sense of common heritage is not linked to a contemporary state” (p. 96). A good example of her definition was the Jewish diaspora before the foundation of the Israeli state. Levitt (1999), meanwhile, used the term diaspora to refer

particularly to migrants who had been expelled or involuntarily exiled from their home states. For Parreñas (2001c), the inequities of the dual global economy would be a reason for that expulsion. For example, limited opportunities in the Philippines and higher wages for doing the same, or even lower-status, jobs abroad would effectively drive skilled and educated Filipinos to work as OFWs.

Though their tenure abroad is primarily economic and temporary in nature, OFWs have evolved socio-cultural practices that are usually identified with earlier diasporas. In the thirty-year history of state-sponsored migrant employment, OFWs have arguably evolved rituals and communities that connect themselves to their host country as well as the Philippines simultaneously. That these experiences take place across states but are firmly grounded in the Philippines-as-homeland (Tyner & Kuhlke, 2003) is also a strong argument to say that OFWs comprise a diasporic community.

Transnationalism transpires not in a mental and emotional state of belonging (Schiller, 1999), but through regular remittances, mediated conversations, organizational affiliations, media uses, among other avenues of connections between home and host states. Increasingly, transnational practices are going beyond the personal and familial transactions, as with the case of OFWs. Transnational advocacy groups have successfully lobbied international agencies and national governments to recognize the contributions of migrant workers by ensuring that their rights and welfare are upheld (Law, 2003). Further, OFWs, like other transmigrants such as those from the Dominican Republic, can now exercise their right to suffrage through absentee voting. Transmigrants are thus becoming an important bloc in matters beyond the personal.

Transnational practices are far from homogenous. Itzigsohn, Cabral, Medina, and Hernandez (1999) differentiated between narrow and broad transnationality among Dominicans' economic, political, civil-societal, and cultural activities, depending upon the

simultaneity of their border-crossing activities. Likewise, Levitt, deWind, & Vertovec (2003) said transnational practices could range from the “selective” to the “comprehensive.” In a special edition of the “International Migration Review” on transnational migration, they noted:

Not all migrants are engaged in transnational practices and that those who are, do so with considerable variation in the sectors, levels, strength, and formality of their involvement. . . . Migrants take part in cross-border activities that are either limited to, or link between, the economic, political, sociocultural and religious sectors of their lives at different stages of their life cycles. (p. 569)

Another qualification about transnational practices was whether it automatically led to cosmopolitanism. Roudometof (2005), who defined cosmopolitanism as a moral and ethical compass that shows in our attitudes and orientations (p. 116), posed a succinct question about this: “Does transnationalism lead to greater levels of cosmopolitanism? Is localism a negation of both of these processes?” (p. 113).

Critical essays do not have a definitive answer when situating this issue with migrant workers. Hannerz (1990) argued that migrant workers, like many transnationals, neither were, nor typically became, cosmopolitan because their ultimate goal was to earn income, and that cross-cultural encounters were “not a fringe benefit but a necessary cost” (Sampson, 2003, p. 260). As such, they tended to keep within their work circles and rarely ventured to socialize with the other residents of their host societies. Kelley (2000), however, argued that overseas employment had imbued social units in the Philippines with a “more cosmopolitan and expansive worldview.” The desire to work abroad, indeed, was higher among the children of migrant workers than those whose parents were employed in the Philippines (Asis, 2003), as the children showed greater awareness of and less apprehension about opportunities abroad. Levitt (1999)

conceptualized this as “social remittances” between home and host countries (p. 927). This interplay, according to Levitt and Schiller (2004), was the missing factor in the “container theory of society,”<sup>20</sup> which neglected the role of social relations that transcended national borders as it assumed that nation-states bound all societies.

#### *Venues of interaction*

Transnational practices transpire neither in a vacuum nor in simple considerations of borders and nation-states. Levitt (1998) listed four ways of conceptualizing the venues where transmigrants simultaneously interacted with others. These were transnational 1) migration circuits, 2) communities, 3) social fields, and 4) binational societies (pp. 927-928). My own review of literature on OFWs noted communities and social fields, as well as other conceptions such as Pierre Bourdieu’s “Habitus,” and Jurgen Habermas’ “Public Sphere.”

Anderson (2001) described how groups of Filipinos came together to read newspapers, eat foods, and speak languages from their region in particular and the Philippines in general. Meanwhile, Parreñas (2001) discussed an imagined transnational community of domestic helpers which helped them address their partial citizenship in the host country. Dispersed around the world, they had a sense of community through their shared labor and connection with the Philippines. Sampson (2003), meanwhile, located seamen’s border-crossing practices in “hyperspaces” where the cross-cultural encounters of workers from different countries took place in a deterritorialized environment over which no one could stake a claim. She qualified, however, that while the merchant cargo ship might be in a culturally indeterminate location its own internal

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<sup>20</sup> Beck (2000) explained that in the current stage modernity, “economic and social ways of acting, working and living no longer take place within the container of the state” (p. 28) as global interconnectedness is blurring the lines between the West and the non-West, the traditional and the modern.

culture is very hierarchical. Such culture reflected the interactions (Law, 2003) and power relations (Roudometof, 2005) that transformed ordinary transnational spaces into social fields.

Roudometof (2005) explained that social fields did not necessarily operate within the same transnational networks, pointing to the multiple strands of the latter. Levitt, deWind, and Vertovec (2003), for their part, pointed to the multiple layers of social fields. As such, they said that understanding transnational connections among migrants should be seen within and beyond the national level. Levitt and Schiller (2004) similarly drew on this Bourdieuan concept of a social field, adding that it remained open to “participants who are joined in struggle for social position.” Another of Bourdieu’s ideas, the post-structuralist habitus, has also been used to discuss transnational spaces. Guarnizo (1997) conceptualized the transnational habitus as patterns of inclinations on how migrants “act and react to specific situations in a manner that can be, but is not always, calculated” (in Vertovec, 2004b, p. 974). Guarnizo qualified that these predispositions were “not simply a question of conscious acceptance of specific behavioral or sociocultural rules.”

A more political conception of spaces was the transnational public sphere where participants “debate their common affairs, contest meanings, and negotiate claims” (Levitt, 1998, p. 928). An example of such a public sphere was the “transnational cyberpublic” that Law (2003) imagined of the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) network. She argued that MFA, rather than presenting a unified global stance, served as a venue for the discussion of various regional issues.

These venues of interaction should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Transnational communities could be considered as social fields because of the contestation among the different levels in their hierarchies. Perhaps more tricky is the

connection between the habitus and the public sphere, given the difference in participants' ability to contest meanings. Habitus suggests a certain socialization that predisposes people's ways of thinking and acting. This seems to run counter to the public sphere as a discursive arena. However, it could be that the predisposition that attends the habitus is the activism that is required by the public sphere. In this sense, therefore, they are congruent. By considering migrants as actors—with the implied sense of agency—in the global economy, Rodriguez (2002) and Sampson (2003) were effectively proposing for this merger between habitus and the public sphere. Further, by mentioning the global economy, they indicated the processes and forces (which would include the workers themselves) behind the transnational movement of labor.

Piper and Ball (2001) said that migrant employment was in line with corporate efforts to increase profits by securing cheaper and unorganized labor either by locating abroad or importing workers. This was facilitated by the “global restructuring of production” (Piper & Ball, 2001, p. 533) or the international division of labor (Parreñas, 2001, p. 61; Goss & Lindquist, 1995, p. 324) where capital and people moved across borders. However, transnational flow of labor was more constrained than the movement of capital because migrants were perceived to threaten the host countries' economy and culture (Krinks, 2002, p. 215) and had limited rights as national or global citizens (Weekely, 2004, p. 351). Underlying these assertions is the consideration of OFWs as global people. For instance, domestic work and caregiving had drawn so many Filipinas that female OFWs had been called “servants of the world” (Yeoh, Huang, & Devasahayam, 1999, p. 8) and “global servants” (in Parreñas' studies).

Scholars argued that global economic restructuring had drawn young women into the workforce and out of their families and communities (Tyner, 2000b) to provide domestic services in developed countries (Parreñas, 2001c, p. 1129). But the presence



and activities of migrants abroad and across borders had also altered their social milieu and their own sense of identity.

### Networks

One way of conceptualizing transnationalism was through a system of linkages or networks. Yeoh, Huang, and Devasahayam (1999) wrote “Transnational practices and networks of capital, labor, business and commodity markets, political movements and cultural flows are both the products of, and catalyst for, contemporary globalization processes” (p. 7). Examples of these practices and networks include the ways through which OFWs remit their income to the Philippines (Vertovec, 2004b) and organize themselves. Yeoh, Huang, and Devasahayam (1999) argued that border-crossing OFW organizations provide a model for transnational “alliance-making and networking among social movements and NGOs coming together to assert pressure for social change spanning national boundaries” (p. 7). One such model is the Migrant Forum in Asia which, from its Hong Kong secretariat, maintains linkages with various migrant organizations around the world. Law (2003) wrote of MFA, “As a networked community emulating the dense networks through which migrants travel, it holds the potential to transform how we think about broader social relations: between migrant groups and host societies, but also between South, Southeast and East Asia NGOs” (p. 236).

Communities of migrant workers also create transnational interpersonal networks which involve them, their families, friends, and co-workers. Unlike organizational networks with their formal and purposeful hierarchies, missions and goals, interpersonal networks are informal patterns of interactions bound by familial, work, and platonic relations. Interpersonal networks can be conceptualized in two ways. First, the networks exist on their own as the participants’ patterns of interactions and relations, as with the

dynamics among members of a family. Second, interpersonal networks can involve the channels or media through which participants interact, as with telephony and online systems. These conceptualizations are not mutually exclusive since the participants of transnational interpersonal networks use media to maintain their connections.

Interpersonal networks, Vertovec (2001) said, are grounded on “some form of common identity [which is] often based upon a place of origin and the cultural and linguistic traits” (p. 573). Goss and Lindquist (1995) had a similar argument: “Members of the network will be linked by common interests and/or obligations that function primarily through personal contact. Migrant networks develop from social networks as individuals and groups exploit social relationships of kinship, friendship, community, or employment experience in order to support migration.”

Such networks thus facilitate the exchange of information and simultaneous interactions across borders. An oft-cited example of this is chain migration, where an initial migrant begins a sustained series of migrations between specific source and destination states. Anderson (2001) said that social networks are used to get employment, especially in domestic work and caregiving where personal references are important. Further, social networks help sustain the hiring of new employees in “a self-perpetuating cycle” (Parreñas, 2001, p. 114). They have resulted in chain migration and a support mechanism for newcomers in finding accommodations and additional employment in Italy (Tacoli, 1999), in Taiwan (Tung, 2000), and among seabased workers (Sampson, 2003). Conversely, social networks in the Philippines have helped locate and move new workers from local communities to various international destinations (Shah, 2000).

Recruitment agencies also have their own social networks to identify job openings and deploy migrant workers (Tyner, 2000b). Parreñas (2001), meanwhile,

argued that networks exist not only in the physical plane. She said that the readers of and contributors to the multi-national OFW magazine "Tinig Filipino" imagine a global community of their own (pp. 11-12).

Social networks, however, are far from being a utopia. They can be exclusivist, favoring and benefiting primarily those who already have some links to current participants. Shah (2000) observed job openings for OFWs were circulated only among the closely-knit community of family members and friends in a fishing village in the Philippines, while Tacoli (1999) said the dominance of domestic workers in Italy is due to the networks existing there. The network, in this case, had not expanded beyond the workgroup. This could help explain gendered occupational channels (Tyner and Donaldson, 1999), and preview the future composition of the OFW population.

Contemporary transnationalism is marked by the media networks through which data and information increasingly cross borders, distinguishing it from conceptions and experiences of earlier diasporas (Tyner & Kuhlke, 2000, 1998; Schiller, 1999). It is these networks that enable migrants and organizations to sustain constant, if not perpetual, contact transnationally. Vertovec (2004) wrote:

Everyday cheap international telephone calls account for one of the main sources of connection among a multiplicity of global social networks. For many of today's migrants, transnational connectivity through cheap telephone calls is at the heart of their lives. For migrants and their kin in distant parts of the world, telephone calls can only provide a kind of punctuated sociality that can heighten emotional strain as well as alleviate it. This mode of intermittent communication cannot bridge all the gaps of information and expression endemic to long-distance separation. Nevertheless, cheap international telephone calls join

migrants and their significant others in ways that are deeply meaningful to people on both ends of the line. (p. 223)

Discounting technological determinism, Vertovec (2004b) argued that while more activities in wider border-crossing networks are a change from the past, they “do not necessarily lead to long-lasting, structural changes in global or local societies” (p. 972). Still, he speculated that the “extensiveness, intensity and velocity of networked flows of information and resources may indeed combine to fundamentally alter the way people do things” (p. 972). Portes (1996) also thought that the mediated transnational practices of people could be changing the “global capital, local labor” stereotype (pp. 813-814): it is not only capital which is moving around the world to tap labor in different locales, but that labor itself is moving around the world to places where capital is located.

By using various communication networks, migrant workers appear to be challenging this dynamic between capital and labor. For example, their tenure abroad exposes them to various governmental and fiscal models. Together with the increased awareness about their economic contributions and political power through organizations, conversations and the media, their stay abroad can thus serve as impetus to call for reforms. Conversely, a sense of empowerment in the host country, either through imagined communities of laborers (Parreñas, 2001c) or transnational advocacy groups, can impel them to seek for improved welfare in the host country. Thus, inasmuch as global and national informational and technological flows affect their lives, so do their lives influence these processes (Levitt, deWind, & Vertovec, 2003).

Organizations, like individuals, are also harnessing the transformative potential of transnational technologies. Law (2003) essayed how MFA used electronic telecommunications networks as nodes for transnational communication to harness an imagined community for political activism (p. 234).

### The Nation-State

While transnationalism, by definition, is the crossing of borders, it does not automatically imply the impending death of the nation-state. Researchers have argued that nation-states as political, social, and economic units have been adept in keeping migrant workers within an imagined sense of nationhood or in disciplining those who go beyond such containment. They said nation-states did so by reconfiguring themselves and redefining national membership (Levitt, deWind & Vertovec, 2003). Thus, they were able to contest the transnationalist threat from migrant communities by changing their discursive representations while maintaining their form and substance as sovereign and territorialized bodies (Baubock, 2003).

Guarnizo and Smith (1998, in Anderson, 2001, p. 673) pointed out that migrants' networks were rarely contradictory to the "essentialized national identity" and that their practices seldom represented "counter-narratives of the nation." Tyner and Kuhlke (2001), however, argued that diasporic communities negotiated their national identities in "spaces of uncertainty, of hybridity" where they experienced the push and pull of their host country and the homeland. As such, and with the help of border-crossing media, they were able to reconstruct nationalism (p. 233). Similarly, Anderson (2001) noted that migrant workers could oppose national hegemonies with the help of advocacy groups.

However, the literature is rich with examples of how such had hegemonies emerged both from host and home countries. Studies discussed how these hegemonies affected migrants' lives (Levitt & Schiller, 2004), encouraged and enacted undue ideologies and policies (Yeoh, Huang, & Devasahayam, 1999), or served as the points of reference for their activities (Levitt & Schiller, 2004; Baubock, 2003).

The Philippine government had constantly sought to keep OFWs, along with other expatriate Filipinos, within the national discourse, both for ideological and economic reasons (Anderson, 2001). It was able to promote the competitiveness of its citizenry and escape criticism over the lack of local opportunities by positioning the OFW in the discourse of globalization (Tyner, 2000) and reminding OFWs of their rights, privileges and continued obligations as Philippine citizens through publications such as the “Handbook for Filipinos Overseas” (Rodriguez, 2002)

Similarly, researchers argued that the government rhetoric espousing OFWs as the nation’s modern-day heroes was not so much an expression of gratitude as it was an attempt to own them (Parreñas, 2003b, 2001c; Rafael, 1997). Also, the label drew a parallel between the OFWs’ and the nation’s sacrifices towards their collective progress (Ileto, 1998). This was not the first time that the government had sought to keep the Philippines relevant in the lives of migrant Filipinos. In the 1970s, President Ferdinand Marcos launched the “*Balikbayan*” [Homecoming] tourism program where Filipinos, or those with Philippine ancestry, were invited not so much as visitors but as returnees to the homeland. Thus, the government reminded them of their roots and the primacy of the nation in their identity (Rodriguez, 2002; Rafael, 1997). A popular 1993 song, “*Babalik ka rin*” [You will also return], was cited as example of this approach. Its lyrics<sup>21</sup> serve as a reminder to migrant Filipinos that wherever they might be in the world, the Philippines is their uncontested homeland (Rodriguez, 2002; Parreñas, 2001c).

Parreñas (2003b, 2001c), however, pointed out that attempts to embrace migrant Filipinos are not always affirmatory. Indeed, she noted how the government framed migrant Filipinas contradictorily. On the one hand, they are modern-day heroes whose

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<sup>21</sup> The lyrics that Parreñas (2001c) cited was: “*Saang dako ka man ng mundo, Hong Kong, Australia, Singapore o Saudi, babalik at babalik ka rin.*” She translated it as follows: “In whatever corner of the world you are in, Hong Kong, Australia, Singapore, or Saudi Arabia, you are eventually going to return” (p. 1138-1139).

economic remittances contribute to national development. On the other hand, they destabilize the nation by reworking gender relations and seemingly abandoning their children. This representation thus could preclude women from asserting themselves progressively and harnessing their economic potential (Gibson, Law & McKay, 2001).

While the nation-state frames itself for migrants, migrants also frame it for themselves and for others, with both frames underscoring the centrality of the nation-state. For instance, Filipino migrants were an active absent community in the impeachment of President Joseph Estrada in 2001 (Rodriguez, 2002) and in the passing of legislation on dual citizenship and absentee voting two years later (Levitt & Schiller, 2004) by participating in SMS brigades and signing-up in online petitions. These cases illustrated how transnational communities were shaping the politics in their homeland (Itzigsohn, Cabral, Medina, and Hernandez, 1999; Vertovec, 2004b). Economically, migrants framed the nation-state as beneficiaries of their labor. As such, they would demand not only for better public services (Levitt & Schiller, 2004), but also for the greater national development (Weekley, 2004) that should result from their remittances. OFWs know that their remittances are helping improve the economic standing of their own families and communities. By extension, these monies should ideally translate to better governmental and commercial services.

The increasing number of Filipinas in its migrant workforce, meanwhile, had defined the Philippines as a female nation among the Japanese (Mackie, 1998; Tyner, 1996) and in the global economy (Parreñas, 2001c). This feminine labelling shows yet another facet in the role of the nation—this time, the host—in transnationalism. Indeed, researchers argued that in the migrant employment landscape, host governments occupied a more privileged space as they chose where to source workers (Tyner, 1996b), decided how to ensure workers' welfare (Yeoh, Huang, & Gonzales, 1999) and

how much to pay workers (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004). The tightening of migration channels<sup>22</sup> and the increased competition among labor-sending countries (Piper, 2004) is strengthening this argument.

### Identity

Transnationalism is a multi-level discourse that is grounded on the personal. Cross-border activities are initiated and experienced by persons, and even transnational organizations, nation-states, and technological networks have people as their agents. Thus, to appreciate transnationalism requires the study of transmigrants, and one way to do this was by exploring their sense of identity. Vertovec (2001, in Rodriguez, 2002) defined identity as how “people conceive of themselves and are characterized by others” (p. 344). This section explores assertions about OFW identity as it has been contextualized with the nation, class mobility, feminization, and simultaneity.

### *Nation and identity*

Studies of transmigrants revealed that transmigrants valued their connection to a hegemonic nationalist identity (Rodriguez, 2002:344). Thus, even if they might be dispersed around the world, the Philippines remained “home” for many migrants (Alegado, 2003; Asis, 2003; Sampson, 2003; Parreñas, 2001c). However, this does not preclude a sense of affiliation with other groups. While maintaining their association to the Philippine nation, Philippine migrants saw themselves as part of the global Philippine diaspora (Tyner & Kuhlke, 2000) or their occupational community (Parreñas, 2001c).

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<sup>22</sup> Piper (2004) wrote: “Despite some variations, labor migration policies in the receiving countries in Asia can be broadly summarized as follows: limiting labor migration, limiting the duration of migration, and limiting integration” (p. 75).



Identifying OFWs with the Philippines, however, is not solely their doing.

Employers also essentialized national identities when hiring workers, while citizens of a host country could stereotype migrants. Tyner (1996) said the Japanese equated the Philippines with poverty, and Filipinas with prostitution. Anderson (2001) explained how this “commodified racialized identity” helped Filipinas who are known for the fluency in English and ability to take care of children quite well to get better-paying jobs in London, rather than on its outskirts.

### *Identity and mobility*

OFWs’ transnational movement entails not only the crossing of borders, but also a re-location between the developing and the developed worlds. This results in a “contradictory class mobility” (Parreñas, 2001) through which they suffer for the welfare of the next generation. These shifts in spaces and places influence OFWs’ identity. It is often noted how teachers, nurses, and clerks in the Philippines at least doubled their income by working as nannies, maids, and caregivers elsewhere (Hochschild, 2003; Tyner, 1996b). Even those who maintained their jobs across states also increased their salary by working abroad: the salary of construction workers could rise from US\$75 to US\$500 per month by becoming OFWs (CIIR, 1987). Such discussions recall the world’s dual economy as having an impact on OFWs’ identity (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2004).

Since migration is an expensive endeavor, with hefty placement fees paid to labor recruiters (see studies by Tyner), it is not the domain of poor Filipinos. Indeed, it was the members of the educated middle class who could choose to work abroad. It was also they who were attracted by the opportunities in migrant work (Tyner, 2004; Krinks, 2002). Alegado (2003) said it was the middle class who saw the differences “local realities and imported consumption aspirations” (p. 3) because it is they who are

exposed to messages from the foreign media and who have relatives abroad that reveal gap between what they have in the Philippines and what they can have elsewhere.

Members of the middle class thus maintained and improved their position through migrant work. Krinks (2002) said OFW families, even those with no other sources of income, were in the top 40 percent of the income bracket. Similarly, houses of OFW families, even in undeveloped settlements, were distinguished by their concrete structure (Kelley, 2000), hi-tech household appliances (Kelley, 2000; CIIR, 1987) and other imported trappings and symbols (Alcid, 1989). San Juan (1996) wrote, "For many Filipinos who have been forced to sell their labor power abroad, Saudi Arabia has become a symbol of the new path to a simulacra of prosperity" (p. 171).

These economic benefits, however, came at the expense of social status. Parreñas (2001) called this shift "contradictory class mobility," as lower-order OFWs such as underemployed domestic workers would experience economic upward mobility simultaneously with social downward mobility when they were deployed abroad (Tyner, 2004; Huang, Yeo, & Jackson, 2004). Thus, these OFWs had to negotiate through their "conflicting class identities" as they moved from their middle class position and occupation in the Philippines to their minority status and "3D" (dirty, demeaning, and dangerous) jobs abroad (Lan, 2003).

This change in positionality affected employer-employee relations. Employers were surprised to know that their domestic workers came from middle class families in the Philippines and that their maids had household help, too (Parreñas, 2001). The surprise arose from the notion that domestic workers automatically came from poor families. Moreover, domestic workers tried to approximate that preconception by not telling their employers about their own properties and household help in the Philippines (Lan, 2003; Constable, 2003). In this dynamic, Cheng (2004) saw an identity struggle

that reinforced inequalities and presented “challenges to the deployment of feminist strategies for building alliances among women, both locally and globally.”

Attendant to contradictory class mobility was the deskilling experienced during underemployment. For example, while they appreciated its economic benefits, domestic workers complained that their work abroad was making them stupid, a process which some said was worse than being away from their children (Parreñas, 2001).

Still, domestic workers and other OFWs suffered through the temporary downgrading of their social status for the long-term welfare of their families. Thus, even the promise of permanent residency in their host country did not appeal to domestic workers since moving their family abroad could consign their children to their low-status jobs (Parreñas, 2002). Similarly, education was one of the main expenses of migrant workers as it could help guarantee that their children would not have to experience their plight (Tacoli, 1999). While their children may sustain the chain migration of labor, it was their hope that their children would have the education needed to work at the professional level abroad. Finally, educated children were also in a better position to support their return to the Philippines (Cueva, 1995).

#### *Feminization and identity*

The increasing number of women OFWs has not only feminized the identity of the Philippines in some countries; it also raises issues of identity, especially in relation to the women’s position in the family and in society.

Despite what may be their many transnational connections, many OFWs remain oriented towards their family and friends in the Philippines. This stance, together with the support of the extended family (Parreñas, 2003), could perhaps explain why marriage and family life had remained stable despite the distance among their members

(Vasquez, 1992 in Tyner, 2004). However, this geographic separation particularly “places children under serious emotional strain” (Parreñas, 2003:39; also in Krinks, 2002) and causes homesickness and loneliness among all parties (CIIR, 1987:7-8). A recent study, however, revealed the children of OFWs appeared to be well-adjusted to their transnational families if they were made to realize the sacrifices of their parents (Asis, 2003). Among all adolescent children, the offspring of migrant single mothers appeared to have apprehensions about their situation. However, it is important to note that single mothers find in migrant employment the opportunity to support their families abandoned by the other parent (Ticoli, 1999). In a sense, migrant employment was a place for liberation for these mothers, as Constable (2003) wrote:

Unfaithful husbands with mistresses, abusive spouses, or spouses who have abandoned their familial obligations altogether are also among the reasons why women go to work abroad. For such women, emigration offers refuge, sustenance, and, in some cases, permanent escape (p. 171).

The linking of broken families and migrant work emerged only with the feminization of the OFW experience. Because women were expected to nurture the family, even on top of contributing to the household income, their departure abroad was seen as a threat to family life (Parreñas, 2003; Gonzales, 1998). However, they see their work abroad as a sacrifice to preserve the middle class standing of their family (Tyner, 2004; Alegado, 2003; Krinks, 2002).

Another identity issue related to feminization was the nature of domestic work, the job of many female OFWs. Domestic work highlighted the contradiction of commodified reproductive labor as maids took care of other people’s children when they should be looking after their own offspring (Anderson, 2003; Parreñas, 2001c; Hochschild, 2003). It also impelled women to negotiate their domesticity, femininity, and

motherhood relative to those of the other female members of the household where they worked (Cheng, 2004; Lan, 2003).

### *Simultaneity of identities*

Migrant employment thus poses a number of identity struggles that involve belongingness to the nation-state, contradictory class mobility, and, for women, feminization and its relations to reproductive labor. More importantly, however, these struggles transpire simultaneously across borders.

The concept “politics of simultaneity” (Smith, 1994 in Law, 2003, p. 236), for instance, refers to the concurrent discussion of ideas and perspectives by participants dispersed across territories. While Law (2003) applied it to Migrant Forum in Asia’s transnational strategy development, I feel that the concept of simultaneity is also appropriate at the personal level. After all, transmigrants, by definition, are “immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationships to more than one nation-state” (Glick-Schiller et al, 1995, p. 48 in Parreñas, 2001, p. 28). In fact, Parreñas (2001) used simultaneity to explicate the imagined global community of Filipina domestic workers. Levitt and Schiller (2004), meanwhile, wrote:

Simultaneity, or living lives that incorporate daily activities, routines, and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally, is a possibility that needs to be theorized and explored. Migrant incorporation into a new land and transnational connections to a homeland or to dispersed networks of family, compatriots, or persons who share a religious or ethnic identity can occur at the same time and reinforce one another. (p. 1003)

Implicit to simultaneity is the maintenance of concurrent identities or frames of reference, especially to manage transnationalism. Guarnizo (1997) said Dominicans sustained a “dual frame of reference” to compare their standing between their home and host countries (in Vertovec, 2004b). Tyner and Kuhle (2000) said research on diasporic communities revealed a “dualist conception of identity” where the homeland and the host country were hybridized. Sampson (2003, citing Vertovec, 1999) adopted a similar proposition when she said that OFWs may have “multiple identities” or develop “cultural hybridities” specific to their changing work locations (p. 255).

#### Summary and a network theory of transnationalism

Transnationalism among migrants has been studied through the simultaneity of their cross-border practices. Its multi-territorial nature has raised identity issues, especially those that relate to the constructions of nation-state, the dual world economy, and the feminization of migrant employment.

While transnational activities transcend the territories of nation-state, they do not threaten its primacy in the lives of transmigrants. Nation-states have been found to enact policies to control as well as sublimate demands for the protection of transmigrants. Further, they have also been adept at redefining their representation as either home or host nation-states, reminding transmigrants of their permanent or temporary affiliation. Thus, they serve as important points of references for the identity of transmigrants.

Since states are not economically equal, the movement of transmigrants across borders results not only in a shift of places, but also of spaces. As middle class and well-educated transmigrants from the Philippines work abroad in lower-order occupations, they find themselves socially demoted. Relative economic advancement thus comes at the expense of social downward status, and a shift in how transmigrants perceive and

present themselves. In the Philippines, they are the nation's modern-day heroes with comparatively stronger economic might, but abroad they are in the ethnic minority whose purchasing power is at the lower end of the salary spectrum.

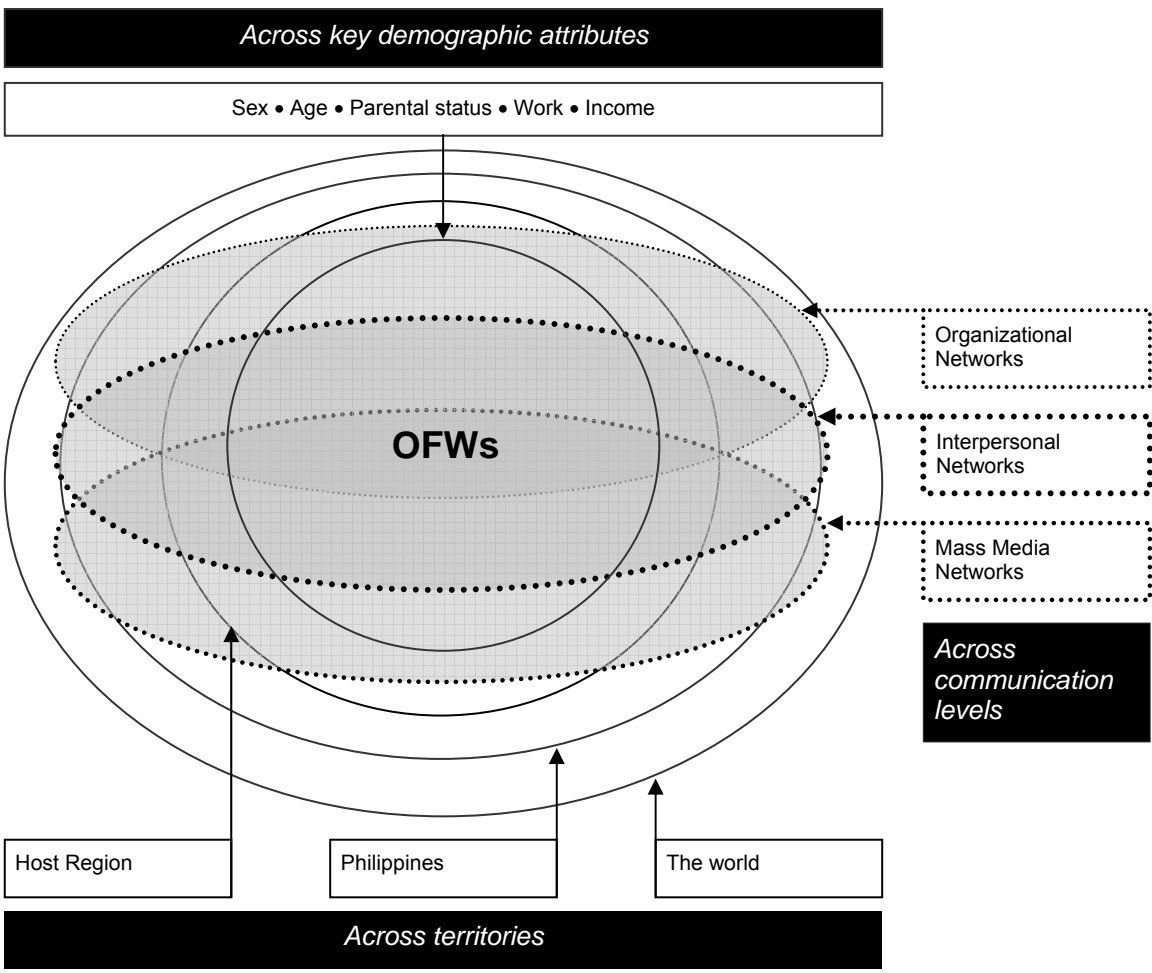
This contradictory class mobility has been observed particularly among female OFWs. As clerks, teachers, and nurses went abroad to become domestic workers and caregivers, they not only changed professions but also exchanged their social status for economic benefits. The channeling of female OFWs primarily into the service sectors thus affects their personal and shared identities. On the one hand, they see the contradiction between their commodified reproductive labor and their inability to nurture their own families. They also compare their femininity with the other women in the household where they serve. On the other hand, they see themselves as members of a global community of Filipina domestic servants.

These activities and negotiations of identity have been located in different spatial conceptions and social organizations: in *social fields* which incorporate power relations among transmigrants; in *communities* where they have a sense of belonging; in *habitus* which maps their positionality depending upon their status and characteristics; and in *public spheres* where they contest meanings. These locations are not mutually exclusive and they all inform us how we can explore transnationalism and its transformative possibilities as well as the agency of its participants.

One way of merging these transnational practices, identities and venues of interaction is through a network, which is the approach in this research. By considering them as interconnected—though not necessarily level or symmetrical—patterns of activities, conceptions, places, and spaces, I am able to construct a framework for transnationalism. This addresses what Portes (1997) said was a dearth in theory-building in studies of transnationalism, even with the emergence of concepts about it.

Since models need to be precise and simple, I am focusing on the transnational communication networks of OFWs (Figure 3.0.). I visualize these networks as having three fields: interpersonal communication, organizational participation, and mass media use.

Figure 3.0. A proposed framework for the transnational communication networks of overseas Filipino workers



Each communication level stretches from the OFWs themselves, across the host region where they reside, the Philippines as their homeland, and the world as their



greater public sphere as global citizens. This depiction reflects the linkages and simultaneity of experiences across territories. Implicit to these three spatial categories—the Philippines, the host region, and the world—is the continued importance of territoriality in transnationalism. However, while the literature has noted the nation-state as the pivotal unit of analysis, I opted to discuss areas of deployment in terms of host regions for parsimony (see Chapter 4). This also underscores the host region of OFWs as one of the study's key demographic attributes (KDAs).

For representation, communication levels are symmetrical and overlapping to indicate possible areas of confluence. Their shape and size, however, could be altered to reflect imbalances and inequalities in patterns of use as well as the influence of KDAs sex, age, parental status, work, and income. Their coverage could be changed as well to show gaps in participation across networks. Likewise, I chose not to use lines, as networks are usually drawn so as not to show linearity. I thought that the oval shapes appropriately depict what I have discussed as social fields and the power relations incorporated in them.

The provision for confluence addresses concerns over undue subscription to technological determinism. While it may appear that the three communication fields are media-based, I argue that with the emergence of personal media, the channel-specificity of various levels of communication no longer holds true. For example, OFWs who engage in interpersonal communication may do so through mass media networks, such as through online postings that are designed for their friends and chatmates, but are also available to the general public. Similarly, by putting OFWs at the center of the model, I imbue them with the agency in choosing who to talk with, which organizations to join, which media to use, and which content to seek.

The centrality of the OFWs in the spatial landscape and the communication networks is also in line with the application of structuration, which discusses the interplay of human agency and social structures, to migration studies (Benitez, 2005; Tacoli, 1999; Goss & Lindquist, 1995).

## Chapter 4

### METHODOLOGY

The Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) phenomenon has been studied using different research designs. Case studies have focused on a single issue or organization, while cross-sectional ones have looked at demographic, geographic, and financial profiles. Reactive studies such as surveys and interviews have gathered data directly from OFWs, while non-reactive studies have constructed data from the textual analysis of Web sites, state policies, and other documents. Finally, studies have also used both primary data and meta-analyzed secondary data. It has also been approached through the combination of methods, as I have done in this research.

This chapter thus begins with a review of the methods of previous studies on OFWs. It continues with a two-part discussion on the design of this research: The first section discusses the quantitative component involving the survey of 320 respondents. The second describes the qualitative part involving interviews with representatives from organizations and institutions that work for OFWs and the textual analysis of print materials that the informants provided. The chapter ends with a description of data analysis.

#### Overview of methods

Case studies have focused on the dynamics among different Philippine diasporic communities (Alegado, 2003; Rafael, 1997), the feminization of the migrant labor force (Anderson, 2003; Piper, 2003), the value of religion among OFWs (Mateo, 2003; Tsujimoto, 2003), and the operations of government agencies (Gonzales, 1998; Luciano, 1996; Tharan, 1989) and non-government organizations (Law, 2003; Ogaya, 2003; Anderson, 2001; Gibson, Law & McKay, 2001; Alunan-Melgar & de Jesus-Maestro,

1989; Maranan, 1989). Other case studies which used secondary data discussed reasons for migration (Dos Santos & Postel-Vinay, 2003; Carlos, 2002) and demographic profiles of OFWs (Collado, 2003; Abella, 1979), particularly those related to geographical (Tyner, 2000b; Tyner & Donaldson, 1999) and gender distributions (Tyner, 1996b).

Non-reactive studies also included those which used textual or document analysis to critique state representations (Tyner, 2000, 1997, 1996) and policies (Piper, 2004; Weekley, 2004; Yeoh, Huang, & Devasahayam, 2004; Parreñas, 2003b; Piper & Ball, 2002, 2001; Rodriguez, 2002; Nuqui & Josue, 2000; Medel-Anonueva, Abad-Sarmiento, & Oliveros-Vistro, 1989; Tyner, 1997). Other studies using this technique looked at media content (Mackie, 1998; Tyner & Kuhlke, 2000; Tyner, 1997), particularly that produced by OFWs themselves (Parreñas, 2001c) or by recruiters (Tyner, 1999b, 1998).

Reactive studies could be grouped into two categories. In-depth interviews were used to explore relations between OFWs and their employers (Cheng, 2004; Constable, 2003; Tung, 2000), and between OFWs and their children (Parreñas, 2003, 2001, 2001b). Surveys, meanwhile, were employed to study remittances (Menjivar, DeVanzo, Greenwell, & Burciaga, 1998), occupational destinations and economic mobility (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2005 & 2004).

Multi-method studies employed (a) participatory action research to study the lifestyles of females OFWs in Canada (Grande & Kerr, 1998), (b) survey and in-depth interviews to study gender relations in Italy (Tacoli, 1999), and (c) participant observation and in-depth interviews to study employer-employee dynamics in Taiwan (Lan, 2003) and among sea-based workers (Sampson, 2003).

As the review has shown, many of the studies on OFWs have been case studies on specific issues or destinations, using secondary materials or ethnographies that employed participant observation and intensive personal interviews or focus groups. The few that employed survey research studied economic behavior across host countries.

In this research, I took my cue from the multi-method studies, but extended them by drawing 320 respondents from 16 spaces of deployment and interviewing 20 informants from 19 organizations. By using triangulation (Mason, 2002), I was able to study the communication networks of OFWs, both from personal and organizational/institutional perspectives.

#### Quantitative component

I used a survey as my quantitative research method (see Babbie, 2004; Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold, 1998) since it enabled me to study communication patterns and demographic attributes across countries of deployment. The survey involved a random survey of 300 respondents from the 15 countries that hosted the largest OFW populations. An additional 20 sea-based workers were included to represent those who worked abroad, but who had no specific host country. Twenty respondents from each destination allowed the inclusion of as many groups while satisfying statistical requirements in performing tests of significance across sub-groupings.

#### *Selection of respondents*

In 2004, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) started the “E-link Project for OFWs,” which is an online database system for the records of OFWs and recruitment agencies, among others (POEA, 2004). Since the database is still new, I felt it was not a viable resource from which to draw a sampling frame for the survey.

Even if that were feasible, it would have been impossible to reach the OFWs who have been randomly selected in the sampling frame. Administering the survey in person or the telephone among respondents chosen this way would have entailed considerable time and financial resources because this would have meant traveling or calling to the 15 destinations included in this research.

Thus, I employed a viable alternative that I had used in previous studies. Since OFWs have fixed contracts, they regularly need to renew their documents each time they returned to the Philippines. They do this at the POEA One-Stop Processing Center for Balik-Manggagawa. Located at the basement of the POEA head office in Metro Manila, the Center renews the papers of an average of 3,000 OFWs per workday.

Upon entering the Center, OFWs meet with labor officers who check whether they have all the required documents. After this screening stage, they fall in line while POEA staffers enter the OFWs' papers in the database. The process ends after the OFWs pay the renewal fee and receive their OFW identification card. The waiting period between the screening stage and the payment of fees lasts at least 20 minutes.

While waiting, OFWs sit in rows of chairs that are arranged like church pews. The rows face the bank of windows where OFWs are called for their payment and ID. It is this seating arrangement that I used as the de facto sampling frame for the random selection of respondents.

To do this, I developed a control sheet listing office hours in thirty-minute intervals. In each thirty-minute timeframe, a survey researcher was assigned to interview a respondent from a specific country. The researcher located this respondent based on a particular location in the bank of chairs.

Table 4.1 shows an excerpt of the protocol for research selection. It shows that a data-gatherer was assigned to interview a respondent deployed in Saudi Arabia between

8:30 and 9:00 in the morning. To locate the respondent, the data-gatherer asked the 15<sup>th</sup> person in line if he or she was from Saudi Arabia. If this were the case, then the survey was administered after permission is granted by the respondent. If that person did not work in Saudi Arabia, and it was expected that the queue and the protocol would not match perfectly, the person who was in line before the initial respondent was then asked. If there was still no match, the person who stood in line after the initial respondent was approached. This selection of alternative respondents was done five persons away from the original interviewee in either direction. Alternate respondents for the 15<sup>th</sup> person in line thus went as follows: 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> in line. If the appropriate respondent was still not located after this process, another time was given to it during the extension of the data-gathering period.

Time	Number	Data gatherer	Country	Interval (from the first person in line)
8:30-9:00	1.	Romualdo	Saudi Arabia	15 <sup>th</sup>

During the initial data-gathering period from July 15 to August 4, 271 of the 320 respondents were interviewed using this system at the POEA. Thus, I extended the data gathering until September 16 to complete the required number of respondents. However, I learned during the first run that of the 49 remaining respondents, 10 were from Japan and sea-based workers respectively. I then learned that finding these workers at POEA was difficult because entertainers, who comprise a big portion of the OFWs in Japan, renewed their papers at another government office, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Similarly, recruitment agencies process the papers of sea-based workers by batch. Thus, seafarers no longer go to POEA directly. To address these unanticipated issues, I sent two students each to TESDA and to the Manila

clearinghouse of the recruiter agencies to interview the respondents we could not locate in POEA. They followed the same protocol we used in POEA.

### *Data gathering*

A summer stipend from Ohio University (OU) School of Telecommunications and a dissertation grant from the University of the Philippines Diliman funded this research. Sixteen undergraduate students (Table 4.2.) of the Communication Research program of the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication (UP CMC), where I am on study leave as an Assistant Professor, did the face-to-face survey interviews.

Founded in 1908, the University of the Philippines is the country's premier university. Its flagship campus in Diliman draws the best students in the country as it receives over 75,000 applications for the 4,000 freshmen slots it can accommodate each year. The College of Mass Communication is located in Diliman, and offers undergraduate programs in journalism, broadcast communication, film, and communication research. It also offers master's programs in media studies and communication, and a doctorate program in communication. The Communication Research Program is highly reputed in the country, and its department has been named a Center of Excellence in Communication Education by the Philippine Commission of Higher Education.

Mary Lou Alacapa	Gina Lorraine Lindo
Princess Alaoria	Monique Aleli Naval
Abirigo Bondad	Rania Ortaliz
Cristina Calderon	John Estanley Penalosa
Fatima Campita	Hazel Prado
Cassandra Cuevas	Sylvia Catherine Romualdo
Ria Darisan	Ma. Andrea Soriano
Kathleen Delos Santos	Reginald Uy



The Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Research includes courses on basic and advanced quantitative and qualitative research, data interpretation and reporting, and special topics on communication management, planning, and computer technology. An undergraduate thesis is a requirement for graduation. The Communication Research Society (CRS), meanwhile, is an organization exclusively for undergraduate students in the Communication Research program. CRS members have worked closely with the faculty in various academic and commissioned studies. I have personally worked with them, even while pursuing my doctorate at Ohio University (OU).

I have kept in touch with CRS since I am one of their two faculty advisers. I learn of its activities through a Yahoo online group. It was through this online group that I made a call for data-gatherers among CRS members in their senior year. I told prospective data-gatherers that they would be paid US\$2.00 for each completed questionnaire. Altogether, 16 interviewers administered the survey:

On June 23, 2005, I received permission from the OU Institutional Review Board exempting the research from a full review. On July 15, I met with my 16 survey researchers for a training session (see Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold, 1998) at the UP CMC. During the 90-minute session, I explained the study's background and objectives, the sections and administration of the questionnaire, and the random selection of respondents. On the first day of data-gathering, each student received a survey kit which contained (a) the revised questionnaires, (b) the data gathering schedule and a directory of all researchers so those who worked during the same shift could coordinate together, (c) letters of introduction and a card for identification purposes, and (d) supplies such as pencils and a sharpener. I also included a one-page summary of the research protocol we had earlier discussed.

To explain the data gathering process as well as to get clearance for the students to work in their building, I talked to the following POEA officials: General Administrative and Support Services Administrator Carmelita Dimzon, Planning Office Director Salome Mendoza, and One-Stop Processing Center for Balik-Manggagawa Chief Elmira Sto. Domingo. It is a practice in the Philippines to make a courtesy call with officials before data gathering begins in their area of jurisdiction. The officials were very accommodating, and their sole request was to be provided with a copy of the research once completed. They told me that being courteous to OFWs is the best way to get their cooperation. The processing time for the renewal of documents took less than half an hour on the average, which was sufficient for the 20 minutes needed to do the survey.

### *Survey instrument*

I used a comprehensive survey questionnaire (Appendix 1) to address the survey method's inability to probe as intensively as qualitative approaches. The questionnaire had seven sections: Section A covered demographic data. Sections B and C dealt with interpersonal and organizational communication patterns respectively. Section D focused on mass media uses, while section E looked at media ownership, access, and costs. Section F determined how media use had changed since the time the OFWs first worked abroad. Section G explored issues in migrant work, and Section H the attitudes of OFWs regarding new communication technologies.

The questionnaire was pre-tested by ten of my researchers who had access to OFWs. Most of the items in the questionnaire used 0 to 5 rating/ranking scales, which were made consistent (0 is never/not appropriate and 5 is most frequent/strongly agree) following the pre-test. Other changes that resulted from the pre-test included: (a) adding guidelines on how to answer each section; (b) merging communication in home and in

the host countries per theme, rather than having different sections for each one; (c) incorporating all media questions per theme, rather than having separate sections for print, television, radio, and film; (d) rephrasing the attitudinal statements; and (e) merging items on OFW issues and changing them into a rating scheme.

These changes made the questionnaire not only easier and faster to administer, but also more accessible to respondents. Items flowed more smoothly and the respondents did not have to remember many details, which would have been difficult given the time constraints. Because most of the items were pre-coded and used comparable scales following the changes, coding and data analysis became easier. For a questionnaire to be included in the research, the respondent should have answered six of its seven pages.

### *Debriefing*

Before I returned to the United States, I met with the data-gathers for a debriefing session. They said the data gathering went quite smoothly, and that the rating/ranking system was easy to administer. In cases where the respondents did not easily grasp the scale, the students showed a visual version of it. Time was the largest constraint as the respondents were eager to leave the POEA building. However, the students gained the cooperation of the respondents by explaining the significance of the study and politely adding that their work would not be paid and included in the research if the respondents did not complete the questionnaire. Thus, only two questionnaires were spoiled because of inadequate responses.

The researchers agreed that the respondents were cooperative generally. They did note that professionals were more open to the interview, while domestic workers were more apprehensive. This reminds me of literature that discussed the unwillingness

of lower-order migrant workers to extend themselves beyond their job by joining organizations or doing advocacy work. The attitude towards the research also varied. Some respondents were grateful that their experiences were being documented, while others felt cynical about what the research could do to improve their situation. Likewise, even if the students introduced the survey as part of my dissertation, a couple of respondents wondered whether it was for a telecommunications company. It was good, then, that the question about communication expenses was at the latter part of the instrument as this deflected the concern.

The interval system worked, but OFWs who did not satisfy the protocol teased the researchers about being bypassed. For instance, numerous workers from Saudi Arabia, Italy, and Hong Kong were quite eager to participate, but they could not be interviewed because of the probability sampling scheme.

It is important to note that the POEA has started to decentralize the renewal process by allowing OFWs to renew their work papers by mail or through the Internet. Right now, the project is still new and has few participants. In the long term, however, it might no longer be tenable to conduct a random survey of OFWs in the POEA building depending upon their receptivity to the alternative ways to renew documents.

#### Qualitative component

For the qualitative approach, I employed personal interviews and the textual analysis of print materials. Through this, I explored specific communications by public, private, and socio-civic organizations that rendered services or sold products particularly to OFWs. Interviews, according Jankowski and Wester (1991), are the best method for “institutional norms and statuses” (p. 60), as I am doing with organizational

communication patterns in this research. I thus covered the exchange not only among OFWs, but also the linkages between them and other agencies.

#### *Selection of informants*

I purposely chose the informants to represent four major institutional groupings (Table 4). I first contacted these organizations by email from the United States. I then asked my sister, who was in the Philippines, to coordinate the time, date, and venue of the interviewees as it proved cumbersome to work out these details by e-mail. I had contact with three other organizations, though problems in scheduling prevented them from participating in this research.

Half of the informants requested a copy of the questionnaire beforehand, either to prepare the needed data and materials prior to the interview or to seek clearance from their organization. Informants from the companies, in particular, wanted the questions beforehand to make sure it was for scholarly research, and not for a competitor. On two occasions, I was asked to either fax or e-mail a letter certifying that the answers would be used for academic, not-for-profit purposes. Everyone, except for one recruitment agency and two industry participants, allowed me to record the interviews. Those who did not want to be recorded felt they would be more comfortable talking without the tape on. Another informant was not able to meet me, and opted to e-mail her answers. For the sake of consistency, and because doing so would not alter the findings of the research, I only included in this research the recorded interviews. Those who participated in the research, but whose remarks are not in this dissertation, are marked with an asterisk in Table 4. The students who did the survey for me transcribed the interviews in verbatim. I paid them US\$10 for each 40-minute interview, the average length of each session. I also asked the students to sign a confidentiality waiver.

Table 4.3. Organizational participants	
Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overseas Workers Welfare Administration</li> <li>2. Philippine Overseas Employment Administration</li> <li>3. Commission on Filipinos Overseas</li> <li>4. International Labor Affairs Service (ILAS)</li> </ol>
Non-government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Center for Migrant Advocacy</li> <li>6. Kanlungan Centre Foundation</li> <li>7. Migrant Forum in Asia</li> <li>8. Scalabrini Migration Center</li> <li>9. Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation</li> </ol>
Companies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Inq7 Interactive, Inc.</li> <li>11. Philstar.com</li> <li>12. ABS-CBN International Sales*</li> <li>13. ABS-CBN Interactive, Inc.</li> <li>14. Star Cinema*</li> <li>15. Globe Telecommunications*</li> </ol>
Recruiters/ Unions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines*</li> <li>17. Overseas Placement Association of the Philippines</li> <li>18. Philippine Association Service Exporters, Inc.</li> </ol>

#### *Interview proper*

Informants were very cooperative. However, like the survey respondents, three of the informants expressed interviewee fatigue. They were cynical about how they have granted several interviews without hearing from the researchers again, or seeing the results of the research, or the research actually being of any help towards improving the plight of OFWs. For one informant, I wrote a letter certifying that I would provide a copy of the research once it is completed. On two other occasions, I gave copies of my previous studies on migrant workers.

The interviews were more like conversations (Babbie, 2004, p. 300) as my informants talked about their experiences while I shared with them findings from my own studies and review of literature. The interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes, and I am happy to say by the time interviews ended, my informants appeared to have been relieved of their initial apprehensions. I look forward to meeting with them again to present the dissertation and to work with them in future possible projects for OFWs.

### *Interview Instrument*

For the personal interviews (Appendix 2), I used an unstructured guide (Mason, 2002) which explored seven themes:

1. Overview of their organization;
2. Projects, products, services for OFWs;
3. Communication and marketing strategies;
4. Specific uses of mass media in number;
5. Linkages with other organizations;
6. Changes in the way they communicate with OFWs; and,
7. Lessons learned and future plans in communicating with OFWs;

### *Textual analysis*

Before each interview ended, I asked the informants for copies of their organizations' brochures, newsletters, flyers, and other print materials. I then asked them to explain how and why they developed these materials. On a theoretical level, these documents are material expressions of organizational ideology (Mason, 2002, p. 107). As such, they provide additional context to the interviews. On a practical level, the documents show what, how, and why materials are designed for OFWs. Knowing this would help in developing recommendations on communicating with OFWs.

### *Data analysis*

Survey data were coded in SPSS and covered the respondents' profile and three levels of communication: interpersonal, organizational, and mass mediated. I started the data analysis with a basic reading of uni-variate tables. I then proceeded with the bi-variate tests of significance using six demographic items—gender, marital and parental

status, work and income, and region of deployment—as independent variables. (The next chapter covers the hypotheses between the independent and dependent (communication) variables.)

Chi-Square Test of Independence was used in cross-tabulating the independent variables with categorical communication measures. For the rating/ranking scales on communication, T-test of Independence was used for the dichotomous variables gender, marital and parental status, work and income, while Analysis of Variance was used for host regions because this variable has four categories. Other statistical tests used were correlation to test the significant difference between work abroad and work in the Philippines, and Paired Samples *t*-test to explore the relationship in the use of interpersonal media within and outside the host country. In all these tests, the significance level was set at  $\alpha=.05$ .

To the quantitative analysis I added the comments and the print materials from the interviewees. This way, I was able to compare and contrast the survey results with the experiences of the informants. I thus came up with a holistic perspective on the communication dynamics of OFWs.

#### Scope and limitations

By using a one-shot survey, I was able to capture in this study the communication and media practices of OFWs in major host countries. While this method enabled respondents to compare their communication and media habits during their tenure through a Likert Scale, it did not give them the opportunity to expound on these practices which they could have done if they were interviewed in-depth. A future study can purposely interview veteran OFWs regarding the changes in their communication and media patterns vis-à-vis developments in communication policies and technologies.



The reductionist nature of a survey precluded the qualification of practices at the sub-national level. Doing so would have complicated the territorial levels covered in the study since it would have meant referring to sub-national regions within the home, the host, and the other countries. I thought that limiting the discussion at the level of the nation-state is aligned to the territorial focus of literature on OFWs. Further, now that the national orientation of communication and media practices has been discussed, other scholars can explore their sub-national dynamics.

In the analysis, I limited the independent variables to six socio-demographic variables which, based on literature, could influence socialization patterns. I also did not consider developments in media as an independent variable because to do so would have subscribed to technological determinism. Instead, I focused on how OFWs adopted these developments in their own communication and media practices.

The interviews were very helpful in understanding the industry behind the OFW phenomenon. However, time and financial constraints prevented me from interviewing representatives of host governments and OFW organizations that are based in host countries. The considerable literature on OFW experiences in host regions, however, compensates for this deficiency.

The textual analysis was limited to materials from the interviewees themselves since its purpose was primarily to understand how organizations and institutions communicate with OFWs. Excluded from the textual analysis were OFW representations in the mass media, which would comprise an entire study on its own.

Finally, I did not include a review of the policies of the host countries on migrant workers, and communication and media because of time and resource constraints. While this could have helped contextualize the findings, it would have entailed an entire study on its own.

## Chapter 5

### PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The migrant labor community consists not only of the workers themselves, but also of governmental and private organizations that provide goods and services to them and advocate for their rights and protection. This chapter begins by introducing representatives from these organizations and continues with a profile of the survey respondents. It ends with a discussion of the research hypotheses, explaining the significance of the six key demographic attributes on interpersonal communication, organizational participation, and mass media ownership, access, and use.

#### Organizational informants

Sixteen informants from 14 organizations representing four sectors of stakeholders in the migrant employment industry participated in this research (Table 5.1.). This section introduces these organizations, which all share a desire to serve the OFW community and provide the institutional perspective of migrant workers' communication issues.

#### *Government agencies*

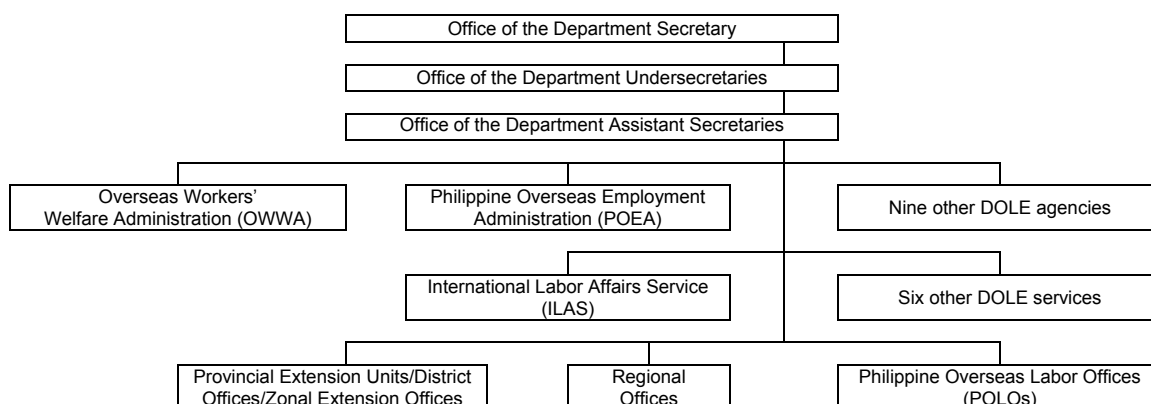
Given the state sponsorship of migrant employment, government is central in the OFW discourse. Thus, I interviewed four informants from the Department of Labor and Employment to explore how the government communicates with migrant workers before, during, and after deployment. I also interviewed two informants from the agency that deals with permanent Filipino migrants to compare its activities with those of the DOLE offices.

Table 5.1. Contact details of interviewees			
	Name and Position	Office and Address	Web site
<b>Government agencies</b>			
1.	Rustico SM. de la Fuente <i>Director, Policy and Program Development Office</i>	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration OWWA Center Bldg., 7 <sup>th</sup> corner FB Harrison Streets, Pasay City	< <a href="http://www.owwa.gov.ph">http://www.owwa.gov.ph</a> >
2.	Salome Mendoza <i>Director, Planning Office</i>	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration Blas F. Ople Bldg., Ortigas Ave. corner EDSA, Mandaluyong City	< <a href="http://www.poea.gov.ph">http://www.poea.gov.ph</a> >
3.	Carolina de Leon <i>Director, Seabased Employment Association and Processing Center</i>		
4.	Secretary Dante A. Ang, <i>Chair</i>	Commission on Filipinos Overseas Citigold Center, 1345 Pres. Quirino Avenue corner Osmeña Highway, Manila	< <a href="http://www.cfo.gov.ph">http://www.cfo.gov.ph</a> >
5.	Jose Z. Molano Jr., <i>Executive Director</i>		
6.	Merliza Makinano, <i>Director International Labor Affairs Service (ILAS)</i>	Department of Labor and Employment GF DOLE Bldg., General Luna Street, Intramuros, 1002 Manila	< <a href="http://www.ilas.dole.gov.ph">http://www.ilas.dole.gov.ph</a> >
<b>Non-government organizations</b>			
7.	Ellene Sana <i>Executive Director &amp; Board of Directors Secretary</i>	Center for Migrant Advocacy 72 Matahimik Street, Teachers' Village, Quezon City	< <a href="http://www.pinoy-abroad.net/">http://www.pinoy-abroad.net/</a> >
8.	Florence May Cortina <i>Officer-in-Charge</i>	Kanlungan Centre Foundation 77 K-10 Street, Kamias, Quezon City	< <a href="http://www.kanlungan.ngo.ph">http://www.kanlungan.ngo.ph</a> >
9.	Ma. Lorena Macabuag <i>Project Coordinator</i>	Migrant Forum in Asia 59-B Malumanay St., Teachers Village, Diliman, Quezon City	< <a href="http://www.mfasia.org">http://www.mfasia.org</a> >
10.	Fabio Baggio <i>Director</i>	Scalabrini Migration Center 4, 13th Street, New Manila, 1112 Quezon City	< <a href="http://www.smc.org.ph">http://www.smc.org.ph</a> >
11.	Rosario "Sari" L. Cañete <i>Deputy Director/MS-A1 Coordinator</i>	Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation 59-B Malumanay St., Teachers village Diliman, Quezon City	< <a href="http://www.unladkabayan.org/">http://www.unladkabayan.org/</a> >
<b>Private companies</b>			
12.	Mary Ann Bundalian <i>Business Development Officer</i>	Inq7 Interactive, Inc. 9/F Rufino Building, 6784 Ayala Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino Street, Makati City	< <a href="http://www.inq7.net">http://www.inq7.net</a> >
13.	Maria Amanda Sandoval <i>Business Development Manager</i>	Philstar.com 6/F RFM Corporate Center, Pioneer cor. Sheridan Streets, Mandaluyong City	< <a href="http://www.philstar.com">http://www.philstar.com</a> >
14.	Luis Paolo M. Pineda <i>Head Mobile ABS-CBN Interactive</i>	ABS-CBN 9/F ELJCC Building Mother Ignacia Ave., South Triangle, Quezon City	< <a href="http://www.abs-cbn.com">http://www.abs-cbn.com</a> >
<b>Recruitment agencies</b>			
15.	Mr. Eduardo Mahiya <i>President</i>	Overseas Placement Association of the Philippines Room 401, Feren Building, 2063 FB Harrison cor. Gil Puyat Ave. Pasay	
16.	Victor Fernandez <i>President</i>	Philippine Association Service Exporters, Inc. G/F David Building I , 567 Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City	< <a href="http://www.pasei.com/">http://www.pasei.com/</a> >

The main agencies for migrant employment are the Philippine Overseas Employment (POEA) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), two of the 11 attached offices of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) (see Figure 5.1.). According to the [DOLE Web site](#) (2006), POEA is responsible with the

“supervision of the deployment of OFWs under the best possible terms, and the regulation of private sector participation in recruitment and overseas placement,” while OWWA provides the “extension of social, welfare and other assistance to OFWs and their dependents” (DOLE, 2006). Thus, POEA processes the initial and continued deployment of migrant workers, while OWWA develops socio-civic projects for and addresses the problems of current migrant workers and their families.


Figure 5.1. Philippine Department of Labor and Employment organizational chart




Established in 1972, POEA was reorganized in 1987 “to respond to changing markets and economic condition [sic]; and to strengthen the workers protection and regulatory components of the overseas employment program” (POEA, 2006). Planning Division Director Salome Mendoza talked about POEA’s current activities as well as her experiences as a veteran employee of the POEA and during her recent stint as a Philippine Overseas Labor Officer (POLO) in Macau. Director Carolina de Leon of the Seabased Employment Association and Processing Center explained to me the process of deploying seafarers as well as what differentiates them from land-based workers.

Policy and Program Office Director Rustico SM. de la Fuente was my OWWA informant. He discussed the many activities of OWWA during the three stages of migrant work: before, during, and after deployment (Figure 5.2.).

Figure 5.2. Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration member benefits and services (OWWA, n.d.a.)



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Labor and Employment  
Overseas Workers Welfare Administration



### Benefits and Services for OWWA Member-OFWs

**Article VII, OWWA Omnibus Policies  
Board Resolution No. 038 S. 2003**

**An OWWA member-OFW is entitled to services and benefits over and above the provisions of the employment contract, offer of employers or the laws of the receiving country. For a US\$25.00 membership contribution, an OWWA member is entitled to the following benefits and services:**

**INSURANCE AND HEALTH-CARE BENEFITS**

**Life Insurance.** A member is covered with life insurance for the duration of his employment contract. The coverage includes P100,000.00 for natural death and P200,000.00 for accidental death.

**Disability and Dismemberment Benefits.** A member is entitled to disability/dismemberment benefits as a rider provision of his life insurance as provided for in the impediment schedule contained in the Manual of Systems and Procedures. The coverage is within the range of P2,000.00 to P50,000.00.

**Total Disability Benefit.** A member is entitled to P100,000.00, in case of total permanent disability.

**Burial Benefit.** A burial benefit of P20,000.00 shall be provided in case of the member's death.

**LOAN GUARANTEE FUND**

**Pre-Departure Loan.** This loan services ready-to-leave newly hired OFWs whose employers or agents have already paid the compulsory membership contribution to OWWA. The loan is designed to assist members in their pre-departure needs such as payment of placement fees, clothing requirements, pocket money, and other pre-departure expenses.

**Family Assistance Loan.** This loan is available for emergency and other family needs as endorsed by the member.  
The loan shall not exceed P40,000.00.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFITS**

A member may avail for himself or his duly designated beneficiary any of the following scholarship programs, subject to a selection process and accreditation of participating institutions:

**Skills-for-Employment Scholarship Program** for technical vocational training scholarship.

**Education for Development Scholarship Program** for baccalaureate courses. A maximum of P10,000.00 for school fees and P20,000.00 for allowances per semester shall be provided.

**Seafarers' Upgrading Program** for sea-based members. Member seafarers shall be entitled to one upgrading program for every three (3) membership contributions. Qualified grantees shall be provided with training assistance from P1,200.00 to a maximum of P7,500.00.

**SOCIAL SERVICES AND FAMILY WELFARE ASSISTANCE**

**Repatriation Program.** Members may avail of repatriation services whenever necessary.

**Reintegration Program.** Members may avail of the Reintegration Program of the Department of Labor and Employment. This includes community organizing, capability-building, social preparation programs and livelihood loans.

**WORKERS ASSISTANCE AND ON-SITE SERVICES**

Members may avail of on-site assistance such as locating the OFWs, providing information and guidance, developing materials of the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars, conducting psycho-social counseling, conciliation services, medical and legal assistance, and outreach missions, among others.

A third office under DOLE is the International Labor Affairs Service (ILAS). Like POEA, ILAS was founded in 1972 and restructured in 1987 to become one of the seven services supporting the operations of DOLE. ILAS is tasked with "everything that has something to do with international involvement of the department," as its Director, Merliza Makinano, explained (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

Makinano said her office has three divisions. The first is the Foreign Labor Operations Division (FLOD), “which is the one handling the Labor Attachés<sup>23</sup> in our 35 posts around the world.” The second is the International Labor Standards Division that monitors whether the labor standards in the Philippines are “at par with international labor standards based on conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Organization.” The third is the Technical Cooperation Division which monitors “the bilateral agreements that we have with other countries.” Of these three, perhaps the FLOD is the most pertinent agency for migrant employment as it deals directly with Philippine Overseas Labor Offices abroad which coordinate with POEA for job requests by foreign firms and with OWWA for workers who are either distressed or who are interested in more proactive government programs.

The Philippine migrant community is composed not only of OFWs, but also of Filipinos who have actually emigrated permanently. Thus, I interviewed Secretary Dante A. Ang and Executive Director Jose Z. Molano Jr. of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), which seeks to “Promote stronger economic and cultural ties between the Philippines and Filipinos Overseas.” I interviewed the CFO officials to compare the government’s programs for OFWs and other overseas Filipinos. Like OWWA, CFO also has a PDOS which, together with counseling services, is included in its migrant social and economic integration program area. However, since CFO deals with Filipinos who are citizens of other states, its projects primarily seek to maintain the link between them and the “homeland.” Thus, the second program area is, according to Director Molano, “Filipino education and heritage, in which we deal with the younger generation of Filipinos overseas. . . . We also have language programs and we are about to launch an Internet-based learning of the Filipino language.” The third program, meanwhile, “deals

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<sup>23</sup> Please see Chapter 7 (Organizational Participation) for the extensive discussion of Labor Attaches.

with Filipino national development” which provides the “mechanisms through which Philippine organizations overseas are able to contribute to national development here in the Philippines. And much of this assistance goes into scholarships, construction of drinking water supply, and the construction of school buildings, small infrastructure and medical missions.” The final program pertains to “policy development and data banking, in which we advocate the interests of overseas Filipinos in Congress,” said Molano (personal communication, July 25, 2005).

#### *Non-governmental organizations*

Though contemporary Philippine migrant employment began in 1972, the organizational participants in this research were all founded after the 1986 EDSA Revolution that ousted President Ferdinand Marcos and reinvigorated civil society. With their extensive involvement in the migrant community, I interviewed five representatives from as many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to learn their experiences in working with OFWs.

The Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) is the oldest of these NGOs having been established in 1987 “to encourage and facilitate the study of socio-demographic, economic, political, psychological, historical, legislative and religious aspects of human migration and refugee movements from and within Asia” (SMC, 2006). Two years later, the Kanlungan<sup>24</sup> Centre Foundation, Inc. was founded “to work with overseas Filipino/a workers and their families in addressing such problems and issues” as hazardous workplaces, gendered violence, low pay, and social exclusion (Kanlungan, 2002). Then, in 1990, the Migrant Forum in Asia was conceived in Hong Kong, and organized four years later in Taiwan “as a regional network of non-government organizations (NGOs),

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<sup>24</sup> Kanlungan literally means a place for shelter.

associations and trade unions of migrant workers, and individual advocates in Asia who are committed to protect and promote the rights and welfare of migrant workers” (MFA, 2006). Its current headquarters is in the Philippines.

The Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation was “established in the Philippines in 1996 to respond to the urgent need for migrant workers to plan and organize their return.” It was a special program to organize “savings associations as a capital build-up mechanism that would establish income-generating activities in the Philippines” (Unlad, 2004). The newest of the organizations in this research, the Center for Migrant Advocacy–Philippines (CMA) was established in 2002 “to help improve the economic, social and political conditions of migrant Filipino families everywhere through policy advocacy, information dissemination, networking, capability-building, and direct assistance” (CMA, 2006).

These NGOs provide advocacy and support mechanisms for OFWs. Through their advocacy work, they lobby the government to protect OFWs’ rights and provide products and services to promote OFWs’ welfare. NGOs also coordinate to establish a sense of community among OFWs, address the plight of distressed workers, create support systems to prevent abuses against OFWs, and address the root causes of migration. My informants from these organizations told me about their main programs, which can be divided into five groups: welfare assistance; research and information services; advocacy; economic empowerment; and networking.

#### *Welfare assistance*

Florence May Cortina, Kanlungan’s Officer-in-Charge, said they provide legal assistance and feminist counseling as well as temporary shelter for distressed workers.



However, she added they always regard workers not as dependents, but as partners towards improving the conditions of OFWs. According to its Web site, CMA (2006):

Provides immediate help to migrant workers and their families, especially those who are distressed, most vulnerable and need immediate help. This program documents cases and gives welfare, legal, representation, and livelihood assistance to victims of abuse, armed conflict and health hazards. CMA works with government agencies, private institutions and other NGOs in pursuing this program.

#### *Research and information services*

All five participants engaged in research or maintained a database of studies on migrant employment. Cortina said Kanlungan maintains a small library where students and other researchers access information on migration. They also have a databank of news clippings on migrant labor as well of all the cases that have involved them. CMA, for its part, “conducts research to support its policy advocacy initiatives and public information activities (and) issues timely positions on key issues affecting overseas Filipinos and their family members” (CMA, 2006), while the MFA (2006) “co-produces the Asian Migrant Yearbook (AMY) with the Asian Migrant Centre (AMC). The AMY is a compendium of migration facts, issues and analyses of the events collected from MFA members and other migration concerned organizations.”

Research and publications are central in the activities of SMC, according to its director, Father Fabio Baggio. He noted that SMC publishes newsletters, peer-refereed journals and books on migration and consistently participates in various conferences. He said a recent effort studied the children left behind by their migrant worker parents. Similarly, Sari Cañete of Unlad said they did a feasibility study in Malaysia and Hong

Kong on how migrant workers' surplus income could be used towards productive ends. She said this research revealed how migrant workers are the only segment among marginalized sectors in the Philippines that has surplus income.

### *Advocacy*

An important aspect of NGOs labor pertains to national and international advocacy for migrant workers' rights and welfare. Ellene Sana, CMA's Executive Director, said their advocacy involves the writing of policy reports, increasing public awareness and attitude towards OFWs and OFW issues, and lobbying at the Philippine Congress and executive agencies to improve legislation and implementation of governmental programs for OFWs. CMA's Web site (2006) states:

Our main program aims to initiate and pursue key policy reforms to guarantee the rights of overseas Filipinos by strengthening protection measures, uplifting general welfare, delivering prompt assistance and facilitating effective reintegration. The program also aims to raise awareness and generate social support for issues related to overseas migration. To this end, CMA will pursue lobby initiatives, network with relevant agencies and international bodies, cooperate with other organizations in pushing its reform agenda and launch/participate in mobilizations and campaigns.

Kanlungan's Cortina said they are currently focused on the amendments to RA 8042, the "Magna Carta" for OFWs as they "want to repeal its two sections that seek to deregulate the labor export industry." At the international level, meanwhile, the MFA advocates for a healthy policy and legislative environment for OFWs in both home and host countries. Its Project Coordinator, Lorena Macabuag, said MFA "campaigns for the ratification of the Migrant Workers Convention, both in the host and sending countries.

MFA members also provide direct services to migrant workers like counseling, shelter and repatriation assistance. Further, MFA, at the regional level, advocates for the ratification of national legislation concerned with helping protect migrant workers.” SMC’s Father Baggio called their work in this area “habitual advocacy:”

It is a political commitment that started from the 80s and the 90s as well. . . . We are part of the Asian Center for Philippine Migrants, which is a network of advocacy groups and migrants in and outside the Philippines. Obviously, our work is mainly on the Congress, the government agencies, and other NGOs that are ready to cooperate with us in upholding migrants’ rights (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

#### *Economic promotion*

Since economics is at the heart of migrant employment, NGOs seek to channel OFWs’ financial resources towards more productive activities. Kanlungan has a community service program in the Philippines to address the poverty that drives some Filipinos to migrate. Unlad Kabayan (2006), meanwhile, has two core projects. First is the Migrant Savings for Alternative Investment program where migrants can use their savings “to invest in existing businesses or build their own enterprises. These projects provide migrants with alternative sources of income and jobs for their communities.” The second is the Social Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development Services (SEEDS), which “help build sustainable, gender responsive and socially responsible enterprises that stimulate local community economies.”

### *Networking*

NGOs maintain transnational networks that enable them to coordinate with OFWs both within and outside the Philippines. SMC is a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization-Management of Social Transformations (UNESCO-MOST) group, the Asia-Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN), and the Philippine Migration Research Network (PMRN), while CMA (2006) has contacts with “over 50 Filipino, migrant advocates, and solidarity organizations in the major global regions.” Cañete said that Unlad has partners in Europe, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

MFA, meanwhile, “is a regional network of migrants’ organizations, classroom organizations, advocates, NGOs, and trade unions working to promote the right of migrant workers [since it is] basically an advocacy network,” according to Macabuag. It has over 260 members in Asia, and is “the regional partner of Migrants Rights International (MRI) for ratification campaigns [of laws for migrants’ rights] and monitoring migrants’ rights violation in Asia” (personal communication, August 2, 2005).

### *Private companies*

The relatively recent export of Philippine media products is one of the reasons I believe it is important to study how OFWs use mass media. The emergence of online newspapers, the availability of TV and radio shows online or via cable, and the sale of DVD movies and other communication products by Philippine companies have widened the previously limited access of OFWs and other migrant Filipinos to mediated messages from the Philippines. These Philippine media products join similar products from the host country and other third party countries. Indeed, OFWs can potentially read newspapers and magazines, watch TV shows and movies, listen to music and radio

shows, surf Web sites, and chat in online rooms from three territorial spaces: the host country, the Philippines, and other countries.

Since I had no access to media producers from the other territories, I opted to interview representatives from the pioneering Philippine media exporters. I interviewed six informants from the film, broadcast, telecommunications, and online publishing industries that have products or services available in the host countries. Three informants did not want their interviews to be recorded and, for the sake of consistency, their remarks were excluded from this research. The three informants who are included in this research came from online news and entertainment sites.

Philstar.com started in 1997 as the online version of the national broadsheet *The Philippine Star*. Since 2000, it has positioned itself as a venue for “The Filipino Global community” where migrant Filipinos have “a chance to touch base with the homeland.” It has since expanded its content by providing materials in Filipino and Cebuano through partnerships with other publications. Inq7.net is a joint venture between the national broadsheet *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and the broadcast company *GMA Network, Inc.* Launched in 2000, it provides print content in English and video files in Filipino. It also has a partnership with a Cebu regional newspaper. Like Philstar.com, Inq7.net targets migrants through its section called *Global Nation*, “the virtual home away from home of the overseas Filipino community” (Web site). “Celebrating the Filipino Spirit Worldwide,” is the tagline for Global Nation, not unlike that of The Philippine Star’s.

The two sites are quite popular. Philstar.com and Inq7.net respectively receive a hundred thousand and a million unique viewers per day. Per month, they respectively have a total of 21 million and 41 million page views. Data from Inq7.net show that 74 percent of its viewers come from outside the Philippines, with its largest audience

located in North America (47 percent), followed by Asia (11 percent), Europe (seven percent), and the Middle East (five percent) (Philstar.com, 2006; Inq7.net, 2004).

ABS-CBN, the Philippines' largest media company assigned the third informant as its point person for my research. Paolo Pineda is Head Mobile [sic] of ABS-CBN Interactive, the department tasked with the company's online and multi-media services. Aside from running the gateway ABS-CBN Web site, Interactive also operates [ABS-CBN Now!](#), a paid online service where subscribers can access streaming and archived news and entertainment shows as well as view pay-per-view specials and movies.

Together with its international cable service, "The Filipino Channel" (TFC), ABS-CBN, through ABS-CBN Global, is at the forefront of transnational Philippine media organizations. Its global operations have their roots in 1992 with ABS-CBN International's news and entertainment service in Saipan, and the airing of its evening primetime news program "TV Patrol" in San Francisco, California (ABS-CBN Global, 2006). In 1994, TFC was launched in California and Hawaii, and in Papua New Guinea two years later. It expanded to Saudi Arabia in 1997, to Dubai in 1998, to Japan in 2000, and to Europe and Indonesia in 2003. In 2004, it was launched in Australia. TFC maintains offices in these locations where they work with local cable affiliates to provide access to their three channels (the main TFC channel, the ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC), and the CinemaOne for Philippine movies). As an example, subscribers to the "Dish Network" can have TFC channels as part of their cable service.

ABS-CBN has stakes in telecommunications, with its own pre-paid card service, "Sarimanok One," and international long distance call service "BayanKollect sa America." It also operates Global Money for remittances from the Middle East, Europe, and the United States.

*Recruitment agencies*

Recruitment agencies are the main partners of the government in finding and fielding jobs for prospective OFWs. Their associations are important lobby groups in the drafting and implementation of policies on migrant workers. Thus, I interviewed President Eduardo Mahiya of the Overseas Placement Association of the Philippines (OPAP) and President Victor Fernandez of the Philippine Association Service Exporters, Inc. (PASEI).

Mahiya said OPAP was founded in 1977 with 50 members. It now has 476 members that are all POEA-licensed recruitment agencies. The qualification about licensing is important as illegal recruitment agencies are among the main problems of the OFW deployment process. As Mahiya said, "Before we accept members, we see to it that their license is attached to the application, and we verify if the license is still valid then we accept their membership" (personal communication, August 2, 2005). One of OPAP's main activities, he said, is the conduct of the pre-departure orientation seminar using modules for different countries. If they were to use only one module, he said the participants would be confused since the laws in Saudi Arabia are different from those in Hong Kong, for example.

Younger but larger than OPAP is PASEI. Founded in 1980 by ten private recruitment agencies, its membership grew to 27 within four months. Now it has 650 members, which, according to Fernandez, represents 75 percent of all agencies that recruit land-based workers. He explained that for their silver anniversary, they are strengthening their lobbying efforts on migrant labor activism in legislation and introducing their socio-civic projects for OFWs. Their other activities include anti-illegal recruiting campaign, conflict resolution, and sports programs and socials. They are doing

this, he said, “to remove the image that we have no other interest but to earn money and deploy workers” (personal communication, July 28, 2005).

### Survey respondents

Twenty respondents each came from the top 15 destinations of OFWs, while another 20 were sea-based workers. A majority (56 percent) of the 320 respondents were women (Table 5.2.). In nine<sup>25</sup> of the 15 countries where the respondents worked, women outnumbered men, reflecting the feminization of the migrant labor force (Figure 1.2.). Excluding sea-based workers, most of whom were men (Table 5.3.), women comprised 62 percent of all respondents.

One of my informants,<sup>26</sup> Carolina de Leon of the POEA Sea-based Division, said her office did “not allow female seafarers on board on carriers, tankers, and car carriers”<sup>27</sup> because of the ship environment and facilities. However, she recalled one incident where the management of a vessel requested a female seafarer, arguing that it already had two women of different nationalities on board. Further, she said POEA’s rule appeared to have not been gender sensitive (personal communication, July 22, 2005).

The age of the respondents ranged from 21 to 57 years old, with half of the respondents being 34 years old or younger (Table 5.2.). This shows the importance of youth among OFWs because of the short-term and labor-intensive nature of their jobs (Goss & Lindquist, 1995). Many (84 percent) of the respondents were Roman Catholics,

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<sup>25</sup> The countries where men outnumbered women were Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Japan, and Korea. The figure for Japan was skewed because of the difficulty in locating entertainers, who renewed their contracts in a different office. See methodology for details.

<sup>27</sup> Interviews were conducted in English, Filipino, or a combination of both. All English translations are mine.



Table 5.2. Gender, age, religion, and educational level of respondent

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
Gender															
Male	44.4			41.6	47.2	32.4	54.3	49.0	43.3	27.5	95.0	57.5	37.2	38.8	52.5
Female	55.6			58.4	52.8	67.6	45.7	51.0	56.7	72.5	5.0	42.5	62.8	61.2	47.5
Chi-square				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.00, p = .32$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 15.37, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (3, N = 320) = 30.91, p < .01$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 12.23, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 318) = 9.36, p < .01$	
Age															
21 to 34	50.3	47.2	52.8			71.0	33.1	44.0	55.8	47.5	60.0	49.6	50.7	52.0	48.4
35 to 57	49.7	52.8	47.2			29.0	66.9	56.0	44.2	52.5	40.0	50.4	49.3	48.0	51.6
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.00, p = .32$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 45.54, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (3, N = 320) = 4.06, p = .25$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = .04, p = .84$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 318) = .41, p = .52$	
Religion															
Catholic	84.1	85.9	82.6	84.5	83.6	85.5	82.9	84.0	83.3	86.3	80.0	85.0	83.6	83.7	84.4
Muslim	3.4	1.4	5.1	3.7	3.1	4.1	2.9	9.0	0.8	---	5.0	0.9	4.8	5.6	---
Other Christian	12.5	12.7	12.4	11.8	13.2	10.3	14.3	7.0	15.8	13.8	15.0	14.2	11.6	10.7	15.6
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (2, N = 320) = 3.17, p = .21$		$\chi^2 (2, N = 320) = 0.21, p = .90$		$\chi^2 (2, N = 320) = 1.43, p = .49$		5 cells (41.7%) have n < 5.				$\chi^2 (2, N = 320) = 3.71, p = .16$		$\chi^2 (2, N = 318) = 8.26, p = .02$	
Educational level															
High school	33.4	23.9	41.0	32.3	34.6	32.4	34.3	36.0	42.5	25.0	---	1.8	50.7	45.4	14.8
Some college/ Vocational	27.5	34.5	21.9	27.3	27.7	24.8	29.7	28.0	24.2	18.8	80.0	14.2	34.8	32.1	19.7
College/ Postgraduate	39.1	41.5	37.1	40.4	37.7	42.8	36.0	36.0	33.3	56.3	20.0	84.1	14.5	22.4	65.6
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (2, N = 320) = 11.84, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (2, N = 320) = 0.27, p = .87$		$\chi^2 (2, N = 320) = 1.67, p = .43$		$\chi^2 (6, N = 320) = 43.46, p < .01$				$\chi^2 (2, N = 320) = 154.28, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (2, N = 318) = 61.14, p < .01$	

\*Two respondents did not reply.

while three percent were Muslim (Table 5.2.). Of the 11 Muslim respondents, 10 worked in West Asia<sup>28</sup> (Table 5.3.).

Countries	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Work		Income**	
	Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>West Asia</b>										
Bahrain	7	13	7	13	5	15	7	13	14	5
Saudi Arabia	14	6	10	10	8	12	15	5	16	4
Kuwait	5	15	9	11	9	11	3	17	17	3
Qatar	12	8	10	10	9	11	6	14	13	6
United Arab Emirates	11	9	8	12	5	15	11	9	12	8
<b>East Asia</b>										
Hong Kong	1	19	7	13	8	12	0	20	19	1
Japan	14	6	9	11	10	10	9	11	12	8
Malaysia	7	13	8	12	9	11	10	10	12	8
Singapore	10	10	12	8	11	9	13	7	10	10
S Korea	15	5	16	4	13	7	2	18	17	3
Taiwan	5	15	15	5	10	10	1	19	18	2
<b>N. America &amp; Europe</b>										
Canada	2	18	13	7	9	11	4	16	6	14
Italy	6	14	7	13	8	12	2	18	12	8
United Kingdom	7	13	9	11	13	7	16	4	0	20
United States	7	13	9	11	10	10	11	9	7	13
Seabased	19	1	12	8	8	12	3	17	11	9

\*In frequency; \*\*Two respondents did not reply.

Migrant labor, with its roots among construction workers in West Asia and domestic helpers in East Asia, had long been stigmatized as the domain of the peripheral labor force. However, 39 percent of the respondents had college degrees, while another 27 percent had some post-secondary education (Table 5.2.). Thus, it is the better-educated Filipinos who are now leaving the country, a pattern which began in the 1960s and has increased significantly in the last decade (Tyner, 2004; Alegado, 2003; Krinks, 2002). This movement raises concerns that the country is experiencing both brain and brawn drain (Parreñas, 2001), and signifies the inability of the core, where the resources are supposed to be most abundant, to provide jobs even to its most skilled

<sup>28</sup> While most literature and Philippine government documents refer to it as the Middle East, I prefer to use West Asia in my discussion of the results for consistency.

citizens. That the respondents also mainly came from the National Capital Region (NCR), the economic center of the Philippines, also supports this assertion. For the residents of the most affluent region to seek even greener pastures speaks to the limited opportunities in the country.

While still in the Philippines, 28 percent of the respondents worked as professionals, and 25 percent of them worked as such once abroad (Table 5.4.).<sup>29</sup> There was a similar decline among technicians and associate professionals when they moved from the Philippines (13 percent) to their host countries (7 percent), primarily by shifting from allied health professions to caregiving (Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004).

Conversely, the share of services and sales workers (domestic workers and caregivers, among others) grew from 15 percent to 45 percent between countries of assignment.

Over one quarter (27 percent) of the respondents had never worked prior to their deployment, while the majority (57 percent) of them still worked within the general category of their job in the Philippines: for example, sales clerks still worked within the services sector. Eight respondents had been promoted relative to their Philippine job: from junior to senior consultants, for instance. However, over 40 (13 percent) of them

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<sup>29</sup> I used the 1992 Philippine Standard Occupational Classification (PSOC) which has the following 10 categories: 1) Officials of Government and Special-Interest Organizations, Corporate Executives, Managers, Managing Proprietors and Supervisors; 2) Professionals; 3) Technicians and Associate Professionals; 4) Clerks; 5) Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers; 6) Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen; 7) Trades and Related Workers; 8) Plant and machine Operators and Assemblers; 9) Laborers and Unskilled Workers; and 10) Special Occupation (NSCB, 2005). To contract the categories with smaller frequencies, I merged items 3 and 4. No respondent fitted in item 9 since domestic workers are included by POEA in item 5, together with entertainers (POEA, 2005; also see note in Figure 1.3.). This system thus differs from the occupational classification of the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2006), which puts domestic workers in the Elementary Occupation category (PSOC's item 9) and entertainers in the Technicians and Associate Professionals category (PSOC's item 3). I decided to align my findings with the PSOC and POEA classification for them to be readily useful for the Philippine agencies. The data can be recoded to follow ILO's system if so desired.

Table 5.4. Work profile of respondents

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>Work in the Philippines</b>															
None	27.2	19.7	33.1	26.7	27.7	26.9	27.4	27.0	22.5	30.0	45.0	15.9	33.3	27.6	27.0
Executives & managers	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.4	---	---	0.8	1.3	---	0.9	0.5	---	1.6
Professionals	28.1	35.2	22.5	32.3	23.9	30.3	26.3	21.0	31.7	35.0	15.0	61.9	9.7	16.8	45.9
Technicians & associate professionals	12.8	9.9	15.2	13.0	12.6	15.2	10.9	16.0	10.8	15.0	---	15.0	11.6	13.3	12.3
Service & sales	14.7	12.7	16.3	13.7	15.7	11.0	17.7	15.0	18.3	11.3	5.0	4.4	20.3	19.4	7.4
Trades & related workers	7.5	13.4	2.8	5.6	9.4	5.5	9.1	10.0	6.7	5.0	10.0	1.8	10.6	10.2	3.3
Plant & factory workers	9.1	8.5	9.6	8.1	10.1	9.7	8.6	11.0	9.2	2.5	25.0	---	14.0	12.8	2.5
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 24.14, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 4.20, $p = .65$		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = .94, $p = .24$		8 cells (28.6%) have $n < 5$ .				$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 116.07, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 318) = 47.17, $p < .01$	
<b>Work abroad</b>															
Executives & managers	3.8	6.3	1.7	3.1	4.4	2.8	4.6	5.0	4.2	---	10.0	9.7	0.5	3.1	4.9
Professionals	25.0	33.8	18.0	26.7	23.3	24.1	25.7	20.0	24.2	37.5	5.0	70.8	---	10.2	48.4
Technicians & associate professionals	6.9	6.3	7.3	5.0	8.8	6.9	6.9	17.0	1.7	3.8	---	19.5	---	6.1	8.2
Service & sales	44.7	16.2	67.4	43.5	45.9	46.2	43.4	43.0	45.0	55.0	10.0	---	69.1	54.6	29.5
Trades & related workers	5.3	10.6	1.1	3.7	6.9	3.4	6.9	10.0	4.2	2.5	---	---	8.2	7.1	2.5
Plant & factory workers	9.7	16.2	4.5	11.8	7.5	11.7	8.0	5.0	20.8	1.3	---	---	15.0	14.3	1.6
Seabased	4.7	10.6	---	6.2	3.1	4.8	4.6	---	---	---	75.0	---	7.2	4.6	4.9
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 102.17, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 7.19, $p = .30$		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = .70, $p = 3.79$		11 cells (39.3%) have $n < 5$ .				$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 315.99, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 318) = 71.59, $p < .01$	
<b>Change in job</b>															
First employment	27.2	19.7	33.1	26.7	27.7	26.9	27.4	27.0	22.5	30.0	45.0	15.9	33.3	27.6	27.0
Underemployed	13.4	7.7	18.0	12.4	14.5	13.8	13.1	10.0	17.5	13.8	5.0	8.0	16.4	15.3	10.7
The same	56.9	68.3	47.8	59.0	54.7	57.2	56.6	60.0	56.7	55.0	50.0	69.9	49.8	56.1	57.4
Better	2.5	4.2	1.1	1.9	3.1	2.1	2.9	3.0	3.3	1.3	---	6.2	0.5	1.0	4.9
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = 30.30, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = 1.06, $p = .79$		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = .24, $p = .97$		5 cells (31.3%) have $n < 5$ .				$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = 26.80, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 318) = 5.77, $p = .12$	

\*Two respondents did not reply.

were underemployed: for example, teachers and engineers who have since become caregivers, factory workers, or domestic helpers (Hochschild, 2003; Tyner, 1996b).

This deskilling is a concern, as underemployed OFWs find they can rarely return to their old occupations when they seek to reintegrate themselves into the Philippine economy. My two informants from the Commission on Overseas Filipinos (CFO) noted how migrant Filipinos felt bad about their underemployment. While Executive Director Jose Z. Molano Jr. was talking about Filipino who emigrate permanently, his remarks could apply to OFWs, too:

There's one thing which some Filipinos who settle in other countries usually complain about, which is their professional qualifications here are not necessarily recognized as such in these countries. So they have to start . . . where they are able to get employment immediately; they have to start with jobs that are not commensurate to their qualifications (personal communication, July 25, 2005).

Secretary Dante Ang, however, qualified that this underemployment does not happen across host regions. He said that outside North America, and particularly in the Middle East, Philippine doctors are allowed to practice their profession, which prevents them from having to serve as nurses first. He explained that the Philippine government cannot impose its standards on other countries, and that a bilateral agreement is required for other states to allow Filipino medical practitioners to gain equivalent employment in their territories.

OFWs migrate for work for economic betterment, even at the risk of downward social mobility (Tyner, 2004; Parreñas, 2001 Tacoli, 1999; Mackie, 1998 Rafael, 1997; San Juan, 1996). Almost as many respondents earned a monthly income less than US\$500 (32 percent) or US\$1,000 (30 percent, Table 5.5.), which placed them within or above the average monthly family income of US\$416 in the NCR and well above the

Table 5.5. Income, frequency of coming home, and number of years abroad of respondents

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
Income abroad*															
US\$500 or less	32.1	24.3	38.2	28.0	36.3	31.3	32.8	43.9	40.8	6.3	25.0	6.3	46.1	52.0	---
501 to 1000	29.6	30.0	29.2	35.4	23.6	34.0	25.9	29.6	32.5	25.0	30.0	26.8	31.1	48.0	---
1001 to 1500	15.7	15.0	16.3	13.7	17.8	13.2	17.8	15.3	8.3	26.3	20.0	20.5	13.1	---	41.0
1501 to 2000	8.5	12.1	5.6	8.7	8.3	5.6	10.9	6.1	5.8	13.8	15.0	17.9	3.4	---	22.1
2001 to 2500	5.7	7.9	3.9	5.0	6.4	8.3	3.4	2.0	6.7	10.0	---	10.7	2.9	---	14.8
Over 2500	8.5	10.7	6.7	9.3	7.6	7.6	9.2	3.1	5.8	18.8	10.0	17.9	3.4	---	22.1
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (5, N = 320) = 12.35, $p = .03$		$\chi^2$ (5, N = 320) = 6.93, $p = .23$		$\chi^2$ (5, N = 320) = 9.12, $p = .10$		$\chi^2$ (15, N = 320) = 60.93, $p < .01$				$\chi^2$ (5, N = 320) = 82.48, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (5, N = 318) = 318, $p < .01$	
Comes home...															
Every 6 months	17.2	23.9	11.8	20.5	13.8	16.6	17.7	17.0	20.8	11.3	20.0	25.7	12.6	11.7	26.2
Every year	36.9	40.1	34.3	36.6	37.1	35.9	37.7	31.0	41.7	31.3	60.0	38.1	36.2	39.3	32.8
Every 18 months	4.7	4.9	4.5	3.7	5.7	2.8	6.3	3.0	4.2	8.8	---	4.4	4.8	4.1	5.7
Every other years	28.1	20.4	34.3	26.1	30.2	31.7	25.1	39.0	20.0	31.3	10.0	19.5	32.9	31.6	22.1
Irregularly	13.1	10.6	15.2	13.0	13.2	13.1	13.1	10.0	13.3	17.5	10.0	12.4	13.5	13.3	13.1
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (4, N = 320) = 14.21, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (4, N = 320) = 3.19, $p = .53$		$\chi^2$ (4, N = 320) = 3.46, $p = .48$		$\chi^2$ (12, N = 320) = 24.06, $p = .02$				$\chi^2$ (4, N = 320) = 12.12, $p = .02$		$\chi^2$ (4, N = 318) = 12.86, $p = .01$	
Total number of years abroad															
Five years or less	58.8	58.5	59.0	85.1	32.1	73.8	46.3	53.0	65.8	53.8	65.0	56.6	59.9	61.7	54.9
Six to 10 years	19.1	16.2	21.3	11.2	27.0	15.2	22.3	18.0	19.2	21.3	15.0	19.5	18.8	19.9	18.0
11 to 15 years	12.2	13.4	11.2	3.1	21.4	6.9	16.6	13.0	8.3	18.8	5.0	13.3	11.6	10.7	13.9
16 years or more	10.0	12.0	8.4	0.6	19.5	4.1	14.9	16.0	6.7	6.3	15.0	10.6	9.7	7.7	13.1
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = 2.39, $p = .49$		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = 99.27, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = 27.52, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (9, N = 320) = 14.24, $p = .11$				$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = .38, $p = .94$		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 318) = 3.68, $p = .30$	
Previous areas of deployment**															
None	70.9	65.5	75.3	82.6	59.1	79.3	64.0	70.0	73.3	68.8	70.0	67.3	72.9	77.0	62.3
Asia	32.8	58.0	47.0	30.0	75.0	34.0	71.0	35.0	36.0	28.0	6.0	41.0	64.0	50.0	52.0
Europe	2.2	40.8	26.4	18.6	47.2	23.4	40.6	35.0	30.0	35.0	30.0	36.3	30.9	25.5	42.6
North America	1.3	4.0	3.0	1.0	6.0	1.0	6.0	1.0	4.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	4.0	2.0	5.0

\*Two respondents did not reply. \*\*Multiple response item.

national mean of US\$225. The income reported in this research also approximates the US\$575 monthly salary reported by Martin, Abella, and Midgley in 2004.

On the average, 54 percent of the monthly income was sent to the Philippines, 25 percent was spent in the host country, 15 percent was saved, and four percent went to investments. T-tests of Independent Samples revealed that of the six test variables, only work and age of respondents did not have an effect upon spending habits (Table 5.6.). Instead, male, with-children, and lower-income respondents spent a larger portion of their income to the Philippines relative to their counterparts, who, in turn, saved a larger share of their salary. Further, higher-income and without-children respondents also set aside a larger amount of money for investments.

	Send to the Phils.		Spend in the host		Save		Invest	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	54.3	26.7	24.7	17.7	15.5	18.2	4.3	10.3
Gender								
Male (n=142)	60.8	25.2	22.9	15.3	11.1	15.5	4.7	11.5
Female (n=178)	49.1	26.7	26.1	19.4	19.1	19.4	4.1	9.3
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = 3.99, p < .01)$		$t(318 = -1.63, p = .11)$		$t(318 = -4.06, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 0.50, p = .62)$	
Age (years old)								
21 to 34 (n=161)	60.8	25.2	22.9	15.3	11.1	15.5	4.7	11.5
35 to 57 (n=159)	49.1	26.7	26.1	19.4	19.1	19.4	4.1	9.3
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = -1.03, p < .30)$		$t(305 = 0.75, p = .46)$		$t(318 = 0.27, p < .79)$		$t(318 = 0.92, p = .36)$	
Parental Status								
No children(n=145)	49.4	26.0	26.3	20.0	19.5	19.9	5.7	12.2
With children (n=175)	58.3	26.6	23.3	15.6	12.3	16.0	3.2	8.4
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = -3.02, p < .01)$		$t(318 = -3.02, p = .14)$		$t(318 = 3.60, p < .01)$		$t(247 = 2.16, p = .03)$	
Host region								
West Asia (n=100)	60.1	25.9	21.6	17.4	14.0	18.9	3.1	7.0
East Asia (n=120)	56.3	26.3	22.4	14.6	14.0	19.1	5.1	12.9
N. America/Euro (n=80)	40.0	24.3	33.7	20.5	21.5	15.6	5.5	10.4
Sea-based (n=20)	70.3	17.5	17.8	11.6	8.5	11.7	1.0	3.1
ANOVA	$F(3, 316 = 13.28, P < .01)$		$F(3, 316 = 10.37, p < .01)$		$F(3, 316 = 4.58, p < .01)$		$F(3, 316 = 1.72, P = .16)$	
Work								
Profs/ Assoc (n=113)	49.5	28.1	25.4	16.3	18.3	18.1	6.2	11.4
Service & Trade (n=207)	56.9	25.5	24.3	18.5	14.1	18.1	3.3	9.6
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(116 = -1.03, p = .31)$		$t(120 = -0.78, p = .44)$		$t(120 = 0.78, p = .44)$		$t(120 = 1.06, p = .29)$	
Income*								
Lower (n=196)	57.8	26.4	22.6	18.2	14.3	18.5	3.2	9.4
Higher (n=122)	48.9	25.9	28.2	16.5	17.7	17.5	6.2	11.6
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316 = -2.36, p = .02)$		$t(316 = 0.54, p = .59)$		$t(316 = 2.00, p = .05)$		$t(199 = 2.27, p = .02)$	

\*In Mean percentage of income per month. \*\*T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

Across host regions, sea-based and North America/Europe respondents respectively sent the largest and the smallest portions of their salary to the Philippines. Conversely, sea-based and North America/Europe respondents respectively spent and saved the smallest and the largest shares of their income.

Migrant employment has led to transnational families whose members live in different countries (Tyner, 2004; Asis, 2004; Parreñas, 2003, 2002, 2001; Tung, 2000; Tacoli, 1999; CIIR, 1987). Indeed, 56 percent of respondents were married (Table 5.7.) and over half (55 percent) of the respondents had children.<sup>30</sup> Of the 179 married respondents, one fifth (21 percent) of their spouses had no current occupation. Among working spouses, 10 percent were professionals. Nearly three-fourths (72 percent) of the spouses were in the Philippines. Over half of married and separated/widow/er respondents had either one (26 percent) or two (29 percent) children, meaning their families were smaller than the average Philippine family that has five members.<sup>31</sup>

Nearly a third (32 percent) of the respondents were from the Southern Tagalog region, adjacent to the Metropolitan Manila (NCR) area from where another 30 percent of the respondents originate (Table 5.8). Since another 13 percent of respondents were from Central Luzon to the north of NCR, three-fourths of the sample thus came from the capital region and its environs. Transnational labor movement from the Philippines thus had, as its main source, the region that is already the core of the national economy (Tyner, 2000b; Tyner & Donaldson, 1999).

From a communication perspective, this is important since the telecommunications infrastructure that facilitates transnational communication is most

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<sup>30</sup> It must be noted that not only married respondents have children since eight person of respondents with children are separated/widow/er.

<sup>31</sup> From Philippine National Statistics Office. (2002). *Number of Families and Average Family Size in National Capital Region, by Income Stratum and Urban-Rural Residence*. [Data in table form]. Available from <<http://www.census.gov.ph>>.



Table 5.7. Marital and parental status of respondents

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>Marital status</b>															
Married	55.9	72.5	42.7	42.9	69.2	12.4	92.0	63.0	51.7	52.5	60.0	59.3	54.1	51.0	63.9
Single	36.3	24.6	45.5	54.7	17.6	80.0		25.0	44.2	37.5	40.0	35.4	36.7	38.8	32.8
Separated/Widow/er	7.8	2.8	11.8	2.5	13.2	7.6	8.0	12.0	4.2	10.0	---	5.3	9.2	10.2	3.3
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 30.21, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 51.97, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 229.80, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 13.53, $p = .03$				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 1.787, $p = .409$		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 318) = 7.76, $p = .02$	
<b>Parental status</b>															
No children	45.3	33.1	55.1	64.0	26.4			36.0	50.8	50.0	40.0	43.4	46.4	48.0	41.0
With children	54.7	66.9	44.9	36.0	73.6			64.0	49.2	50.0	60.0	56.6	53.6	52.0	59.0
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 15.37, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 45.54, $p < .01$				$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = 4.91, $p = .12$				$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = .268, $p = .605$		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 318) = 1.48, $p = .22$	
<b>Spouse work</b>	(n=179)	(n=103)	(n=76)	(n=69)	(n=110)	(n=18)	(n=161)	(n=63)	(n=62)	(n=42)	(n=12)	(n=67)	(n=112)	(n=100)	(n=78)
None	20.6	51.5	16.5	34.8	37.2	21.1	38.0	45.3	41.3	14.0	41.7	42.6	32.5	39.2	31.6
Executives & managers	1.6	1.9	3.8	5.8	0.9	---	3.1	1.6	4.8	2.3	---	1.5	3.5	2.9	2.5
Professionals	10.6	21.4	15.2	14.5	21.2	31.6	17.2	18.8	15.9	20.9	25.0	29.4	12.3	14.7	24.1
Technicians & associate profs.	5.9	11.7	8.9	11.6	9.7	5.3	11.0	9.4	7.9	14.0	16.7	14.7	7.9	5.9	16.5
Services & sales	7.8	8.7	20.3	13.0	14.2	15.8	13.5	10.9	7.9	27.9	8.3	2.9	20.2	14.7	12.7
Trades & related	7.5	3.9	25.3	13.0	13.3	26.3	11.7	14.1	14.3	14.0		5.9	17.5	17.6	7.6
Plant & factory	1.6	1.0	5.1	4.3	1.8	---	3.1	---	4.8	2.3	8.3	1.5	3.5	2.9	2.5
Seabased	1.3		5.1	2.9	1.8	---	2.5	---	3.2	4.7		1.5	2.6	2.0	2.5
Chi-square		6 cells (37.5%) have $n < 5$ .		6 cells (37.5%) have $n < 5$ .		10 cells (62.5%) have $n < 5$ .		18 cells (56.3%) have $n < 5$ .				6 cells (37.5%) have $n < 5$ .		6 cells (37.5%) have $n < 5$ .	
<b>Spouse residency</b>															
Philippines	72.1	75.7	67.1	73.9	70.9	44.4	75.2	68.3	82.3	57.1	91.7	68.7	74.1	73.0	70.5
Abroad	27.9	24.3	32.9	26.1	29.1	55.6	24.8	31.7	17.7	42.9	8.3	31.3	25.9	27.0	29.5
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 1.61, $p = .20$		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 0.19, $p = .66$		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 7.58, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = 10.59, $p = .01$				$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = .519, $p = .432$		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 318) = 0.13, $p = .71$	
<b>No. of children</b>															
None	14.2	11.2	17.5	20.5	10.7	100.0	---	14.7	11.9	20.0	---	12.3	15.3	15.0	12.2
One	26.0	23.4	28.9	34.2	21.4	---	30.3	22.7	26.9	32.0	16.7	31.5	22.9	26.7	24.4
Two	29.4	36.4	21.6	24.7	32.1	---	34.3	37.3	22.4	24.0	41.7	28.8	29.8	25.8	35.4
Three	15.2	15.9	14.4	13.7	16.0	---	17.7	13.3	19.4	10.0	25.0	17.8	13.7	15.8	14.6
Four or more	15.2	13.1	17.5	6.8	19.8	---	17.7	12.0	19.4	14.0	16.7	9.6	18.3	16.7	13.4
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (4, N = 320) = 6.54, $p = .16$		$\chi^2$ (4, N = 320) = 12.45, $p = .01$		3 cells (30.0%) have $n < 5$ .		$\chi^2$ (12, N = 320) = 12.35, $p = .42$				$\chi^2$ (4, N = 320) = 4.499, $p = .343$		$\chi^2$ (4, N = 318) = 2.25, $p = .69$	

\*Two respondents did not reply.

Region	Percentage
National Capital Region	30.0
1. Ilocos	3.4
2. Cagayan Valley	6.6
3. Central Luzon	12.8
4. Southern Tagalog	32.2
5. Bicol	5.3
6. Western Visayas	2.8
7. Central Visayas	1.9
8. Eastern Visayas	0.9
9. Zamboanga Peninsula	0.3
11. Northern Mindanao	1.6
12. Soccsksargen	0.6
13. Caraga	0.3
14. CAR	1.3

developed in the areas where the greatest percentage of the respondents lives. Thus, the technological hardware needed to link them with their families across borders is readily available.

#### Research hypotheses

This research explored the influence of six key demographic attributes—gender, age, parental status, host region, work and income—on the transnational communication habits of OFWs. This section explains the selection of these variables and their possible significance on how OFWs communicate, participate in organizations, and own and use interpersonal media and mass media.

#### *Independent variables*

Among these socio-demographic attributes, I focused on gender, age, parental status, host regions, work and income as my independent variables. In this section, I look at how they relate with other variables. The interactions provide a nuanced understanding of the OFW profile and help explain communication patterns.

## *Gender*

The increasing feminization of the migrant workforce has centered on gender as a crucial variable in the OFW discourse. Indeed, gender was significantly related to many of the variables.

The majority (53 percent) of men were in the older (35 to 57 years old) age group, and the majority of women were in the younger (21 to 37 years old). However this difference was not statistically significant (Table 5.2.), which supports the argument that migrant employment is drawing young women (Tyner, 2000b, Tacoli, 1999). Among female respondents, the largest group was composed of high school graduates (41 percent), followed by those who completed college (37 percent). Meanwhile, the largest share (41 percent) of their male respondents finished college, followed by those who had some college or vocational education (37 percent). As such, gender and educational level were significantly related, with male OFWs having more education. This reflects the relative lack of well-compensated jobs in the Philippines for women with less education as well as the work opportunities in the low-end services sectors in other countries (Tacoli, 1999).

Indeed, a third of the female respondents had no work in the Philippines compared to only a fifth of the male respondents. Similarly, 35 percent of the men were professionals compared to 22 percent of the women. Abroad, the proportion of professionals among women decreased by four percent, compared to one percent among men. Professionals thus remained the largest group of male workers, while over two-thirds (67 percent) of women worked in the service and sales sectors compared to only 16 percent of men. Migrant employment was the first work for a larger share of women (33 percent) than men (20 percent). Moreover, more women (18 percent) than men (8 percent) were underemployed abroad (Tyner, 2004; Parreñas, 2001c). Indeed,

while 68 percent of men remained in the same occupational spectrum across territories, only 48 percent of women did so (Table 5.4.).

Women also earned less: 38 percent of them earned US\$500 per month, compared to only 24 percent of men. A tenth of male respondents had incomes higher than \$2,500, compared to only seven percent of female respondents, supporting the findings of Semonyonov and Gorodzeisky (2005). Perhaps because of their lesser pay and the nature of their jobs in domestic help and caregiving, women returned to the Philippines less frequently. Almost two-thirds (64 percent) of men and 46 percent of women did so at least once a year (Table 5.5.). The more infrequent homecoming of female OFWs contributes to the linking of the feminization of the migrant labor to problems within the family (Parreñas, 2003). Further, it underscores how OFW mothers worry about mothering their children from a distance (Parreñas, 2001b).

There was a significant difference in the proportion of married men (72.5 percent) and married women (42.7 percent, Table 5.7.), which supports Tacoli's (1999) finding that young single female OFWs work abroad to support parents and siblings. Since children of families with both parents working abroad are said to experience a stronger sense of abandonment (Asis, 2004; Parnas, 2003), I explored how many of the respondents have spouses who are not in the Philippines. This is also important with communication networking, especially if both parents do not work in the same host country. Indeed, 24 percent of male and 33 percent of female respondents had spouses who lived abroad. Similarly, over half (10 of 18) of married respondents who had no children both worked abroad, compared to only 25 percent of those who had children.

Communication with children about migrant employment, however, could be explored not only through their transnational interaction with their parents and relatives. Father Fabio Baggio of the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC) said they engaged in a

collaborative research project “to assess the impact of migration in families left behind, especially children.” He explained they suggested to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration a special program for the fathers whose wives are employed abroad:

We realized . . . that [labor] migration is not known by children and mostly teachers at present. It is not presented as such. I mean there are a lot of dreams about migration but not a real representation of what it is. So we suggested including in the programs special modules on migration presenting the real situation. Presenting it to children, to youth, adolescent, to eliminate a lot of illusions, and represent reality. Second is that we notice there is a feminization of migration in Asia, a lot of fathers are left behind together with the children but they are not able to take the role of the mothers (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

The data support the importance of migrant work for single parents to support their families (Asis, 2004; Constable, 2003; Tacoli, 1999). A higher percentage of women (12 percent) than men (3 percent) was either widowed or separated (Table 5.7.). A fifth of the spouses were the only income-earners in the family, though there was a significant difference across gender. Among married respondents, nearly half (49 percent) of males, compared to 17 percent of females, were sole breadwinners in the family.

### *Age*

The thirty-year history of state-sponsored migrant employment means that it now straddles two generations, providing spaces for veterans and newcomers. To explore the significance of age as a socio-demographic variable, I grouped the respondents, using the median age, into younger (21 to 34 years old) and older (35 to 57 years old).

Age was not significantly related to gender, religion, and educational level (Table 5.2.), occupation abroad and in the Philippines, and change in job (Table 5.4.), income, and frequency of coming home (Table 5.5.). That age did not impact upon work and income is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it underscores the opportunities abroad that are available equally for younger and older OFWs. Because their salaries are not significantly different, it means younger OFWs have the same financial resources as their older counterparts. On the other hand, however, it indicates the lack of occupational growth that would have skewed work categories and income levels in favor of older OFWs. Indeed, there are few avenues for promotion among domestic workers, caregivers, and factory workers. This argument is supported by the significant difference in the total number of years abroad between the two age groups, which means that while younger respondents have been abroad for a shorter period of time than their older counterparts, they still have the same work attributes. Age significantly related to marital and parental status (Table 5.7.). A majority of older respondents (69 percent) were married, while younger ones (55 percent) were single. Likewise, 74 percent of older OFWs had children, while 26 percent of younger ones had none.

#### *Parental status*

I chose parental status—having children or not—over marital status because only a third of the respondents were single. Also, while there have been studies on single OFWs (Tyner, 2000b; Tacoli, 1999), the literature on transnational family dynamics has focused on the relationship between parents and children (Tyner, 2004; Asis, 2004; Parreñas, 2003, 2002, 2001; Tung, 2000). Further, it is upon the desire to improve the welfare of younger generations that the decision to work abroad is primarily founded.

Parental status significantly related to gender, as 68 percent of women were single while 54 percent of men were married (Table 5.2.). As with age, parental status was not significantly related to religion, educational level, work in the Philippines and abroad, change in job (Table 5.4.), income, and frequency of coming home (Table 9). However, it was directly related with age (Table 5.2.) as well as with length of tenure abroad (Table 5.5). Over half of parent-respondents have worked abroad for at least six years compared to less than a quarter of those without children.

A majority (56 percent) of respondents without children said their spouse lived abroad, compared to 75 percent of respondents with children who said their spouse stayed in the Philippines (Table 5.7.). Families where both parents work abroad, which comprised 25 percent of parent-respondents, had been a concern among scholars as the situation could create a sense of abandonment among the children (see Asis, 2004).

### *Host regions*

Their residency in a foreign country for most of the year distinguishes the communication patterns of OFWs. In order to reflect their place of deployment, I decided to group the countries from which I drew the respondents into three host regions: West Asia (n=100), East Asia (n=120), North America and Europe (n=80). I added a fourth group, Sea-based workers (n=20), for OFWs who had no specific host country. This facilitates statistical testing, while reflecting countries that are geographically proximate and culturally alike.

Host regions drew significantly different distributions of respondents according to gender, religion, and education. West Asia was the only region with an almost equal number of male and female OFWs, while only 28 percent of North America/Europe workers were male (Table 5.2.). Over 80 percent of all respondents in each region were

Roman Catholics. Nearly 10 percent of West Asia respondents were Muslim, a percentage much higher than in the other regions. Similarly, 56 percent of North America/Europe respondents had college/postgraduate degrees, compared to only over a third of the respondents in other regions. Because of the limited number of managers and the lack of diversity in sea-based jobs, many cells had frequency less than five; as such, a Chi-square test cannot be performed (Table 5.4).

North America/Europe respondents also had higher income levels than their counterparts elsewhere. East Asia and sea-based respondents, meanwhile, came home more frequently (Table 5.5.). Carolina De Leon of POEA said the duration of contracts differentiated seafarers from their land-based counterparts. While land-based workers usually have two-year contracts, seafarers usually have six- to ten-month contracts that are renewed with each boarding in a vessel. More than half of all respondents in each host region were married, though the smallest proportion of single respondents could be found in East Asia (Table 5.7.).

### *Work*

I reduced the seven major occupational categories into two: professionals and associates (PA, n=113) to include professionals, executives, managers, and technicians; and services and trades workers (ST, n=207) to include those engaged in services, sales, trades, plant and factory work. I placed sea-based workers in the second category, unless they were executives (Table 5.4.; also see footnote [29](#) for the occupational classification system that I used).

I used work rather than education as an independent variable because it presumably reflected the workers' educational level (Table 5.2.), and considered underemployment (Table 5.4.). It could be argued that education influences



communication patterns because it contributes to access to various social networks and to the ability to use various technologies. However, education is not an efficient variable in this regard because of underemployment. Thus, even with proficiency in communication technologies developed through education, OFWs can be constrained from using these because of their work conditions.

As I have noted earlier, work and gender were directly related, with men and women comprising 57 percent of professionals/associates and 64 percent of services/trades workers respectively. The former also earned more and came home to the Philippines more frequently (Table 5.5.).

### *Income*

A cohort of work is income, since professionals/associates were generally better paid than services/trades workers (Table 5.4.). As with occupation, income was differentiated by gender with women comprising the majority of lower income earners, and men the higher (Table 5.2.). Further, as with work, income was not significantly related to age and parental status, as financial resources were equal across age groups and among respondents with or without children. Unlike work, however, income was not equally distributed among respondents with different marital status: almost two-thirds (64 percent) of higher-income respondents were married, compared to only 51 percent of their lower-income counterparts. Further, 10 percent of lower income respondents came from single-income-earner families (Table 5.7.).

Income is an important variable in the OFW experience since it is the desire for economic betterment that drives people to migrate for work. It also defines the resources that OFWs can use to communicate with their families across distances.

### *Dependent variables*

In order to discuss communication as a system of networks, it has been divided into three categories: interpersonal communication, organizational participation, and mass media ownership, access, and use (Table 5.9.). This section explains how the key demographic attributes can influence these communication networks.

Table 5.9. Dependent variables	
<b>Interpersonal communication</b>	
1. Frequency of contact with individuals in and outside the host country 2. Interpersonal media used to communicate within and to outside the host country 3. Co-workers and housemates	4. Weekends 5. Topics usually discussed 6. Problems 7. Travel
<b>Organizational participation</b>	
8. Frequency of contact with organizations in and outside the host country 9. Membership in organizations 10. Reasons behind organizational membership	11. Plans of unorganized respondents 12. Participation in institutional activities 13. Membership profile 14. Ratings of organizational services
<b>Mass Media use</b>	
15. Ownership and access to various media forms 16. Use of media from the host country, the Philippines, and other countries 17. Media type and use 18. Ratings of media services	19. Monthly media costs 20. Internet use 21. Changing use patterns 22. Attitude towards developments in media

#### *Interpersonal communication*

In this dissertation, I explored interpersonal communication by comparing the frequency of contact of the respondents with people within and outside the host country. Related to this was their use of interpersonal media to communicate with these people. In the host country itself, I looked at their co-workers and housemates, and how they spent their weekends. For the content of their conversations, I had the respondents rate a list of topics that they commonly discussed. Since OFW problems had been the subject of many studies, I also included a section on them. Moreover, because of the transnational nature of migrant work, I discussed their travels within and outside their host country and the Philippines.

I hypothesized that female respondents, because of their predominant work in domestic settings, were less likely to have small interpersonal networks within the host country. They perhaps would face more problems because of the highly personal and perpetual interactions between them and their employer.

As regards the use of interpersonal media, younger respondents, who would be more likely to be exposed to newer technologies, may harness them to communicate within and outside the country. Further, younger respondents were more likely to have higher disposable incomes because they had the same salaries as their older counterparts but tended not to have children. Thus, they would be more able to purchase interpersonal media equipment such as mobile phones and Internet-connected computers for chatting and e-mailing. The same rationale could explain why they were more likely to spend weekends pursuing recreational activities or going on vacations. It could be argued, however, that respondents with children would have a greater need to communicate with their families across borders. Host regions, meanwhile, could have an impact upon the informal social networks depending upon their openness to the free association of migrants.

#### *Organizational participation*

Parallel to my discussion on interpersonal contacts, I talked about the frequency of contact between the respondents and organizations in and outside the host country. Then I looked more deeply into the respondents' organizational memberships and institutional participation. I explored the reasons behind their membership and the activities of their organizations. I then discussed the plans of unorganized respondents to join a group in the future. I concluded by asking them to rate the organizational services that are designed particularly for them.

It is unclear what impact gender has upon organizational membership. While women were less likely due to the “invisible” nature of their work (Tung, 2000; Grandea & Kerr, 1998) to be empowered to join an organization, increasingly women had been organized by various advocacy groups to improve their conditions. Age and parental status, meanwhile, may have an inverse impact upon organizational communication since younger respondents, who tend to be single and childless, may have more time to participate in organizations.

Host regions perhaps have the most direct impact upon organizational communication not only because of strict policies on formal associations, but also because of stereotypes about the limitations in the formations of groups in specific host countries. Likewise, the fact that many organizations were likely to have a religious flavor prevents these organizations from operating in countries that do not have the same state religion. Finally, work and income can define organizational and institutional participation as it can be a source for prestige and professional connections for executives and higher income earners.

### *Mass media use*

OFWs need the mass media to update them about the news and events in the territories where they and their friends and families live. I begin by looking at ownership and access to various media forms in the host country. I then look at the respondents’ uses of media by origin and by type, as well as the rating of media services for OFWs. The emergence of border crossing interpersonal and mass media has provided OFWs with a variety of options to keep in touch with personal, national and global events. I thus explore how these new media forms have changed OFW communication patterns as

well as their attitude towards developments in media. I conclude with a discussion of media costs.

Media use varies by gender as shown by previous studies where women have been less likely to access media in general, or to seek news from media in particular. Age, meanwhile, can influence media use, especially with newer media forms, since younger than older respondents can be more adept in using them. The need of parent-respondents to monitor the circumstances of their children, meanwhile, can impel them to use the mass media for news and information about the Philippines. However, cost considerations can constrain them from fully harnessing the potential of media for this purpose.

The diversity of media content is also dependent upon host regions, with some regions being more democratic than others. Thus, while Philippine media are now available as cable, online or satellite services in the host countries I am studying, access to these media can be regulated in the host regions through censorship. Work and income, meanwhile, influence media use because of the availability of media forms at the workplace or by the ability to purchase them.

## Chapter 6

## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) socialize in two territories: (1) through mediated or face-to-face conversations in the host country; and (2) through mediated communication with people in the Philippines and in other (third party) countries. These multiple frames of references distinguish the OFWs' communication patterns from people who primarily exchange messages with others within their state's boundaries.

The interpersonal communication networks of OFWs are not homogenous. At the macro level, communication policies and practices in their host countries differ. At the level of the individual, diverse demographic characteristics accordingly influence communication patterns.

Thus, this chapter explores these networks first by looking at the individuals with whom OFWs are in contact within and outside the host country, and the media that they use to maintain this contact. It then focuses on networks in the host country by looking at the OFWs' co-workers, housemates, and weekend activities. The third section looks at the content of their conversations, first by discussing their common topics, and then by probing their problems. The last section discusses their travel networks as another index of the multi-territorial nature of their socialization.

## Communication inside and outside the host country

OFW conversations transpire either within or across borders, and in either physical/face-to-face or virtual/mediated spaces.

*Frequency of contact with individuals*

Using a scale of 0 to 5, where 0 is none and 5 is most frequent, respondents were asked to rate the frequency of their contact with their employers/supervisors, co-workers, and housemates in the host country as well as with their family/relatives and friends in the host country, in the Philippines, and in other countries.<sup>32</sup>

Respondents said they were in contact most frequently with their family members in the Philippines ( $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ), followed by co-workers ( $M = 3.9$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ) and the employer/supervisor ( $M = 3.8$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ) in the host country. Friends in the Philippines ( $M = 2.2$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ) and in other countries ( $M = 1.3$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ) were rated lower in the scale, as with family members in the host ( $M = 1.5$ ,  $SD = 2.2$ ) and in other countries ( $M = 1.3$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ) (Table 6.1.).

These findings show that, despite their distance, respondents believed they were better connected with their family in the Philippines than with any group of individuals elsewhere. In fact, work, which brought them to the host country and which was central to their activities there, was perceived to be secondary as an occasion for conversations. While respondents rated their contact with familial relations in the Philippines and co-workers most highly, they also communicated with non-co-workers in the host country. Friends and ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ) housemates ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = 2.1$ ) in the host country were also rated towards the “more frequent” end of the scale.

The limitations of extra-territorial and non-work-related contacts were evident in the poor rating of (1) family members outside the Philippines and (2) friends outside the

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<sup>32</sup> Some of these categories are not mutually exclusive—i.e, employers can be housemates as with the case of domestic workers, or co-workers can be friends. I felt there was no need to complicate the categories by reflecting such qualifications, ie, housemates who are not employers, housemates who are not co-workers, and as follows. The categorization seemed clear to the respondents, and no misunderstanding was reported during the data gathering.

Table 6.1. Frequency of contact with individuals inside and outside the host country\*

	Host country										Philippines				Other countries			
	Employer/ Supervisor		Co-workers		Housemates		Family		Friends		Family		Friends		Family		Friends	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	3.8	1.5	3.9	1.7	3.5	2.1	1.5	2.0	3.7	1.5	4.1	1.0	2.2	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.5
Gender																		
Male (n=142)	3.4	1.6	4.6	0.9	3.4	2.1	1.3	1.9	3.8	1.5	4.1	1.0	2.3	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.5
Female (n=178)	4.0	1.4	3.4	2.0	3.5	2.1	1.7	2.1	3.6	1.6	4.0	1.1	2.2	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.4
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(277) = -3.56,$ $p < .01)$		$t(254) = 7.29,$ $p < .01)$		$t(318) = -.174,$ $p = .86)$		$t(312) = -1.63,$ $p = .10)$		$t(318) = .682,$ $p = .49)$		$t(318) = 0.69,$ $p = .49)$		$t(318) = 0.68,$ $p = .50)$		$t(318) = -1.09,$ $p = .28)$		$t(318) = 0.23,$ $p = .81)$	
Age (years old)																		
21 to 34 (n=161)	3.7	1.5	4.0	1.7	3.5	2.1	1.4	2.0	3.7	1.5	4.1	1.0	2.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.5
35 to 57 (n=159)	3.9	1.5	3.9	1.8	3.4	2.1	1.6	2.0	3.7	1.6	4.0	1.0	2.1	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -1.06,$ $p = .29)$		$t(318) = 0.78,$ $p = .44)$		$t(318) = .32,$ $p = .75)$		$t(318) = -.73,$ $p = .47)$		$t(318) = .09,$ $p = .92)$		$t(318) = .37,$ $p = .71)$		$t(318) = 1.19,$ $p = .24)$		$t(318) = -.15,$ $p = .88)$		$t(318) = -1.05,$ $p = .29)$	
Parental Status																		
Without (n=145)	3.7	1.5	3.9	1.7	3.5	2.1	1.3	1.9	3.7	1.6	4.0	1.0	2.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5
With kids (n=175)	3.8	1.5	3.9	1.8	3.4	2.1	1.7	2.1	3.7	1.5	4.1	1.1	2.1	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.4
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -.58,$ $p = .56)$		$t(318) = -.20,$ $p = .84)$		$t(318) = .45,$ $p = .65)$		$t(314) = -1.77,$ $p = .08)$		$t(318) = -.12,$ $p = .90)$		$t(318) = -1.17,$ $p = .24)$		$t(285) = 2.49,$ $p < .01)$		$t(318) = .50,$ $p = .62)$		$t(318) = .92,$ $p = .36)$	
Host region																		
West Asia (n=100)	3.8	1.7	4.2	1.5	3.5	2.1	1.5	2.1	3.7	1.6	4.0	1.1	2.1	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.6
East Asia (n=120)	3.8	1.4	3.7	1.9	3.5	2.0	0.9	1.7	3.7	1.5	0.1	0.9	2.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.4
N. Am/Euro n=80)	4.1	1.4	3.8	1.9	3.3	2.2	2.4	2.1	4.0	1.4	4.0	1.1	2.3	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.6
Sea-based (n=20)	2.6	1.2	4.2	1.5	3.6	1.9	1.3	1.8	2.5	1.9	4.0	1.4	3.0	1.7	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.2
ANOVA	$F(3,316) =$ $5.76, p < .01)$		$F(3,316) =$ $1.65, p = .18)$		$F(3,316) =$ $0.16, p = .18)$		$F(3,316) =$ $8.75, p = .92)$		$F(3,316) =$ $5.35, p < .01)$		$F(3,316) =$ $0.46, p = .01)$		$F(3,316) =$ $2.31, p = .71)$		$F(3,316) =$ $1.53, p = .21)$		$F(3,316) =$ $0.97, p = .41)$	
Work																		
Professionals/ Associates (n=113)	4.0	1.4	4.7	0.9	3.5	2.1	1.7	2.0	3.8	1.4	4.1	1.0	2.3	1.4	1.8	1.3	1.7	1.5
Services & Trades Workers (n=207)	3.7	1.6	3.5	2.0	3.4	2.1	1.4	2.0	3.6	1.6	4.0	1.1	2.2	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.1	1.5
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(255) = 1.79,$ $p = .07)$		$t(308) = 7.21,$ $p < .01)$		$t(318) = 0.34,$ $p = .73)$		$t(318) = 1.16,$ $p = .24)$		$t(258) = 1.21,$ $p = .23)$		$t(318) = 0.98,$ $p = .33)$		$t(318) = 0.94,$ $p = .35)$		$t(318) = 3.12,$ $p < .01)$		$t(318) = 3.39,$ $p < .01)$	
Income																		
Lower (n=196)	3.6	1.5	3.7	1.8	3.6	2.0	1.3	1.9	3.6	1.6	4.0	1.0	2.2	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.4
Higher (n=122)	4.0	1.5	4.2	1.6	3.3	2.2	1.8	2.1	3.8	1.5	4.1	1.1	2.2	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.5
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316) = -1.92,$ $p = .05)$		$t(287) = -2.49,$ $p < .01)$		$t(234) = 1.18,$ $p = .24)$		$t(242) = -2.18,$ $p = .03)$		$t(316) = -0.75,$ $p = .03)$		$t(316) = -0.67,$ $p = .51)$		$t(316) = -0.20,$ $p = .84)$		$t(316) = -3.60,$ $p < .01)$		$t(236) = -3.62,$ $p = .01)$	

In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.  
\*\*Two respondents did not reply.



host country. Thus, the respondents' interpersonal communication networks remained more transnational than global.

There were differences, however, in the frequency of contact by specific respondent groups. Women ( $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ) were more likely than men ( $M = 3.4$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ) to say they were most in contact with their employers—evidence of the live-in arrangements of most female domestic workers and caregivers. Men, meanwhile, said they had the most contact with their co-workers ( $M = 4.6$ ,  $SD = 0.9$ ).

Across age groups, older respondents focused more on their family, employer, and co-workers than younger respondents did. While younger respondents also rated their families as the ones they most frequently maintained contact with, they were more likely to communicate with their co-workers than with their superiors. Further, they gave higher ratings for their friends than for their superiors.

There were no such differences among respondents when grouped across respondents who have or who have no children. There was, however, a significant gap in the frequency of contact with friends in the Philippines between respondents who had children ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ) and those who had none ( $M = 2.1$ ,  $SD = 1.3$ ).

Frequency of contact with communication partners varied a lot across host regions. Respondents from West Asia ( $M = 4.2$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ) and sea-based respondents ( $M = 4.1$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ) rated their co-workers most highly. Those from East Asia rated their family/relatives ( $M = 4.1$ ,  $SD = 0.9$ ) most highly, while those from North America/Europe rated employers/supervisors ( $M = 4.1$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ) accordingly so. Rated second in terms of frequency of contact were family members/relatives in the Philippines, except in East Asia where most respondents appeared to live with their employers and whom they therefore rated next to their family ( $M = 3.8$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ). The same can be inferred among West Asia respondents who rated their employers/supervisors third relative to the other

categories of individuals ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ). The centrality of work among Asian respondents is therefore evident in this regard.

Other peculiarities indicated different lifestyles across host regions. North America/Europe respondents rated friends third ( $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ) among the seven choices, implying a stronger social scene. In comparison, while sea-based respondents rated their shipmates ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 1.9$ ) after their co-workers and family members, they did not refer to them as friends ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 1.9$ ). This meant they differentiated between co-workers and shipmates, even if they all stayed in the same ship. This illustrated what Sampson (2003) observed as the rigorous hierarchy inside the ship and the fact that short contracts precluded the development of strong friendly relations.

Between professionals/associates and services/trades workers, the ranking of the ratings also differed. Among the former, co-workers ( $M = 4.7$ ,  $SD = 0.9$ ) and employers/supervisors ( $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ) were first and third in terms of frequency of contact. Family/relatives in the Philippines came in second ( $M = 4.1$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ). Services/traders workers, meanwhile, were in contact with the following in order of frequency: family ( $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ ), employer ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ), and friends ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ). These differences indicated the demands of work among professionals/associates, and the direct relations between services/trades workers and their employer with whom they usually lived. Surprisingly, however, services/trades workers rated their friends in the host country quite highly, indicating a social network that has emerged even with the supposed invisibility of their labor (Tung, 2000; Grandea & Kerr, 1998) in private households. The diverse venues where services/trades workers spend their weekends (see the latter part of this chapter) support this observation.

Ratings for specific groups significantly differed between professionals/associates and services/trades workers as well as between lower and higher income

respondents. While the ratings were low, higher income respondents and professionals appeared to have greater contact than did their counterparts with people from other countries. Rating differences between higher and lower income respondents were also significant for almost all communication partners. The only two exceptions were housemates and those who lived in the Philippines. The ratings given by higher income respondents imply that they were in more frequent contact in the host country with employers, co-workers, family/relatives, and friends.

#### *Interpersonal media ownership and access*

Improvements in Philippine telecommunications and the popularity of mobile telephony among Filipinos have made interpersonal media a viable means of communication between OFWs and individuals in and outside the host country.

As with Philippine statistics (see Chapter 1), more respondents had a mobile phone than a landline phone. Indeed, 83 percent and 76 percent of them had mobile phones that were subscribed to phone networks in their host country and in the Philippines respectively (Table 6.2.). While mobile phones can be used around the world through global roaming, I learned from a previous study (Paragas, 2005) that during their tenure abroad a number of OFWs maintained two mobile phones as this gave them a sense of perpetual contact (Katz & Aakhus, 2003) with their family in the Philippines.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The informants in the 2005 study said they maintained two phones while abroad: one that is subscribed to a network in the host country, and another that is subscribed to a Philippine network. While either mobile phone can technically be used across state borders through global roaming capabilities, the informants said they liked the idea that their family could immediately and directly contact them through the Philippine-connected mobile phone. Cost was a consideration, though it was not a major factor since the informants primarily used the Philippine mobile phone for texting.

Table 6.2. Interpersonal media ownership and access

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>Landline</b>															
None	21.9	26.1	18.5	20.5	23.3	18.6	24.6	26.0	23.3	18.8	5.0	15.9	25.1	22.4	20.5
Own	24.4	20.4	27.5	21.7	27.0	20.7	27.4	24.0	21.7	35.0		37.2	17.4	17.9	34.4
Have Access	53.8	53.5	53.9	57.8	49.7	60.7	48.0	50.0	55.0	46.3	95.0	46.9	57.5	59.7	45.1
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 3.68, $p$ = .16		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 2.18, $p$ = .34		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 5.14, $p$ = .07		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 20.27, $p$ < .01				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 16.08, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 11.63, $p$ < .01	
<b>Mobile phone with host country SIM</b>															
None	13.1	14.8	11.8	11.2	15.1	13.8	12.6	13.0	15.0	10.0	15.0	8.0	15.9	13.3	12.3
Own	82.5	80.3	84.3	85.1	79.9	79.3	85.1	85.0	80.8	87.5	60.0	91.2	77.8	81.1	85.2
Have Access	4.4	4.9	3.9	3.7	5.0	6.9	2.3	2.0	4.2	2.5	25.0	0.9	6.3	5.6	2.5
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 0.87, $p$ = .65		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 1.51, $p$ = .47		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 4.27, $p$ = .12		4 cells (33.3%) have $n$ < 5.				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 9.99, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 1.91, $p$ = .38	
<b>Mobile phone with Philippine SIM</b>															
None	20.0	15.5	23.6	20.5	19.5	21.4	18.9	13.0	26.7	20.0	15.0	10.6	25.1	23.5	14.8
Own	76.3	81.0	72.5	77.0	75.5	73.8	78.3	82.0	70.8	78.8	70.0	86.7	70.5	71.9	82.8
Have Access	3.8	3.5	3.9	2.5	5.0	4.8	2.9	5.0	2.5	1.3	15.0	2.7	4.3	4.6	2.5
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 3.38, $p$ = .18		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 1.45, $p$ = .48		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 1.28, $p$ = .53		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 15.43, $p$ = .02				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 10.76, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 4.91, $p$ = .09	
<b>Mobile phone with cam</b>															
None	43.4	40.1	46.1	33.5	53.5	40.0	46.3	53.0	46.7	31.3	25.0	26.5	52.7	52.6	29.5
Own	51.6	54.2	49.4	61.5	41.5	55.2	48.6	42.0	52.5	63.8	45.0	70.8	41.1	41.8	66.4
Have Access	5.0	5.6	4.5	5.0	5.0	4.8	5.1	5.0	0.8	5.0	30.0	2.7	6.3	5.6	4.1
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 1.19, $p$ = .55		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 13.50, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 1.41, $p$ = .49		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 40.13, $p$ < .01				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 25.92, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 18.32, $p$ < .01	
<b>Digital video/cam</b>															
None	43.8	38.0	48.3	39.1	48.4	43.4	44.0	54.0	44.2	31.3	40.0	29.2	51.7	54.1	27.9
Own	46.3	52.1	41.6	52.8	39.6	46.9	45.7	34.0	49.2	60.0	35.0	65.5	35.7	34.7	63.9
Have Access	10.0	9.9	10.1	8.1	11.9	9.7	10.3	12.0	6.7	8.8	25.0	5.3	12.6	11.2	8.2
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 3.81, $p$ = .15		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 5.78, $p$ = .05		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 0.06, $p$ = .97		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 18.97, $p$ < .01				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 26.27, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 26.42, $p$ < .01	

\*Two respondents did not reply.

Only 24 percent of respondents, meanwhile, had their own landline phone, in addition to 54 percent of them had access to one.<sup>34</sup> Access to a phone, especially a mobile phone, is important not only for communicating with the family. Mobile phones can serve as a lifeline for distressed workers.

Ellene Sana of the Center for Migrant Advocacy said they were developing a database of OFW mobile phone numbers that could be used as a reference for some surveys on OFWs. Moreover, mobile phones could serve as an SOS hotline when migrants required assistance with their problems. Sana explained:

Mobile phones are accessible worldwide and text messages can be forwarded. Thus, we can receive an SOS request, which we can forward immediately to the Department of Foreign Affairs. We can also monitor the progress of assistance through the phone (personal communication, (July 29, 2005).

However, while such assistance can indeed be facilitated faster over the phone, Florence May Cortina of Kanlungan said it is not foolproof. She explained:

Working for a distressed OFW is fast through mobile phones. For example, their family here receives a request for assistance from their relative in Saudi Arabia through the mobile phone. The OFW can describe over the phone what is happening to him/her, but he/she has to do it surreptitiously because the employer may get the unit (personal communication, July 20, 2005).

Over half (52 percent) of the respondents who owned a mobile phone-said their unit had a camera, while another 46 percent said they owned a digital video camera. Another five percent and 10 percent had access to a mobile phone cam or a video cam respectively. This means that a majority of the respondents were able to digitally take

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<sup>34</sup> By ownership, I meant the respondents owned and used the unit exclusively or paid for its subscription on their own. By access, I meant the respondents either had shared use and/or subscription.

pictures and, with Internet connection (see Chapter 8), to send these electronically.

Thus, mediated communication facilitates not only the exchange of sound, but also of images instantaneously.

Gender and parental status did not have an impact upon interpersonal media ownership, contradicting two general perceptions: that men are more wired than women and that parent-respondents would be more contactable than those without children because of their desire to exercise their parental duties across distances. That female OFWs also use mobile phones just as widely as their male counterparts is widely-observed among people who work extensively with them. Thus, it would come as a surprise for Ellene Sana if she were to learn of a domestic worker in Hong Kong who did not own a mobile phone.

Though gender and parental status did not have an impact upon interpersonal media ownership, host regions, work, and income did. Compared to their counterparts, a larger portion of North America/Europe, professional, and higher-income respondents owned landline phones, mobile phone with camera, and video cameras. Host regions and work further differentiated ownership and access of mobile phones with Philippine SIM card. However, a larger share of younger respondents (62 percent) than older (42 percent) owned a mobile phone with a camera, indicating greater interest, and ability to purchase, phone units with more complicated technology.

#### *Interpersonal media use*

One of OWWA's recent projects with Scalabrini investigated the communication dynamic between parent-OFWs and their children. OWWA Director Rustico De la Fuente said their research showed how the use of media technologies has "mitigated the social cost of migration." He explained:

We could see now that migrants can chat the whole hour without worrying about the expenses. And you know the net effect is that the migrants out there have regained their lost role as decision makers. They are now part of the decision making of the family on a daily or hourly basis. . . . Of course, others are kidding, and even the migrants themselves out there in the Middle East, that they could see the pictures of a prospective boyfriend or girlfriend. They communicate, if not with the computer, then through text messages (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

Beyond family matters, interpersonal media were also used for transnational businesses. Sari Cañete of Unlad said, "for example, our clients would text us, 'Have you transferred our money to this particular enterprise?'. Then we would text back."

Since I interviewed De la Fuente during the pre-testing of our survey questionnaire, I thought it was proper to test this assertion. Thus, on a scale of 0 (not used) to 5 (most frequently used), respondents were asked to rate the six ways of mediated communication in terms of their usage within and towards outside the host country. The items given for rating were traditional letters, e-mail, online chat, landline phone, phone cards, mobile phone, and texting.

Mobile phones was rated most highly as the media of choice in making phone calls both within ( $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ) and to outside the host country ( $M = 4.1$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ). Texting was rated second (Host:  $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 1.8$ ; Outside:  $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 1.8$ ). Traditional letters, long the staple of OFW transnational communication (Paragas, 1996 & 1999; CIIR, 1987), were rated the lowest among the choices. Communication by landline, meanwhile, still rated higher than online chats or e-mails. There was generally no difference between the use of the media in and across states, except for traditional

letters, phone cards, and landline phones. The first two were more for cross-border communication, while the last was primarily for intra-country calls (Table 6.3.).

Medium	In the host country (N=320)		To outside the country (N=320)		Paired samples test (two-tailed)				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	T-test	df	Sig ≤
Traditional letters	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.4	-0.4	1.3	-5.1	319	0.01
E-mail	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.9	0.1	1.3	0.8	319	0.40
Internet chat	1.6	1.9	1.5	1.8	0.0	1.2	0.5	319	0.60
Landline phone	2.8	2.0	2.6	2.0	0.2	1.9	2.1	319	0.01
Phone cards	2.4	2.1	2.7	2.1	-0.3	1.7	-3.0	319	0.01
Mobile phone	4.0	1.6	4.1	1.5	-0.1	1.5	-1.5	319	0.10
Texting	3.6	1.8	3.6	1.8	0.0	1.7	0.1	319	0.90

The ordering of mobile phones, texting, landline phones, and phone cards as the primary media for communication within and to outside the country was generally the same across respondent groupings. However, age, host region, work, and income influenced the extent of use. Younger respondents generally gave higher ratings than older ones in their use of e-mail and online chat, and mobile phone and texting both within and outside the host country (Tables 6.4. and 6.5.). The fact that younger respondents also tended to have no children was reflected in the significant difference between the ratings for e-mail and online chat. Further, ratings for the intra-country use of e-mail, online chat, and landline phones were significantly different across host regions, work and income groupings (Table 6.4.). North America/Europe, professional/associate, and higher income respondents consistently gave significantly higher ratings for their use of e-mail, chat, and landline phone. Sea-based workers, meanwhile, posted low ratings for e-mail and online chat. North America/Europe respondents also gave higher ratings for their use of phone cards.

One informant, Sari Cañete of Unlad, noted differences in interpersonal media use within East Asia. She said their Hong Kong clients usually coordinated with them by



Table 6.4. Interpersonal media within the host country\*

	Traditional letters		E-mail		Internet chat		Landline phone		Phone cards		Mobile phone		Texting	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Gender</b>														
Male (n=142)	0.6	0.9	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.9	2.7	1.9	2.4	2.1	4.1	1.5	3.6	1.8
Female (n=178)	0.6	1.0	1.9	2.0	1.5	1.9	2.9	2.0	2.4	2.1	3.9	1.7	3.6	1.8
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -.26, p = .79$		$t(318) = .24, p = .81$		$t(318) = .33, p = .74$		$t(318) = -.88, p = .38$		$t(318) = .36, p = .72$		$t(318) = .92, p = .36$		$t(318) = -.38, p = .70$	
<b>Age (years old)</b>														
21 to 34 (n=161)	0.6	1.0	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.9	2.7	1.9	2.3	2.1	4.3	1.4	4.0	1.6
35 to 57 (n=159)	0.6	1.0	1.6	1.9	1.3	1.7	3.0	2.0	2.5	2.1	3.8	1.8	3.3	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -.19, p = .85$		$t(318) = 3.28, p < .01$		$t(315) = 2.87, p < .01$		$t(318) = -1.44, p = .15$		$t(318) = -.63, p = .53$		$t(300) = 2.63, p < .01$		$t(303) = 3.62, p < .01$	
<b>Parental Status</b>														
Without (n=145)	0.5	0.9	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.8	2.0	2.4	2.2	4.1	1.6	3.7	1.8
With kids (n=175)	0.7	1.0	1.6	1.9	1.2	1.7	2.9	2.0	2.4	2.1	3.9	1.7	3.5	1.8
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -1.78, p = .08$		$t(294) = 3.23, p < .01$		$t(280) = 3.82, p < .01$		$t(318) = -0.11, p = .91$		$t(318) = 0.02, p = .98$		$t(318) = 1.26, p = .21$		$t(318) = 1.07, p = .29$	
<b>Host region</b>														
West Asia (n=100)	0.6	1.0	1.7	1.9	1.3	1.7	2.7	2.1	2.0	2.1	4.0	1.7	3.5	1.9
East Asia (n=120)	0.5	0.8	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.9	2.8	2.0	2.4	2.1	4.1	1.7	3.7	1.8
N. Am/Euro (n=80)	0.7	1.1	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.9	3.3	1.7	2.9	2.1	4.2	1.4	3.6	1.7
Sea-based (n=20)	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.4	0.7	1.3	2.1	1.9	2.4	1.9	3.4	1.8	3.5	1.9
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 1.20, p = .31$		$F(3,316) = 3.91, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 3.16, p = .02$		$F(3,316) = 2.92, p = .04$		$F(3,316) = 2.83, p = .03$		$F(3,316) = 1.44, p = .23$		$F(3,316) = 1.65, p = .18$	
<b>Work</b>														
Professionals/ Associates (n=113)	0.6	0.9	3.1	1.9	2.2	1.9	3.1	1.9	2.4	2.1	4.5	1.2	3.9	1.6
Services & Trades Workers (n=207)	0.6	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.7	2.7	2.0	2.4	2.1	3.8	1.8	3.5	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.47, p = .64$		$t(210) = 7.80, p < .01$		$t(208) = 4.63, p < .01$		$t(246) = 1.94, p = .05$		$t(318) = -0.27, p = .79$		$t(305) = 4.01, p < .01$		$t(264) = 2.16, p = .03$	
<b>Income</b>														
Lower (n=196)	0.6	0.9	1.5	1.8	1.3	1.8	2.6	2.0	2.3	2.1	3.9	1.7	3.6	1.8
Higher (n=122)	0.6	1.0	2.7	2.0	2.0	1.9	3.2	1.9	2.5	2.1	4.2	1.5	3.6	1.8
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316) = -0.67, p = .50$		$t(234) = -5.33, p < .01$		$t(243) = -3.45, p < .01$		$t(316) = -2.84, p < .01$		$t(316) = 0.98, p = .33$		$t(280) = -1.57, p = .12$		$t(316) = -0.08, p = .94$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

Table 6.5. Interpersonal media used to outside the host country\*

	Traditional letters		E-mail		Internet chat		Landline phone		Phone cards		Mobile phone		Texting	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Gender</b>														
Male (n=142)	0.9	1.3	2.1	2.0	1.6	1.8	2.5	2.0	2.7	2.1	4.3	1.4	3.7	1.8
Female (n=178)	1.1	1.4	1.8	1.9	1.5	1.8	2.7	2.0	2.7	2.1	4.0	1.7	3.6	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 1.10, p = .23$		$t(318) = 1.29, p = .20$		$t(318) = .33, p = .74$		$t(318) = -.93, p = .35$		$t(318) = -.01, p = .99$		$t(318) = 1.46, p = .15$		$t(318) = .44, p = .66$	
<b>Age (years old)</b>														
21 to 34 (n=161)	1.1	1.4	2.2	1.9	1.7	1.8	2.6	2.0	2.9	2.1	4.4	1.2	3.9	1.7
35 to 57 (n=159)	0.9	1.3	1.6	1.9	1.3	1.8	2.7	2.0	2.5	2.1	3.8	1.8	3.3	2.0
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = .91, p = .36$		$t(318) = 2.45, p < .01$		$t(318) = 2.02, p = .04$		$t(318) = -.40, p = .69$		$t(318) = 1.55, p = .12$		$t(279) = 3.44, p < .01$		$t(308) = 2.70, p < .01$	
<b>Parental Status</b>														
Without (n=145)	0.9	1.4	2.2	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.8	2.0	2.9	2.1	4.2	1.6	3.6	1.9
With kids (n=175)	1.0	1.3	1.7	1.9	1.2	1.7	2.5	2.0	2.5	2.1	4.1	1.5	3.6	1.8
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.44, p = .66$		$t(318) = 2.42, p = .02$		$t(292) = 3.05, p < .01$		$t(318) = 1.11, p = .27$		$t(318) = 1.77, p = .08$		$t(318) = 0.22, p = .82$		$t(318) = -0.09, p = .92$	
<b>Host region</b>														
West Asia (n=100)	0.9	1.3	1.8	1.9	1.3	1.7	2.2	2.0	1.8	2.0	4.3	1.4	3.4	1.9
East Asia (n=120)	1.0	1.3	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.7	2.0	2.9	2.1	4.3	1.5	3.8	1.8
N. Am/Euro (n=80)	0.9	1.3	2.1	2.0	1.7	1.9	3.2	1.8	3.4	2.0	3.8	1.8	3.4	1.9
Sea-based (n=20)	1.6	1.9	1.2	1.9	0.9	1.6	2.2	2.2	3.2	1.9	4.3	1.4	4.2	1.5
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 1.65, p = .18$		$F(3,316) = 1.44, p = .23$		$F(3,316) = 1.91, p = .13$		$F(3,316) = 4.80, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 9.70, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 1.84, p = .14$		$F(3,316) = 1.44, p = .23$	
<b>Work</b>														
Professionals/ Associates (n=113)	0.9	1.2	3.0	1.8	2.1	1.9	2.7	1.9	2.5	2.1	4.3	1.4	3.7	1.8
Services & Trades Workers (n=207)	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.8	1.2	1.7	2.6	2.0	2.8	2.1	4.1	1.6	3.6	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -1.12, p = .26$		$t(318) = 7.85, p < .01$		$t(206) = 4.54, p < .01$		$t(342) = 0.86, p = .39$		$t(318) = -0.92, p = .36$		$t(259) = 0.98, p = .33$		$t(318) = 0.42, p = .68$	
<b>Income</b>														
Lower (n=196)	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.2	1.7	2.3	2.0	2.5	2.1	4.2	1.5	3.7	1.8
Higher (n=122)	0.9	1.2	2.6	2.0	2.0	1.9	3.0	1.9	3.0	2.0	4.0	1.6	3.5	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316) = 0.47, p = .64$		$t(241) = -5.22, p < .01$		$t(239) = -3.83, p < .01$		$t(316) = -3.04, p < .01$		$t(316) = -2.42, p = .02$		$t(316) = 1.13, p = .26$		$t(316) = 1.05, p = .29$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

text, while those in Taiwan did so by e-mail because the latter would first meet as a group during which they would write their correspondence. She added, “Perhaps because we have been in Hong Kong for a long time we have established a lot of personal relations already” (personal communication, July 26, 2005).

For communication with individuals outside the host country, North America/Europe respondents gave the highest rating for their use of the landline phone, while those from West Asia gave the lowest rating for the use of phone cards. Work and income significantly influenced ratings for the use of e-mail, chat and landline phones. Professionals and higher income respondents gave significantly higher scores for each of these media (Table 6.5.). These findings indicated a digital divide among the respondents. Ellene Sana said:

Of course this is already a given—not only on who [among OFWs] has access, but also on who is literate in it. Not because there is ICT<sup>35</sup> means domestic workers will be ok with accessing it. The point is we should look at opportunities to improve our cause (personal communication, July 29, 2005).

She then described how access to interpersonal media can be extended to other OFWs through their face-to-face relations:

For example, in Saudi Arabia, there are a couple of Filipinos in the telephone company who are active in coordinating with us. One of them is in charge of troubleshooting equipment, so if everything is working well, then he has a lot of free time to correspond with us (personal communication, July 29, 2005).

The same relay system worked in shipping vessels, too. Carolina de Leon of the POEA Sea-based Center said a ship usually had a communication group that included a

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<sup>35</sup> Information and communication technology

radio operator, and telecommunications and internet managers. These people usually relayed job openings to their friends for direct hiring by the vessel itself.

Another opportunity to bridge the divide was shown by Salome Mendoza of POEA when she worked as the labor attaché in Macau. She narrated:

I coordinated with Caritas Macau, which had a tie-up with a Chinese school. So we were able to get the computer center free-of-charge with 44 units of computer with an LCD projector. When we started, everyone was excited when we taught them how to surf the Internet and how to e-mail. As a result, cyber cafés mushroomed there because they have Filipino customers, the ones we taught (personal communication, August 4, 2005).

OWWA is implementing a similar project in partnership with Microsoft. According to the Microsoft Philippines Web site (2005), the project called Tulay<sup>36</sup> “provides IT training and access to technology that will enable OFW families to communicate via the Internet. More than three thousand OFWs and their families are targeted to benefit from the project.” There are now six Tulay training Centers.

Among the newer media in the choices, mobile phone and texting generally had the same ratings across respondent groupings. Only age and work significantly affected them, whereas all variables except gender influenced Internet-based media. Mobile phones then can be considered as the most universal of the interpersonal media across respondent groupings, and across territorial spaces.

A separate discussion of online activities (see Chapter 8) reveals that a majority (54 percent) of the respondents used the Internet. However, this statistic is skewed towards younger, without-child, professional, and higher-income respondents who used the Internet more than did their counterparts (Table 8.2). Interestingly, the Internet was

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<sup>36</sup> Tulay is the Filipino word for Bridge.

used less as a mass medium, as originally envisioned in the research, than as a personal medium for correspondence (92 percent) and chatting (76 percent).<sup>37</sup> Surfing the World Wide Web for leisure (73 percent) and work (34 percent) were the other main activities online. Florence May Cortina had an explanation for both the popularity of mobile phones and the niche audience of online correspondence. She said:

Those who chat are those who have access to computers. For example, they would set an appointment for chatting. But, our tradition is more oral in nature. That is why chatting is not really a match for us. Usually, intellectuals and professionals are (the ones who are) able to write a lot (personal communication, July 20, 2005).

However, she did note this is changing after I asked her about chatting. She said that earlier generations were much more oral compared to the generation today which likes to chat online. Father Fabio Baggio of Scalabrini Migration Center gave another reason. He said their research has revealed that parents and children are enjoying better transnational communication, especially through text messages. The low subscription fees charged by Philippine mobile phone service providers, he said, give families the opportunity to keep in touch everyday. Victor Fernandez of PASEI, meanwhile, said:

Even domestic helpers, once they go abroad, know how to manipulate their mobile phone, even if they don't know how to use a computer. And this phone, we have noticed, has been able to help reduce homesickness. It helps them discuss their homesickness with their family. This helps the industry in a way

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<sup>37</sup> One of the findings of a study on Internet use in rural Philippines was that Internet cafes had families of migrant workers as their primary clientele (Umali & Paragas, n.d.). An hour's rental of an online computer at such a café usually cost US\$0.50, which equals one minute of an international long distance call. Unlimited-time monthly Internet subscriptions range from US\$10.00 for dial-up to US\$40.00 for broadband connections.

because we have fewer complaints about people coming home unless they are already maltreated (personal communication, July 28, 2005).

Mobile phone companies are aware of the increasing importance of their services among OFWs. Globe Telecommunications launched *Globe Kababayan* [Globe Compatriot] to target the niche audience which OFWs comprise. The program enables Globe subscribers to share the pre-paid credit on the mobile phone transnationally. It also allows them to automatically add to that pre-paid credit even when they are out of the country as well as to remit money by text. *Globe Kababayan* also has regular promotions that range from special rates for international long distance calls between the Philippines and specific countries to raffle contests where vehicles could be won. The latter, in particular, was conducted in tandem with POEA and OWWA (Figure 6.1.).

However, the survey revealed that *Globe Kababayan* still had a poor participation rate among OFWs as it earned a mean rating of 0.81 on a scale of 0 (never used) to 5 (frequently used).

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Figure 6.1. *Globe Kababayan* promotional flyer (n.d.)



### Communication in the host country

Earlier I touched upon the respondents' ratings of the frequency of their contact with various individuals to compare their intra- and cross-border communication. However, what is distinctive about the OFW experience is their residency in a foreign land most of the time. Thus, it is necessary to explore whom it is they interact with during their deployment abroad. Indeed, understanding the social networks in Macau was the first thing that Salome Mendoza did when she started her work as its Labor Attaché:

I began by knowing the community first through environmental scanning. When I first came there, I immediately checked where the Filipinos were. I had to coordinate with the Macau government to track their whereabouts since the information would not be voluntarily given. Once I accomplished this, I got a total picture of the community. I learned that there were three categories of Filipinos there: the permanent residents, the temporary residents, and the OFWs who are not considered as residents. I saw that most of the Filipinos there were domestic helpers. They were the ones who opened Macau for Filipinos 20 years ago. They still comprise the largest Filipino population, until they have become residents already. . . . Thus, as far as we were concerned there, we needed to extend our governmental services not only to OFWs but to the entire Filipino community (personal communication, August 4, 2005).

### *Co-workers and housemates*

Interestingly, respondents said their co-workers abroad were also Filipinos (29 percent) or from other (19 percent) countries. Another 15 percent said their co-workers came from both the Philippines and third party countries. Thus, 63 percent of all

respondents worked with people who were not from the host country. All of them practically worked in an expatriate bubble (Table 6.6.).

Gender, work, and income were related to the nationality of co-workers. A significantly larger proportion of women (17 percent against 1 percent), services and trades workers (15 percent against 1 percent), and lower income respondents (13 percent against 6 percent) worked alone compared to their counterparts. Conversely, men (13 percent against six percent), professionals/associates (13 percent against 7 percent), and higher income respondents (15 percent against 6 percent) had co-workers that came from a more diverse base of states.

A majority of respondents lived with either their co-workers (38 percent) or employers (18 percent). Over 10 percent, meanwhile, either lived alone (25 percent) or with their own family members (12 percent). All variables influenced the type of housemates of the respondents, except age. A majority (58 percent) of male and a fifth (23 percent) of female respondents lived with their co-workers. Another 30 percent of women, compared to only one percent of men, lived with their employers.

Across parental status, a significantly larger portion of respondents who had no children lived with friends compared to those who had children (12 percent against 4 percent). A larger share of those who had children, meanwhile, had family who lived with them in the host country than respondents who had no children (15 percent against 3 percent). Across regions, the largest groups of respondents who worked in West (43 percent) and East (45 percent) Asia, as well as at sea (75 percent) lived with co-workers. Those who worked in North America and Europe, meanwhile, had diverse living arrangements, with the largest share staying with family members or relatives (26 percent). Further, 22 percent of North America/Europe respondents lived alone, or twice the percentage in the other regions.



Table 6.6. Co-workers and housemates in the host country

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
Co-workers from...															
None	10.0	0.7	17.4	6.2	13.8	6.2	13.1	5.0	11.7	16.3	0.0	0.9	15.0	12.8	5.7
The Philippines	29.1	27.5	30.3	36.0	22.0	32.4	26.3	23.0	38.3	23.8	25.0	22.1	32.9	35.2	19.7
The host country	7.8	9.9	6.2	6.8	8.8	8.3	7.4	4.0	9.2	8.8	15.0	10.6	6.3	6.6	9.8
Other countries	19.4	21.1	18.0	17.4	21.4	23.4	16.0	33.0	12.5	17.5	---	25.7	15.9	17.9	20.5
The Philippines & the host country	7.8	7.0	8.4	9.3	6.3	6.9	8.6	4.0	6.7	13.8	10.0	11.5	5.8	6.6	9.8
The Philippines & other countries	15.3	19.7	11.8	13.7	17.0	12.4	17.7	22.0	11.7	7.5	35.0	13.3	16.4	14.3	17.2
From host and other countries	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.9	2.1	1.1	1.0	2.5	1.3	---	2.7	1.0	1.0	2.5
From all three groups	9.1	12.7	6.2	9.3	8.8	8.3	9.7	8.0	7.5	11.3	15.0	13.3	6.8	5.6	14.8
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (7, N = 320) = 31.20, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (7, N = 320) = 12.86, p = .08$		$\chi^2 (7, N = 320) = 9.54, p = .22$		10 cells (31.3) have n < 5.				$\chi^2 (7, N = 320) = 31.01, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (7, N = 318) = 20.42, p < .01$	
Housemates															
None	15.3	15.5	15.2	13.0	17.6	14.5	16.0	12.0	14.2	22.5	10.0	19.5	13.0	10.7	23.0
Employer	17.5	1.4	30.3	14.3	20.8	14.5	20.0	14.0	24.2	15.0	5.0	3.5	25.1	22.4	9.8
Co-worker	38.1	57.7	22.5	42.2	34.0	39.3	37.1	43.0	45.0	12.5	75.0	41.6	36.2	40.3	33.6
Family/relatives	12.2	9.2	14.6	9.3	15.1	8.3	15.4	12.0	5.0	26.3	---	16.8	9.7	10.2	15.6
Friend	7.5	6.3	8.4	9.3	5.7	11.7	4.0	3.0	5.8	17.5	---	10.6	5.8	6.6	9.0
Combinations	9.4	9.9	9.0	11.8	6.9	11.7	7.4	16.0	5.8	6.3	10.0	8.0	10.1	9.7	9.0
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (5, N = 320) = 66.01, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (5, N = 320) = 10.09, p = .07$		$\chi^2 (5, N = 320) = 12.79, p = .02$		$\chi^2 (15, N = 320) = 75.68, p < .01$				$\chi^2 (5, N = 320) = 27.68, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (5, N = 318) = 20.42, p < .05$	

\*Two respondents did not reply.

Similarly, 42 percent of professionals/associates and 36 percent of services/trades workers lived with co-workers, but more professionals/associates (20 percent) than services/trades workers (13 percent) lived alone. A quarter of professionals/associates also lived alone, compared to only four percent of services/trades workers. Meanwhile, two-fifths (40 percent) and a third (34 percent) of higher and lower income respondents respectively had co-workers as their housemates. However, twice the proportion of higher than lower income respondents lived alone (23 percent against 10 percent). Conversely, the share of higher income respondents who lived with employers was only half of lower income respondents (10 percent against 22 percent).

Thus, the respondents' life abroad generally revolves within a work and social sphere where other employees, with whom they live outside of work, are also either Filipinos or migrant workers. However, men, professionals, and higher income respondents work in more culturally diverse environments and more often live with co-workers than employers.

### *Weekends*

The findings show the centrality of work in the OFW life. After all, work brought OFWs abroad. However, I thought that it was important to ask respondents about their weekends since I imagined they had a social life distinct from their work relations. Based on the answers of the respondents, however, work relations dominated even weekends, during which the respondents were supposed to have some respite from work.

To explore the weekend habits of the respondents, respondents were asked to rate home, work, church, public parks, shopping malls, and organizations as the usual venues for their weekends using a 0 (none) to 5 (most frequent) scale (Table 6.7.).

Table 6.7. Where weekends are spent in the host country\*

	Home		Work		Church		Park		Mall		Organization	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	3.5	1.8	3.0	2.0	2.5	1.8	1.9	1.5	2.5	1.6	0.9	1.5
Gender												
Male (n=142)	3.3	1.9	3.1	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.4	2.2	1.6	0.9	1.4
Female (n=178)	3.7	1.6	3.0	2.0	2.9	1.7	2.1	1.6	2.7	1.6	0.9	1.5
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(282 = -1.89, p = .06)$		$t(318 = 0.73, p = .47)$		$t(318 = -4.38, p < .01)$		$t(313 = -3.41, p < .01)$		$t(318 = -2.80, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 0.26, p = .79)$	
Age (years old)												
21 to 34 (n=161)	3.5	1.7	3.3	1.9	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.5	2.5	1.6	0.7	1.3
35 to 57 (n=159)	3.5	1.8	2.8	2.0	2.7	1.8	1.9	1.6	2.6	1.7	1.1	1.6
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = -0.13, p = .90)$		$t(318 = 2.11, p = .04)$		$t(318 = -1.93, p = .05)$		$t(318 = -0.51, p = .61)$		$t(318 = -0.38, p = .70)$		$t(295 = -2.78, p < .01)$	
Parental Status												
Without children (n=145)	3.3	1.7	3.0	2.0	2.4	1.8	1.9	1.5	2.5	1.6	0.9	1.5
With children (n=175)	3.6	1.8	3.0	2.0	2.6	1.8	1.8	1.5	2.5	1.6	0.9	1.5
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = -1.62, p = .11)$		$t(318 = -0.02, p = .98)$		$t(318 = -0.99, p = .32)$		$t(318 = 0.29, p = .77)$		$t(318 = -0.22, p = .82)$		$t(318 = -0.39, p = .70)$	
Host region												
West Asia (n=100)	3.6	1.8	2.8	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.7	2.6	1.7	0.9	1.6
East Asia (n=120)	3.4	1.7	3.2	2.0	2.8	1.8	1.9	1.4	2.4	1.5	0.9	1.5
N. America/Europe n=80)	3.8	1.4	2.7	1.9	3.2	1.5	2.1	1.4	2.7	1.5	0.9	1.5
Sea-based (n=20)	1.8	2.0	4.3	1.4	1.2	0.7	1.5	1.4	1.9	1.8	1.1	1.2
ANOVA	$F(3,316 = 7.82, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 4.14, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 12.43, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 1.72, p = .16)$		$F(3,316 = 1.76, p = .15)$		$F(3,316 = 0.12, p = .95)$	
Work												
Profs/ Assocs (n=113)	3.6	1.7	3.0	1.8	2.7	1.8	2.0	1.5	2.8	1.6	1.1	1.6
Service & Trade (n=207)	3.5	1.8	3.1	2.0	2.4	1.8	1.8	1.5	2.3	1.6	0.8	1.4
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = 0.51, p = .61)$		$t(254 = -0.38, p = .70)$		$t(318 = 1.72, p = .09)$		$t(318 = 0.82, p = .41)$		$t(318 = 2.66, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 2.02, p = .04)$	
Income												
Lower (n=196)	3.5	1.8	3.0	2.1	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.6	2.4	1.6	0.7	1.2
Higher (n=122)	3.4	1.8	3.0	1.8	2.9	1.8	2.0	1.4	2.6	1.6	1.3	1.7
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316 = 0.70, p = .48)$		$t(284 = -0.12, p = .91)$		$t(316 = -3.04, p < .01)$		$t(316 = -1.13, p = .37)$		$t(316 = -1.13, p = .26)$		$t(201 = -3.42, p < .01)$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

\*\*Two respondents did not reply.

In general, home ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = 1.8$ ) and work ( $M = 3.0$ ,  $SD = 2.0$ ) had the highest mean ratings. A close third and fourth were shopping malls ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ) and the church ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 1.8$ ). Since respondents lived with either co-workers or employers/supervisors, spending weekends at home thus meant socializing with the same set of people, indicating a limited social sphere. Across tests of statistical significance among different groups, home and work remained as the two most highly rated choices, with variations in the ranking of the church and the mall in third place.

Women spent their weekends doing diverse activities. Compared to men, women gave significantly higher ratings to the church ( $M = 2.9$ ,  $SD = 1.7$  against  $M = 2.0$ ,  $SD = 1.8$ ), the park ( $M = 2.1$ ,  $SD = 1.6$  against  $M = 1.6$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ), and the mall ( $M = 2.7$ ,  $SD = 1.6$  against  $M = 2.2$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ). This supports the assertion that while women are engaged in invisible labor, they are able to develop and to find time for social networks.

Across host regions, sea-based workers said they primarily spent weekends at work. They were thus the only group that did not enjoy home life even on weekends. North America/Europe respondents, meanwhile, gave their second highest ratings for the church, the only group to do so.

Older  $t(318) = -1.93$ ,  $p = .05$ ) and higher income  $t(316) = -3.04$ ,  $p < .01$ ) respondents gave higher ratings for the church as weekend venues than did their counterparts. The same groups also rated organizations as places for their weekends significantly higher than the others, though the mean ratings they gave for organizations are very low. There appears to be a link between church and organizational activity during weekends for older and higher income respondents, an idea that I explore more deeply in the next chapter. Finally, younger than older respondents  $t(318) = 2.11$ ,  $p = .04$ ), and professionals/associates than services/trades workers  $t(318) = 2.66$ ,  $p = .01$ ), rated malls more highly, reflecting a more consumerist recreational pattern.

## Content of conversations

The earlier discussions tended to focus on the channels of communication for OFWs. However, as I have explained in the framework, I conceptualized networks as both the linkages of media and content. Thus, I explored the topics and problems of OFWs as these indicated their interconnected frames of references and interests.

### *Usual topics*

Family ( $M = 4.4$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ) and work ( $M = 4.2$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ) were the main topics of conversations of the respondents while abroad. I asked the respondents to rate these two topics in terms of the frequency which these were discussed using a 0 (not at all) to 5 (frequent) scale. Other topics included for rating were (with means and standard deviations in parentheses): life abroad (3.77 (1.38)), Philippine news (3.65 (1.45)), finances and remittances (3.61 (1.47)), future plans (3.57 (1.55)), problems (3.24 (1.59)), host country news (2.96 (1.56)), world news (2.79 (1.53)), OFWs news and events (2.73 (1.51)), and lovelife (2.65 (1.75)) (Table 6.8.).

By ordering the ratings based in terms of reported frequency, it is evident that even while they lived abroad, the Philippines remained central in the OFW discourse. Combined with the OFWs' focus on work and personal issues, their frame remained at the very intimate level. Interestingly, the low rating given to the events within the host country where they live, as well as the issues that face OFWs themselves, shows limited attention to the policies and events that can affect them immediately and collectively.

Family and work remained the top-rated choices across the groupings by the six independent variables, though the order of the other categories changed across the tests. Among men, Philippine news ( $M = 3.8$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ), life abroad ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ), and future plans ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ) were the next-highly rated choices. Among women,

Table 6.8. Common topics of conversation\*

	Family		Work		Life abroad		Host country		World news		Philippine news		OFW news		Finances remittances		Problems		Loveliflife		Future plans		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Sample (N=320)	4.4	1.0	4.2	1.2	3.8	1.4	3.0	1.6	2.8	1.5	3.7	1.5	2.7	1.5	3.6	1.5	3.2	1.6	2.7	1.8	3.6	1.6	
Gender																							
Male (n=142)	4.3	1.2	4.2	1.1	3.7	1.4	2.8	1.7	2.8	1.6	3.8	1.4	2.8	1.4	3.5	1.6	3.2	1.6	2.7	1.7	3.6	1.6	
Female (n=178)	4.5	0.9	4.1	1.3	3.9	1.4	3.1	1.5	2.8	1.5	3.6	1.5	2.7	1.6	3.7	1.4	3.3	1.6	2.6	1.8	3.5	1.5	
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(266)=-1.64$ $p=.10$		$t(318)=0.86$ $p=.39$		$t(318)=-1.24$ $p=.22$		$t(285)=-1.55$ $p=.12$		$t(318)=0.32$ $p=.75$		$t(318)=1.07$ $p=.29$		$t(315)=0.47$ $p=.64$		$t(289)=-0.75$ $p=.45$		$t(318)=-0.40$ $p=.69$		$t(318)=0.50$ $p=.62$		$t(318)=0.31$ $p=.76$		
Age																							
21 to 34 (n=161)	4.5	1.0	4.2	1.2	3.7	1.4	2.9	1.6	2.8	1.6	3.5	1.5	2.7	1.5	3.6	1.5	3.2	1.6	2.8	1.8	3.6	1.6	
35 to 57 (n=159)	4.4	1.1	4.1	1.2	3.9	1.3	3.1	1.5	2.8	1.5	3.8	1.4	2.8	1.5	3.6	1.5	3.3	1.6	2.5	1.7	3.6	1.5	
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318)=0.49$ $p=.62$		$t(318)=1.01$ $p=.31$		$t(318)=-1.12$ $p=.26$		$t(318)=-1.15$ $p=.25$		$t(318)=0.31$ $p=.76$		$t(318)=-1.99$ $p=.05$		$t(318)=-0.65$ $p=.52$		$t(318)=-0.27$ $p=.78$		$t(318)=-0.37$ $p=.71$		$t(318)=1.24$ $p=.22$		$t(318)=-0.11$ $p=.91$		
Parental status																							
Without (n=145)	4.4	1.0	4.1	1.3	3.7	1.4	2.9	1.6	2.8	1.6	3.5	1.6	2.7	1.6	3.6	1.5	3.2	1.7	2.8	1.8	3.5	1.6	
With kids (n=175)	4.5	1.1	4.2	1.1	3.8	1.3	3.0	1.5	2.8	1.5	3.8	1.3	2.8	1.5	3.6	1.5	3.3	1.5	2.5	1.7	3.7	1.5	
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318)=-0.62$ $p=.54$		$t(318)=-0.79$ $p=.43$		$t(318)=-0.28$ $p=.78$		$t(318)=-0.69$ $p=.49$		$t(318)=0.29$ $p=.77$		$t(282)=-2.17$ $p=.03$		$t(318)=-0.37$ $p=.71$		$t(318)=-0.24$ $p=.81$		$t(318)=-0.31$ $p=.76$		$t(318)=1.66$ $p=.10$		$t(318)=-1.05$ $p=.29$		
Host region																							
West Asia (n=100)	4.4	1.0	4.2	1.1	3.8	1.4	2.9	1.7	2.7	1.7	4.0	1.4	2.9	1.6	3.6	1.6	3.2	1.7	2.5	1.7	3.6	1.5	
East Asia (n=120)	4.4	1.1	4.3	1.1	3.7	1.4	2.9	1.5	2.8	1.4	3.4	1.4	2.6	1.5	3.6	1.4	3.2	1.6	2.8	1.7	3.5	1.5	
N. Am/Euro (n=80)	4.4	1.2	4.0	1.4	3.8	1.3	3.2	1.5	3.0	1.5	3.7	1.5	2.7	1.4	3.6	1.4	3.1	1.5	2.7	1.8	3.5	1.6	
Sea-based (n=20)	4.8	0.7	4.4	1.2	4.3	1.2	2.7	1.6	2.2	1.4	3.8	1.5	2.6	1.4	4.1	1.4	3.8	1.4	2.9	1.7	3.6	1.8	
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 0.82, p=.49$		$F(3,316) = 1.35, p=.26$		$F(3,316) = 1.12, p=.34$		$F(3,316) = 1.12, p=.34$		$F(3,316) = 1.80, p=.15$		$F(3,316) = 2.88, p=.04$		$F(3,316) = 0.77, p=.51$		$F(3,316) = 0.66, p=.58$		$F(3,316) = 0.99, p=.40$		$F(3,316) = 0.58, p=.63$		$F(3,316) = 0.08, p=.97$		
Work																							
Profs/Associates (n=113)	4.3	1.2	4.3	1.1	3.8	1.2	3.2	1.5	3.2	1.5	3.9	1.3	2.9	1.4	3.4	1.5	3.1	1.5	2.7	1.8	3.7	1.4	
Service/Trade (n=207)	4.5	0.9	4.1	1.2	3.7	1.5	2.9	1.6	2.6	1.5	3.5	1.5	2.7	1.6	3.7	1.4	3.3	1.6	2.6	1.8	3.5	1.6	
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(188)=-1.40$ $p=.16$		$t(318)=1.49$ $p=.14$		$t(264)=0.64$ $p=.53$		$t(318)=1.83$ $p=.07$		$t(318)=3.21$ $p<.01$		$t(264)=2.01$ $p=.05$		$t(254)=1.07$ $p=.28$		$t(318)=-1.93$ $p=.05$		$t(318)=-0.92$ $p=.36$		$t(318)=0.30$ $p=.76$		$t(262)=1.49$ $p=.14$		
Income																							
Lower (n=196)	4.5	1.0	4.1	1.2	3.7	1.5	2.8	1.5	2.6	1.5	3.6	1.5	2.8	1.5	3.7	1.4	3.3	1.7	2.6	1.8	3.5	1.6	
Higher (n=122)	4.3	1.1	4.2	1.1	3.8	1.2	3.2	1.6	3.1	1.5	3.8	1.4	2.7	1.5	3.5	1.5	3.1	1.5	2.7	1.7	3.6	1.5	
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316)=0.96$ $p=.34$		$t(316)=-0.70$ $p=.48$		$t(288)=-0.54$ $p=.59$		$t(316)=-2.56$ $p<.01$		$t(316)=-2.74$ $p<.01$		$t(316)=-1.26$ $p=.21$		$t(316)=0.48$ $p=.63$		$t(316)=1.31$ $p=.19$		$t(283)=1.45$ $p=.15$		$t(316)=-0.77$ $p=.44$		$t(316)=-0.72$ $p=.47$		
*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.																							
**Two respondents did not reply.																							

meanwhile, they were life abroad ( $M = 3.9$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ), finances ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ), and Philippine news ( $M = 4.4$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ). There was, however, no significant difference in the mean ratings given by either gender per category, showing that while priorities differed, the perceived frequency of a topic was the same across gender.

Across age, parental status, and host region groupings, life abroad ranked third in the rating, except for West Asia where Philippine news was rated higher than life in the host country. Among younger and without-children groups, finances and future plans followed. Among older groups, however, Philippine news and finances took these slots. Across the ten choices, only the rating for Philippine news differed between the two groups. Older  $t(318) = -1.99$   $p = .05$  and parent-respondents  $t(282) = -2.17$   $p = .03$  gave higher ratings for Philippine news compared to their counterparts.

Work and income, however, played out very differently compared to the other variables. Among professionals, work ( $M = 4.3$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ ) was central in their everyday discussions, just edging out family ( $M = 4.3$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ). Likewise, news about the Philippines had a higher mean rating ( $M = 3.9$ ,  $SD = 1.3$ ) than conversations about life abroad ( $M = 3.8$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ). Comparatively, the order of ratings given by services and trades workers hewed closely to the general pattern of family-work-life-abroad, with finances ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ) getting a higher rating than Philippine news ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ). A similar pattern can be observed among lower income groups. Like professionals, however, higher income workers rarely talked about finances, focusing instead on their plans for the future.

There were also significant differences in the ratings of host country news and world news among work and income groups. Professionals and higher income respondents gave higher ratings for these topics than did their counterparts. Moreover,

professionals also gave significantly higher ratings to Philippine news but lower ratings to finances than did services/trades workers.

Thus, there appeared to be a certain sense of parental surveillance and futurism among the men, a greater proportion of whom had their own families and children in the Philippines. This could also explain the differences in the order of mean ratings across age groups and parental status. The primacy of finances for the women, many of whom were single, showed the pressure on them as they assume the role of breadwinners, which was not traditionally their domain (Kelley, 2000). This was compounded by the fact that women earned less than men. The ratings given by professionals and higher-income respondents showed a greater diversity of interests, particularly in the news and events in the host country and around the world. Moreover, concern over finances seemed to give way to future plans among higher occupational and income groups.

### *Problems*

OFW narratives, both in popular and academic discourses, often revolved around the problems that migrant workers face abroad. Since most of these stories focused on individual accounts, the respondents were asked about their own experiences. This was a way of measuring about the severity (or lack thereof) of the reported abuses against OFWs,<sup>38</sup> this could also help address the notoriously problematic nature of statistics on distressed migrant workers, as Florence May Cortina explained:

I am not sure how we measure the extent of OFW problems. For instance, in 2003, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said it addressed four rape, and

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<sup>38</sup> The impersonal nature of a survey is a double-edged sword in determining very personal variables such as problems. Respondents may either be very candid or very reticent in opening up to a stranger (the survey administrator) whom they have limited chance of meeting again in the future. Interviews may motivate greater disclosure among informants. However, their intensive and unstructured nature precludes the generalizability of the findings to the entire population.



14 physical and verbal abuse complaints. At the same time, OWWA had 49 cases of rape and sexual abuse. On our part, we had 33 clients who were raped or experienced physical abuse. Thus, I wonder why the DFA only had four cases. In the case of maltreatment, OWWA assisted 895 workers, though the figure is not segregated by gender. These figures only include those who approach our embassies. Usually, they just run away and develop their own network or stay with friends as they look for other jobs or part-time work. Then, they become undocumented migrant workers. The cases of those who do come to the embassy are sometimes reported differently. We have assisted in rape cases which, when we followed them up, were reported by the Labor Attaché as homesickness. The OFWs explained to us that they were asked to sign such reports so they can go home immediately (personal communication, July 20, 2005).

In this research, a majority (52 percent) of the respondents said they had no problems while working abroad. This statistic approximated those for other groupings, except for host regions. Among the respondents from the four destinations, less than half of those from West Asia (41 percent) and North America/Europe (42 percent), while 53 percent of those from East Asia and 70 percent of sea-based workers, had problems (Table 6.9.). This was a revelation since most of the problems are attributed to Asian countries, as noted by International Labor Affairs Services Director Merliza Makinano. However, the preponderance of problems among sea-based workers comes from their loneliness at sea. Makinano said of the problems with OFWs in the Middle East:

In the Middle East, because of the host country regulations and laws, you would have more workers needing assistance on welfare cases. Ninety percent of our

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
Had problems?															
Yes	47.8	47.9	47.8	48.4	47.2	49.0	46.9	41.0	53.3	42.5	70.0	41.6	51.2	50.0	44.3
No	52.2	52.1	52.2	51.6	52.8	51.0	53.1	59.0	46.7	57.5	30.0	58.4	48.8	50.0	55.7
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.01, p = .98$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.05, p = .82$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.14, p = .71$		$\chi^2 (3, N = 320) = 8.18, p = .04$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 2.71, p = .10$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.99, p = .320$	
Problems**	(n=153)	(n=68)	(n=85)	(n=78)	(n=75)	(n=71)	(n=82)	(n=42)	(n=64)	(n=33)	(n=14)	(n=47)	(n=106)	(n=100)	(n=53)
Contract problems	5.9	10.1	2.4	10.4	1.3	8.3	3.7	---	9.4	3.1	14.3	4.3	6.5	8.0	1.9
Assault	0.7	---	1.0	---	1.3	---	1.2	2.3	---	---	---	---	0.9	1.0	---
Workplace disagreements	24.8	23.2	26.2	24.7	25.0	26.4	23.5	23.3	29.7	25.0	7.1	23.9	25.2	24.0	26.9
Financial	26.8	29.0	25.0	26.0	27.6	26.4	27.2	32.6	21.9	28.1	28.6	28.3	26.2	29.0	23.1
Homesickness and emotional	59.5	60.9	58.3	61.0	57.9	61.1	58.0	44.2	59.4	71.9	78.6	60.9	58.9	57.0	63.5
Family problems	7.2	4.3	9.5	5.2	9.2	5.6	8.6	9.3	6.3	9.4	---	4.3	8.4	9.0	3.8
Health problems	2.0	2.9	1.2	2.6	1.3	1.4	2.5	7.0	---	---	---	4.3	0.9	2.0	1.9
Sought help?															
Yes	54.9	54.4	55.3	50.6	59.2	52.1	57.3	57.1	57.8	45.5	57.1	51.1	56.6	61.6	41.5
No	45.1	45.6	44.7	49.4	40.8	47.9	42.7	42.9	42.2	54.5	42.9	48.9	43.4	38.4	58.5
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.01, p = .91$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.13, p = .29$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.42, p = .52$		$\chi^2 (3, N = 320) = 1.52, p = .68$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.40, p = .52$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 5.63, p = .02$	
Where ?**	(n=84)	(n=37)	(n=47)	(n=40)	(n=44)	(n=37)	(n=47)	(n=24)	(n=37)	(n=15)	(n=8)	(n=24)	(n=60)	(n=62)	(n=22)
At work	25.0	16.7	14.9	20.0	11.6	17.7	13.9	9.8	21.8	3.7	36.4	10.0	18.1	16.9	13.6
Friends	40.5	25.0	25.7	26.2	24.6	29.0	22.2	29.3	20.0	22.2	45.5	25.0	25.5	24.7	25.0
Embassy	6.0	3.3	4.1	3.1	4.3	3.2	4.2	2.4	5.5	3.7	---	2.5	4.3	5.6	---
NGO	1.2	---	4.1	1.5	---	---	1.4	---	---	3.7	---	2.5	---	---	2.3
Family	3.6	---	1.4	1.5	2.9	1.6	2.8	2.4	1.8	3.7	---	---	3.2	3.4	0.0
Recruitment	7.1	8.3	2.7	7.7	2.9	8.1	2.8	---	9.1	3.7	9.1	7.5	4.3	4.5	6.8
Media	8.3	18.3	14.9	7.7	24.6	6.5	25.0	12.2	18.2	22.2	9.1	22.5	13.8	16.9	15.9
Church	3.6	---	4.1	---	4.3	---	4.2	---	5.5	---	---	0.0	3.2	2.2	2.3
Calling the Phils.	23.8	15.0	14.9	7.7	21.7	6.5	22.2	9.8	18.2	18.5	9.1	22.5	11.7	15.7	13.6
Selling assets	2.4	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.4	4.9	---	---	---	---	2.1	2.2	---
Why not?*	(n=69)	(n=31)	(n=38)	(n=38)	(n=31)	(n=34)	(n=35)	(n=18)	(n=27)	(n=18)	(n=6)	(n=23)	(n=46)	(n=38)	(n=31)
Solved it alone	44.9	26.7	20.3	27.7	18.8	27.4	19.4	31.7	18.2	22.2	18.2	17.5	25.5	23.6	22.7
Minor problems	17.4	10.0	8.1	10.8	7.2	11.3	6.9	7.3	9.1	11.1	9.1	12.5	7.4	4.5	18.2
Prayers	4.3	3.3	1.4	---	4.3	---	4.2	---	1.8	3.7	9.1	---	3.2	2.2	2.3
No results anyway	2.9	---	2.7	1.5	1.4	3.2	---	---	---	7.4	---	---	3.1	1.1	2.3

\* Two respondents did not answer; \*\*Multiple response items

intervention would be on welfare assistance because of the kind of work that they are also dealing with. Most of our welfare cases are from vulnerable sectors like the domestic helpers. [Being a domestic helper] is a 24-hour job. They live with the family. They can't speak the language. Sometimes they find themselves in a situation that is not like the situation in the Philippines. It is quite sad but it's a reality that some are college graduates—teachers and even physical therapists and nurses—who are taking jobs as governess or domestic helpers. And they find themselves in situation wherein, unlike in the Philippines where they work for only eight hours five days a week, they only have Sunday as their day-off, and still they have to go with Madam. Sometimes they find themselves caring for 13 members of the family, and they would only sleep for five hours and there's no food. Actually there's food but they can't eat it because they are not used to the food. They don't eat rice and they're just eating bread and sometimes they grow very weak. And they work . . . for instance, the husband . . . the employer would be awake up to 12 and they have to take care of the child . . . they have to be ready for school so they have to be up by five. They have a lot of horror stories that they have to go the bathroom just to sleep but then the madam would be timing them. 'Oh, you've been there ten minutes' and things like that. A lot of welfare cases are actually so in the Middle East, so we work with the host governments, and we work with the NGOs in the case of Lebanon (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

Among the 153 respondents who said they had problems, 60 percent mentioned homesickness and other emotional concerns. Other commonly noted problems involved finances (27 percent) and disagreements at the workplace (25 percent). The majority (55 percent) of those who faced problems said they sought help, mainly from friends (41

percent), at work (25 percent) and by calling the Philippines (24 percent)—indicating the personal spheres within which problems are resolved. Interestingly, very few OFWs approached governmental (six percent) and non-governmental organizations (one percent) as well as media (eight percent) and religious groups (four percent) despite their many programs for OFWs. Only seven percent of respondents approached recruitment agencies, which can arbitrate contractual concerns.

It thus appears that OFWs do not fully harness the extensive support systems for them. For instance, OWWA Director De la Fuente gave me a tour of their “24-hour operation center where a family could inquire as to the status of their relatives having problems abroad or where it can request the expediting of whatever processes they wish.” He added that this very new center “is accessible nationwide, worldwide, through text, the Internet or through hotlines” (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

On site itself, migrant workers can seek help through the Philippine mission in their host country. Makinano said:

We have case officers who can talk to the employers to release the workers.

Sometimes the worker has a two-year contract, but wants to go home before the contract is finished. In such a case, the worker should pay for the expenses that have been incurred in bringing him/her to the kingdom or to whatever country.

With the intervention of the labor office, we are able sometimes to ask the employer that the expenses should just be waived. And, on top of that, they're given exit permits. If you are in the Middle East and if you are under sponsorship, you can't leave the country until your sponsor says that you can leave. Or sometimes the sponsor would give you an objection certificate in which case you can transfer to another employer. This is where the Labor Office would come in (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

Extending assistance to distressed workers requires a lot of flexibility, as

Makinano further explained:

We always try to help. We try to repatriate them. And these require a lot of ingenuity. A lot of them really get caught. There are cases that they would go to the hospital. And you can't go to the hospital aside from the permit to stay there. If you are giving birth you are supposed to have a husband. Even for a simple check-up there. You are supposed to have a husband if you have something to do with those kinds of things. There were one or two cases. . . . We just repatriated two kids actually, eleven years old and another five years old, I think. The mother gave birth and they . . . she just left the next day. One woman came to the labor office with no identification cards, nothing at all. She was just crying, and right there and then, she was giving birth. So we had to seek the help of Filipino nurses in hospitals because they cannot be admitted to the hospital. Who is going to pay for it? But also, you know, they're supposed to have papers. And so the next day our labor officials and staffers went to see her and she's gone and she left the baby. Having the baby was illegal, and she could go to jail and the baby would go to the orphanage (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

NGOs also have information networks to assist distressed workers, as Ellene Sana described earlier. Ma. Lorena Macabuag of Migrant Forum in Asia described the work of Kanlungan, one of their member organizations and also a participant in this research. She said that Kanlungan provides legal assistance and counseling to migrant workers or temporary shelter. "Sometimes," she said, "if an OFW has a problem in Hong Kong, they can contact an MFA member there such as the Asian Migrant Center. Then AMC can contact us and we can help facilitate whatever help is needed, such as legal or repatriation assistance." She added:

[MFA] runs a listserve<sup>39</sup> where subscribed member-organizations, individuals, and other advocates can exchange statements or any action alerts. We also have a Web site where our publications and updates on the status of migrants in a particular country are shown. . . . I remember one instance when a domestic worker in Hong Kong fell from the tenth floor of a building, but her colleague said she was pushed by her employer. Her employer said it was suicide, so it was difficult to prove. In such instances, we disseminate the information through the network and call for action alerts. In this case, the domestic helper was Indonesian, and the Indonesian government was not doing anything so the migrant advocates in Hong Kong called for an investigation (personal communication, August 2, 2005).

Of the independent variables, only income factored in whether respondents sought help. A larger share of lower (62 percent) than higher (42 percent) income respondents asked for help for their problems. The latter (18 percent) more than the former (five percent) felt the problems they faced were only minor. However, the main reason given by the 69 respondents who did not seek help for their problems said they could handle these on their own (45 percent), indicating the discourse of sacrifice that has been dominant in OFW narratives (San Juan, 1996).

While host regions did not have a significant impact in whether respondents sought help, organizations that work to help OFWs say their approach to assistance differs across regions. Cortina of Kanlungan said:

We don't have a formula. We don't have one strategy, and our work depends on the situation. Each case is very specific. For instance, we are getting a lot of distressed workers who are taking shelter at the Afro-Asian Migrants Mission in

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<sup>39</sup> A listserve is an online system for the automatic distribution of e-mails among registered members.

Lebanon. The NGO helps in repatriating the workers and serves as the support mechanism there. Once they arrive here, then we take over for the claiming of repatriation benefits. However, for Saudi Arabia, we don't have any contact yet. Thus, we coordinate directly with the Embassy regarding workers who want to be repatriated (personal communication, July 20, 2005).

The coordination also sometimes involved working with organizations from neighboring countries. Sana said they dealt with problems in Saudi Arabia through their affiliates in Bahrain or Kuwait, where they had more contacts. Makinano also said their work at ILAS varies a lot, even if they have a "whole range of services." But the services differ from marketing to promotions to welfare cases depending upon the place of deployment. She said, "for instance, European countries have very good social policies and protection mechanisms so we need not worry about the welfare of our workers" (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

### Travel networks

With the extra-territorial nature of their work, OFWs can be considered transnational nomads. However, I needed to explore whether they move beyond the linear flow between their houses abroad and in the Philippines, particularly for travel that is not normally part of their job.

Over half of the respondents traveled within the host country (62 percent) and the Philippines (64 percent), though only 32 percent did so in other countries (Table 6.10.). Work and income were the pivotal factors that defined travel patterns, with significantly larger proportions of professionals and higher income respondents traveling in all the three geographic destinations.

Table 6.10. Travels

Travels in...	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>The host country</b>															
Yes	61.9	62.0	61.8	59.6	64.2	60.7	62.9	54.0	63.3	70.0	60.0	69.9	57.5	54.6	74.6
No	38.1	38.0	38.2	40.4	35.8	39.3	37.1	46.0	36.7	30.0	40.0	30.1	42.5	45.4	25.4
Chi-square		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .00, p = .97$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .69, p = .40$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .16, p = .69$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 5.01, p = .17$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 4.78, p = .03$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 12.80, p < .01$	
<b>The Philippines</b>															
Yes	64.4	59.9	68.0	66.5	62.3	65.5	63.4	53.0	70.0	75.0	45.0	72.6	59.9	59.7	73.0
No	35.6	40.1	32.0	33.5	37.7	34.5	36.6	47.0	30.0	25.0	55.0	27.4	40.1	40.3	27.0
Chi-square		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.27, p = .13$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .61, p = .43$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.15, p = .70$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 14.51, p < .01$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.11, p = .02$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.79, p = .02$	
<b>Other countries</b>															
Yes	31.7	28.4	34.3	29.8	33.5	37.2	27.0	27.3	30.8	40.0	25.0	44.6	24.6	23.5	44.6
No	68.3	71.6	65.7	70.2	66.5	62.8	73.0	72.7	69.2	60.0	75.0	55.4	75.4	76.5	55.4
Chi-square		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.27, p = .26$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.51, p = .47$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.82, p = .05$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 3.90, p = .27$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 13.44, p < .01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 15.51, p < .01$	
<b>Reasons to travel</b>	(n=206)	(n=85)	(n=121)	(n=107)	(n=99)	(n=95)	(n=111)	(n=54)	(n=82)	(n=58)	(n=12)	(n=82)	(n=124)	(n=117)	(n=89)
To visit family	6.8	3.0	5.8	2.6	6.6	3.6	5.4	6.3	5.2	1.3	5.0	5.5	4.1	2.9	2.5
To sightsee	24.3	10.4	21.1	16.9	15.9	21.0	12.6	14.7	19.1	17.3	5.0	14.7	17.3	16.2	16.1
To be educated	5.8	---	7.0	4.5	3.3	5.8	2.4	3.2	3.5	6.7	0.0	8.3	1.5	2.2	6.8
To rest and relax	72.3	53.7	45.0	46.8	51.0	50.7	47.3	46.3	47.0	53.3	55.0	58.7	43.4	45.4	55.1
Work duties	18.4	10.4	14.0	14.9	9.9	13.0	12.0	15.8	14.8	6.7	5.0	9.2	14.3	14.1	10.2
Family obligation	1.9	1.5	1.2	1.9	0.7	1.4	1.2	---	1.7	2.7	---	0.9	1.5	1.1	1.7
Local practice	3.9	0.7	4.1	3.2	2.0	3.6	1.8	1.1	3.5	4.0	---	4.6	1.5	2.2	3.4
To seize the opportunity	1.0	1.5	---	0.6	0.7	---	1.2	---	1.7	---	---	0.9	0.5	---	---
<b>Reasons not to travel</b>	(n=114)	(n=57)	(n=57)	(n=54)	(n=60)	(n=50)	(n=64)	(n=46)	(n=38)	(n=22)	(n=8)	(n=31)	(n=83)	(n=79)	(n=33)
Not interested	5.3	3.0	1.2	2.6	1.3	1.4	2.4	3.2	1.7	1.3	0.0	3.7	1.0	1.6	2.5
No money	40.4	20.1	11.1	15.6	14.6	13.0	16.8	16.8	13.9	10.7	30.0	8.3	18.9	18.4	9.3
No time	24.6	9.0	9.4	9.1	9.3	10.1	8.4	9.5	10.4	6.7	10.0	7.3	10.2	8.6	10.2
Not allowed	3.5	---	2.3	1.3	1.3	2.2	0.6	3.2	0.9	0.0	---	---	2.0	2.2	0.0
Other priorities	13.2	4.5	5.3	7.1	2.6	6.5	3.6	4.2	6.1	5.3	---	1.8	6.6	7.0	1.7
Concerned over safety	0.9	---	0.6	---	0.7	0.7	---	---	0.9	---	---	---	0.5	0.5	---
All work	2.6	0.7	1.2	---	2.0	1.4	0.6	2.1	---	1.3	---	0.9	1.0	1.6	---

\* Two respondents did not answer; \*\*Multiple response items



Host regions became definitive when it came to travel in the Philippines. More East Asia (70 percent) and North America/Europe (75 percent) than West Asia (53 percent) and sea-based (45 percent) respondents said they traveled in the home country. Interestingly, among the four groups, sea-based workers said they traveled the least, though the sheer nature of their job made them de facto “globe-trotters.” Despite traveling around the world, sea-based workers did not identify themselves as global citizens, as they moved within the confines of work and their expatriate bubble. This reminds me of the qualification made by Roudemetof (2005) as to whether transnationalism leads to cosmopolitanism. In this case, Hannerz (2005) was correct in arguing that migrant workers do not become cosmopolitan because their primary goal was to earn money rather than to interact with another culture. However, younger, higher-income, and professional respondents appeared to transcend Hannerz’s argument with their travels.

Together with professionals and higher income groups, it was respondents without children who traveled to states beyond the Philippines and the host country much more significantly than those with children (37 percent against 27 percent.) The main reasons for traveling were to rest and relax (72 percent), to sightsee (24 percent), to fulfill work obligations (18 percent), to visit family (seven percent), and to be educated (six percent). While statistical tests cannot be performed for multiple response items, twice as many women traveled to sightsee and to be educated than men and those without children. Reasons for not traveling included lack of money (40 percent) and time (25 percent). Other respondents, meanwhile, had other priorities (13 percent). Though they earned significantly more than women, twice the number of men said they had no money for traveling. Similarly, almost double the percentage of services and trades workers and lower-income respondents said they had no money to travel.

## Synthesis

Even while abroad, respondents interacted with their family in the Philippines most frequently. After the family in the Philippines, people in the host country got the highest scores for frequency of contact with the OFWs, though co-workers and employers were rated higher than friends and housemates. These categories, however, are not mutually exclusive: 38 percent and 18 percent of the respondents said their housemates were their co-workers or employers respectively. These data underscored the centrality of work while abroad, and the rather limited communication sphere with non-work contacts. Likewise, while they interacted most frequently with them, the respondents did not automatically consider their co-workers as friends, thus precluding intense and extensive sharing of problems and concerns that could alleviate homesickness and the sense of solitude abroad.

The largest groups of respondents said their co-workers also came from the Philippines (30 percent) and countries outside the host state (19 percent). Together with the 15 percent of respondents who said their co-workers were from both groups, 64 percent of the respondents thus worked with people from outside the host country. Together, they all lived and worked in an expatriate bubble, with limited transactions with the citizens of the host country (Sampson, 2003). This invisibility within the host society, scholars have argued, makes OFWs prone to abuse (Asata, 2003; Tyner, 2000).

The Philippine network of the respondents was limited to their immediate family since their friends in the Philippines were rated quite poorly in terms of contact. Family and friends in countries outside the Philippines and the host state did not fare as well. Thus, while the ratings given by the respondents for the people with whom they maintained the most regular contact indicated transnational, rather than global, linkages, their multi-cultural workspaces were more global in nature than they perhaps realized.

The primary topic of OFW conversations was their family, followed by work and life abroad. The respondents said they talked about finances and remittances more than they discussed problems. Moreover, they conversed about Philippines news more than news about the host country and around the world. OFW issues were discussed the least of these topics. Problems appeared to be part of the OFW experience, with 48 percent saying they had problems abroad. However, the problems were primarily emotional, with 60 percent saying they felt homesick (Parrenas, 2001b). Other problems involved finances and workplace issues (Tyner, 2004; Piper, 2003; Parrenas, 2001c; Grandea & Kerr, 1998; Gonzales, 1998). Among the 153 respondents who encountered problems, 55 percent sought help through either their friends, co-workers, or by calling the Philippines. Those who did not seek help said either they simply suffered through their problems or their problems were only minor.

Life for the OFWs revolved within the house-and-work sphere. Indeed, even weekends were spent primarily inside the house—where many of the service workers such as domestic helpers and caregivers worked—or at work. This lifestyle underscores what ILAS Director Merliza Makinano observed as the on-call nature of migrant work (Gibson, Law & McKay, 2001; Grandea & Kerr, 1999; Cueva, 1995) and the transformation of the household into a perpetual venue for a women's contest on who is the better mother between the migrant workers and their employers (Parrenas, 2001b).

The mall and the church (Lan, 2003; Ogaya, 2003) ranked third as venues for OFW weekends. Migrant Forum in Asia's Lorena Macabuag said the limited days-off of most migrant workers prevented them from spending weekends in organizations, an observation validated by the survey results. Half of the percentage of respondents who traveled within the Philippines (64 percent) and the host country (62 percent) also traveled to other countries (32 percent). The respondents who traveled did so to rest

and relax (72 percent), sightsee (24 percent), and to fulfill work duties (18 percent).

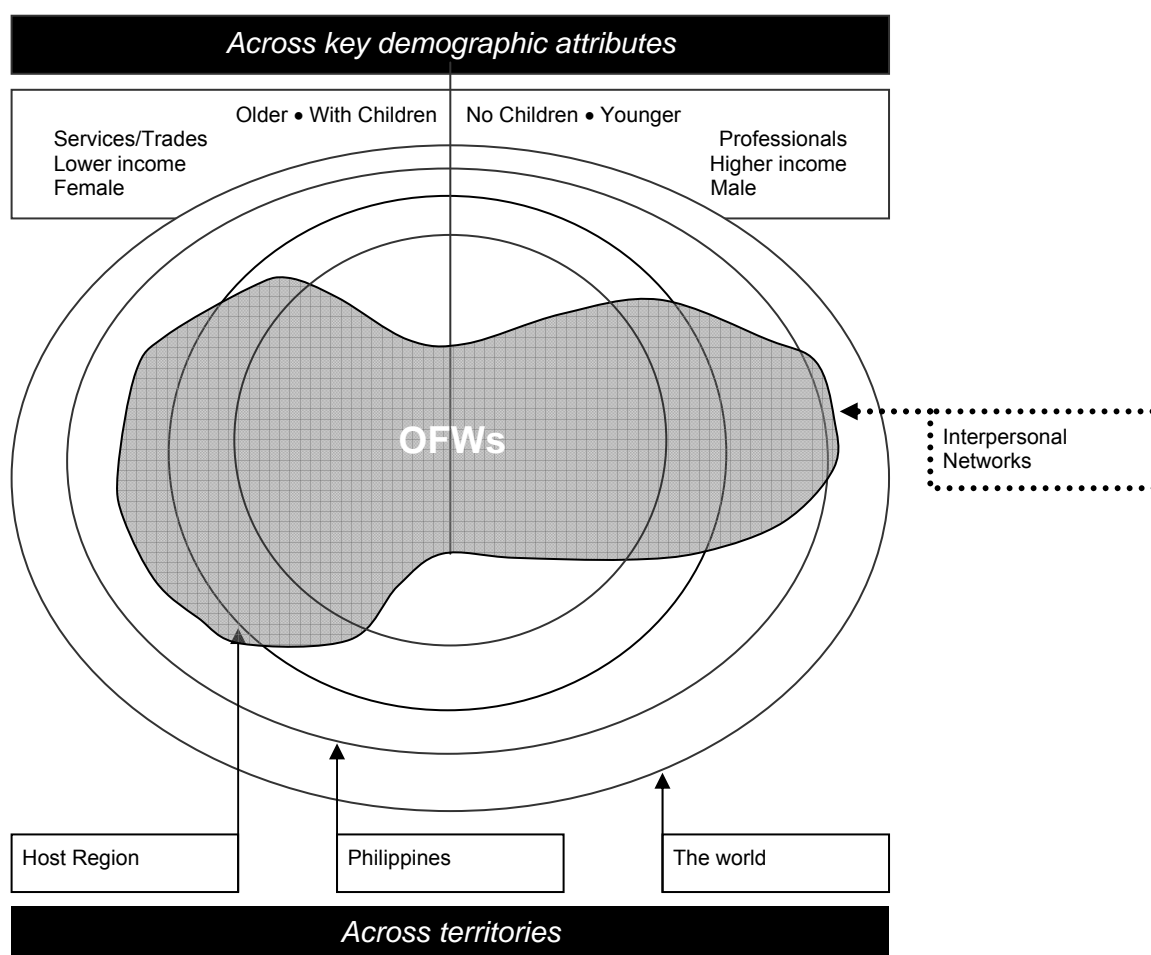
Those who did not travel say they either had no money or time, or had other priorities.

Interpersonal communication between the host country and the Philippines was mediated. The respondents primarily used mobile phones for such contact: 87 percent and 80 percent either owned or had access to mobile phones that were subscribed respectively to networks in the host country and the Philippines. Another 78 percent had both ownership and access to landline phones. Thus, for interpersonal media, ownership, access, and use had a correspondent relationship: the respondents actually used the technologies which they owned. Over 55 percent of the respondents either owned or had access to a mobile cam and a digital camera. Since almost as many respondents were also able to use the Internet, over half of the respondents arguably could exchange sound and images transnationally and instantaneously. Traditional letters lost their primacy as the mode of transnational contact, rating even lower than e-mails and online chats. Informants knew of the near-universal use of mobile phones. The Center of Migrant Advocacy used mobile phones to help distressed workers, while Unlad Kabayan used them to transact businesses with their clients abroad.

Interpersonal communication networks, however, were not the same across all OFWs (Figure 6.2.). On the one hand of these eccentric networks were females, lower-income earners, and workers in the services and trades sectors who had greater interactions within the host country, both with their employers who were its citizens and among themselves during their weekend social activities. On the other hand were men whose interactions within the host country were limited to the expatriate bubbles which they shared with their co-workers who were either from the Philippines or other countries. Higher-income professionals comprised a special segment of OFWs who not only had complex communication patterns inside and outside the host country, but who

also transcended the primarily transnational practices between home and host countries of most OFWs. They had significantly more interaction with people from across the world. Between this continuum of OFWs are younger respondents across gender, occupation, and income who availed of newer interpersonal media such as e-mail, online chatrooms, and mobile phones to connect with people within and outside the host country.

Figure 6.2. Interpersonal networks



## Chapter 7

### ORGANIZATIONAL PARTICIPATION

Organizations help mitigate the alienation and problems that OFWs may experience abroad. Through organizations, OFWs can create a sense of community in the host countries by engaging in Philippine traditions and addressing their shared problems as expatriates. Likewise, through the organizations, they or other support groups can advocate for policies to protect migrant workers' rights, improve their collective welfare, and establish ways to inform each other of their rights and privileges.

In this chapter, I explore OFWs' organizational membership and institutional participation, as well as their perceived frequency of contact with organizations in the host country and the Philippines. I also look at the OFWs' estimation of the projects, products, and services that specifically cater to them. Since my previous studies found organizational membership among OFWs to be limited, I include the experiences and observations of the organizations that provide products and services for OFWs.

#### Organizational membership

I expected that organizational membership would be low among OFWs, so I also explored why respondents have remained unorganized despite the supposed many benefits that come with being part of a formal association.

#### *Organized respondents*

Nearly one-third (31 percent) of the respondents were members of some organization (Table 7.1.). This might seem a small figure, but it is already an 83 percent increase from the 18 percent organizational membership I noted in a 1999 study.

Table 7.1. Organizational membership

Are you a member of any...	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea-based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
Organization?															
Yes	31.3	33.8	29.2	28.6	34.0	27.6	34.3	26.0	30.8	36.3	40.0	38.9	27.1	24.5	41.8
No	68.8	66.2	70.8	71.4	66.0	72.4	65.7	74.0	69.2	63.8	60.0	61.1	72.9	75.5	58.2
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.77, p = .38$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.08, p = .30$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.66, p = .198$		$\chi^2 (3, N = 320) = 2.94, p = .40$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 4.81, p = .03$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 10.513, p < .01$	
Host country organization?															
Yes	23.1	23.2	23.0	21.7	24.5	20.0	25.7	17.0	23.3	33.8	10.0	31.9	18.4	15.8	34.4
No	76.9	76.8	77.0	78.3	75.5	80.0	74.3	83.0	76.7	66.3	90.0	68.1	81.6	84.2	65.6
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.00, p = .96$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.35, p = .55$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.46, p = .227$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 9.13, p = .03$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 7.49, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 14.725, p < .01$	
OFW organization?															
Yes	16.3	19.0	14.0	13.0	19.5	15.2	17.1	15.0	18.3	10.0	35.0	16.8	15.9	14.8	18.0
No	83.8	81.0	86.0	87.0	80.5	84.8	82.9	85.0	81.7	90.0	65.0	83.2	84.1	85.2	82.0
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.43, p = .23$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 2.45, p = .12$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.23, p = .634$		$\chi^2 (3, N = 320) = 7.96, p = .05$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = .04, p = .84$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = .585, p = .44$	
OFW host country organization?															
Yes	14.7	16.9	12.9	11.2	18.2	13.1	16.0	15.0	15.0	8.8	35.0	15.9	14.0	12.8	17.2
No	85.3	83.1	87.1	88.8	81.8	86.9	84.0	85.0	85.0	91.3	65.0	84.1	86.0	87.2	82.8
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.00, p = .32$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 3.18, p = .07$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.53, p = .466$		$\chi^2 (3, N = 320) = 8.85, p = .031$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = .21, p = .64$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.208, p = .27$	
Intent to join **	(N=220)	(n=94)	(n=126)	(n=115)	(n=105)	(n=105)	(n=115)	(n=74)	(n=83)	(n=51)	(n=12)	(n=69)	(n=151)	(n=148)	(n=71)
Yes	39.1	58.5	24.6	40.9	37.1	42.9	35.7	50.0	31.3	33.3	50.0	44.9	36.4	37.2	42.3
No	59.1	40.4	73.0	56.5	61.9	56.2	61.7	48.6	65.1	66.7	50.0	55.1	60.9	60.1	57.7
Unsure	1.8	1.1	2.4	2.6	1.0	1.0	2.6	1.4	3.6	---	---	---	2.6	2.7	---
Chi-square		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 25.45, p < .01$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 0.45, p = .50$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.00, p = .318$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 6.80, p = .08$				$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 1.17, p = .29$		$\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = .328, p = .57$	

\*Two respondents did not reply; \*\*Asked among respondents who are not a member of any organization. Chi-square is computed excluding "unsure" respondents to satisfy statistical requirements.

This time, however, I decided to qualify organizational membership. Doing this, I discovered only 23 percent were actually members of an organization of any kind in the host country, and that 16 percent were members of an OFW organization. Finally, only 15 percent were members of an OFW organization in the host country itself.

Only work and income apparently affected formal association. A significantly larger share of professional (39 percent versus 27 percent) and higher income (42 percent against 25 percent) respondents were affiliated with any organization than were their counterparts. Correspondingly, a larger percentage of professional (32 percent against 18 percent) and higher income (34 percent against 16 percent) respondents were members of such organizations in their host countries. However, host regions had a more significant influence on formal organization among OFWs. Across the four regions, sea-based workers (35 percent) and North America/Europe (10 percent) respondents were the most and the least organized respectively  $\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 7.96, p = .05$ . In Asia, 15 percent and 18 percent of respondents from the West and the East respectively were members of OFW organizations.

The largest group (38 percent) of the 100 respondents who were members of at least one organization said they joined it for social reasons. Other main reasons for membership were to learn about projects for OFWs (28 percent), to seek assistance for legal (18 percent) and financial (8 percent) matters, to seek spiritual growth (14 percent), and to network among colleagues (15 percent), particularly to find job openings for themselves and their relatives seeking to work abroad, too (9 percent).

Organizations such as Kanlungan provide legal help, while Unlad Kabayan and the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration offer credit and financial assistance.

Florence May Cortina of Kanlungan said:



Kanlungan has four main programs. One of them is the Direct Service and Development Program. It gives services to distressed workers and their families. We provide welfare assistance, but this is limited. We accompany them to government agencies to help them with claiming their benefits (personal communication, July 20, 2005).

Kanlungan also has a publication that guides OFWs to sue for monetary compensation before the Philippine National Labor Relations Commission for contractual violation, illegal termination, and constructive dismissal.<sup>40</sup> OWWA provides benefits and services to OFWs before, during, and after their tenure abroad. Prior to deployment, OWWA coordinates with accredited agencies, industry associations, and non-government organizations to host the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS). The PDOS gives new OFWs a preview of life and work abroad and explains their insurance coverage, funded by the US\$25 contribution made by their employers to OWWA. De la Fuente explained:

A portion of [the contribution] is allotted to cover them with life insurance. So if it is natural death, [the life insurance coverage] would be just US\$1,886<sup>41</sup> and US\$3,773 for accidental death. This insurance coverage is on top of whatever the employer is providing them. [Once in the host country, OWWA provides] representation services from time to time whenever [OFWs] have a misunderstanding with their company, the management or with their employers. And here is why we are strong. . . . We deploy our own officers on site, particularly in places with high concentration of Filipino workers. There we do

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<sup>40</sup> Constructive dismissal takes place when an employee resigns from a job because of the behavior of the employer.

<sup>41</sup> The figures cited by Director De la Fuente were in Philippine pesos. I converted them at the 2006 foreign exchange rate of US\$1 = PhP53.

both crisis intervention as well as developmental program implementation. Crisis intervention means that whenever the worker is in distress, we do categorize it as a crisis situation. . . . So we intervene with whatever means we could. It may be counseling sessions with migrant workers or giving them proper information or suggest [sic] possible steps for them to solve the problem, or we do negotiate with their agents or principal (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

OWWA also has reintegration programs to prepare OFWs for their eventual return to the Philippines for good, either because of termination, retirement, or poor health. De la Fuente said OWWA helps OFWs:

. . . to create a vision for themselves so that they will clearly plan what to do when they are back here. It will be so unfortunate when they become burdens to their families rather than champions of the family just like now when they are earning gold. [OWWA does this through] ongoing sessions on how to invest, on how to be an entrepreneur, on how to prepare business plans and when they are here in the Philippines, they are assisted to become entrepreneurs. We have free training programs on business planning and business management. We have lending programs for those who were not able to put up their own capital. Of course, we want them to save so that they will not depend on loans when they return to the Philippines for their business ventures. And for those who were not able to do so because they were helping the families, OWWA has put up a livelihood loan, US\$3,773 for an individual loan and US\$18,867 for group loans. We consider borrowers as group when they have at least five members, so it's more on partnership [where] it works best... And this time, we [also] involve the family... We do make training and orientation programs for the families (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

The International Labor Affairs Services (ILAS) also provides services to OFWs abroad through its Philippine Overseas Labor Officers (POLOs). These services are summarized in the inside front cover of the 2003 ILAS Report (Figure 7.1.), which also lists POLO accomplishments. The 33 POLOs that year reportedly handled 187,567 and resolved 177,923 cases<sup>42</sup> on site. The resolved cases included counseling (107,935), custodian<sup>43</sup> (13,028), repatriation (7,737), legal assistance (7,495), and referral (4,253) services. The POLOs altogether received 269,022 OFW queries and helped 287,179 OFWs. They also recommended 1,250 employers and agencies for blacklisting. Of these, 1,158 were indeed blacklisted.

More women than men joined organizations for spiritual growth (22 percent against 6 percent), information (30 percent against 25 percent), and socials (42 percent against 36 percent). Conversely, a larger group of men said they joined organizations for past-time and exercise than did women (11 percent against 2 percent) and to help others (11 percent against 6 percent) (Table 7.2.).

Across age and parental status groupings, a larger share of younger and without-children joined organizations for information, job openings, networking, and legal assistance. Conversely, a larger percentage of older and with-children respondents said they joined organizations to socialize, exercise, and help. The only difference across age and parental status was with credit and financial assistance, where younger and with-children respondents outnumbered their counterparts.

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<sup>42</sup> It is not clear whether the resolved cases are a subset of the handled cases.

<sup>43</sup> Custodian services involve providing temporary shelter for distressed OFWs who want to return to the Philippines or change employers without completing their original contract.

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Figure 7.1. Philippine Overseas Labor Offices projects (ILAS, 2003)

## THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS LABOR OFFICES

The Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) refer to the thirty-three (33) offices of the Department located in various countries in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. The POLO is an office directly under the Office of the Secretary. It acts as the operating arm of the Department for the administration and enforcement of its policies and programs applicable to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Designated to oversee and assist OFWs abroad, the POLOs, particularly the Labor Attaches, report to the Secretary through the DOLE's International Labor Affairs Service (ILAS).

The programs being implemented by the POLOs are as follows:

### **Employment Facilitation**

Verification of employment documents and job orders;  
Processing of returning workers thru issuance of OECs;  
Labor market information; and  
Name-hire program (in certain posts).

### **Welfare Assistance Program**

Crisis Intervention Services;  
Repatriation Services;  
Legal Assistance Services;  
Conciliation and Mediation; and  
Visitation to jails and hospitals.

### **Policy Advocacy**

Full disclosure;  
Bias for women and vulnerable occupation; and  
Migration for development.

### **Information Dissemination**

DOLE Programs;  
Pag-ibig Overseas Programs;  
SSS Overseas Programs; and  
Programs of other government agencies.

### **Managerial Effectiveness**

Databasing and information system/computerization;  
Networking with social partners (OFW communities, host government, employers/foreign recruitment agencies; and non-government organizations);  
Staff development/team-building; and  
Periodic reports covering activities, significant developments, and other relevant labor market information.

There are 19 Filipino Workers' Resource Centers (FWRC) being operated by the POLOs: 6 in Asia, 10 in the Middle East, and 3 in Europe and the Americas. These FWRCs serve as one-stop centers for information and welfare assistance to our OFWs 24-hour, 7 days a week.

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Table 7.2. Reasons behind organizational membership

Reasons for...	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
Joining	(n=100)	(n=48)	(n=52)	(n=46)	(n=54)	(n=40)	(n=60)	(n=26)	(n=37)	(n=29)	(n=8)	(n=44)	(n=56)	(n=48)	(n=51)
For spiritual growth	14.0	6.4	22.0	13.3	14.8	15.4	13.3	11.5	13.9	20.7	---	11.4	16.4	18.8	10.0
For information	28.0	25.5	30.0	33.3	22.2	30.8	25	19.2	30.6	31.0	25.0	31.7	23.6	27.1	28.0
For job openings	9.0	10.6	8.0	11.1	7.4	12.8	6.7	3.8	8.3	6.9	37.5	13.6	5.5	6.3	12.0
For networking	15.0	14.9	16.0	15.6	14.8	12.8	16.7	11.5	16.7	17.2	12.5	15.9	14.5	8.3	22.0
For credit & finance help	8.0	6.4	10.0	11.1	5.6	5.1	10.0	7.7	8.3	3.4	25.0	4.5	10.9	8.3	8.0
For legal help	18.0	17	18.0	24.4	11.1	20.5	15.0	19.2	13.9	24.1	---	22.7	12.7	12.5	22.0
For socials	38.0	36.2	42.0	35.6	40.7	33.3	41.7	42.3	41.7	37.9	12.5	31.8	43.6	35.4	40.0
Past-time/exercise	6.0	10.6	2.0	2.2	9.3	5.1	6.7	11.5	2.8	6.9	0.0	9.1	3.6	8.3	4.0
To help	8.0	10.6	6.0	4.4	11.1	5.1	10.0	19.2	2.8	6.9	0.0	6.8	9.1	10.4	4.0
Required	8.0	8.5	8.0	4.4	11.1	7.7	8.3	3.8	5.6	10.3	25.0	9.1	7.3	8.3	8.0
Not joining	(N=220)	(n=94)	(n=126)	(n=115)	(n=105)	(n=105)	(n=115)	(n=74)	(n=83)	(n=51)	(n=12)	(n=69)	(n=151)	(n=148)	(n=71)
Not interested	22.3	19.1	24.6	20.5	25.0	24.0	21.4	20.8	25.9	23.5	8.3	19.4	24.2	23.6	21.4
Not allowed	5.0	5.3	4.8	5.4	4.8	3.8	6.3	11.1	1.2	0.0	16.7	3.0	6.0	6.9	1.4
Not aware of any	15.0	23.4	8.7	17.0	13.5	16.3	14.3	12.5	14.8	13.7	41.7	19.4	13.4	14.6	17.1
No time/Too busy	58.2	53.2	61.9	60.7	57.7	58.7	59.8	59.7	63.0	60.8	25.0	62.7	57.7	59.0	58.6
Afraid of sanctions	3.6	2.1	4.8	2.7	4.8	2.9	4.5	5.6	3.7	2.0	0.0	1.5	4.7	4.2	2.9
Not accessible	2.3	2.1	2.4	3.6	1.0	1.9	2.7	2.8	1.2	2.0	8.3	1.5	2.7	2.1	2.9
No trust	0.5	---	0.8	---	1.0	1.0	---	---	---	2.0	---	---	0.7	0.7	---
Expensive	0.5	---	0.8	---	1.0	1.0	---	1.4	---	---	---	---	0.7	0.7	---

\*Two respondents did not reply; \*\*Asked among respondents who are not a member of any organization. Chi-square is computed excluding "unsure" respondents to satisfy statistical requirements.

Sea-based workers differed the most in terms of explaining their membership as a quarter of them said it was required. Moreover, they used organizational networks to find job openings and financial assistance. Unlike the other groups, especially those from North America/Europe, no sea-based workers joined an organization for spiritual reasons. They were also the least likely to cite organizations as venues for socialization and exercise. Across work and income groups, professionals and higher-income workers tended to be more serious about joining organizations for networking, legal help, and job openings more than did trades and services, and lower-income workers. The latter, meanwhile, joined organizations for spiritual growth and financial help. Cortina explained how OFWs network in organizations:

Some OFWs are referred to us by other NGOs because we are known for our services. Then there are our clients who are referred to us by those whom we have previously served. Then there are those who are following up on their cases with the POEA or the NLRC, and if someone would ask 'is no one still helping him/her?' then he/she would be referred to us. And, not to surprise you, even the government refers some of them to us (personal communication, July 20, 2005).

By type, OFW organizations had the most members (52 percent), followed by professional (27 percent), religious (24 percent), and socio-civic (15 percent) groups. Philippine governmental (13 percent), cultural (14 percent), and regional (6 percent) organizations were also mentioned. Accordingly, main organizational activities were educational and training (44 percent), social (27 percent), religious (26 percent), and community outreach (25 percent) projects. Other activities include those related to sports (13 percent) and culture (10 percent) (Table 7.3.).

Table 7.3. Organizational profile\*

Organizations	Sample (N=100)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income**	
		Male (n=48)	Female (n=52)	21 to 34 years old (n=46)	35 to 57 years old (n=54)	No children (n=40)	With children (n=60)	West Asia (n=26)	East Asia (n=37)	N. America & Europe (n=29)	Sea- based (n=8)	Profs & Asso. (n=44)	Service & Trade (n=56)	Lower (n=48)	Higher (n=51)
<b>Types</b>															
Government	13.0	12.2	13.7	15.2	11.1	20.0	8.3	15.4	15.8	10.7	---	13.6	12.5	12.2	14.0
Philippine community	14.0	12.2	15.7	10.9	16.7	15.0	13.3	7.7	13.2	25	14	20.5	8.9	8.2	18.0
OFW	52.0	53.1	51.0	43.5	59.3	52.5	51.7	57.7	60.5	25	87.5	47.7	55.4	55.1	50.0
Philippine regional community	6.0	8.2	3.9	4.3	7.4	5.0	6.7	11.5	7.9	---	6	2.3	2.3	10.2	2.0
Sports	8.0	14.3	2.0	4.3	11.1	2.5	11.7	15.4	7.9	3.6	---	11.4	5.4	4.1	12.0
Socio-civic	15.0	14.3	15.7	21.7	9.3	15.0	15.0	11.5	13.2	21.4	15	20.5	10.7	12.2	18.0
Religious	24.0	18.4	29.4	15.2	31.5	25.0	23.3	26.9	23.7	28.6	0	22.7	25.0	24.5	24.0
Professional	27.0	26.5	25.5	34.8	18.5	35.0	20.0	15.4	15.8	39.3	62.5	45.5	10.7	8.2	44.0
<b>Activities*</b>															
None	5.0	2.3	8.2	5.1	5.7	5.6	5.4	8.0	6.1	3.7	---	2.3	8.2	9.5	2.0
Cultural	10.0	9.3	12.2	2.6	17	11.1	10.7	20.0	15.2	---	---	7.0	14.3	14.3	8.2
Religious	26.0	20.9	34.7	15.4	37.7	30.6	26.8	28.0	21.2	44.4	---	34.9	22.4	26.2	30.6
Sports	13.0	23.3	6.1	5.1	20.8	11.1	16.1	20.0	15.2	11.1	---	16.3	12.2	11.9	14.3
Educational	44.0	44.2	46.9	69.2	28.3	50.0	42.9	20.0	45.5	51.9	100.0	55.8	36.7	33.3	57.1
Social	27.0	27.9	30.6	25.6	32.1	16.7	37.5	32.0	33.3	29.6	---	23.3	34.7	31.0	28.6
Community outreach	25.0	25.6	28.6	25.6	28.3	33.3	23.2	28.0	30.3	25.9	14.3	23.3	30.6	31.0	22.4
Governmental	2.0	4.7	---	---	3.8	---	3.6	4.0	---	---	14.3	4.7	---	---	4.1

\*Multiple response items. \*\*Two respondents did not reply.

There are differences in the organizational types and activities across gender, with a larger percentage of women in religious groups and a larger percentage of men in sports groups. From my interview at the Scalabrini Migration Center, I got an interesting leaflet that, to me, implied the importance of religion in the OFW experience. The size of an index card, it was distributed in Korea and included the Migrant Workers' Prayer (Figure 7.2.).

Figure 7.2. Migrant worker's prayer (SMC, n.d.)

**“Welcome one another,  
just as Christ has welcomed you”  
(Rm 15,7)**

**“그리스도께서 여러분을 받아 들이신 것 같이  
여러분도 서로 받아들이십시오”  
(로마서 15,7)**

**Migrant worker's prayer**

Dear Lord, source of hope and our way to salvation.  
Guide us as we travel.  
Lead us on the right path,  
And never let us depart from you.

Watch over us and always lead us safely back home:  
Keep us away from any danger,  
Spare us from sickness and accident,  
Protect us from embarrassment and humiliation.  
And deliver us from scandal and shame.

Watch over, O Lord, those whom we leave behind;  
Let our homes be always safe,  
Let our children be always secured and responsible,  
Let our loved remain always faithful,  
And let what we earn be spent for good end.

Stay by our sides and always remind us of our true home;  
As pilgrims, we are just passing in this world,  
As your creatures, we must return to you,  
As your servants, we must lead others to heaven.

~ AMEN ~

SUWON (Emmaus) 257-8501 / ANSAN (Galilea) 494-8411  
ANYANG 443-2876 / PYUNGTAEK 618-0965 / YONGIN 339-9133

The informants noted different aspects of the organizations and their activities. Florence May Cortina of Kanlungan said when an OFW died in Korea, the Pangasinan<sup>44</sup> Association in South Korea helped repatriate the body. However, she noted their coordination with such regional Philippine organizations remains informal since they do not have formal linkages. My informants from the government agencies, meanwhile, said

<sup>44</sup> Pangasinan is a province in northern Philippines, in the island of Luzon.



they reach out to OFW organizations by tapping into their interests. OWWA's Rustico de la Fuente said:

There was a time when even direct communication with our migrants would be so difficult. But we were able to manage those cultural nuisances by adapting to the realities in each country. For example, in Saudi Arabia, we used sports activities... Through sports activities or social events, we can already communicate with OFWs there by giving them our flyers. Definitely, they're going to question you from time to time but basically we explain our side to them... We are so fortunate, for example, that the newspaper of Saudi Arabia has Filipino Editors. Then, that's also true with Taiwan, with other Asian countries. We are properly covered (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

Merliza Makinano of ILAS, meanwhile, said that various POLOs have offered sports clinics, and baking, computer, and drafting classes in different countries, depending upon the demands of each post. This approach makes sense with the gendered organizational membership and activities. POEA's Salome Mendoza, however, noted a difficulty in dealing with organized respondents. She said:

It is not very easy to work with them because at the level of the organizations, they already fight with each other. The community [in Macau] had 7,000 members, and there were 10 regional and 30 religious groups... Sometimes, even if there were are only three or two members they would already establish [an organization]. If someone got in a fight with a member or an officer, he/she would set up his/her own... Thus, I planned to work out an umbrella organization. They said there was a coalition about 10 years ago but it was not very successful because of jealousy among the members.

[The community in Macau also had] no worthwhile projects. . . . They would only have projects if it is time for the Fiesta.<sup>45</sup> What they would do was to have a fiesta where they give away tickets and line up activities for the whole night. So it was more on entertainment, and not really something for the Filipino community like scholarship projects (personal communication, August 4, 2005).

While younger/without children and older/with children groupings generally had the same reasons for their membership, such was not the case for specific organizational affiliations. A larger proportion of older respondents were members of OFW groups than were younger (59 percent against 43 percent) groups. No such difference was evident across parental status groups. These patterns also characterized those who were members of religious organizations and accordingly engaged in religious activities. Conversely, a larger section of younger than older respondents joined socio-civic (22 percent against 9 percent) and professional (35 percent against 19 percent) groups, and participated in their organization's educational activities. Interestingly, respondents who were older and who had children were engaged with sports organizations and social activities more than their younger and without-children counterparts.

Work and income had an impact upon organizational type. A larger percentage of professional and higher-income respondents were members of Philippine community, professional, and socio-civic groups than their counterparts. Professionals and higher income respondents also engaged to a greater degree in educational and religious activities, though there was not much difference in affiliation with religious groups. More services/trades and lower-income workers, meanwhile, were affiliated with OFW

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<sup>45</sup> A fiesta is a traditional festival for community gatherings, usually to celebrate a special day for the village patron saint. Lately, however, it has become a rallying activity for diasporic communities, as with the June 12 Philippine Independence Day fiestas in North America.

organizations and took part in socio-cultural and community outreach activities. Among respondent groups by host regions, it is clear that sea-based workers were the best organized professionally with OFW groups that provide educational services. North America/Europe respondents, meanwhile, were distinguished by the weak presence of OFW groups but the strong activity of socio-civic, religious, professional, and cultural organizations.

#### *Unorganized respondents*

Over two-thirds of the respondents were not members of any organization (Table 7.1.) because they were either too busy to have time for any groups (58 percent) or not interested at all (22 percent). Respondents also said they were not aware of any group (15 percent), and that they were either not allowed to join organizations (five percent) or afraid of sanctions (four percent) (Table 7.2.).

Among the independent variables, only gender and host regions reflected key differences in reasons for not joining an organization. More men than women (62 percent against 53 percent) cited lack of awareness, while more women than men (62 percent against 53 percent) noted lack of time. Sea-based workers showed the least disinterest for organizations: only eight percent of them said they were not interested in joining organizations, compared to an average of 23 percent among land-based workers from different host regions. Instead, sea-based workers cited lack of awareness and access as reasons for not having any organizational affiliation.

When I asked the informants what was the most difficult aspect of their work two said that it is getting the migrant workers to be more critical of their situation. Father Fabio Baggio of SMC said:

It is quite difficult for the researchers on migrants to realize that the worker is not able to say anything specific because he is ignorant of the matter. [For example, we would ask,] “How much did you pay [for the OWWA fee]?” [Then, he would say,] “I don’t know.” It’s impossible. Or, [we would ask,] “Have you seen the contract?” [Then, he would say,] “No.”

Father Baggio added:

. . . What we found [was that] the OFWs are not interested. It is very difficult to uphold their rights, when their first enemies are themselves. They are not with the alliance. So we start [by working to] gain their trust, realizing that only with their help can we help their situation. If not, it is really not possible.

Ma. Lorena Macabuag of Migrant Forum in Asia echoed this sentiment:

. . . In our efforts to organize migrant workers, there’s still a lot to be done. . . . It is really difficult to organize migrant workers once they arrive in the host countries, and it is a big challenge for advocates and for migrants’ organizations as well to organize among themselves and to organize migrant workers. For example, in Malaysia, the local union itself is already finding it very difficult to organize, what more with foreign workers, migrant workers. So there’s still a larger challenge to widen awareness raising and capacity building to empower the migrants to demand for the right and freedom of association, even to have a union or establish an association even if they are outside of their country.

There is hope, however, for a wider membership base for organizations in the future. Nearly two-fifths (39 percent) of unorganized respondents said they intended to join an organization, with more than twice the percentage of male respondents saying so than females (58 percent against 25 percent,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 25.5, p < .01$ ) (Table 7.1.). This supports an implication that if men were only to learn about a group they

would probably want to join it. Comparatively, women felt they are too busy to find time for an organization.

Indeed, Father Baggio said that the conduct of their research also serves as a way to inform migrant workers of their privileges. He said:

In Taiwan, we started gathering signatures of the members and, you know, like four out of five were asking what is the OWWA membership fee. Then they asked, "Did I pay?" Then you can start to explain [the benefits of their OWWA membership] (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

Macabuag, meanwhile, noted the constraints of time and mobility that the respondents faced on spending weekends (see Chapter 6):

Aside from the lack of information as to the things they can do in organizations, there's also the difficulty of mobility. They have only a day off once a week. And this is their only time to go out, and they spend it to call the Philippines, do their grocery [shopping], send money, and run other errands. So they really have no time to join an organization because it takes up a lot of time as well. Then they would have no more time to rest, and it will make things difficult for them, too. Moreover, those migrant workers in factories, even if it is their day off, they are not allowed to go out of the premises. And the domestic workers, as well as caregivers, they really cannot leave the house (personal communication, August 2, 2005).

#### Institutional participation

In literature and in my previous research, institutions play an important role in the socialization of OFWs. On the one hand are the church and other religious groups that have emerged as important organizing institutions for OFWs. On the other hand is the

government which has reorganized its foreign missions to serve as facilitators of OFW activities.

The presence of the Philippine government differs across host areas. Across the globe there are 84 official Philippine representatives. These include 80 embassies or consulates, of which 28 have Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs), the administrative body within the mission responsible for all labor-related matters between the Philippines and the host country.<sup>46</sup> There are four free-standing POLOs, with three of them in Taiwan and one in Macau, where one of my informants, Salome Mendoza, used to be the chief representative. Since the Philippines has more than one office in at least a couple of territories, there would seem to be a dearth of official missions in the 170 countries where OFWs can be found. However, as Figure 7.3. shows, the Philippines appears to be adequately represented in the territories with the largest OFW populations. Thus, in this research, all respondents work in countries where the Philippines has an embassy with a POLO.<sup>47</sup>

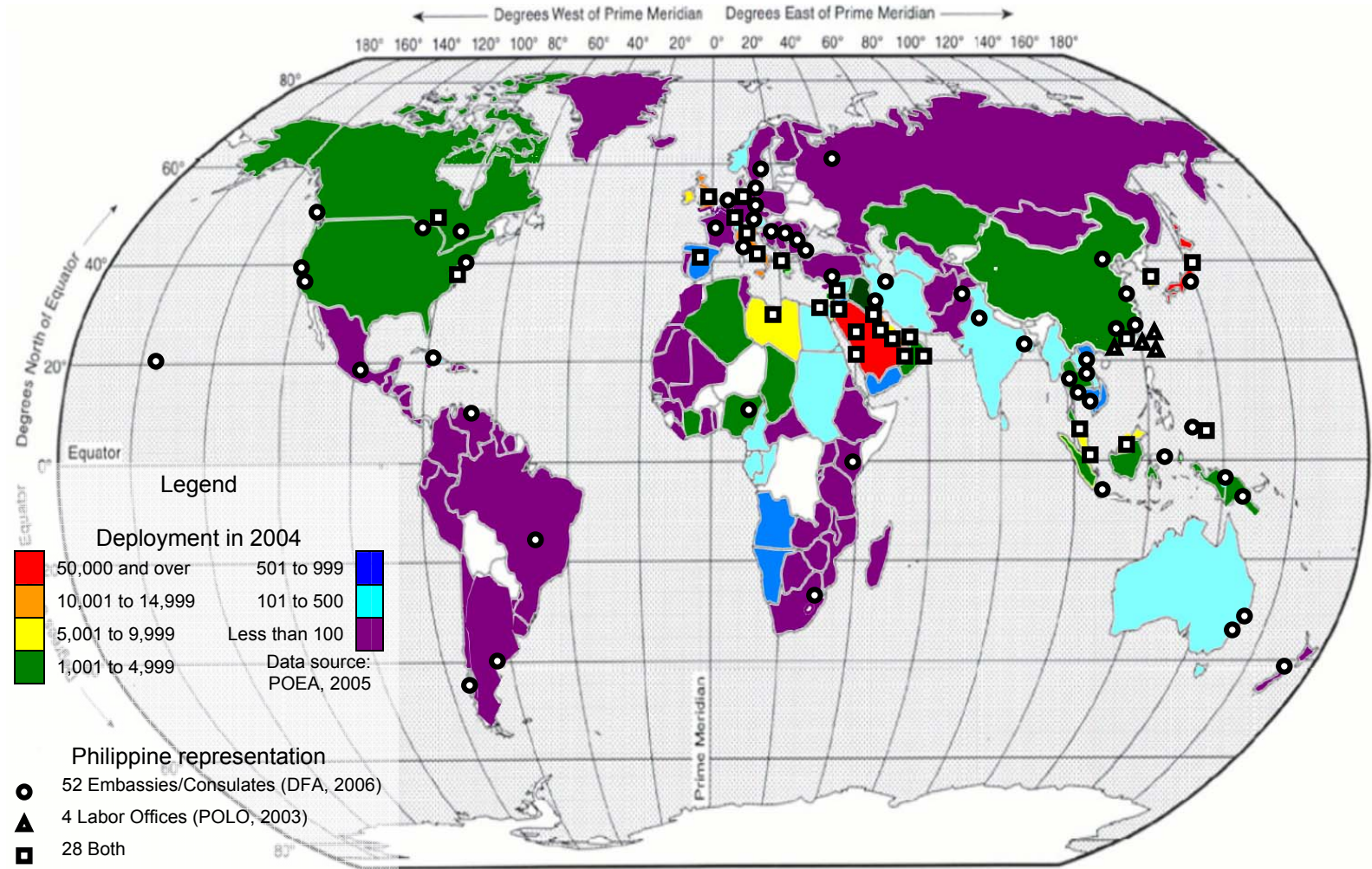
The POLO, according to its Web site (POLO, 2006), “acts as the operating arm of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for the administration and enforcement of its policies and programs applicable to the Overseas Filipino Workers.” As OWWA Director De la Fuente said, through the POLO, “we belong to a single DOLE family when we are already on site.” The POLOs report to the DOLE secretary through ILAS. A POLO has three main officials, with the Labor Attaché (LABAT) at its helm. Its main duties, according to Makinano:

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<sup>46</sup> In the [POLO Web site](#) (2004), the Labor Department Secretary’s message and the introduction say there are 34 branches around the world. The directory, however, lists only 32 locations, the figure which I am using in the map and in the discussion.

<sup>47</sup> In places where there are no POLOs, the embassy or consulate staff assume the additional duty of working with OFWs as well as with employers who have, or seek to employ, OFWs.

Figure 7.3. Official Philippine representation overseas



. . . basically are to protect the welfare and promote the interest of the Filipino worker. So in doing this they verify job orders, make sure that the standards are there, and that the minimum standards set by POEA [are met]. . . . [We] also maintain Filipino Workers Resource Centers where, as mandated by RA 8042, we have workers who are distressed and need shelter, where we provide training aside from board and lodging, and where we process their repatriation if they don't want to remain in that country and if their case cannot be settled by our case officers with the employers (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

De la Fuente said, under the LABAT is an OWWA welfare officer who is:

. . . trained not only to intervene whenever the migrant worker is in crisis, but also to implement developmental programs for them. They organize community oppositions; they conduct leadership training; they conduct consultation sessions; they have socio-cultural practice events, sports undertakings, and cultural shows (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

The role of the LABAT is thus a crucial link between the OFW and the Philippine government. However, the qualifications for this position, which is a presidential appointee, remain unclear. As Director Makinano said, the current cream of LABATs . . . came from different backgrounds actually. Most of them are from the department. They have been here since 1975, when Secretary Blas Ople called for bright young minds to join the government service. So some of them have been here for 29 years; others for 19 years. They went through the OEDB, the Overseas Employment Governing Board [sic], the precursor of POEA. Previous LABATs came from the staff of the Philippine Senate, while others were doctors who have since retired as they turned 65 years old. LABATs are diplomats when they are outside the country but here they are managers. We had one before



who became an ambassador from being a Labor Attaché. He used to be the vice president of one of the major banks in the country. During my time here, I actually had three labor attachés who became ambassadors (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

Salome Mendoza, who is now Planning Director at the POEA Head Office, said that being a LABAT entails more than fulfilling the written duties and responsibilities. During her stint as the LABAT in Macau, she said she acted as a “village chairperson”<sup>48</sup> for the Filipino community. Since the Macau office was a stand-alone POLO post, she also had to coordinate with the Consulate General in Hong Kong for the processing of passports which she could not issue from her office. Thus, she said, that while only 70 percent of the Filipinos in Macau were OFWs, she still had to assist the remainder even if they were technically no longer the responsibility of her POLO. She explained:

All welfare cases came to me even if they were no longer within my domain. You really cannot say no to them. Even OWWA and tourism functions also became part of my job. So when they have questions, I have to network and coordinate. Thus, I came up with a newsletter called “*Ugnayan*,”<sup>49</sup> which was in Filipino. (I am not sure if they still continue it until now.) At first, it was in English, but it was not very attractive to them so I changed the language and encouraged participation from among the Filipino community. The coverage was strengthened, which meant a lot were reading it. It was even posted online. There were only two of us running it. I did the writing, while my Executive Assistant did the layout (personal communication, August 4, 2005).

She added that a LABAT’s work is round-the-clock:

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<sup>48</sup> This is a translation of “barangay captain,” the barangay being the smallest Philippine political unit.

<sup>49</sup> *Ugnayan* is the Filipino word for “Connections”.

The job was for seven days a week, 24 hours a day because you can be on-call even late at night. When they call, you should help them. There are also no weekends because we have training sessions on Saturdays and Sundays. OFWs have their own jobs, and you have to work within their free time (personal communication, August 4, 2005).

She said domestic helpers were a focus for her training program, “We conducted continuing education not only for OFWs, but the whole community. I did focus on domestic helpers because they appear to have been the ones left behind the most. The training program was on computer literacy” (personal communication, August 4, 2005).

With these government services in place, it was interesting, therefore, to see the extent to which OFWs have networked with Philippine overseas missions. The survey revealed that only 16 percent of the respondents joined embassy-sponsored activities. This was only half the share (35 percent) of respondents who participated in church activities and only a quarter of the respondents (64 percent) who attended religious services (Table 7.4.). Moreover, despite its apparent importance, respondents rated the Labor Attaché in their host country very poorly. Using a 0 (no contact) to 5 (very positive) scale, the mean rating for the LABATs was only 0.41, which was slightly lower than the rating of 0.59 for the entire embassy (Table 7.5.).

Organizations like Migrant Forum in Asia use church activities to promote their work. Lorena Macabuag, its project director, said:

Many Filipino migrant workers are Catholics so we work with the local Catholic Church to facilitate educational discussions on migrant work. We have members like the one in Taiwan, Hope Workers Center, where thousand of Filipinos go to every Sunday because they have a Catholic church there. Thus, Filipino organizers go there as well to network because this way they do not find it

Table 7.4. Institutional participation

Do you participate in...	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea-based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>Religious services?</b>															
Yes	64.1	59.9	67.4	62.7	65.4	63.4	64.6	53.0	65.0	76.3	65	64.6	63.8	58.2	73.0
No	35.9	40.1	32.6	37.3	34.6	36.6	35.4	47.0	35.0	23.7	35	35.4	36.2	41.8	27.0
Chi-square		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.96, p = .16$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .25, p = .62$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .04, p = .84$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 10.53, p = .02$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .02, p = .88$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 7.12, p = .01$	
<b>Church activities?</b>															
Yes	35.3	33.1	37.3	28.6	42.4	28.5	41.1	26.0	35.0	45.6	45	43.4	31.1	25.1	52.5
No	64.7	66.9	62.7	71.4	57.6	71.5	58.9	74.0	65.0	54.4	55	56.6	68.9	74.9	47.5
Chi-square		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .61, p = .44$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 6.67, p = .01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.54, p = .02$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 8.25, p = .04$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 4.82, p = .03$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 24.44, p < .001$	
<b>Embassy activities</b>															
Yes	15.6	18.3	13.5	14.9	16.4	14.5	16.6	14.0	20.0	13.8	5.0	21.2	12.6	13.8	18.9
No	84.4	81.7	86.5	85.1	83.6	85.5	83.4	86.0	80.0	86.2	95.0	78.8	87.4	86.2	81.1
Chi-square		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.40, p = .24$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .13, p = .72$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = .26, p = .61$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 3.87, p = .28$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 4.18, p = .04$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.46, p = .23$	

\*Two respondents did not reply; \*\*Asked among respondents who are not a member of any organization. Chi-square is computed excluding "unsure" respondents to satisfy statistical requirements.

Table 7.5. Participation in projects for overseas Filipino workers

	Labor Attache		Philippine Embassy		OWWA		Credit/Finance Services		Absentee Voting		Protests Abroad		Party List System		OFW Electronic Card		Concerts	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	0.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.6	1.2	0.5	1.0	0.9	1.5	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.5	0.9	1.5	0.9	1.3
Gender																		
Male (n=142)	0.4	0.9	0.5	1.0	0.7	1.3	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.7	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.6	1.0	1.6	0.8	1.2
Female (n=178)	0.4	1.0	0.6	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.0	0.8	1.5	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.5	0.8	1.4	0.9	1.3
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = -0.46, p = .64)$		$t(318 = -0.70, p = .48)$		$t(280 = 1.16, p = .25)$		$t(318 = -0.36, p = .72)$		$t(318 = 1.17, p = .24)$		$t(318 = -0.74, p = .46)$		$t(318 = 0.76, p = .45)$		$t(318 = 1.50, p = .13)$		$t(318 = -0.85, p = .40)$	
Age																		
21 to 34 (n=161)	0.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.0	0.6	1.2	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.5	0.7	1.2	0.8	1.1
35 to 57 (n=159)	0.4	0.9	0.6	1.2	0.7	1.3	0.5	1.0	1.3	1.8	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.6	1.2	1.8	1.0	1.4
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(289 = -1.76, p = .08)$		$t(318 = 0.29, p = .77)$		$t(318 = -1.33, p = .19)$		$t(318 = -0.94, p = .35)$		$t(270 = -4.12, p < .01)$		$t(287 = -1.55, p = .12)$		$t(318 = -0.88, p = .38)$		$t(318 = -1.00, p = .32)$		$t(318 = -1.44, p = .15)$	
Parental status																		
Without (n=145)	0.3	0.9	0.7	1.3	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.9	0.5	1.2	0.3	0.8	0.1	0.5	0.7	1.3	0.9	1.2
With kids (n=175)	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.7	1.3	0.6	1.1	1.2	1.7	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.6	1.0	1.6	0.9	1.3
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(289 = -1.76, p = .08)$		$t(318 = 0.29, p = .77)$		$t(310 = -1.33, p = .19)$		$t(318 = -0.94, p = .35)$		$t(270 = -4.12, p < .01)$		$t(287 = -1.55, p = .12)$		$t(318 = -0.88, p = .38)$		$t(318 = -1.00, p = .32)$		$t(318 = -1.44, p = .15)$	
Host region																		
West Asia (n=100)	0.4	0.9	0.7	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.1	1.2	1.8	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.8	1.6	0.7	1.1
East Asia (n=120)	0.5	1.0	0.6	1.1	0.5	0.9	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.6	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.8	1.4	1.0	1.3
N. Am/Euro n=80)	0.4	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.6	1.3	0.4	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.9	0.1	0.3	0.8	1.5	1.1	1.6
Sea-based (n=20)	0.4	0.8	0.2	0.4	1.6	1.9	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	1.4	1.9	0.4	0.6
ANOVA	$F(3,316 = 0.26, p = .85)$		$F(3,316 = 1.85, p = .14)$		$F(3,316 = 5.42, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 0.28, p = .84)$		$F(3,316 = 3.98, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 0.50, p = .68)$		$F(3,316 = 1.12, p = .34)$		$F(3,316 = 0.94, p = .42)$		$F(3,316 = 2.74, p = .04)$	
Work																		
Professionals/ Associates (n=113)	0.6	1.1	0.7	1.2	0.7	1.3	0.6	1.3	1.0	1.6	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.4	1.0	1.6	1.1	1.5
Services & Trades Workers (n=207)	0.4	0.8	0.5	1.1	0.6	1.2	0.4	0.9	0.8	1.5	0.3	0.9	0.2	0.6	0.8	1.4	0.7	1.1
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(177 = 1.73, p = .08)$		$t(202 = 1.40, p = .16)$		$t(318 = 0.50, p = .61)$		$t(170 = 1.45, p = .15)$		$t(318 = 0.83, p = .41)$		$t(316 = -1.65, p = .10)$		$t(318 = -0.79, p = .43)$		$t(318 = 1.40, p = .16)$		$t(183 = 2.49, p < .01)$	
Income																		
Lower (n=196)	0.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.0	0.9	1.6	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.5	0.7	1.2	0.8	1.1
Higher (n=122)	0.4	0.9	0.6	1.2	0.7	1.3	0.5	1.0	0.9	1.5	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.6	1.2	1.8	1.0	1.4
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316 = -0.39, p = .69)$		$t(316 = -0.65, p = .52)$		$t(316 = -0.80, p = .42)$		$t(316 = 0.10, p = .92)$		$t(316 = .05, p = .96)$		$t(316 = -0.07, p = .94)$		$t(316 = -0.31, p = .76)$		$t(185 = -2.67, p < .01)$		$t(215 = -1.79, p = .08)$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

difficult to meet or find the migrants. At least the church is there so the Filipinos are there, too (personal communication, August 2, 2005).

No differences across gender, age, and parental groupings can be seen in institutional participation, except with church activities. A larger percentage of older  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 320) = 6.67, p = .01 and with-children  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 320) = 5.54, p = .02 respondents took part in religious projects. Host regions, meanwhile, had an impact on religious activities. Going to church  $\chi^2$  (3, N = 320) = 10.53, p = .02 and joining church activities  $\chi^2$  (3, N = 320) = 8.25, p = .04 were highest and lowest among North America/Europe and West Asia respondents respectively (Table 7.4.).

NGOs have apparently adapted to the centrality of church activities in some regions, and the prohibition of those activities in other places. Father Baggio of SMC said they used two different networks to reach out to OFWs:

The first one is the one is through the network of Catholic churches because we are connected to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. We work with parishes and chapels through their chaplains. It is a huge network. We are talking about maybe 200, 300 communities, more or less. I don't know about the exact numbers, but we are talking about thousands and thousands of people (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

Ellene Sana of the Center for Migrant Advocacy (CMA) also noted their partnership with the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW), of which SMC is a member. PMRW is a coalition of organizations such as the Apostleship of the Sea, the Episcopal Commission on Migrants and Itinerant People, the International Catholic Migration Commission, and the Stella Maris International Service Center, among others (PMRW, 2004). Father Baggio also referred to CMA as their partner:

Our second network which is very strong in the Middle East is the CMA, and it is well-built. I mean, they discuss issues seriously. Since, you know, they are not able to handle communities in the Middle East because of the restrictions that they have there, they organized themselves from a lay point of view (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

Sana said they maintain contact persons in informally-organized OFW groups in Saudi Arabia<sup>50</sup> to help distressed workers or to discuss various issues (see Chapter 6). Unlad Kabayan's Sari Cañete also said their approach is different in the Middle East because, as a woman, she cannot go there on her own. Thus, she said:

We tap migrant workers there. For example, in Jordan, there is a lawyer who is a member of our network. Also, we do it the other way around. When the OFWs come home, then we meet them here. We are just starting with this approach though (personal communication, July 26, 2005).

Cañete also said they work with the church in their efforts to reach migrant workers. She explained that churchgoers who were interested in their program would attend Unlad's more comprehensive orientation after the Mass:

For example, in Taiwan, our partner is the church. We give our orientation during Sunday Mass. We tell our success stories as a homily. That is one example of our strategy. There are also readings in the Bible that we relate to the concrete experiences of a migrant worker. Before every Mass, we give a brief orientation, and then announce that there will be a one- to two-hour orientation after the mass (personal communication, July 26, 2005).

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<sup>50</sup> The [CMA Web site](#) (2003) lists these organizations as their partners in the Middle East: International Coalition on Overseas Filipinos Voting Rights, Saudi Arabia; e-lagda-Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Task Force Pusong Mamon, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; V-Team, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Kasapi Congress-Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Kav La' Oved, Tel-Aviv, Israel; and, Daughters of Charity, Beirut, Lebanon

As regards work, over a fifth (21 percent) of professionals compared to 13 percent of services and trades workers participated in embassy projects  $\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 4.176, p = .04$ . Income, meanwhile, reflected greater church attendance among respondents with higher salaries  $\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 7.12, p < .01$ . The effect of both work  $\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 4.82, p = .03$  and income  $\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 24.44, p < .01$  can be seen in the more active presence of professionals and higher-income respondents in church activities outside of the regular services (Table 7.4.).

Salome Mendoza's projects as a LABAT in Macau show the diverse projects that missions abroad can initiate. She started by establishing a glee club, because:

One of the reasons you are there is to check the quality of the programs. I initially did not like the community programs they would [conduct] to celebrate something. So I told them to produce something that is not necessarily cultural, but which they can be proud of. When I arrived there they danced just like what they saw on TV, and they wore tight-fitting costumes. They did not need to gyrate in order to be appreciated (personal communication, August 4, 2005).

The glee club was not her only project though, as she worked to gain the support of both OFWs and permanent residents in government-initiated activities. Her projects reflected the government's desire to network with and empower OFW communities:

Before I went home, I conducted a leadership training seminar to the community officials [as a way of creating a bond among them]. Because, you know, Filipinos like building groups, and they fight among each other on who is the best-looking and who has the most food. They had no tangible legacy like scholarships or medical projects. Thus, I started by networking with the Macau government and our compatriots who do not like joining our community because they are ashamed of it. I enticed them with free medical and dental services, which are

expensive there. Thus, I coordinated with the doctors and sought sponsors who could provide medicines. I did the medical services monthly, and the dental services quarterly. This was something [the members of the community] looked forward to.

I also held similarly pleasing activities like free cooking lessons: Chinese cooking, and baking. I also had an “Isang gunting, Isang suklay” [One pair of scissors, one comb] project where I sought out Filipino permanent residents in Macau who knew how to cut hair. I used them as trainers, since if we used non-residents we could have been raided [by Macau officials for violating labor laws] (personal communication, August 4, 2005).

#### Organizational and institutional transactions

Similar to my measure for contact with individuals, I asked respondents to rate the frequency of their transactions with organizations that provide products and services for OFWs using a 0 (no transactions) to 5 (frequent) scale. Compared to the ratings given to contacts with individuals, however, those for organizations were very low. The respondents rated their participation in services with OWWA (0.6), the Embassies (0.6), and the Labor Attachés (0.4) very poorly (Table 7.5.).

Government officials are aware of the negative perception of their agencies among migrant workers. For instance, when I told Mendoza about the apprehensions of OFWs in dealing with the Philippine embassy abroad, she said:

You know, that is true. The perception is really very negative. Thus, sometimes, OFWs would say, “We are the new heroes”, but they would say government services are not commensurate to this status. Thus, they can be very demanding. You really need to listen to them and give the assistance that they



want. If this is not possible, you need to explain the situation to them, but they will really contradict you vehemently (personal communication, August 4, 2005).

To mitigate the negative impression of government services, OWWA Director De la Fuente said:

We always consider our programs as need based. That makes us dynamic and that makes our programs relevant; attuned not only to the capacity but also to the needs of migrant workers. So through direct links with them, we obtain feedback face-to-face. But now, through other latest technology, they can give feedback through e-mail or they call our attention through radio programs. Once the feedback reaches us, we make sound amendments to the rules or have some redirection of our programs or expansion of the benefits. Communication really plays a vital role in this case. Of course, before these are effectively implemented we have to orient, we have to inform, we have to educate the migrant workers themselves including their families. In the case of implementing of what I described to you as the reintegration program, communication plays a vital role there. First is how to make them safe, how to make them conscious that there is a need for themselves and for their families (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

Host country agencies ( $M = 0.81$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ) and non-government organizations (NGOs) ( $M = 0.71$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ) were rated better than their Philippine counterparts ( $M = 0.76$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ;  $M = 0.57$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ). Private organizations did not fare similarly well ( $M = 0.76$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ). Ratings per category did not differ significantly across respondent groupings (Table 7.6.).

Table 7.6. Frequency of contact with institutions*										
	Host country				Philippines				Private organizations	
	Gov't agencies		NGOs		Gov't agencies		NGOs		Mean	SD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Sample (N=320)	0.8	1.2	0.7	1.2	0.8	1.1	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.3
Sex										
Male (n=142)	0.8	1.2	0.7	1.2	0.8	1.1	0.6	1.1	0.8	1.3
Female (n=178)	0.9	1.2	0.7	1.1	0.7	1.1	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.2
T-test	$t(318 = -0.76, p = .45)$		$t(318 = 0.46, p = .65)$		$t(317 = 0.97, p = .33)$		$t(317 = -0.06, p = .95)$		$t(318 = 0.06, p = .96)$	
Age (years old)										
21 to 34 (n=161)	0.9	1.2	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.9	0.7	1.2
35 to 57 (n=159)	0.7	1.2	0.8	1.3	0.8	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.8	1.3
T-test	$t(318 = 1.20, p = .23)$		$t(298 = -1.13, p = .26)$		$t(317 = -0.04, p = .97)$		$t(317 = -0.75, p = .45)$		$t(318 = -0.69, p = .49)$	
Parental Status										
Without (n=145)	0.9	1.2	0.7	1.1	0.7	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.7	1.2
With kids (n=175)	0.8	1.2	0.8	1.2	0.8	1.1	0.7	1.2	0.8	1.3
T-test	$t(318 = 1.01, p = .31)$		$t(318 = -0.81, p = .42)$		$t(317 = -0.23, p = .82)$		$t(303 = -1.83, p = .07)$		$t(318 = -0.69, p = .49)$	
Host region										
West Asia (n=100)	0.7	1.2	0.7	1.3	0.7	1.0	0.4	0.9	0.7	1.3
East Asia (n=120)	0.8	1.2	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.2	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.2
N. Am/Euro n=80)	0.9	1.3	0.8	1.3	0.6	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.8	1.3
Sea-based (n=20)	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.3	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.5
ANOVA	$F(3,316 = 0.53, p = .66)$		$F(3,316 = 0.38, p = .77)$		$F(3,316 = 0.96, p = .41)$		$F(3,316 = 1.08, p = .36)$		$F(3,316 = 0.28, p = .84)$	
Work										
Profs/ Associates (n=113)	1.0	1.4	0.9	1.3	0.8	1.1	0.7	1.2	1.0	1.4
Service & Trade (n=207)	0.7	1.0	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.9	0.6	1.1
T-test	$t(318 = 1.01, p = .31)$		$t(318 = -0.81, p = .42)$		$t(317 = -0.23, p = .82)$		$t(303 = -1.83, p = .07)$		$t(318 = -0.69, p = .49)$	
Income										
Lower (n=196)	0.7	1.0	0.7	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.5	1.0	0.7	1.2
Higher (n=122)	1.0	1.4	0.8	1.2	0.6	1.0	0.6	1.1	0.9	1.4
T-test	$t(209 = -1.91, p = .06)$		$t(316 = -0.53, p = .60)$		$t(316 = 1.65, p = .10)$		$t(315 = -0.68, p = .50)$		$t(316 = -1.70, p = .09)$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = No content sought & 4 = Use of print media, TV, radio, and the Internet for various media content. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

### *Political events*

In 2003, two laws affecting overseas Filipinos were passed. The first was the Overseas Absentee Voting Law (OAVL), which finally enabled Filipinos outside the country to participate in Philippine elections. The second and perhaps unimportant for OFWs, was the Dual Citizenship Law, which allowed Filipinos who have become citizens of other countries to reacquire their Philippine citizenship.

The survey revealed that very few of the respondents participated in transnational voting. On a scale of 0 (did not participate) to 5 (participated actively)

absentee voting was rated only 0.9. Other political activities that involve OFWs were also rated quite poorly. Participation in the Philippine party list system, which allows various sectors to vote for their representative to Congress, had a mean rating of 0.2, even lower than in joining protests abroad (0.3).

I asked the informants about the experiences about absentee voting to find possible explanations for its low rating. NGOs, which lobbied hard for the legislation, apparently ran out of steam to promote voting among OFWs during the election period itself. Government missions abroad were overworked since their limited staff had to conduct the election on top of their regular duties. Many OFWs, especially those who lived far from city centers where both government and non-government organizations had their offices, were unaware of the election requirements and processes. Even if they knew these details, many of them were dissuaded from voting because of the difficulty and the costs of going to polling places. Florence May Cortina said:

In our focus sector, the marginalized sector, absentee voting is not a primary issue for them. Although OFWs want their participation not to be limited solely to the sending of remittances, that they also want to have political participation, there are problems within the law itself. Thus, rather than encouraging them, they are afraid to register because it entails additional costs. This explains the low registration turn-out (personal communication, July 20, 2005).

Ellene Sana echoed this sentiment:

The awareness was really high. But the turnout was low because suddenly the people lost their fervor. They got tired of lobbying (for the law). When it was time for them to register later and then cast their ballots, they had no more energy. Now we see that the major factor for the low turn out was the entirety of the bill... For instance, for OFWs, the registration period was so short. Originally, the

registration was supposed to be longer, but because of the delays here in the Philippines—such as delays in the release of the budget and the writing of the implementing rules and regulations by the Commission on Elections—it became just two months. Further, the registration happened between August and September. It was summer then and it was super hot. Thus, in the Middle East, the temperature was between 40 and 50 degree Celsius.<sup>51</sup>

A personal appearance was also a requirement. It is not walking distance to go to our Embassy or the Consulate, and there were very limited places to register and vote. This was the most difficult part for the OFWs. If you are a domestic, the information about these things is not very accessible to you, and you would find it difficult to make a personal appearance [at the Embassy]. . . . Finally, there was a provision for postal registration in three places. Japan was one of those places, and this provision was announced very belatedly. But then, OFWs in Japan are very mobile as they have very short contracts (personal communication, July 29, 2005).

Ma. Lorena Macabuag also noted the inaccessibility of polling places:

. . . There were actually a lot of people who wanted to vote, from the seafarers to the migrants. But there were many issues, such as the distance to the voting centers and the confusion over voters' ID. There were voters who registered but whose names were not in the final voters' list. There was also a problem with the schedule, and the domestic workers have specific days-off, and sometimes the Consulate is closed on these days (personal communication, August 2, 2005).

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<sup>51</sup> Between 104 and 122 degrees Fahrenheit.

OFWs, however, were able to circumvent some of these problems. Macabuag said some of their member organizations mobilized OFWs during voting day. They also arranged for carpools to provide free rides for people to be able to vote. Others established special voting areas in Churches so migrants could vote and discuss absentee voting policies. Sana, however, qualified:

While we are saying that we generally created an impression about absentee voting, the audience was really big and scattered that at the end of the day our advocates can only do so much. Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos issued a statement that NGOs only made noise about the passing of the bill, but did not help in the campaigning. . . . They produced what looked like a primer, which was very unfriendly. The words were so small, and it was just basically the law. You would not even be encouraged to read or understand it (personal communication, July 29, 2005).

There were also concerns regarding the administration of registration and voting. Sana added that some posts did not like absentee voting because it was “politicizing foreign affairs.” Salome Mendoza of POEA, however, discounted this. She said, “Filipino associations are very active in this case, and they can immediately see if you are politicizing the process.” She added, “Our training is also to support the projects of the government, and not the individual. Our experience is that the absentee voting was clean. But it made my blood run high [with all the work]” (personal communication, August 4, 2005). ILAS Director Merliza Makinano also noted that absentee voting stretches mission staff members. A post with ten officers might have each of them manning a polling station. Volunteers from the Filipino community served as inspectors, as is the case in the Philippines.

## Organizational communication dynamics

Earlier sections previewed how organizations work with OFWs. Ellene Sana coordinated with OFWs, sometimes even across countries, to help their distressed clients, while Salome Mendoza developed her networks in Macau to start her projects as a Labor Attaché. Their efforts, however, are only two of the many ways that organizations communicate with OFWs.

### *Interpersonal promotions*

Since their clients are outside of the Philippines most of the time, organizations based in the Philippines send their representatives to the host countries to promote their products and services.

Victor Fernandez of PASEI said he visits Saudi Arabia once a year “because at this point I consider myself a consul for [my contacts there] them. I was a contract worker before I put up my own business. . . . I want to keep my ties with them” (Figure 7.4.).

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Figure 7.4. A coffee forum in Jeddah (PASEI, 2004)



ILAS Director Merliza Makinano said that some of their LABAT offices also hold “kapihan” or coffee forums. She said, “We have this regular meeting, like a kapihan meeting, with organization leaders in our office in Hong Kong.” She added that some LABAT offices hold monthly meetings or basketball or bowling tournaments. Makinano noted the importance of talking directly with OFWs in their host regions. She said, “A lot of them are really eager for information and once information gets there, even if it is false, it can be taken as the truth and it’s quite difficult [to correct it].” She recalled an incident where this happened:

When I was in Israel, I had a meeting with the heads of all community associations, and they were asking me: “What has the government been doing with the six billion dollars that we have been sending them?” And I was so shocked, because they were so angry with the government... [So I asked them,] “Have you sent any remittances addressed to the government? This is the money sent to your families and this is being sent to the Philippines and we counted it as money sent in the Philippines and money that has been running around in the country and the banking system.” And so they understood it. It’s just a matter of communicating with them (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

Companies such as the Philippine Star and Inq7.net hold road shows, or traveling promotional events, where they participate in various expatriate Filipino community fairs. Amanda Sandoval said they did a road show in 2000, right after the launch of the new Philstar.com. They went to different parts of the United States to increase awareness about the Web site. Mary Anne Bundalian of Inq7.net added their road shows have been successful in raising awareness about the Web site and in hearing about the interests of Filipinos abroad. She said that little trinkets such as ball

point pens and buttons with the Inq7.net logo have been very popular. Also a favorite among fair attendees is Choc-nut, a Philippine chocolate brand, which they give away to attract people to their booth in the exhibition hall.

While I, the author, was in New Jersey in August, 2005, I was able to attend “Philippine Fiesta in America,” where I observed first hand the workings of a road show. The fiesta was, according to its organizer Nanding Mendez, “an event that mixed business and pleasure, trade and cultural entertainment, professional networking and just friendly get-togethers” (Mendez, 2005).

Indeed, as Figure 7.5. shows, the fiesta combined the ingredients of a traditional Philippine fiesta with a beauty pageant and Philippine food. But the other side of the venue at the Meadowlands Exhibition Center was given to businesses that catered to overseas Filipinos. Sold alongside handicrafts were subscriptions to newspapers, long distance phone call services, and Philippine cable networks such as GMA PinoyTV and The Filipino Channel. Also promoted were Web sites such as Inq7.net and remittance services like Western Union. Altogether, these promotions would be seen by the 20,000 visitors who, according to Mendez attend the annual event. However, while their clients are primarily in North America, Dante Ang of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas said they yet have to do a road show there. He explained:

The issue of road show will depend on our money, on our capability to finance the road show. But even if we don’t go out and talk to these people personally, we have very close working relations with the associations which help us with the so-called dissemination of facts, dissemination of information. And our programs are being disseminated through these so-called associations overseas. . . . Even without us going there, the work is being undertaken by our counterparts in the



Figure 7.5. Images from the 2005 Philippine Fiesta in America



*Clockwise, from top left: Last year's beauty pageant winners; a booth selling Philippine cable TV services, food items sold "turo-turo" (point-point) style; a booth with a traditional hut; another table selling subscriptions to Philippine shows; a small section of the packed exhibition hall; and a parade of colors.*

United States. So the issue of road show to me at this point is not too relevant because there are others who are taking the lead overseas (personal communication, July 25, 2005).

Ang's explanation is important since companies that join road shows are represented abroad by their associates or branches in the host country. In the Fiesta in America event, for instance, GMA PinoyTV and other Philippine cable services were represented by affiliates of DirectTV or Dish Network.

#### *Print communications*

From my interviews and the Fiesta in America, I gathered several brochures and leaflets that promoted products and services for overseas Filipinos. In the Fiesta in America, the flyers were clearly sales materials, with images related to the Philippines as the primary visual cues. The bi-lingual language and the choice of words such as "home" and "*kapuso*" [of one heart] create a sense of belonging (Figure 7.6).

Similar OWWA materials that Director de la Fuente gave me during our interview also promoted services for OFWs by tapping into their sense of belonging to an OFW community. Though the design, graphics, and paper<sup>52</sup> of the OWWA materials are poorer than their commercial counterparts, their contents are nevertheless appropriate to their audiences. They are appealing through the language of choice and the rhetorical devices that evoke a sense of service and sincerity. One of the materials (on the top left of Figure 7.7.) was an illustrated story, called "*komiks*" [comics] in Filipino, a format that used to be popular in the Philippines. This particular comics in the "Mga Klasikong Kwento" [Classic Stories] series implored female OFWs to fight for themselves as the blurb "*Karangalan, Ipaglaban Mo*" [Dignity, Fight for it] stated.

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<sup>52</sup> Other materials I got were just mimeographed and poorly printed flyers.

Figure 7.6. Flyers from the 2005 Philippine Fiesta in America



From left to right: Western Union remittance services (n.d.), GMA PinoyTV cable (2005), and the Inq7.net Web site (n.d.).

NGO brochures, meanwhile, included the context of migration as well as the organization's history, activities, officers, contact details, and partners (Figure 7.8.). They also included a description of migration that is particularly telling of the NGOs' rather negative perspective on labor migration. Unlad Kabayan's brochure (n.d.) states, "Labor migration provides immediate relief to migrant workers and their families, however, little is done to address the long-term costs and negative effects."

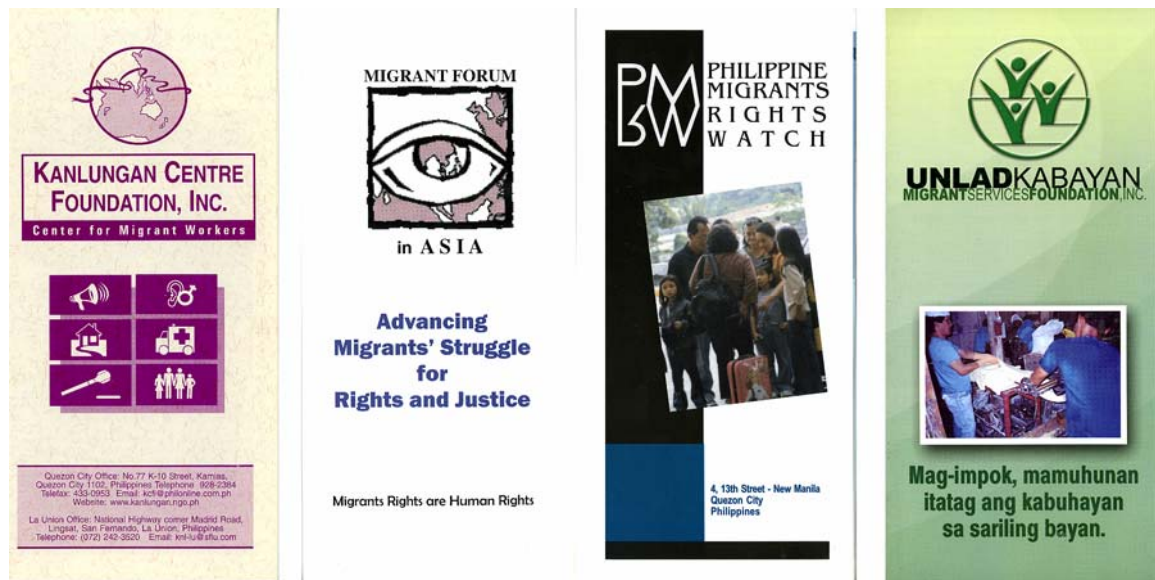
Kanlungan's brochure (n.d.), meanwhile, notes, "Labor export has not been without a price. Contract violations, illegal recruitment, violence against women migrants, trafficking in women and children, occupational hazards, indifference and neglect of the Philippine government have wrought immeasurable pain and damage to migrant workers' health and well-being."

Figure 7.7. Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration print materials



Clockwise, from top left: the front and back covers of an illustrated story (n.d.b.); a brochure listing of services “brought by OWWA—from you, for all of you” (n.d.c.); a brochure for the OFW Grocery Project, explaining the project, the beneficiaries, the loan details, the criteria on how to join, and the documentary requirements (n.d.d.).

Figure 7.8. Organizational brochures



*From left: Kanlungan, Migrant Forum in Asia, Philippine Migrants Rights Watch, and Unlad Kabayan.*

Similarly, the brochure of Migrant Forum in Asia (n.d.) states, “Migration in the age of information technology has become a matter of trade and commerce. . . . while the 20<sup>th</sup> century ushered a kind of development that has transformed the world into one global village, it is not without dreadful consequences.” The brochure of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (n.d.), of which Scalabrini Migration Center is a member, notes the roots of migration. “International economic imbalances, poverty and environmental degradation, combined with the absence of peace and security, human rights violations, unequal development, and unfavorable judicial and democratic institutions are all factors affecting international migration,” the brochure states.

The organizational mission statements, on the other hand, share an optimistic view of society. Unlad seeks to contribute towards “a society that cares to painstakingly build viable livelihoods for its people,” while Kanlungan strives towards a “Philippine society where there is sovereignty, freedom, justice, equality, democracy, self-reliance, and pro-people economic development.” MFA, meanwhile, has a more global perspective. It envisions “an alternative world system based on respect for human rights and dignity, social justice, and gender equity, particularly for migrant workers.”

From the text and presentation of these brochures, it is evident they are not designed for OFWs, with their rather complicated English and abstract statements.

Indeed, Sari Cañete said:

We developed the brochure within our organization and it contains our strategic plans. They are distributed to our partners abroad through our NGO and church contacts. Within the Philippines, we give them only in limited numbers, primarily to government organizations and our partner schools and universities. The brochures are not really for massive distribution (personal communication, July 26, 2005).

Still, Cañete said that their brochure has been helpful into reaching out to interested migrants:

If ten migrants get to read it, perhaps one or two would come to us for the entire program. The other eight would simply ask, “How can I access your credit program?” They would only ask about their interest, rather than truly appreciate the whole program. They would look at “how can Unlad help us.” Thus, from all the many programs in our brochure, their attention is still focused on “Unlad has a credit program. How can we get it?” (personal communication, July 26, 2005).

Newsletters are another type of print materials used by NGOs and government agencies. Earlier, I discussed POEA Director Salome Mendoza's work on the Ugnayan newsletter while she was the Macau LABAT. ILAS Director Makinano also recalled that aside from Ugnayan, LABAT Mendoza also "used to have a column in a newspaper." Makinano added, "In Singapore, Spain, Lebanon, and Rome, we also have newsletters to address Filipino associations about their involvement in our office" (personal communication, July 27, 2005). CFO Executive Director Jose Molano said:

We send newsletters regularly to the different associations—there are about four thousand Filipino organizations overseas—on a quarterly basis. . . . The Department of Foreign Affairs sends the names of all of these organizations to us. Historically, this is something which was started from the very beginning. Filipinos abroad got in touch with us to report that they had organized themselves into this or that organization. And these are organizations, of not just the emigrants but also of overseas workers (personal communication, July 25, 2005).

Macabuag of MFA also said their members have their own newsletters and publications to which MFA contributes. She added that they also try to collect these materials, together with other materials on migration, for their small library. Cortina said Kanlungan has a newsletter, but "it is not really for our clients. It is more for advocacy: for distribution to government agencies and our partner NGOs abroad and in the Philippines. We give them to our clients, too, but its medium is in English" (personal communication, July 20, 2005).

#### *Online communications*

All the informant organizations, except for OPAP, maintain Web sites and regularly use e-mail for their correspondence. While the sentiment about their online

presence is generally positive, there are still some reservations about it. Sari Cañete of Unlad said their Web site has so far only increased the number of interview requests that they have received:

Apparently, the Web site is not maximized by the migrants . . . because they are not particular about research. Based on our experience, they will trust and listen to you, but they will never browse the Internet to look for prospective [livelihood] partners (personal communication, July 26, 2005).

OFWs like to correspond by e-mail, according to the informants. Amanda Sandoval of Philstar.com said they receive e-mails from Filipinos around the world. For her, this shows “that they all still care very much about the Philippines. It’s very apparent in all the letters that we get, so we try to foster that community by keeping them in touch with the news and by giving them an outlet to share their views” (personal communication, July 27, 2005). She said the e-mails are usually phatic in nature, while others react to letters of the editor or share their sentiments about events in the country. In return, the Philstar.com marketing manager sends online newsletters or greeting cards for Christmas, New Year’s days, or Valentine’s days.

Paolo Pineda of ABS-CBN Interactive also said “A lot of the OFWs contact us via e-mail. We have a customer service e-mail which they use to correspond with us. And through the message boards they post, they give their comments.” He added that Filipinos in the United States and the Middle East have been the most frequent contacts, usually “to give us compliments, thank us for giving them content, or to give suggestions on how to improve our shows.” He qualified, however, that “there are also the negative comments—they don’t like what’s happening, their reactions to the news” (personal communication, July 29, 2005).



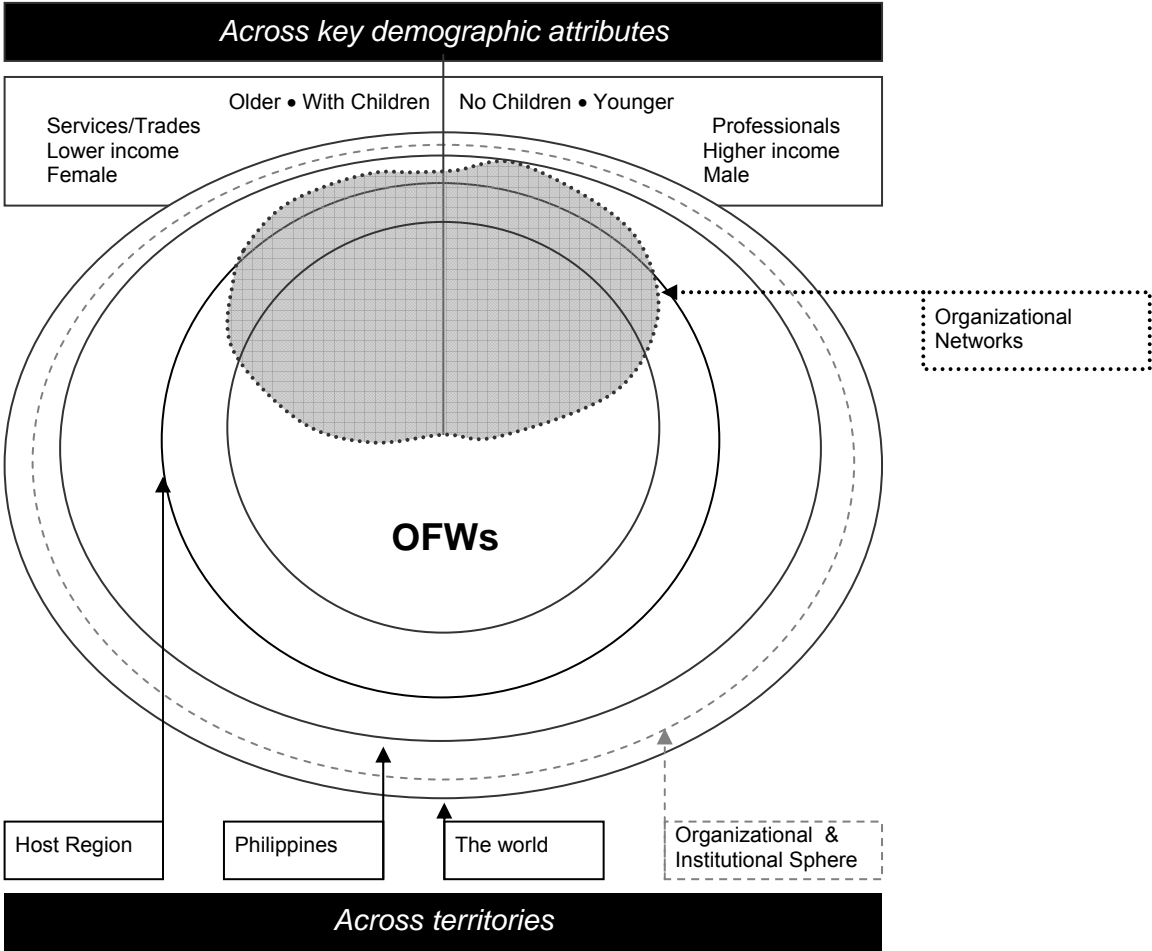
## Synthesis

Organizational networks among OFWs were small, with only 31 percent of the respondents being members of any organization. A fourth (23 percent) of the respondents were members of an organization in the host country, while 16 percent were members of an OFW organization. However, only 15 percent were members of an OFW within the host country. Though they may have few members, organizations of and for OFWs are increasingly becoming strategic players in the transnational arena as they belong to coalitions of members around the world. Migrant Forum in Asia, for instance, has over 260 member organizations in more than 20 countries (Law, 2003). Together, they have created a global advocacy network for migrant workers (Figure 7.9.).

The 100 respondents who joined organizations said they did so for socials, information, legal assistance, networking, and spiritual growth. Though few respondents were members of OFW organizations, they represented the strongest bloc by organizational type. Over half (52 percent) of the affiliated respondents said they were part of an OFW organization, compared to 27 percent and 26 percent who were in professional and religious groups respectively. Though OFWs pay a fee as members of the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration, only 13 percent said they were connected to a government organization. Typical organization activities were training, social, religious, and community outreach projects.

Perhaps because of its limited nature, organizational participation is not as eccentric as interpersonal communication and mass media use networks. Still, membership in non-OFW organizations was higher among older and without-children respondents who were active in church groups and higher-income professionals who

Figure 7.9. Organizational networks



joined occupational associations. Likewise, while there was no gender difference in organizational membership, men were more likely to join an organization if only they knew of one. These qualifications were also true for the sparse contact between the respondents and institutions. While 64 percent attended religious services, 35 percent participated in Church activities outside the Mass. Still, that was twice the 16 percent who joined activities organized by embassies.

Respondents also rated the frequency of their transactions with various institutions very poorly. Still, the ratings revealed the respondents transacted more frequently with government agencies than with non-government organizations, and with host institutions more than with their Philippine counterparts. Likewise, the respondents said they rarely bought or used the increasing array of products and services for them. In fact, only TV shows for OFWs, especially those from the Philippines, were rated highly.

The limited membership of OFWs in organizations and the infrequent contact between them and other institutions is disheartening considering that formal affiliation and regular correspondence between them is mutually beneficial: OFWs can avail themselves of the many products and services that organizations and institutions provide, while organizations and institutions can better tailor their projects for OFWs through greater interaction. Advocacy groups have successfully lobbied the Philippine government and international agencies to pass resolutions on preventing abuse against migrant workers. These groups, working in tandem with OFWs, can help build support for protecting migrants' rights and welfare, especially in persuading host governments to sign international agreements acknowledging migrant workers' rights. Such partnerships are already working to some extent. For instance, informal ties between OFWs and organizations such as those maintained by Center for Migrant Advocacy in the Middle East are proving very useful in linking distressed workers to help and rescue agencies.

Thus, while formal networks are not extensive, those that operate now should not be discounted. This is an instance where quality supersedes quantity, as Unlad Kabayan attests. Rather than approach the mass OFW audience, Unlad focuses on workers who already have an emergent entrepreneurial interest. The strategy thus is not to embrace everyone, but those who are ready to participate. This hopefully creates a base big enough to inspire others to join as well.

The outreach services of organizations and institutions deserve mention, even if it appears that OFWs do not avail themselves of them. The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), for instance, has programs that range from financial assistance, insurance and health to education and training (Figure 7), while the Labor Attachés in charge of over 30 Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) of the International Labor Affairs Services organize migrant workers' activities on-site. At the same time, non-government organizations network with each other and various governments to provide welfare assistance, conduct research, disseminate information, do advocacy work, and organize economic projects for OFWs.

Private media companies have been tapping into the economic potential of the migrant workers' community. Advertisements on news Web sites, for instance, quote real estate in US dollars as they target overseas Filipinos. Indeed Philippine real property developers say OFWs comprise a big portion of their clientele. Developers say OFWs spend 30 percent of their income on housing and that OFWs already comprise 20 percent of their clientele (Salazar, 2006).

Coalitions of recruitment agencies, which are key actors in the deployment of migrant workers, are not very active in keeping in touch with their clients abroad. However, this appears to be highly dependent upon the leaders of the coalitions and their decision whether to continue working with migrant workers who are already abroad, as with the activist stance of Victor Fernandez, the president of the Philippine Association of Service Exporters, Inc.. Fernandez has been eagerly exploring avenues to improve the welfare of OFWs as he believes these help in decreasing repatriation.

Informants spoke of the difficulty of involving OFWs in various activities from advocacy to entrepreneurship. However, there are indications of how OFWs can be organized. The 220 respondents who have not joined an organization said they were

very busy, not interested or unaware of it. However, 39 percent of them said they intended to join an organization. If they were to have done so, then over 58 percent of all respondents would have had a formal affiliation. Right now though, there is no public sphere to speak of that involves OFWs.

Creativity is needed in order to promote organized participation among OFWs. Salome Mendoza explained how a needs assessment and direct personal involvement with OFWs helps a lot in addressing apprehensions about formal networks, a sentiment echoed by Unlad Kabayan's Sari Canete. ILAS Director Merliza Makinano noted the thirst of OFWs for information about the Philippines, an observation supported by the content sought from the mass media. Thus, formal networks can serve as a venue to discuss the Philippines, rather than to talk about OFW issues directly. The rather heavy tone of the informant organizations' discourse, as gleaned from their brochures, can be improved to appeal to OFWs. Lighter language and a more positive outlook, without distracting from the issues, can be more inviting for OFWs who, after all, would surely not want to spend their precious weekend pondering about a political economy that appears very complicated and well beyond their reach.

During this research, both respondents and informants noted that while they have been approached by researchers before, they have rarely been furnished results of the completed studies. This impels scholars to share their studies with the mass audience and find ways to utilize their findings to alleviate the plight of migrant workers.

## Chapter 8

## MASS MEDIA USE

Philippine migrant employment is an example of transnational movement, with labor moving across borders, perhaps alongside capital, information, and services.

How Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) connect to these cross-border flows from a communication perspective can be studied through their use of mass media products from the host country and the Philippines, as well as from other (third party) countries. Exploring OFWs' mass media use patterns at this time has a particular temporal importance with the emergence of online media services and the export of news and entertainment products from the Philippines. These developments mean OFWs have the opportunity to connect directly to Philippine media channels, balancing what has arguably been a skewed flow of information from the host and other countries.

This chapter first looks at OFWs' media ownership and access in order to determine whether they have the required technology to connect to mediated information. It then explores the use of media across territories (home, host, and other countries) and types (print, TV, radio, and Internet). Afterwards, it discusses the ratings of media shows that are designed particularly for OFWs, as a parallel measure to the ratings given to the organizational products and services for them.

Often mentioned as a consideration in availing media services are costs and proficiency. On the one hand, OFWs are said to spend a significant portion of their salary in order to talk to their family across distances. On the other hand, proficiency with and attitude towards information and communication technology influences not only the ability to use newer media, but also the extent to which these can be used. The chapter thus explores monthly media expenses, trends in Internet use, and attitude towards developments in media. The chapter also discusses respondents' perceptions of how

their use of media has changed since they started working as OFWs. This indicates two things: first, whether their experiences abroad have impelled them to harness media for communication; second, how OFWs have integrated media in their everyday lives.

#### Ownership of and access to various media forms

One of the distinguishing marks of OFW households has always been their hi-tech audio-visual equipment (CIIR, 1987), which perhaps underscores the role of communication technologies as a status indicator. Beyond this, however, TV and radio sets and computers are also important media for information and entertainment. In this section, I thus look at the trends of the respondents' ownership of mass media forms.

Radio sets (72 percent) were owned by the most number of respondents, followed by television sets (64 percent), and VCD/DVD players (59 percent). Over two-fifths (42 percent) of respondents had cable TV. However, when combining respondents who owned a specific media unit with those who had access to it, TV became the most popular medium (96 percent), followed by radio (93 percent), disc players (91 percent), and cable TV (82 percent) (Table 8.1.). Comparatively, only 17 percent owned their own computer terminal abroad, and 14 percent had an Internet connection. A further 53 percent and 52 percent had access to a computer unit and to the Internet respectively (Table 8.2.), and as many respondents went online.

The independent variables all significantly influenced media ownership. A larger percentage of men, professionals, and higher-income earners than their counterparts owned their personal TV sets with cable connection and DVD players. Professionals and higher-income earners further differentiated themselves by their ownership of radio sets and computers as well as their connection to and use of the Internet. Older and with-

Table 8.1. Mass media use and access

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>TV</b>															
None	3.8	2.8	4.5	3.7	3.8	3.4	4.0	4.0	5.8	1.3	---	3.5	3.9	5.1	1.6
Own	63.8	72.5	56.7	59.0	68.6	61.4	65.7	64.0	53.3	86.3	35.0	77.9	56.0	54.1	78.7
Have Access	32.5	24.6	38.8	37.3	27.7	35.2	30.3	32.0	40.8	12.5	65.0	18.6	40.1	40.8	19.7
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 8.53, $p$ = .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 3.41, $p$ = .18		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 0.88, $p$ = .64		4 cells (33.3%) have $n < 5$ .				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 15.90, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 19.84, $p < .01$	
<b>Cable TV</b>															
None	18.1	14.1	21.3	16.1	20.1	19.3	17.1	20.0	20.0	16.3	5.0	15.0	19.8	19.9	15.6
Own	42.2	52.8	33.7	37.3	47.2	34.5	48.6	47.0	34.2	55.0	15.0	58.4	33.3	35.7	52.5
Have Access	39.7	33.1	44.9	46.6	32.7	46.2	34.3	33.0	45.8	28.8	80.0	26.5	46.9	44.4	32.0
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 11.93, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 6.44, $p$ = .04		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 6.78, $p$ = .03		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 24.35, $p < .01$				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 19.41, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 8.70, $p$ = .01	
<b>VCD/DVD Player</b>															
None	9.1	6.3	11.2	8.1	10.1	8.3	9.7	11.0	8.3	10.0	---	4.4	11.6	11.2	5.7
Own	59.1	68.3	51.7	55.9	62.3	54.5	62.9	61.0	52.5	72.5	35.0	77.0	49.3	49.5	73.8
Have Access	31.9	25.4	37.1	36.0	27.7	37.2	27.4	28.0	39.2	17.5	65.0	18.6	39.1	39.3	20.5
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 9.19, $p$ = .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 2.65, $p$ = .27		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 3.52, $p$ = .17		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 22.26, $p < .01$				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 23.33, $p < .01$		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 18.30, $p < .01$	
<b>Radio</b>															
None	7.2	5.6	8.4	7.5	6.9	6.2	8.0	9.0	9.2	3.8	---	5.3	8.2	8.7	4.9
Own	72.2	78.2	67.4	71.4	73.0	72.4	72.0	72.0	66.7	83.8	60.0	81.4	67.1	65.8	82.0
Have Access	20.6	16.2	24.2	21.1	20.1	21.4	20.0	19.0	24.2	12.5	40.0	13.3	24.6	25.5	13.1
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 4.55, $p$ = .10		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 0.10, $p$ = .95		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 0.43, $p$ = .81		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 13.32, $p$ = .04				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 7.49, $p$ = .02		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 9.76, $p < .01$	

\*Two respondents did not reply.



Table 8.2. Computer and Internet ownership and access

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income*	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea- based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>Computer</b>															
None	30.3	28.9	31.5	24.2	36.5	27.6	32.6	35.0	30.0	25.0	30.0	11.5	40.6	37.2	18.9
Own	16.9	16.2	17.4	17.4	16.4	16.6	17.1	10.0	15.0	28.8	15.0	28.3	10.6	9.2	29.5
Have Access	52.8	54.9	51.1	58.4	47.2	55.9	50.3	55.0	55.0	46.3	55.0	60.2	48.8	53.6	51.6
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 0.46, $p$ = .79		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 5.92, $p$ = .05		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 1.13, $p$ = .567		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 12.12, $p$ = .06				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 35.74, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 26.77, $p$ < .01	
<b>Internet</b>															
None	34.7	32.4	36.5	29.2	40.3	29.7	38.9	41.0	30.8	31.3	40.0	13.3	46.4	41.3	23.8
Own	13.8	12.0	15.2	13.7	13.8	14.5	13.1	8.0	13.3	25.0		26.5	6.8	6.1	26.2
Have Access	51.6	55.6	48.3	57.1	45.9	55.9	48.0	51.0	55.8	43.8	60.0	60.2	46.9	52.6	50.0
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 1.79, $p$ = .41		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 4.78, $p$ = .09		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 2.99, $p$ = .224		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 16.28, $p$ = .01				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 46.42, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 28.77, $p$ < .01	
<b>Webcam</b>															
None	51.6	45.8	56.2	45.3	57.9	49.0	53.7	60.0	49.2	46.3	45.0	32.7	61.8	60.2	36.9
Own	15.9	17.6	14.6	14.9	17.0	16.6	15.4	11.0	15.8	25.0	5.0	35.4	5.3	7.1	30.3
Have Access	32.5	36.6	29.2	39.8	25.2	34.5	30.9	29.0	35.0	28.8	50.0	31.9	32.9	32.7	32.8
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 3.44, $p$ = .18		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 7.89, $p$ = .02		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = .73, $p$ = .694		$\chi^2$ (6, N = 320) = 12.11, $p$ = .06				$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 53.53, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (2, N = 320) = 33.18, $p$ < .01	
<b>Internet Use</b>															
Yes	54.4	58.5	51.1	64.0	44.7	63.4	46.9	49.0	60.0	60.0	25.0	82.3	39.1	43.9	70.5
No	45.6	41.5	48.9	36.0	55.3	36.6	53.1	51.0	40.0	40.0	75.0	17.7	60.9	56.1	29.5
Chi-square		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 1.71, $p$ = .19		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 12.04, $p$ = .01		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 8.80, $p$ = .03		$\chi^2$ (3, N = 320) = 10.67, $p$ = .01				$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 54.91, $p$ < .01		$\chi^2$ (1, N = 320) = 21.45, $p$ < .01	
<b>Online activities**</b>	(n=174)	(n=83)	(n=91)	(n=103)	(n=71)	(n=92)	(n=82)	(n=49)	(n=72)	(n=48)	(n=5)	(n=93)	(n=81)	(n=86)	(n=86)
Work research	33.6	34.9	20.9	29.4	25	22.8	32.9	28.6	21.9	31.9	60.0	43.0	9.9	14.0	40.7
Leisurely surfing	72.7	62.7	59.3	59.8	62.5	60.9	61.0	55.1	57.5	68.1	100.0	66.7	54.3	58.1	65.1
Chatting	76.2	65.1	60.4	66.7	56.9	63.0	62.2	57.1	58.9	72.3	80.0	58.1	67.9	62.8	62.8
Emailing	92.3	73.5	78.0	79.4	70.8	82.6	68.3	65.3	79.5	83.0	60.0	74.2	77.8	75.6	76.7
Others	8.4	7.2	6.6	6.9	6.9	8.7	4.9	8.2	4.1	10.6	0.0	7.5	6.2	7.0	7.0

\*Two respondents did not reply. \*\*Multiple response item

child respondents, meanwhile, differentiated themselves from their younger and without-child counterparts as more of them had cable subscription but fewer of them used the Internet. Older respondents also tended not to have a computer.

Across host regions, North America/Europe and sea-based respondents had the highest and the lowest rates of media ownership. Conversely, they had the lowest and the highest rates of access to each medium through units or subscriptions owned by other people. Sea-based workers further differentiated themselves from the rest of the sample by having the least access to and use of the Internet.

Because of the varying nature of media access and ownership, it is thus appropriate that OWWA can be reached through different media. OWWA Director Restituto De la Fuente said:

We have this information service, which is very active. We have a 24-hour operation center where the family could inquire on the status of their relatives who are having problems abroad or where they can request the expediting of whatever processes they wish. And this is accessible nationwide, worldwide, through text, the Internet or through hotlines (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

According to De la Fuente, this service, called the Operation Center, “has improved tremendously the access of migrants to vital information concerning programs, benefits and services. At the same time, it has also improved our reach to them.” Meanwhile, to address the apparent digital divide among OFWs, OWWA has entered a partnership with Microsoft Philippines to launch the “*Tulay*” [Bridge] program to offer computer training for migrant workers. There are now training centers in Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Taiwan, Manila, and Cebu City (in central Philippines).

The training module emphasizes Internet use, particularly to facilitate communication between the migrants and their family members. De la Fuente said they are doing this because of studies that show how information technologies are helping mitigate the social costs of migration. He said, "We could now see face-to-face [online]. We can see that they can chat the whole hour without worrying about expenses" (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

The variables that influence ownership of and access to media forms indicate a digital divide across gender, age, and occupation of respondents. For instance, while TV ownership and access make it the most popular medium, statistics on who owns and has access to it reveal a strong bias towards men, especially when it has peripherals like disc players and services like cable subscription. Meanwhile, younger and without-child respondents were better connected to newer media, which shows that the desire of parent-respondents in monitoring Philippine news through traditional media has not particularly impelled them to subscribe to cable and the Internet. Finally, and quite predictably, there was a digital divide across work and income groups, with richer respondents having greater ownership of traditional and newer media.

#### Use of media from different territories

In their everyday life, OFWs can connect with media from home, host, and other countries. And the nature of these connections reveals the multi-territorial coverage of their own media networks. Parallel to previous measures I use in this research, I asked respondents to rate the frequency with which they used various media on a 0 (not at all) to 5 (very frequent) scale. The choices I included were newspapers, magazines, TV and radio shows, Internet Web sites, online chatrooms, movies in the cinema and in DVD/VCD, and music. Respondents were asked to rate each of these choices as they

originate from the Philippines, the host and other (third party) countries. Ratings were quite low, towards the infrequent end of the scale, as evidenced by composite and individual mean ratings.

I calculated composite scores by averaging all media-based ratings for each territory. Philippine media collectively got the highest ratings ( $M = 2.3$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ ) compared to host ( $M = 2.1$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ ) and third country ( $M = 1.0$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ) media (Tables 8.3).

	Host media		Philippine media		Other country media	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	2.1	1.1	2.3	1.1	1.0	1.2
Gender						
Male (n=142)	2.2	1.0	2.6	1.1	1.0	1.2
Female (n=178)	2.1	1.1	2.1	1.0	0.9	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 0.85, p = .39$		$t(318) = -1.46, p = .15$		$t(318) = 0.24, p = .81$	
Age (years old)						
21 to 34 (n=161)	2.2	1.0	2.4	1.0	1.2	1.3
35 to 57 (n=159)	2.1	1.1	2.1	1.1	0.8	1.1
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -1.25, p = .21$		$t(318) = -0.17, p = .86$		$t(318) = -0.95, p = .34$	
Parental Status						
Without children (n=145)	2.2	1.1	2.4	1.2	1.1	1.3
With children (n=175)	2.1	1.1	2.2	1.0	0.8	1.1
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.49, p = .63$		$t(315) = -0.13, p = .90$		$t(318) = -1.62, p = .11$	
Host region						
West Asia (n=100)	1.8	1.0	2.2	1.0	0.9	1.1
East Asia (n=120)	2.0	1.0	2.3	1.1	1.2	1.3
N. America/Europe (n=80)	2.7	1.0	2.2	1.1	0.9	1.1
Sea-based (n=20)	2.0	1.0	2.9	1.0	0.3	0.7
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 4.16, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 13.02, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 5.32, p < .01$	
Work						
Profs/ Associates (n=113)	2.5	1.1	2.6	1.1	1.3	1.4
Service & Trade (n=207)	2.0	1.0	2.1	1.1	0.8	1.1
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 3.71, p < .01$		$t(210) = 3.53, p < .01$		$t(318) = 1.44, p = .15$	
Income						
Lower (n=196)	1.8	1.0	2.1	1.0	0.9	1.1
Higher (n=122)	2.7	1.0	2.5	1.1	1.0	1.3
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(282) = -5.38, p < .01$		$t(316) = -6.26, p < .01$		$t(316) = -3.29, p = .01$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

Respondent groupings by gender, age and parental status had similar composite scores. However, the scores differed significantly across host regions, and work and income groups. North America/Europe and sea-based respondents respectively rated

host media  $F(3, 316) = 4.2, p = .01$  and Philippine media  $F(3, 316) = 13.02, p < .01$  much higher than did their counterparts. Further, the latter gave the lowest ratings to media from other countries, compared to East Asia respondents who gave the highest  $F(3, 316) = 5.32, p < .01$ . Work and income also had an impact upon the use of media by territory. Professionals and higher-income earners said they much more frequently used host country and Philippine media. Moreover, those with higher-income also gave a significantly higher rating to media from other countries  $t(316) = -3.29, p < 0.01$ .

In the matrix of media and territories, Philippine television shows were rated the highest ( $M = 3.3, SD = 1.9$ ), followed by host country TV shows ( $M = 3.2, SD = 1.8$ ) and Philippine music ( $M = 3.0, SD = 1.87$ ) (Tables 8.4 to 8.6).

Within host countries, respondents' most frequently used media/content are TV shows, newspapers ( $M = 2.9, SD = 1.7$ ), music ( $M = 2.4, SD = 1.9$ ), and DVD/VCD movies ( $M = 2.4, SD = 1.9$ ). Meanwhile, DVD/VCD movies also came in third among Philippine media products ( $M = 2.9, SD = 1.9$ ), after the two I have already mentioned. Finally, among the items from third party countries, music ( $M = 1.5, SD = 2.0$ ), DVD/VCD movies ( $M = 1.4, SD = 2.0$ ), and TV shows ( $M = 1.3, SD = 1.8$ ) were ranked in that order.

From these patterns the importance of TV shows, music, and disc movies is apparent. Conversely, in the order of categories by rating, radio shows are in the middle, with online media products and movies at the cinema at the lower end. This order varies very slightly across independent variables, though specific ratings per item can be significantly different. For instance, not only did men have wider ownership of and access to disc players, they also rated Philippine and host country DVD/VCD movies more highly than women did. Their ratings also showed greater use of Philippine newspapers and TV shows.

Table 8.4. Use of mass media from the host country\*

	Newspaper		Magazines		TV shows		Radio shows		Web sites		Online chat		Cinema		DVD/VCD movies		Music	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	2.9	1.7	2.2	1.7	3.2	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.9	1.2	1.7	1.2	1.5	2.4	1.9	2.4	2.0
Gender																		
Male (n=142)	3.0	1.8	2.0	1.7	3.2	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.2	1.7	1.1	1.5	2.8	1.9	2.4	2.0
Female (n=178)	2.9	1.7	2.3	1.7	3.2	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.2	1.7	1.3	1.6	2.1	1.9	2.4	2.0
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 0.85, p = .39$		$t(318) = -1.46, p = .15$		$t(318) = 0.24, p = .81$		$t(318) = -1.01, p = .31$		$t(317) = 1.04, p = .30$		$t(318) = 0.28, p = .78$		$t(318) = -1.16, p = .25$		$t(318) = 3.26, p < .01$		$t(318) = 0.13, p = .90$	
Age (years old)																		
21 to 34 (n=161)	2.8	1.7	2.2	1.7	3.1	1.8	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.6	2.4	1.9	2.4	1.9
35 to 57 (n=159)	3.1	1.8	2.2	1.8	3.3	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.9	1.0	1.6	1.0	1.5	2.4	1.9	2.5	2.0
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -1.25, p = .21$		$t(318) = -0.17, p = .86$		$t(318) = -0.95, p = .34$		$t(318) = 0.11, p = .91$		$t(317) = 1.82, p = .07$		$t(317) = 1.75, p = .08$		$t(318) = 1.85, p = .06$		$t(318) = 0.12, p = .90$		$t(318) = -0.45, p = .65$	
Parental Status																		
Without (n=145)	2.9	1.7	2.2	1.7	3.0	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.5	2.4	1.9	2.5	2.0
With kids (n=175)	3.0	1.8	2.2	1.8	3.4	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.9	1.0	1.6	1.0	1.5	2.4	1.9	2.4	2.0
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.49, p = .63$		$t(315) = -0.13, p = .90$		$t(318) = -1.62, p = .11$		$t(318) = 0.21, p = .83$		$t(317) = 1.23, p = .22$		$t(293) = 2.77, p < .01$		$t(304) = 2.32, p = .02$		$t(318) = -0.20, p = .84$		$t(318) = 0.68, p = .50$	
Host region																		
West Asia (n=100)	2.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	3.1	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.2	1.8	0.6	1.3	0.9	1.5	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.1
East Asia (n=120)	2.7	1.8	1.9	1.6	3.0	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.5	1.7	1.2	1.5	2.1	1.9	2.2	1.9
N. Am/Euro n=80)	3.4	1.4	3.1	1.6	3.8	1.4	2.4	1.9	2.2	2.1	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.6	3.0	1.7	3.2	1.7
Sea-based (n=20)	2.3	1.6	2.3	1.7	2.5	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.0	1.5	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.6	3.5	1.8	2.9	1.9
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 4.16, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 13.0, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 5.32, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 1.04, p = .37$		$F(3,316) = 5.80, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 8.32, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 3.40, p = .02$		$F(3,316) = 7.65, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 7.23, p < .01$	
Work																		
Professionals/ Associates (n=113)	3.4	1.7	2.6	1.8	3.4	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.7	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.5	1.7	2.7	1.9	2.5	1.9
Services & Trades Workers (n=207)	2.7	1.7	1.9	1.6	3.1	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.1	1.6	1.0	1.5	1.1	1.4	2.2	1.9	2.4	2.0
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 3.71, p < .01$		$t(210) = 3.53, p < .01$		$t(318) = 1.44, p = .15$		$t(247) = -1.12, p = .26$		$t(188) = 7.31, p < .01$		$t(189) = 3.25, p < .01$		$t(202) = 2.13, p = .03$		$t(318) = 2.29, p = .02$		$t(318) = 0.22, p = .83$	
Income																		
Lower (n=196)	2.5	1.8	1.7	1.6	2.9	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.1	1.6	0.9	1.5	0.9	1.4	2.0	1.8	2.1	2.0
Higher (n=122)	3.5	1.5	2.9	1.7	3.6	1.7	2.3	1.9	2.6	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.7	3.0	1.8	2.9	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(282) = -5.38, p < .01$		$t(316) = -6.26, p < .01$		$t(316) = -3.29, p < .01$		$t(316) = -1.97, p = .05$		$t(215) = -7.01, p < .01$		$t(212) = -3.87, p < .01$		$t(218) = -4.02, p < .01$		$t(316) = -4.35, p < .01$		$t(316) = -3.39, p < .01$	

In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

\*\*Two respondents did not reply.

Table 8.5. Use of mass media from the Philippines\*

	Newspaper		Magazines		TV shows		Radio shows		Web sites		Online chat		Cinema		DVD/VCD movies		Music	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	2.6	1.8	2.1	1.7	3.3	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.4	1.8	1.5	1.7	2.9	1.9	3.0	1.9
Gender																		
Male (n=142)	3.0	1.9	2.2	1.7	3.7	1.7	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.8	3.4	1.7	3.2	1.9
Female (n=178)	2.3	1.7	2.0	1.7	3.0	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.5	1.9	1.3	1.8	1.3	1.6	2.5	1.9	2.9	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(286 = 3.92, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 1.09, p = .28)$		$t(316 = 3.69, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 1.51, p = .13)$		$t(318 = 2.31, p = .03)$		$t(318 = 0.83, p = .41)$		$t(285 = 2.49, p < .01)$		$t(311 = 4.35, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 1.55, p = .12)$	
Age (years old)																		
21 to 34 (n=161)	2.7	1.8	2.3	1.7	3.2	2.0	1.8	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.8	3.2	1.8	3.3	1.8
35 to 57 (n=159)	2.5	1.8	1.9	1.7	3.4	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.4	1.8	1.0	1.6	1.2	1.6	2.6	1.9	2.8	2.0
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = 0.84, p = .40)$		$t(318 = 1.99, p = .05)$		$t(318 = -1.09, p = .28)$		$t(311 = -1.66, p = .10)$		$t(317 = 3.08, p < .01)$		$t(309 = 3.18, p < .01)$		$t(311 = 3.09, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 2.98, p < .01)$		$t(314 = 2.56, p < .01)$	
Parental Status																		
Without (n=145)	2.6	1.8	2.4	1.8	3.0	2.1	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.0	1.6	1.8	3.0	1.9	3.1	1.9
With kids (n=175)	2.6	1.8	1.9	1.6	3.6	1.7	2.1	2.0	1.5	1.8	1.0	1.6	1.4	1.7	2.9	1.9	3.0	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = -0.06, p = .95)$		$t(318 = 2.63, p < .01)$		$t(318 = -2.89, p < .01)$		$t(318 = -1.18, p = .24)$		$t(318 = 2.51, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 3.36, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 1.22, p = .22)$		$t(318 = 0.29, p = .77)$		$t(318 = 0.52, p = .60)$	
Host region																		
West Asia (n=100)	2.7	1.8	1.9	1.7	3.8	1.8	1.9	2.0	1.3	1.8	0.9	1.6	1.4	1.8	3.0	1.8	3.0	2.0
East Asia (n=120)	2.6	1.8	2.4	1.7	3.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.9	1.5	1.7	2.7	1.9	2.9	1.9
N. Am/Euro n=80)	2.2	1.7	1.8	1.5	3.0	1.9	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.0	1.6	1.9	1.5	1.7	2.7	1.9	3.1	1.7
Sea-based (n=20)	3.7	1.8	2.8	1.8	3.9	1.6	2.9	2.0	1.3	1.7	0.9	1.4	2.3	2.2	4.5	1.2	3.8	1.8
ANOVA	$F(3,316 = 4.01, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 3.58, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 4.60, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 1.70, p = .17)$		$F(3,316 = 4.05, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 3.79, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 1.52, p = .21)$		$F(3,316 = 5.76, p < .01)$		$F(3,316 = 1.48, p = .22)$	
Work																		
Professionals/ Associates (n=113)	2.5	1.8	2.2	1.7	3.5	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.6	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.8	3.2	1.8	3.4	1.7
Services & Trades Workers (n=207)	2.6	1.8	2.1	1.7	3.2	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.2	1.7	1.1	1.6	1.3	1.7	2.8	1.9	2.8	2.0
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = -0.51, p = .61)$		$t(318 = 0.47, p = .64)$		$t(318 = 1.40, p = .16)$		$t(318 = -0.46, p = .64)$		$t(203 = 6.28, p < .01)$		$t(197 = 3.80, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 2.73, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 2.09, p = .04)$		$t(266 = 2.60, p < .01)$	
Income																		
Lower (n=196)	2.5	1.7	2.0	1.7	3.3	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.3	1.7	1.1	1.7	1.3	1.7	2.7	1.9	2.9	1.9
Higher (n=122)	2.8	1.9	2.2	1.7	3.4	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8	3.2	1.9	3.2	1.7
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316 = -1.66, p = .10)$		$t(316 = -1.09, p = .28)$		$t(316 = -0.57, p = .57)$		$t(316 = -0.22, p = .83)$		$t(234 = -5.94, p < .01)$		$t(229 = -3.27, p < .01)$		$t(240 = -2.13, p = .03)$		$t(316 = -2.02, p = .04)$		$t(277 = -1.81, p = .07)$	
In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.																		
**Two respondents did not reply.																		

Table 8.6. Use of mass media from other countries\*

	Newspaper		Magazines		TV shows		Radio shows		Web sites		Online chat		Cinema		Disc movies		Music	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	0.7	1.3	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.8	0.5	1.2	1.0	1.7	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.5	1.4	2.0	1.5	2.0
Gender																		
Male (n=142)	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.4	1.3	1.9	0.5	1.2	1.0	1.8	0.6	1.4	0.9	1.6	1.6	2.1	1.7	2.1
Female (n=178)	0.7	1.3	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.8	0.5	1.1	0.9	1.7	0.7	1.5	0.6	1.4	1.2	1.9	1.3	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.40,$ $p = .69$		$t(318) = -0.55,$ $p = .58$		$t(318) = -0.31,$ $p = .75$		$t(318) = -0.10,$ $p = .92$		$t(318) = 0.49,$ $p = .62$		$t(318) = -0.24,$ $p = .81$		$t(281) = 1.34,$ $p = .18$		$t(289) = 1.81,$ $p = .07$		$t(290) = 1.57,$ $p = .12$	
Age (years old)																		
21 to 34 (n=161)	0.7	1.3	0.9	1.5	1.5	1.9	0.5	1.2	1.3	1.9	0.9	1.6	0.9	1.6	1.8	2.1	1.9	2.1
35 to 57 (n=159)	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.4	1.1	1.8	0.5	1.1	0.7	1.5	0.4	1.1	0.6	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.1	1.8
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.19,$ $p = .85$		$t(318) = 1.04,$ $p = .30$		$t(318) = 1.53,$ $p = .13$		$t(318) = 0.62,$ $p = .53$		$t(305) = 3.19,$ $p < .01$		$t(289) = 3.07,$ $p < .01$		$t(307) = 2.04,$ $p = .04$		$t(306) = 3.65,$ $p < .01$		$t(312) = 3.51,$ $p < .01$	
Parental Status																		
Without (n=145)	0.8	1.4	0.9	1.6	1.4	1.9	0.5	1.3	1.2	1.9	0.9	1.7	0.9	1.6	1.6	2.0	1.8	2.1
With kids (n=175)	0.6	1.2	0.7	1.4	1.2	1.8	0.5	1.1	0.8	1.6	0.4	1.1	0.6	1.4	1.3	1.9	1.2	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 1.11,$ $p = .27$		$t(318) = 1.25,$ $p = .21$		$t(318) = 0.85,$ $p = .40$		$t(318) = 0.63,$ $p = .53$		$t(288) = 2.16,$ $p = .03$		$t(243) = 3.02,$ $p < .01$		$t(288) = 1.55,$ $p = .12$		$t(318) = 1.30,$ $p = .20$		$t(293) = 2.27,$ $p = .02$	
Host region																		
West Asia (n=100)	0.8	1.5	0.8	1.5	1.5	2.0	0.4	1.0	0.8	1.6	0.4	1.1	0.7	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5	2.1
East Asia (n=120)	0.8	1.4	0.9	1.6	1.4	1.9	0.7	1.5	1.3	1.9	1.0	1.7	1.1	1.7	1.6	2.1	1.7	2.1
N. Am/Euro n=80)	0.7	1.1	0.8	1.4	1.1	1.7	0.4	0.9	1.0	1.8	0.7	1.5	0.5	1.0	1.2	1.9	1.3	1.9
Sea-based (n=20)	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.9	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.7	1.5	0.6	1.3
ANOVA	$F(3,316) =$ $0.62, p = .60$		$F(3,316) =$ $1.01, p = .39$		$F(3,316) =$ $2.58, p = .05$		$F(3,316) =$ $2.48, p = .06$		$F(3,316) =$ $3.60, p < .01$		$F(3,316) =$ $4.60, p < .01$		$F(3,316) =$ $3.44, p = .02$		$F(3,316) =$ $1.53, p = .21$		$F(3,316) =$ $1.94, p = .12$	
Work																		
Professionals/ Associates (n=113)	0.9	1.4	1.2	1.8	1.6	1.9	0.7	1.3	1.6	2.1	0.9	1.6	0.9	1.7	1.8	2.1	1.9	2.1
Services & Trades Workers (n=207)	0.6	1.3	0.6	1.2	1.1	1.8	0.4	1.1	0.6	1.4	0.5	1.3	0.6	1.4	1.2	1.9	1.2	1.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 1.40,$ $p = .16$		$t(165) = 3.57,$ $p < .01$		$t(214) = 1.96,$ $p = .05$		$t(200) = 1.68,$ $p = .10$		$t(172) = 4.39,$ $p < .01$		$t(187) = 2.02,$ $p = .04$		$t(194) = 1.67,$ $p = .10$		$t(206) = 2.54,$ $p < .01$		$t(214) = 2.75,$ $p < .01$	
Income																		
Lower (n=196)	0.7	1.3	0.7	1.4	1.3	1.9	0.4	1.2	0.8	1.6	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.4	1.4	2.0	1.4	2.0
Higher (n=122)	0.7	1.2	0.9	1.6	1.2	1.8	0.6	1.2	1.3	2.0	0.7	1.4	0.8	1.6	1.5	2.0	1.6	2.1
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316) = -0.34,$ $p = .74$		$t(316) = -1.43,$ $p = .15$		$t(316) = 0.34,$ $p = .73$		$t(316) = -0.97,$ $p = .33$		$t(316) = -2.38,$ $p = .02$		$t(316) = -0.14,$ $p = .89$		$t(316) = -0.87,$ $p = .39$		$t(316) = -0.30,$ $p = .76$		$t(316) = -0.90,$ $p = .37$	

In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

\*\*Two respondents did not reply.



Age had an impact upon the use of media, especially newer media. Young respondents gave significantly higher ratings for Internet surfing, online chatting, movie watching both on discs and the cinema, and music listening. Connected to this was the significant difference in the use of online chatting—and, to some extent, online surfing—between respondents without children and their counterparts. Without-children respondents apparently went online and saw movies at the cinemas more frequently. Those with children, meanwhile, rated watching TV much more highly.

North America/Europe respondents gave the significantly highest ratings for the media from their host region since they lived in the countries that heavily export media products. For instance, movies and TV shows produced in Los Angeles are considered host media for OFWs in the United States, while the same are third party country for other OFWs. The only exception in this case is radio, the programs of which are broadcast primarily within the host country.

Work and income were again definitive factors. In the host country, higher-income earners rated all choices more highly than did lower-income earners. The same was true for professionals as well, though there were three exceptions: TV and radio shows, and music.

With media from the Philippines, professionals and higher-income earners more frequently surfed the Internet, chatted online, watched movies, and listened to music than their counterparts. With media from other countries, professionals differed with services and trades workers in all categories except in reading newspapers, listening to the radio, and going to cinemas. Income proved pivotal only in surfing online.

### Media type, content, and use

Communication theories from uses and gratifications to information-seeking (see Littlejohn, 1989) have argued that people seek different content from different media. Taking a cue from these theories, I used a matrix that looked at how the respondents used the print media, TV, radio, and the Internet (the vertical axis) for entertainment, as well as news and information about the Philippines, the host country, OFWs, and social events (the horizontal axis) by asking respondents to cite which media they used for a specific topic.

I discuss the findings on two levels. First, I present composite scores that provide a general picture of 1) the diversity of topics sourced from specific media and 2) the diversity of media used for specific topics. Second, I look at the percentages from which I derived these composite scores to detail the match between the media and the topics. To assess the diversity of content that is sought from each medium, I calculated composite scores by adding the “yes” (coded as 1) answers for each item. Thus, as an example, if a respondent used the print media for all of the five topics, s/he would have a score of five for the diversity of information that s/he is getting from it. I then took the average of these scores, and the medium that had the highest average then became the optimal source of information among the respondents.

Using data from the same matrix, I added the “yes” answers (coded as 1) for each of the four topics. The resulting composite scores thus reflect the number of media used to seek a specific content. If a respondent used print media, TV, radio, and the Internet for entertainment, then s/he would have a score of four for this topic. I then took the average of these scores. The highest mean score indicates the topic which, I argue, most interests the respondents and which, in the process, gets more multi-media bases.

*Uses of specific media for diverse topics*

The scores revealed that TV was the source for the most numerous topics ( $M = 3.0$ ,  $SD = 1.3$ ), followed by the print media ( $M = 1.3$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ), the Internet ( $M = 1.0$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ), and the radio ( $M = 0.5$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ) (Table 8.7.). TV provided news and information about host country and the Philippines, while the print media did so mainly about the host country. The Internet had a low mean rating because specific segments of its users sought particular topics through it: respondents who used it mainly sought one type of information from it. The limited use of radio to entertainment (presumably for listening to music while at work) is surprising since it was the most widely owned medium among the respondents.

	Print		TV		Radio		Internet	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	1.3	1.5	3.0	1.3	0.5	1.0	0.9	1.5
Gender								
Male (n=142)	1.4	1.5	2.8	1.3	0.3	0.8	1.1	1.6
Female (n=178)	1.3	1.5	3.1	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.8	1.4
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = 0.22, p = .82)$		$t(318 = -1.91, p = .06)$		$t(310 = -2.58, p < .01)$		$t(318 = 1.81, p = .07)$	
Age (years old)								
21 to 34 (n=161)	1.2	1.4	2.9	1.3	0.5	1.0	1.2	1.7
35 to 57 (n=159)	1.5	1.6	3.1	1.2	0.5	1.0	0.7	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(310 = -1.69, p = .09)$		$t(318 = -1.48, p = .14)$		$t(318 = 0.45, p = .66)$		$t(292 = 3.39, p < .01)$	
Parental Status								
Without (n=145)	1.3	1.4	2.8	1.3	0.5	1.0	1.2	1.6
With kids (n=175)	1.4	1.5	3.1	1.2	0.5	1.0	0.7	1.3
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = -0.61, p = .54)$		$t(318 = -2.63, p < .01)$		$t(318 = -0.48, p = .63)$		$t(271 = 3.16, p < .01)$	
Host region								
West Asia (n=100)	1.3	1.5	3.1	1.1	0.5	0.9	0.5	1.1
East Asia (n=120)	1.3	1.5	2.8	1.4	0.6	1.2	1.3	1.7
N. Am/Euro n=80)	1.5	1.5	3.2	1.2	0.3	0.8	1.1	1.5
Sea-based (n=20)	1.3	1.3	2.9	1.0	0.5	0.8	0.4	1.1
ANOVA	$F(3,316 = 0.25, p = .86)$		$F(3,316 = 1.79, p = .15)$		$F(3,316 = 1.86, p = .14)$		$F(3,316 = 6.50, p < .01)$	
Work								
Profs/ Associates (n=113)	1.5	1.5	2.9	1.3	0.2	0.6	1.7	1.8
Service & Trade (n=207)	1.3	1.5	3.0	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.1
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318 = 1.31, p = .19)$		$t(318 = -1.02, p = .31)$		$t(317 = -3.83, p < .01)$		$t(157 = 6.61, p < .01)$	
Income								
Lower (n=196)	1.2	1.5	3.1	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.7	1.3
Higher (n=122)	1.5	1.5	2.8	1.3	0.3	0.7	1.4	1.7
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316 = -1.61, p = .11)$		$t(316 = 1.56, p = .12)$		$t(316 = 2.57, p < .01)$		$t(316 = -3.97, p < .01)$	
In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = No media used & 5 = Use of various media for entertainment, and news regarding social events, OFWs, the Philippines, and the host country. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.								

Only the scores for the print media did not differ across respondent groupings. Ratings for TV, on the other hand, significantly differed between respondents with and without children, with the former sourcing more information from it  $t(318) = -2.63, p = 0.01$ . Likewise, younger  $t(292) = 3.39, p < 0.01$  and without-children  $t(271) = 3.16, p < 0.01$  respondents got more information from the Internet. Also affecting the diversity of information sourced online were work and income as professionals and higher-income earners surfed the Internet about a wider range of topics than did the services and trades, and lower-income workers.

Conversely, the latter listened to the radio for more varied information than the former. Also among the more active radio listeners were women compared to men  $t(310) = -2.58, p = 0.01$ , perhaps while playing music during their job. Finally, host regions affected Internet scores, as North America/Europe and sea-based workers said they got the most and the least diverse online information respectively.

#### *Diverse uses of media for specific topics*

Philippine news and information had the highest mean score ( $M = 1.4, SD = 0.7$ ), followed by entertainment ( $M = 1.3, SD = 0.6$ ). News and information about the host country ( $M = 1.2, SD = 0.5$ ) and OFWs ( $M = 1.1, SD = 0.5$ ), and social events ( $M = 1.1, SD = 0.6$ ) brought up the rear (Table 8.8.). From these low ratings, it is apparent that respondents generally depended upon a medium, in conjunction with another one in some cases, to learn about Philippine current affairs and to be entertained. Thus, a multi-media sourcing of information on any topic was not evident among the respondents' media use.

	Entertainment		Phil. news & information		Host news & information		OFW news & information		Social events	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	1.3	0.6	1.4	0.7	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.6
<b>Gender</b>										
Male (n=142)	1.2	0.5	1.3	0.6	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.5
Female (n=178)	1.4	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.2	0.6
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -2.34, p = .02$		$t(318) = -0.29, p = .77$		$t(318) = -1.35, p = .18$		$t(318) = 0.78, p = .44$		$t(317) = -0.93, p = .35$	
<b>Age (years old)</b>										
21 to 34 (n=161)	1.4	0.6	1.4	0.6	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.4	1.1	0.6
35 to 57 (n=159)	1.3	0.6	1.4	0.7	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.6	1.1	0.6
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 0.57, p = .57$		$t(318) = -0.06, p = .95$		$t(318) = 0.84, p = .40$		$t(318) = 0.08, p = .93$		$t(318) = 0.17, p = .86$	
<b>Parental Status</b>										
Without (n=145)	1.4	0.7	1.3	0.6	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.6
With kids (n=175)	1.3	0.6	1.4	0.7	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.2	0.6
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 0.79, p = .43$		$t(318) = -0.64, p = .52$		$t(318) = 0.11, p = .91$		$t(318) = -0.60, p = .55$		$t(318) = -0.38, p = .70$	
<b>Host region</b>										
West Asia (n=100)	1.3	0.6	1.2	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.6
East Asia (n=120)	1.4	0.7	1.4	0.8	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.2	0.6
N. Am/Euro n=80)	1.3	0.5	1.4	0.6	1.4	0.6	1.2	0.6	1.1	0.5
Sea-based (n=20)	1.2	0.4	1.3	0.6	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.4	1.0	0.0
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 1.66, p = .18$		$F(3,316) = 1.82, p = .14$		$F(3,316) = 6.12, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 0.79, p = .50$		$F(3,316) = 0.84, p = .47$	
<b>Work</b>										
Profes/ Associates (n=113)	1.4	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.3	0.7	1.2	0.6	1.2	0.6
Service & Trade (n=207)	1.3	0.6	1.3	0.7	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.5
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(203) = 2.33, p = .02$		$t(318) = 1.68, p = .09$		$t(188) = 2.92, p < .01$		$t(197) = 1.06, p = .29$		$t(212) = 1.50, p = .13$	
<b>Income</b>										
Lower (n=196)	1.3	0.6	1.3	0.7	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.1	0.6
Higher (n=122)	1.3	0.6	1.4	0.7	1.3	0.6	1.1	0.6	1.1	0.5
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316) = -0.39, p = .70$		$t(316) = -0.95, p = .35$		$t(226) = -2.05, p = .04$		$t(316) = -0.27, p = .79$		$t(316) = 0.18, p = .86$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = No content sought & 4 = Use of print media, TV, radio, and the Internet for various media content. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

Scores for news and information about the Philippines, OFWs, and social events did not significantly differ across the respondent groupings. Work made for a difference in entertainment, with professionals using more media for it  $t(203) = 2.33, p = 0.02$ . Work  $t(188) = 2.92, p < 0.01$ , together with host regions  $F(3, 316) = 6.12, p < 0.01$  and income  $t(226) = -2.05, p = 0.04$ , also was pivotal in the number of media used by respondents to learn about the host country's affairs. North America/Europe, professional, and higher-income respondents all appeared to rely on more media to be updated about their country of assignment.

*Specific media for specific content*

In this section, I look at specific media as sources of particular content that I feel are pertinent to the lives of OFWs. As the composite scores reveal, the largest and the smallest number of respondents relied on TV and radio respectively, regardless of topic.

News and information about the host country (32 percent), OFWs (20 percent), and the Philippines (30 percent) were the primary topics that the respondents sought from the print media. There were two significant differences in the extent that print media are used: 36 percent of older and 31 percent of higher-income respondents relied on it for OFW events compared to only 24 percent of their younger and 21 percent lower-income counterparts. Television was mainly used for entertainment (78 percent), followed by news and information about the host country (71 percent) and the Philippines (69 percent). The considerable viewing of Philippine TV perhaps indicates the reach of Philippine broadcast companies—in particular “The Filipino Channel” (TFC)—that now provide their shows through international cable networks. The more extensive use of mass media by with-child respondents compared to those without is validated by the larger percentage of them who used TV for entertainment  $\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 7.06, p = 0.01$  and Philippine news  $\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 6.66, p = 0.01$  (Table 8.9.). These findings underscore how parents use media to update themselves with Philippine events, perhaps as a way of understanding the current surroundings of their children.

Respondents who were in the services and trades sector and who have lower income spent their weekends at the park, the church, and at the mall, indicating their very sociable lifestyle abroad. Indeed, they use TV to learn about OFW and other social news and information. Finally, East Asia respondents, many of whom were in domestic service and accessed the TV through their employers’ units, relied the least on TV for OFW events.

Table 8.9. Use of print media and TV for specific content\*

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income**	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea-based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>Print</b>															
Entertainment	16.6	12.7	19.7	16.8	16.4	19.3	14.3	12.0	19.2	20.0	10.0	21.2	14.0	15.3	18.9
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.79, p = .09$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.01, p = 0.92$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.45, p = 0.23$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 3.40, p = 0.33$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.76, p = 0.10$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.68, p = 0.41$	
Phil. news & info	29.4	31.0	28.1	27.3	31.4	26.9	31.4	29.0	30.8	26.3	35.0	27.4	30.4	28.6	30.3
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.32, p = 0.57$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.65, p = 0.42$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.79, p = 0.38$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 0.81, p = 0.85$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.32, p = 0.57$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.11, p = 0.74$	
Host news & info	31.9	33.8	30.3	30.4	33.3	28.3	34.9	34.0	28.3	35.0	30.0	37.2	29.0	28.1	37.7
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.44, p = 0.51$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.31, p = 0.58$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.58, p = 0.21$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 1.29, p = 0.73$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.25, p = 0.13$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.23, p = 0.07$	
OFW news & info	30.3	32.4	28.7	24.2	36.5	29.0	31.4	27.0	30.0	33.8	35.0	31.0	30.0	29.1	32.0
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.52, p = 0.47$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.69, p = 0.02$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.23, p = 0.63$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 1.18, p = 0.76$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.04, p = 0.85$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.30, p = 0.59$	
Social events	25.0	25.4	24.7	20.5	29.6	24.1	25.7	25.0	23.3	30.0	15.0	31.0	21.7	21.4	31.1
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.02, p = 0.90$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.50, p = 0.06$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.11, p = 0.75$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 2.31, p = 0.51$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.32, p = 0.07$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.77, p = 0.05$	
<b>TV</b>															
Entertainment	77.8	73.2	81.5	74.5	81.1	71.0	83.4	16.0	25.8	26.3	15.0	77.0	78.3	80.6	73.0
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.09, p = .08$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.02, p = 0.16$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 7.06, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 4.50, p = 0.21$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.07, p = 0.79$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.55, p = 0.11$	
Phil. news & info	69.4	69.0	69.7	68.3	70.4	62.1	75.4	75.0	65.8	65.0	69.4	66.4	71.0	73.0	63.1
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.02, p = 0.90$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.17, p = 0.68$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 6.66, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 2.39, p = 0.50$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.74, p = 0.39$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.42, p = 0.06$	
Host news & info	71.3	63.4	77.5	70.2	72.3	71.0	71.4	61.0	71.7	86.3	60.0	69.0	72.5	71.4	70.5
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 7.72, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.18, p = 0.67$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.01, p = 0.94$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 15.16, p = 0.01$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.42, p = 0.52$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.03, p = 0.86$	
OFW news & info	53.8	51.4	55.6	53.4	54.1	49.0	57.7	63.0	43.3	56.3	60.0	44.2	58.9	58.7	45.1
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.56, p = 0.45$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.01, p = 0.90$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.44, p = 0.12$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 9.20, p = 0.03$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 6.34, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.58, p = 0.02$	
Social events	66.6	62.7	69.7	66.5	66.7	62.8	69.7	71.0	63.3	65.0	70.0	57.5	71.5	71.9	57.4
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.73, p = 0.19$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.01, p = 0.97$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.72, p = 0.19$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 1.64, p = 0.65$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 6.41, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 7.14, p = 0.01$	

\*In percent saying yes; \*\*Two respondents did not reply.

Radio appeared to be the least used medium, with its largest audience (17 percent) using it for entertainment. Even fewer respondents used it to listen to news about the Philippines (13 percent), OFWs (eight percent), or social events (six percent). However, I should note that a significantly larger proportion of women than men  $\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 3.79, p = 0.05$  and lower-income than higher-income earners  $\chi^2 (1, N = 320) = 5.99, p = 0.01$  tuned in to radio to know about social activities. Women personally owned a radio unit while they had to share access to a TV set. Further, they probably listened to it while doing their work. This interpretation is also supported by the significantly larger audiences of radio among services and trades workers than among professionals in all five topics (Table 8.10).

OWWA Director De la Fuente said they use a “shotgun approach” to communicate news programs. He explained, “We use all the media necessary such as TV, print, posters, direct mailers. The new program would require all these. But once a new program has been shown, there’s already a working knowledge about it. All we need is a sustaining medium.” OWWA has a specific office responsible for these activities. De la Fuente said, “We call it the advocacy and social marketing department” to reflect its expanded role from simply being a public information arm. They made the change because its duty is “not only to inform but to make sure people would understand our message.” He explained:

Most government offices would be operating under the old form, with simple publication and information offices whose work ended once the materials are produced. But under an advocacy and social marketing concept, it’s a continuing thing. . . . We have to make sure that the people would internalize what we are conveying; not only trying to make the information available but to make sure that our audience appreciates and understands us. It’s not only one-way. Now we like



Table 8.10. Use of radio and the Internet for specific content \*

	Sample (N=320)	Gender		Age		Parental Status		Regions				Work		Income**	
		Male (n=142)	Female (n=178)	21 to 34 years old (n=161)	35 to 57 years old (n=159)	No children (n=145)	With children (n=175)	West Asia (n=100)	East Asia (n=120)	N. America & Europe (n=80)	Sea-based (n=20)	Profs & Asso. (n=113)	Service & Trade (n=207)	Lower (n=196)	Higher (n=122)
<b>Radio</b>															
Entertainment	16.6	12.7	19.7	14.9	18.2	17.9	15.4	19.0	19.2	10.0	15.0	9.7	20.3	18.9	12.3
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.79, p = 0.09$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.64, p = 0.42$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.36, p = 0.55$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 3.55, p = 0.31$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.89, p = 0.02$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.38, p = 0.12$	
Phil. news & info	12.8	9.2	15.7	10.6	15.1	11.7	13.7	9.0	16.7	10.0	20.0	7.1	15.9	15.3	9.0
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.06, p = 0.08$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.47, p = 0.22$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.28, p = 0.60$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 4.39, p = 0.22$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.14, p = 0.02$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.65, p = 0.10$	
Host news & info	5.3	3.5	6.7	5.6	5.0	4.1	6.3	4.0	6.7	3.8	10.0	1.8	7.2	6.1	4.1
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.63, p = 0.20$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.05, p = 0.82$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.73, p = 0.39$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 2.04, p = 0.56$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 4.36, p = 0.04$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.61, p = 0.44$	
OFW news & info	8.1	4.9	10.7	9.3	6.9	6.9	9.1	8.0	11.7	5.0	0.0	3.5	10.6	10.2	4.9
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.49, p = 0.06$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.62, p = 0.43$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.54, p = 0.46$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 4.83, p = 0.18$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 4.92, p = 0.03$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.80, p = 0.09$	
Social events	5.6	2.8	7.9	5.6	5.7	4.8	6.3	5.0	9.2	1.3	5.0	1.8	7.7	8.2	1.6
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.79, p = 0.05$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.01, p = 0.98$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.32, p = 0.57$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 5.81, p = 0.12$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 4.89, p = 0.03$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.99, p = 0.01$	
<b>Internet</b>															
Entertainment	21.9	25.4	19.1	28.6	15.1	27.6	17.1	12.0	29.2	27.5	5.0	36.3	14.0	16.8	30.3
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.81, p = 0.18$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 8.50, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.06, p = 0.02$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 14.25, p = 0.01$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 21.22, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 7.97, p = 0.01$	
Phil. news & info	23.4	24.6	22.5	28.6	18.2	31.7	16.6	11.0	30.0	33.8	5.0	42.5	13.0	15.3	36.9
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 0.21, p = 0.65$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 4.76, p = 0.03$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 10.15, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 20.03, p = 0.01$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 35.29, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 19.43, p = 0.01$	
Host news & info	11.9	14.8	9.6	16.8	6.9	17.2	7.4	5.0	16.7	13.8	10.0	25.7	4.3	9.2	16.4
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 2.07, p = 0.15$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 7.42, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 7.30, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 7.49, p = 0.06$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 31.74, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.71, p = 0.05$	
OFW news & info	19.4	25.4	14.6	24.8	13.8	24.8	14.9	10.0	25.8	23.8	10.0	37.2	9.7	12.8	30.3
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.84, p = 0.02$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 6.21, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.05, p = 0.02$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 10.94, p = 0.01$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 35.40, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 14.79, p = 0.01$	
Social events	16.6	19.7	14	21.7	11.3	20.7	13.1	11.0	23.3	15.0	10.0	30.1	9.2	12.8	23.0
		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 1.84, p = 0.17$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 6.28, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 3.27, p = 0.07$		$\chi^2(3, N = 320) = 6.98, p = 0.07$				$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 23.13, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2(1, N = 320) = 5.63, p = 0.02$	

\*In percent saying yes; \*\*Two respondents did not reply.

the feedback, making it in sync with the principles of advocacy and social marketing (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

However, the limited contact between OFWs and government agencies such as OWWA (see Chapter 7) meant that such social marketing efforts really had not been extensive. The print materials produced by OWWA, for instance, seemed aligned with traditional top-down information and education campaigns (IEC) as they were designed for distribution, rather than a discussion of what projects to initiate. Director De la Fuente's desire for OFWs to understand OWWA implies that its projects are indeed conceptualized with limited participation among OFWs. Apparently, OFWs enter the picture when it is time to provide feedback for a project that has already been launched.

NGOs also use the mass media to broadcast their services, though this has been limited thus far. While The Filipino Channel has invited her as a guest on its shows on migrant workers, Florence May Cortina of Kanlungan said this has only happened intermittently: "We really are not yet ready to go fully mainstream" (personal communication, July 20, 2005). While she did say "the TV networks get us as their resource persons or get our help to get access to distressed OFWs," she added that it is really difficult to ask their media contacts to feature issues which Kanlungan feels are important. Nevertheless, she maintains a regular column in "*OFW Ngayon*" [OFW Today] a tabloid for Filipinos seeking jobs abroad and is a regular guest on various radio programs for women's rights.

Lorena Macabuag of Migrant Forum in Asia meanwhile said, "We try to come up with many press releases on issues involving migrant workers. Recently we completed a conference on development and migration, so we called for a press conference to disseminate the fact that our organizations are doing something." She added that they have been networking with artists to create documentaries, write songs, and produce

music videos on various migrants' issues. They are doing these, she said, in order to "mainstream the issues of migration. So it is no longer limited to advocates. . . . So that the families of migrants would know about their plight. That their life is not easy" (personal communication, August 2, 2005).

For Ellene Sana of Center for Migrant Advocacy, media coverage is particularly important "because, in our culture, what is not shown in media is not given attention" (personal communication, July 29, 2005). Thus, they have developed contacts in Inq7.net and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, among other media organizations. During the interview, she was excited over her recent linkages with "Kumusta Ka, Bayan" [How are you Nation] in TFC and "Pinoy Abroad" [Filipino Abroad] on the GMA Network.

From a mass media perspective, the expansion of TFC of ABS-CBN and GMA PinoyTV of GMA Network in markets outside the Philippines is particularly important for OFWs. The presence of these networks abroad gives Philippine organizations an international medium to reach out to overseas Filipinos.

Since TFC is the older of the two transnational networks, I asked the informants about their working relations with it. OWWA Director De la Fuente said they coordinate with TFC, which covers some of their activities through its ANC news service. ILAS Director Merliza Makinano said she used TFC to survey the activities of her LABATs:

Sometimes, if I want to know what my Attachés are doing, I'll watch TFC. They cover all of the Middle East. Most of the activities are led by the attaches. For instance, I saw the activities of our office in Al Khobar [in Saudi Arabia] for the Independence Day. It is a good way of checking people on what they are doing (personal communication, July 27, 2005).

Salome Mendoza, however, pointed out a possible negative impact of having Philippine programs so readily accessible to OFWs. She said the news could sometimes

be frightening to OFWs. She explained, "It can make them depressed sometimes. It is as if they can tolerate the situation if they are in the Philippines because they know the entire situation" (personal communication, August 4, 2005). Breaking news about natural calamities and attempts by military groups to overthrow the Philippine government would unsettle OFWs abroad because of the limited information that they would get. If they were in the Philippines, the same OFWs would know that these events affected only small sections of the country and caused no real worry among the citizens.

The Internet was used primarily for news and information about the Philippines (23 percent), OFWs (19 percent), and social events (17 percent). Over a fifth (22 percent) of the respondents also used it for entertainment, with surfing and chatting being two of the main activities online.

Among the four media I examined, however, it was the Internet that had the least diverse audience. Indeed, its use for any topic was significantly wider among younger, professional, and higher-income respondents than among their counterparts. Further, the larger percentage of men who surfed the Internet for OFW news and information perhaps indicates a growing interest for virtual association online. However, despite the limited reach of the Internet, it has a strong potential to reach specific segments of OFWs. Paolo Pineda said ABS-CBN Interactive was established as a result of the emergence of the Internet and the migrant population. He said, "We had all this content; we had TFC abroad so people are watching ABS-CBN on TV. But there was still a big population that had no access to TV. I guess the Internet gave us the opportunity to address that issue, and that's how we started" (personal communication, July 29, 2005).

### Media products for OFWs

As with frequency of contact with individuals and organizations, I explored the frequency with which the respondents availed themselves of media products and services specifically for OFWs: newspapers, radio shows, e-groups, TV programs, TFC/Pinoy TV, online newspapers, and the seven movies about OFWs (the last three of which were big blockbusters). On the one hand, this shows the current receptivity of OFWs to the increasingly numerous attempts of mass media companies to reach them. On the other hand, it perhaps indicates which specific media-media content combinations can be successful in reaching out to OFWs.

The broadcast networks received not only the highest rating ( $M = 2.1$ ,  $SD = 2.1$ ), but also the rating that reflected some frequency of usage. Others such as movies about OFWs ( $M = 1.3$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ), community ( $M = 1.1$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ) and online ( $M = 0.9$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ) newspapers were rated quite poorly (Table 8.11).

Across media, viewing of TV shows about OFWs and TFC/GMA PinoyTV rated significantly different across groupings by independent variable. Male, West Asia and with-children respondents gave higher ratings for these two choices than their counterparts. There are two possible explanations for this. First, these respondents had limited social spheres within the host country as they primarily worked and lived with expatriate workers, too. They were thus focused on the issues facing their own work community, than the host country itself. Second, men and with-children respondents were oriented towards the Philippines as a way of surveying the situation of their offspring. Subscription to TFC/GMA PinoyTV, based on the ratings, was also more pervasive among professionals and higher-income earners. This, I believe, was a function of their ability to afford a diverse selection of media products and services.

Table 8.11. Ratings for media products for overseas Filipino workers\*

	Newspapers		Radio shows		E-groups		TV programs		TFC/Pinoy TV*		Inq7.net's Global Nation		Movies	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	1.2	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.6	1.2	1.1	1.6	2.1	2.1	0.9	1.6	1.3	1.7
Gender														
Male (n=142)	1.2	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.6	1.2	1.4	1.9	2.5	2.1	1.1	1.7	1.2	1.6
Female (n=178)	1.1	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.5	1.1	0.8	1.4	1.8	2.1	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.8
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 0.23, p = .82$		$t(318) = -0.25, p = .80$		$t(318) = 0.50, p = .62$		$t(250) = 3.08, p < .01$		$t(318) = 3.05, p < .01$		$t(279) = 1.72, p = .09$		$t(313) = -0.33, p = .74$	
Age (years old)														
21 to 34 (n=161)	1.1	1.6	0.6	1.3	0.6	1.2	1.0	1.6	1.9	2.0	0.9	1.6	1.1	1.5
35 to 57 (n=159)	1.3	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.7	2.3	2.2	0.8	1.5	1.4	1.8
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -1.18, p = .24$		$t(318) = -0.58, p = .57$		$t(318) = 0.33, p = .74$		$t(318) = -0.73, p = .47$		$t(318) = -1.72, p = .09$		$t(318) = 0.61, p = .54$		$t(318) = -1.78, p = .08$	
Parental Status														
Without (n=145)	1.2	1.6	0.5	1.1	0.6	1.2	0.9	1.5	1.8	2.0	0.8	1.5	1.4	1.8
With kids (n=175)	1.1	1.6	0.8	1.4	0.5	1.1	1.2	1.7	2.3	2.2	1.0	1.7	1.1	1.6
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 0.13, p = .90$		$t(316) = -2.41, p = .02$		$t(318) = 0.82, p = .41$		$t(317) = -1.64, p = .10$		$t(315) = -2.39, p = .02$		$t(318) = -0.80, p = .42$		$t(288) = 1.68, p = .09$	
Host region														
West Asia (n=100)	1.1	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.6	1.2	1.7	2.0	3.1	2.2	0.6	1.2	1.4	1.8
East Asia (n=120)	1.1	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.5	1.1	0.6	1.2	1.4	1.9	1.0	1.6	0.9	1.4
N. Am/Euro n=80)	1.2	1.6	0.5	1.1	0.7	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.9	2.0	1.2	1.8	1.4	1.8
Sea-based (n=20)	1.4	1.8	1.1	1.8	0.3	0.7	0.8	1.6	1.6	1.6	0.8	1.6	1.9	2.0
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 0.17, p = .92$		$F(3,316) = 0.94, p = .42$		$F(3,316) = 0.89, p = .45$		$F(3,316) = 8.60, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 14.82, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 2.46, p = .06$		$F(3,316) = 2.87, p = .04$	
Work														
Professionals/ Associates (n=113)	1.0	1.5	0.6	1.2	0.9	1.5	1.2	1.8	2.8	2.2	1.5	1.9	1.3	1.7
Services & Trades Workers (n=207)	1.2	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.4	0.9	1.0	1.6	1.7	2.0	0.6	1.3	1.2	1.7
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(80) = -1.83, p = .07$		$t(67) = -1.86, p = .07$		$t(120) = 0.95, p = .35$		$t(120) = -0.74, p = .46$		$t(120) = 2.35, p = .02$		$t(120) = 1.81, p = .07$		$t(120) = 0.52, p = .61$	
Income														
Lower (n=196)	1.0	1.5	0.7	1.3	0.4	0.8	1.0	1.6	2.0	2.1	0.6	1.3	1.3	1.7
Higher (n=122)	1.3	1.7	0.7	1.3	0.9	1.5	1.1	1.7	2.2	2.1	1.4	1.9	1.2	1.7
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316) = -1.06, p = .29$		$t(316) = -0.95, p = .34$		$t(152) = 3.44, p < .01$		$t(207) = 1.47, p = .14$		$t(216) = 4.26, p < .01$		$t(166) = 4.83, p < .01$		$t(316) = 0.46, p = .64$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

Interestingly, income rather than age, differentiated online use as indicated by the readership of *Inq7.net's Global Nation*. Connected to the wider audience of this Web site among higher income workers was their greater participation in e-groups of OFWs. The poor performance of *Global Nation* among the otherwise better-connected younger respondents can be explained by the lack of interest in news in general and OFW issues in particular. *Inq7.net*, however, has a strong audience abroad, perhaps primarily among permanent expatriates. Mary Anne Bundalian of *Inq7.net* said that they are consistently in the annual listing of the 1,000 most visited sites. She said, "That's something that we are really proud of because we are actually not comparing ourselves with ABS-CBN, but we are competing against CNN and BBC" (personal communication, August 1, 2005).

Aside from Philippine networks, De la Fuente also noted a way of working through Filipinos in the media. He said, "We are so fortunate, for example, that a newspaper in Saudi Arabia has Filipino editors. That's also true in Taiwan, and in other Asian countries. Thus, we are properly covered" (personal communication, July 19, 2005). Apparently the ranks of OFWs now include Filipino journalists. In their position in media, these OFWs not only implicitly provide a voice for the migrant Philippine community in their jurisdiction but also influence the flow of news and information in the host country itself.

An apparent discrepancy between the survey results and the informants' experiences pertained to OFW e-groups, which makes it a good example of groups having considerable impact even without a big following. The mean rating (0.6, on a scale of 0 to 5, where 5 is active participation) given by survey respondents indicated their very limited participation in these electronic groups. However, the informants were quite ecstatic about the activity in these e-groups. Cortina of Kanlungan said they were a member of "many e-groups of migrants." ILAS Director Makinano said they have "e-

groups, usually in the Middle East. They put us in their e-mail list.” Director De la Fuente talked about the dynamics of e-groups:

OFWs are so smart now that they organize themselves into e-groups and so they really have some venue in discussing their opinions. Those based in the Middle East can reach the ones in Asia, and all of a sudden you have a survey of the worldwide population of migrant workers. They speak through their leaders, through their associations, and their associations would deal with us on the Net. So immediately they reach us to say, “You have a good policy here, you have a good program there.” Then we could respond immediately (personal communication, July 19, 2005).

#### Monthly media costs

Studies have shown how transnational communication expenses are part and parcel of the OFW experience. However, exact figures for such expenses have been scant, which is a pity since those figures would be a good measure of both the frequency of cross-border contact and of the diversity of media used for it. Additionally, knowing these figures would perhaps assuage worries that communication eats up financial resources that could otherwise be saved or invested. By aligning these figures with the independent variables, we would know whether some groups are disadvantaged in the use of media.

The largest monthly communication cost for the respondents was international long distance (US\$57.33). Mobile phone subscription was second (US\$54), though it must be recalled that at least 75 percent of the respondents maintained a unit each for the home and the host countries. Cable TV subscription was third (US\$22), followed by cumulative expenses on Philippine media products (US\$19), and landline phone



connection (US\$18). Texting cost nearly US\$10 a month, though many of the respondents said this was bundled with their mobile phone cost estimate (Table 8.12.).

	Cable TV		Philippine media		Landline phone		Mobile phone		International calls		Texting	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	21.6	39.3	18.6	41.8	17.6	47.6	53.9	75.8	57.3	97.0	9.4	20.3
Gender												
Male (n=142)	25.7	40.5	22.7	50.0	21.9	61.3	62.9	95.1	55.0	93.1	10.6	22.0
Female (n=178)	18.3	38.1	15.3	33.9	14.1	32.6	46.6	54.9	59.2	100.	8.5	18.8
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(317) = 1.67, p = .10$		$t(232) = 1.50, p = .13$		$t(202) = 1.37, p = .17$		$t(214) = 1.81, p = .07$		$t(317) = -0.38, p = .71$		$t(312) = 0.94, p = .35$	
Age (years old)												
21 to 34 (n=161)	18.3	28.0	17.8	43.6	13.3	34.2	55.6	64.0	57.0	88.4	9.1	20.6
35 to 57 (n=159)	24.9	48.0	19.4	40.0	21.8	57.8	52.1	86.2	57.7	105.	9.8	19.9
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(254) = -1.49, p = .14$		$t(315) = -0.33, p = .74$		$t(257) = -1.59, p = .11$		$t(317) = 0.41, p = .68$		$t(317) = -0.06, p = .95$		$t(312) = -0.33, p = .74$	
Parental Status												
Without (n=145)	20.9	35.5	15.9	37.8	13.1	32.8	64.1	85.1	59.5	113.	8.7	21.2
With kids (n=175)	22.1	42.3	20.8	44.8	21.3	56.9	45.3	66.0	55.5	81.9	10.0	19.5
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(317) = -0.27, p = .78$		$t(315) = -1.06, p = .29$		$t(282) = -1.61, p = .11$		$t(268) = 2.17, p = .03$		$t(317) = 0.36, p = .72$		$t(312) = -0.58, p = .57$	
Host region												
West Asia (n=100)	23.5	46.3	18.0	34.4	8.6	28.5	45.4	64.4	43.6	60.3	9.5	19.3
East Asia (n=120)	14.0	22.6	13.9	41.7	13.4	42.0	51.5	71.0	53.0	99.8	6.3	17.7
N. Am/Euro n=80)	35.6	49.0	29.3	52.1	32.9	64.6	74.1	97.4	90.2	129.	13.6	25.5
Sea-based (n=20)	1.2	4.4	6.4	12.1	27.2	63.6	30.5	36.0	22.3	31.0	11.7	12.1
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 7.12, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 2.87, p = .04$		$F(3,316) = 4.62, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 3.02, p = .03$		$F(3,316) = 4.80, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 2.13, p = .10$	
Work												
Professionals/ Associates (n=113)	37.4	49.5	24.8	37.0	30.2	62.5	79.3	94.5	79.2	124	13.5	25.5
Services & Trades Workers (n=207)	12.9	29.1	15.2	43.9	10.6	35.2	39.9	59.0	45.3	75.6	7.1	16.3
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(120) = 2.04, p = .04$		$t(118) = 0.53, p = .60$		$t(119) = 1.04, p = .30$		$t(120) = 2.10, p = .04$		$t(119) = 0.66, p = .51$		$t(119) = 1.25, p = .21$	
Income												
Lower (n=196)	14.4	35.5	14.0	37.6	7.4	23.6	40.1	52.0	44.6	78.4	6.5	15.3
Higher (n=122)	32.2	41.3	26.2	47.4	34.2	68.0	75.5	99.4	77.3	119.	13.7	25.5
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(155) = 4.82, p < .01$		$t(315) = 1.95, p = .05$		$t(152) = 3.07, p < .01$		$t(161) = 4.03, p < .01$		$t(158) = 2.63, p < .01$		$t(162) = 2.40, p = .02$	

\*T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

Male and older respondents tended to spend more on each of these communication items compared to their counterparts, though the margin is not large enough to be statistically significant. While gender, age, and occupation had no impact upon communication costs, host regions and incomes did. North America/Europe respondents consistently spent the highest amount on communication. Comparatively,

sea-based workers spent very little on cable TV and Philippine media. The same was clearly the case with West Asia respondents and their expenditure on landline phone. It was income, however, which significantly differentiated respondents, as those with higher income said that they outspent their counterparts on each of the six media. Interestingly, professionals spent significantly more money only on cable TV and mobile phones compared to OFWs in service and trade. Since professionals were more likely to own their TV set, they also have to pay for its cable connection. Likewise, they have to use their mobile phones for work as well.

What is a real revelation, however, is that, contrary to expectations, parent-respondents did not spend much more on their communication. Instead, it was respondents without children who significantly spent more on their mobile phones  $t(268) = -1.61, p = 0.03$ . The latter also had a higher mean expenditure on international long distance calls than the former, though the difference is not significant statistically. A viable explanation for the difference is that while parents desire to communicate more frequently with their children, other costs prevent them from doing so, especially as parents have the same resources as those without children.

#### Changing use patterns

In the 12 years that my father worked in Saudi Arabia, the array of media we could use to communicate expanded dramatically. Accordingly, we diversified the way we exchanged messages by making our phone calls more frequent. Just as he retired from migrant employment, however, computer technology was on the rise and access to the Internet became viable in the Philippines.

PASEI President Victor Fernandez has been in the migrant employment business for two decades now, and he has extensive experience on how the industry has been changed by the newer media. He said:

When I started the business in 1980, what we were using was telex. I don't know if you know that. [It was] very expensive but it was amazing because you type a letter here, [and] the guy on the other end could also respond. . . . I worked as an OCW<sup>53</sup> before I put up my own business, and because of the telex, I did not get homesick. I could communicate with my office three, four times a day. My wife was the one operating my office. I could get in touch with them. "How are you? How are the kids?" . . . So it was just like I was attending a meeting in the next few days. I did not get homesick. I stayed there as a contract worker—say, working for one year; sometimes it was even longer—but I did not get homesick because of the telex.

You know, the telephone came before the telex, but it was very expensive. The cost was very prohibitive. The telephone was there but hardly any contract worker was using the telephone. Even I who owned my business did not call my office. I cheated in trying to be able to use the telephone. . . . If I went to clients, and the clients told me to recruit someone, I would say that if they wanted fast service, they should let me call my wife. So I talked to her using the information, then the clients would say, "Why don't you say hello to your wife." That way I would be able to talk to my wife, and also do business. Afterwards my wife would say to keep in touch through the telex.

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<sup>53</sup> Before migrant workers were called by the government as Overseas Filipino Workers as part of naming them "modern-day heroes," they were called as OCWs, with C standing for "contract."

If you don't recall what the next system was, it was the fax machine, and now it is the computer and the Internet... [Compared to ordinary telephone, corresponding by fax, it] is much cheaper and faster and you can send graphics. Then computers and the Internet arrived, and they helped bring down the cost of communication.

Then came mobile phones, around the same time as computers and the Internet. But there were different mobile phone networks, and it is only recently that they are becoming universally accessible. Now even our domestic helpers and other workers around the world have mobile phones, which actually help reduce homesickness.

These technologies benefit OFWs, and help reduce the incidence of repatriation (personal communication, July 28, 2005).

My own story, as well as Fernandez's, shows the importance of exploring how tenure abroad impels OFWs to avail themselves of the increasingly varied ways to communicate across borders. Using a scale of 1 (Disagree) to 5 (Agree), I thus asked respondents to answer whether, since they started working abroad, their use of specific media has become more frequent.

Respondents say that, during their tenure, they used their mobile phone ( $M = 4.5$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ ) and sent text messages through it ( $M = 4.0$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ) more often. They also made landline phone calls more frequently ( $M = 3.4$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ). The emergence of the Internet in the last decade as a major communication medium has not been as widely felt among the respondents. In the 11 choices I gave to the respondents, using the Internet ( $M = 3.1$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ) and chatting online ( $M = 2.8$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ) ranked ninth and 11<sup>th</sup> respectively (Table 8.13).

Across uses of more traditional media, the respondents more frequently watched TV ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ), listened to the radio ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ), read newspapers ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ), and bought more DVDs or VCDs ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ). As for content, the respondents far more frequently updated themselves with Philippine events ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ) than they did with the world's ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ).

Among the respondents, professionals and higher-income earners said they became heavier users of media (Tables 49 to 51). Like men, they read newspapers, bought DVDs, and kept in touch with world and Philippine events more frequently after they were deployed abroad. Like respondents who were younger and who had no children, they also surfed the Internet and chatted online more often in the interim. Moreover, higher-income respondents, unlike any other group, also said they started to watch TV with greater frequency. Other groups similarly changed aspects of their media use. Sea-based workers, more than any other host regions, bought DVDs. Asia respondents, both from the West and the East, meanwhile, reported the least change in their use of the landline phone.

An interesting difference is that regardless of their parental status, respondents gave similar responses as regards their use of the mobile phone. However, younger than older respondents more significantly improved their use of their mobile phone, perhaps because of their higher income and bigger social sphere due to migrant work.

Conversely, older than younger respondents increased updated themselves more often with Philippine events during their tenure abroad, while more parents than non-parents did the same with world news.

Table 8.13. Changing uses of media\*

	Watched TV		Listened to the radio		Read newspapers & mags		Bought DVDs/VCDs		Used the Internet		Chatted online		Texted/Used SMS		Used landline telephones		Used mobile telephones		Kept in touch with world events		Kept in touch with Philippine events	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	3.4	1.5	3.1	1.5	3.1	1.5	3.1	1.5	3.1	1.5	2.8	1.4	4.0	1.4	3.4	1.5	4.5	1.1	3.3	1.3	3.6	1.3
Gender																						
Male (n=142)	3.6	1.5	3.2	1.5	3.3	1.5	3.4	1.5	3.2	1.5	2.9	1.5	3.9	1.4	3.4	1.5	4.5	1.1	3.5	1.3	3.9	1.2
Female (n=178)	3.3	1.5	3.0	1.4	2.9	1.4	2.8	1.4	3.0	1.5	2.7	1.4	4.0	1.3	3.4	1.4	4.4	1.1	3.1	1.4	3.4	1.4
T-test (two-tailed)	<i>t</i> (299 =1.87 <i>p</i> = .06)		<i>t</i> (318=1.34 <i>p</i> = .18)		<i>t</i> (318=2.16 <i>p</i> = .03)		<i>t</i> (318=3.36 <i>p</i> = .01)		<i>t</i> (318=1.50 <i>p</i> = .13)		<i>t</i> (318=1.14 <i>p</i> = .26)		<i>t</i> (318=-0.12 <i>p</i> = .90)		<i>t</i> (318=-0.53 <i>p</i> = .59)		<i>t</i> (318=0.78 <i>p</i> = .44)		<i>t</i> (318=2.08 <i>p</i> = .04)		<i>t</i> (318=3.34 <i>p</i> = .01)	
Age																						
21 to 34 (n=161)	3.4	1.5	3.0	1.5	3.0	1.4	3.2	1.5	3.3	1.5	3.0	1.5	4.0	1.3	3.3	1.5	4.6	0.9	3.1	1.3	3.5	1.3
35 to 57 (n=159)	3.4	1.6	3.2	1.5	3.2	1.5	3.0	1.5	2.9	1.5	2.6	1.4	3.9	1.4	3.5	1.4	4.3	1.4	3.4	1.4	3.8	1.3
T-test (two-tailed)	<i>t</i> (318=.34 <i>p</i> = .73)		<i>t</i> (318=-1.26 <i>p</i> = .21)		<i>t</i> (318=-1.03 <i>p</i> = .30)		<i>t</i> (318=1.32 <i>p</i> = .19)		<i>t</i> (318=2.43 <i>p</i> = .02)		<i>t</i> (318=2.82 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (318=1.12 <i>p</i> = .26)		<i>t</i> (318=-1.26 <i>p</i> = .21)		<i>t</i> (288=2.59 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (318=-1.83 <i>p</i> = .07)		<i>t</i> (318=-2.42 <i>p</i> = .02)	
Parental status																						
Without (n=145)	3.3	1.4	3.1	1.4	3.1	1.4	3.2	1.4	3.3	1.5	3.1	1.4	4.0	1.3	3.4	1.5	4.5	1.1	3.1	1.2	3.5	1.3
With kids (n=175)	3.4	1.6	3.1	1.5	3.1	1.5	3.0	1.5	2.9	1.5	2.6	1.4	3.9	1.4	3.4	1.5	4.4	1.1	3.4	1.4	3.7	1.4
T-test (two-tailed)	<i>t</i> (315=-0.53 <i>p</i> = .60)		<i>t</i> (314=-0.29 <i>p</i> = .77)		<i>t</i> (318=0.29 <i>p</i> = .77)		<i>t</i> (318=1.47 <i>p</i> = .14)		<i>t</i> (318=2.75 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (318=3.11 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (318=0.14 <i>p</i> = .89)		<i>t</i> (318=0.15 <i>p</i> = .88)		<i>t</i> (318=0.12 <i>p</i> = .90)		<i>t</i> (316=-2.08 <i>p</i> = .04)		<i>t</i> (318=-1.47 <i>p</i> = .14)	
Host region																						
West Asia (n=100)	3.6	1.5	3.3	1.6	3.2	1.5	2.8	1.5	2.8	1.6	2.6	1.4	3.9	1.4	3.1	1.5	4.3	1.3	3.3	1.5	3.9	1.3
East Asia (n=120)	3.2	1.5	3.1	1.5	2.9	1.5	3.0	1.5	3.1	1.5	2.8	1.5	4.0	1.3	3.3	1.5	4.5	0.9	3.2	1.3	3.5	1.3
N. Am/Euro n=80)	3.5	1.4	2.9	1.3	3.2	1.3	3.3	1.2	3.4	1.5	3.0	1.4	3.8	1.4	3.8	1.3	4.4	1.2	3.4	1.2	3.4	1.3
Sea-based (n=20)	3.1	1.6	3.4	1.6	3.3	1.6	3.8	1.6	2.8	1.2	2.3	1.3	4.6	0.8	3.7	1.6	4.8	0.6	3.0	1.3	4.1	1.5
ANOVA	<i>F</i> (3,316 = 1.62, <i>p</i> =.18)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 1.01, <i>p</i> =.38)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 0.94, <i>p</i> =.42)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 3.52, <i>p</i> =.02)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 2.18, <i>p</i> =.09)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 1.65, <i>p</i> =.18)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 2.09, <i>p</i> =.10)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 3.63, <i>p</i> <.01)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 1.16, <i>p</i> =.32)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 0.50, <i>p</i> =.68)		<i>F</i> (3,316 = 1.62, <i>p</i> =.18)	
Work																						
Profs/Associates (n=113)	3.7	1.5	2.9	1.4	3.4	1.4	3.5	1.4	3.8	1.4	3.1	1.4	4.1	1.3	3.6	1.4	4.6	1.0	3.6	1.2	3.9	1.1
Service/Trade (n=207)	3.3	1.5	3.2	1.5	2.9	1.5	2.9	1.5	2.7	1.5	2.6	1.4	3.9	1.4	3.3	1.5	4.4	1.2	3.1	1.4	3.5	1.4
T-test (two-tailed)	<i>t</i> (318=2.22 <i>p</i> = .03)		<i>t</i> (318=-1.60 <i>p</i> = .11)		<i>t</i> (318=2.87 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (318=3.56 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (318=6.18 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (318=3.32 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (318=1.39 <i>p</i> = .17)		<i>t</i> (318=1.41 <i>p</i> = .16)		<i>t</i> (269=1.88 <i>p</i> = .06)		<i>t</i> (318=3.63 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (278=3.03 <i>p</i> < .01)	
Income																						
Lower (n=196)	3.2	1.5	3.1	1.5	2.8	1.5	2.5	1.5	2.8	1.5	2.6	1.5	3.9	1.4	3.2	1.5	4.4	1.1	3.1	1.3	3.5	1.4
Higher (n=122)	3.6	1.5	3.2	1.4	3.5	1.4	3.5	1.4	3.6	1.4	3.1	1.4	4.0	1.3	3.8	1.4	4.5	1.0	3.7	1.2	3.8	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	<i>t</i> (316=-2.16 <i>p</i> = .03)		<i>t</i> (316=-0.73 <i>p</i> = .46)		<i>t</i> (316=-4.21 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (316=-3.85 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (316=-4.85 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (316=-2.69 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (316=-0.18 <i>p</i> = .86)		<i>t</i> (316=-3.73 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (316=-1.05 <i>p</i> = .30)		<i>t</i> (316=-3.97 <i>p</i> < .01)		<i>t</i> (290=-2.11 <i>p</i> = .04)	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-tests consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. \*\*Two respondents did not reply.

These findings suggest that parents and older respondents became more conscious of Philippine and global events, perhaps as a way to ground their own and their children's experiences. This became a surrogate means to actually communicating with their children to ensure their safety, presumably because to do this entails costs for which they have no additional resources compared to respondents who are younger and have no children.

Professionals and higher-income respondents apparently diversified their media habits, with their skills, access to media equipment, and extra income being pivotal in their purchase of media products and harnessing of online communication opportunities.

#### Attitudes towards developments in media

Exploring the attitudes of respondents towards new developments in media such as the Internet, mobile phone, and the export of Philippine TV products is important because it indicates how respondents felt empowered by these developments in managing their transnational communication.

Attitudes towards media developments depended upon the perceived costs and benefits as well as the proficiency in using them. With this in mind, I developed 20 attitudinal statements to assess how respondents viewed developments in media. The respondents rated each of these statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is most strongly agree. Table 8.14 lists the statements, sorted by positive and negative phrasing, then ranked according to their respective Mean and Standard Deviation.

The scores revealed the extent to which respondents believed communication technology was very helpful in their familial relations. The respondents believed that new

Positive statements		Mean	SD
1.	I am able to exercise my duties to my family because of new communication technologies (NCT) such as the Internet, mobile phone, and TFC/Pinoy TV.	4.5	0.8
2.	I have a lot more options in keeping in touch with my family because of NCT.	4.4	0.8
3.	I am in constant contact with my family because of NCT.	4.4	0.9
4.	I feel like I am with my family because of NCT.	4.4	1.0
5.	NCT gives me the sense of security of being in touch with my family.	4.3	1.0
6.	I am a better parent/sibling because of NCT.	4.0	1.2
7.	NCT is an indispensable part of being an OFW.	4.0	1.2
8.	I consider my spending on NCT part of my basic expenses.	4.0	1.1
9.	The availability of online information gives me the feeling I am also in the Philippines.	4.0	1.5
10.	NCTs enable me to exercise my being Filipino/Filipino identity.	3.8	1.1
Negative statements		Mean	SD
11.	With NCT, my family members have become more dependent on me.	3.3	1.4
12.	Spending on NCT is eating up a lot of my budget.	3.0	1.4
13.	NCT has introduced me to limited services for OFWs.	2.8	1.4
14.	My say in how my remittances is spent in the Philippines is the same even with NCTs.	2.8	1.4
15.	Use of NCT is expensive so I rarely use them.	2.5	1.3
16.	NCT has made me more homesick.	2.3	1.3
17.	NCTs have not made being an OFW easier.	2.3	1.4
18.	I am less updated with Philippine events because of NCT.	2.1	1.3
19.	I am not able to use NCT because of lack of proficiency.	2.0	1.2
20.	Even with NCTs, I still don't participate in family life in the Philippines.	1.9	1.2

media, by giving them options on how to communicate across borders, enabled them to have constant contact with their family members. As a result, they were able to exercise their familial duties and participate in their families' lives, giving them a feeling of being with their families and in the Philippines as well as giving them a sense of security. They also felt that they were better parents or siblings. To some extent, they believed the media helped alleviate their homesickness and made their stay abroad easier. Further, the media updated them with Philippine news and enabled them to practice their Filipino-ness. However, the perpetual link offered by media appears to facilitate increased dependence on the respondents by their families, perhaps because they are a phone call away for requests to send additional money or to mediate family problems. Apparently, this dependence is limited to financial support since the respondents claimed their say on how remittances were spent did not change, as Tacoli (1999)



observed. The respondents remitted money, but still left how financial decisions to their family in the Philippines.

In terms of cost, the respondents generally agreed their communication bills took a large portion of their budget, but they were neutral on whether these were so expensive as to preclude frequent use. Instead, they believed the use of media was indispensable in their experience as OFWs and considered it as part of their basic expenses. As for their ability to use new communications technologies (NCTs), the respondents felt they were relatively proficient with them, except that newer media offered few services that are designed specifically for OFWs. Thus, there appeared to be a gap between what is now available for OFWs—such as Globe Kababayan international mobile phone services, Philstar.com and Inq7.net sections on OFWs, and TFC and GMA PinoyTV shows on OFWs—and what they actually know.

To get the general sentiment of the respondents regarding NCTs, I computed a composite statistic by adding all the responses per each item using the codes on the scale. I also reversed the code for negative statements for consistency. Readings of specific statements across respondent groupings revealed some interesting nuances (Tables 8.15 and 8.16).

For instance, professionals  $t(318) = 2.04$ ,  $p = 0.04$ , higher-earners  $t(316) = -2.40$ ,  $p = 0.02$  and men  $t(318) = 2.49$ ,  $p = 0.01$  felt they were better parents/siblings because of NCTs compared to their counterparts. Moreover, men more than women felt they were better Filipinos  $t(318) = 1.99$ ,  $p = 0.05$  because of NCTs.

Table 8.15. Attitude towards developments in media (Positive statements)\*

	Statements																			
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	4.5	0.8	4.4	0.8	4.4	0.9	4.4	1.0	4.3	1.0	4.0	1.2	4.0	1.2	4.0	1.1	4.0	1.5	3.8	1.1
Gender																				
Male (n=142)	4.6	0.7	4.5	0.8	4.4	0.9	4.4	1.0	4.4	0.9	4.1	1.2	4.2	1.1	4.1	1.1	4.0	1.1	4.0	1.1
Female (n=178)	4.4	0.8	4.4	0.8	4.4	0.9	4.3	1.0	4.3	1.1	3.8	1.2	3.9	1.2	4.0	1.2	3.9	1.8	3.7	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(312) = 1.77$ $p = .08$		$t(318) = 0.67$ $p = .50$		$t(318) = -0.12$ $p = .90$		$t(318) = 0.16$ $p = .87$		$t(318) = 1.40$ $p = .16$		$t(318) = 2.49$ $p > .01$		$t(318) = 1.87$ $p = .06$		$t(318) = 0.56$ $p = .57$		$t(318) = 0.21$ $p = .83$		$t(318) = 1.99$ $p = .05$	
Age																				
21 to 34 (n=161)	4.5	.0.8	4.5	0.8	4.3	1.0	4.3	1.0	4.3	1.1	4.0	1.1	3.9	1.2	4.0	1.1	4.0	1.2	3.7	1.1
35 to 57 (n=159)	4.5	0.8	4.4	0.9	4.5	0.8	4.5	0.9	4.4	0.9	3.9	1.3	4.1	1.2	4.1	1.1	4.0	1.8	3.9	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.36$ $p = .72$		$t(318) = 0.74$ $p = .46$		$t(318) = -1.73$ $p = .08$		$t(318) = -1.90$ $p = .06$		$t(318) = -1.50$ $p = .13$		$t(310) = 0.72$ $p = .47$		$t(318) = -1.61$ $p = .11$		$t(318) = -0.60$ $p = .55$		$t(318) = 0.11$ $p = .91$		$t(318) = -1.50$ $p = .14$	
Parental status																				
Without (n=145)	4.5	0.7	4.4	0.8	4.3	1.0	4.2	1.0	4.2	1.1	3.9	1.1	3.9	1.2	4.0	1.2	4.1	1.8	3.7	1.1
With kids (n=175)	4.5	0.8	4.5	0.8	4.5	0.9	4.5	0.9	4.5	0.9	4.0	1.2	4.2	1.1	4.1	1.1	3.8	1.2	3.9	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.09$ $p = .93$		$t(318) = -0.71$ $p = .48$		$t(290) = -2.06$ $p = .04$		$t(318) = -2.30$ $p = .02$		$t(271) = -2.78$ $p < .01$		$t(318) = -0.79$ $p = .43$		$t(318) = -1.94$ $p = .05$		$t(318) = -0.34$ $p = .73$		$t(318) = 1.93$ $p = .06$		$t(318) = -1.00$ $p = .32$	
Host region																				
West Asia (n=100)	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1	3.9	4.2	3.9	3.7
East Asia (n=120)	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.5	4.1	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.6	4.1	3.6	4.2	3.3	3.9	3.5	3.9	3.6
N. Am/Euro n=80)	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1	3.9	4.2	3.9	3.7
Sea-based (n=20)	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.5	4.1	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.6	4.1	3.6	4.2	3.3	3.9	3.5	3.9	3.6
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 0.77, p = .51$		$F(3,316) = 0.47, p = .70$		$F(3,316) = 0.50, p = .68$		$F(3,316) = 0.98, p = .40$		$F(3,316) = 1.08, p = .36$		$F(3,316) = 0.99, p = .40$		$F(3,316) = 1.21, p = .31$		$F(3,316) = 4.03, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 1.43, p = .23$		$F(3,316) = 1.00, p = .39$	
Work																				
Profs/Associates (n=113)	4.6	0.6	4.6	0.8	4.5	0.9	4.4	0.9	4.5	0.8	4.1	1.2	4.1	1.2	4.2	0.9	4.3	1.9	3.9	1.2
Service/Trade (n=207)	4.4	0.8	4.4	0.9	4.3	1.0	4.3	1.0	4.3	1.1	3.9	1.2	4.0	1.2	3.9	1.2	3.8	1.2	3.8	1.1
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(289) = 1.86$ $p = .06$		$t(318) = 1.80$ $p = .07$		$t(318) = 1.03$ $p = .30$		$t(318) = 0.70$ $p = .49$		$t(280) = 1.88$ $p = .06$		$t(318) = 2.04$ $p = .04$		$t(318) = 0.27$ $p = .79$		$t(285) = 2.56$ $p < .01$		$t(318) = 3.11$ $p < .01$		$t(318) = 1.31$ $p = .19$	
Income																				
Lower (n=196)	4.4	0.9	4.4	0.8	4.4	0.9	4.4	0.9	4.2	1.1	3.8	1.2	4.0	1.2	3.9	1.2	3.9	1.7	3.8	1.1
Higher (n=122)	4.7	.05	4.5	0.8	4.4	1.0	4.4	1.0	4.5	0.9	4.2	1.1	4.1	1.1	4.3	1.0	4.1	1.1	3.9	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316) = -4.32$ $p < .01$		$t(316) = -1.31$ $p < .19$		$t(316) = -0.55$ $p = .58$		$t(316) = -0.15$ $p = .88$		$t(293) = -2.89$ $p < .01$		$t(316) = -2.40$ $p = .02$		$t(316) = -1.10$ $p = .27$		$t(316) = -3.17$ $p < .01$		$t(316) = -1.53$ $p = .13$		$t(316) = -1.17$ $p = .24$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-values consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

Table 8.16. Attitude towards developments in media (Negative statements)\*

	Statements																			
	11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sample (N=320)	3.3	1.4	3.0	1.4	2.8	1.4	2.8	1.4	2.5	1.3	2.3	1.3	2.3	1.4	2.1	1.3	2.0	1.2	1.9	1.2
Gender																				
Male (n=142)	3.3	1.4	3.0	1.3	2.8	1.5	2.7	1.4	2.4	1.2	2.2	1.3	2.3	1.4	1.9	1.3	2.0	1.3	1.9	1.2
Female (n=178)	3.2	1.4	2.9	1.4	2.8	1.4	2.8	1.4	2.6	1.3	2.3	1.4	2.4	1.4	2.2	1.3	2.0	1.1	2.0	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = 0.69$ $p = .49$		$t(316) = 0.65$ $p = .52$		$t(290) = 0.11$ $p = .91$		$t(318) = -0.91$ $p = .36$		$t(318) = -1.43$ $p = .15$		$t(318) = -0.77$ $p = .44$		$t(318) = -1.00$ $p = .32$		$t(318) = -1.57$ $p = .12$		$t(285) = 0.23$ $p = .82$		$t(318) = -1.04$ $p = .30$	
Age																				
21 to 34 (n=161)	3.2	1.4	2.9	1.4	2.8	1.4	2.7	1.3	2.3	1.3	2.4	1.3	2.4	1.4	2.1	1.3	2.0	1.1	1.9	1.2
35 to 57 (n=159)	3.3	1.4	3.1	1.4	2.9	1.5	2.8	1.4	2.7	1.3	2.2	1.3	2.3	1.4	2.0	1.3	2.1	1.3	1.9	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.82$ $p = .41$		$t(318) = -1.31$ $p = .19$		$t(318) = -0.41$ $p = .68$		$t(318) = -0.64$ $p = .53$		$t(318) = -2.69$ $p < .01$		$t(318) = 1.61$ $p = .11$		$t(318) = 0.82$ $p = .41$		$t(318) = 0.60$ $p = .55$		$t(307) = -1.12$ $p = .26$		$t(318) = 0.01$ $p = 1.0$	
Parental status																				
Without (n=145)	3.1	1.4	2.8	1.3	2.8	1.4	2.8	1.4	2.3	1.3	2.3	1.3	2.4	1.4	2.1	1.3	1.9	1.1	2.0	1.2
With kids (n=175)	3.4	1.4	3.2	1.4	2.9	1.5	2.8	1.4	2.6	1.3	2.3	1.4	2.3	1.4	2.0	1.3	2.1	1.3	1.9	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -1.86$ $p = .06$		$t(318) = -2.42$ $p = .02$		$t(318) = -0.39$ $p = .69$		$t(318) = 0.30$ $p = .77$		$t(318) = -2.27$ $p = .02$		$t(318) = 0.08$ $p = .94$		$t(318) = 1.27$ $p = .21$		$t(318) = 0.42$ $p = .67$		$t(318) = -1.56$ $p = .12$		$t(318) = 0.75$ $p = .45$	
Host region																				
West Asia (n=100)	3.5	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.0
East Asia (n=120)	3.3	2.5	3.3	2.8	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.7	2.5	2.3	3.3	2.3	2.2	2.1	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.0	1.7
N. Am/Euro n=80)	3.5	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.0
Sea-based (n=20)	3.3	2.5	3.3	2.8	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.7	2.5	2.3	3.3	2.3	2.2	2.1	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.0	1.7
ANOVA	$F(3,316) = 3.45, p = .02$		$F(3,316) = 1.51, p = .21$		$F(3,316) = 3.80, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 3.95, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 1.61, p = .19$		$F(3,316) = 4.51, p < .01$		$F(3,316) = 1.60, p = .19$		$F(3,316) = 1.50, p = .21$		$F(3,316) = 0.74, p = .53$		$F(3,316) = 0.63, p = .61$	
Work																				
Profs/Associates (n=113)	3.2	1.4	3.0	1.4	2.9	1.5	2.8	1.3	2.2	1.2	2.1	1.2	2.2	1.4	1.7	1.1	1.8	1.2	2.0	1.2
Service/Trade (n=207)	3.3	1.4	3.0	1.4	2.8	1.4	2.7	1.4	2.6	1.3	2.4	1.4	2.4	1.4	2.2	1.3	2.1	1.2	1.9	1.2
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(318) = -0.33$ $p = .74$		$t(318) = 0.38$ $p = .71$		$t(318) = 0.84$ $p = .40$		$t(318) = 0.46$ $p = .64$		$t(318) = -2.68$ $p < .01$		$t(257) = -2.34$ $p = .02$		$t(318) = -1.57$ $p = .12$		$t(265) = -3.42$ $p < .01$		$t(318) = -2.14$ $p = .03$		$t(318) = 0.78$ $p = .43$	
Income																				
Lower (n=196)	3.2	1.4	3.0	1.4	2.8	1.4	2.7	1.3	2.6	1.3	2.4	1.3	2.4	1.4	2.2	1.3	2.1	1.2	1.9	1.1
Higher (n=122)	3.4	1.4	3.0	1.4	2.9	1.5	2.9	1.4	2.4	1.3	2.1	1.3	2.3	1.4	1.8	1.2	1.9	1.2	2.0	1.3
T-test (two-tailed)	$t(316) = -1.17$ $p = .24$		$t(316) = -0.43$ $p = .67$		$t(316) = -0.87$ $p = .39$		$t(316) = -1.13$ $p = .26$		$t(316) = 1.12$ $p = .26$		$t(316) = 1.73$ $p = .08$		$t(316) = 0.43$ $p = .67$		$t(316) = 2.48$ $p < .01$		$t(316) = 1.22$ $p = .22$		$t(316) = -0.96$ $p = .34$	

\*In Mean ratings (Standard Deviation), where 0 = Never & 5 = Frequent. T-values consider Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

Older  $t(318) = -2.69, p = 0.01$  and parent-respondents  $t(318) = -2.27, p = 0.02$ , meanwhile, tended to agree more that use of NCTs is so expensive they rarely used them. Compared to respondents who had no children, parent-respondents, while saying that NCTs ate up their budget  $t(318) = -2.42, p = 0.02$ , had a more favorable feeling about how NCTs help them with family life. They got a feeling of contact  $t(290) = -2.06, p = 0.04$ , security  $t(271) = -2.78, p = 0.01$  and belongingness with their family through NCTs  $t(318) = -2.30, p = 0.02$ . Thus, they had a greater belief that NCTs were indispensable for OFWs  $t(318) = -1.94, p = 0.05$ .

Services/trades workers were more likely to be unable to use NCTs for lack of proficiency  $t(318) = -2.14, p = 0.03$ . Because they considered NCTs as expensive  $t(318) = -2.68, p = 0.01$ , which prevented them from using these more fully, they felt that these only made them more homesick  $t(257) = -2.34, p = 0.02$ . Professionals  $t(285) = 2.56, p = 0.01$  and higher-earners  $t(318) = -3.17, p < 0.01$ , meanwhile, said they considered their expenditures on NCTs part of their budget.

### Synthesis

There was almost universal access to the mass media among the respondents. More than four of every five respondents either owned or had access to TV (95 percent) that is subscribed to a cable service (82), a radio set (93 percent), or a DVD/VCD player (91 percent). Meanwhile, 70 percent owned or had access to a computer either at the workplace or at an Internet cafe. However, while 65 percent had access to the Internet, only 54 percent actually used it, mainly for e-mailing, leisurely surfing, and chatting. However, access and use of mass media forms do not parallel each other, unlike the case with interpersonal media. TV was indeed the most popular medium that also provided the most diverse content for the respondents. However, while ownership of and

access to radio was almost universal, the respondents used it the least across all media, the Internet included.

Ratings of specific media for particular content also showed that the largest group of respondents used TV and radio for entertainment, print for news about the host country, the Internet for news about the Philippines. Raw percentage scores however revealed that TV had by far the largest audience among the respondents across all content: entertainment, news and information about the host country, the Philippines, OFWs, and social events. Among these topics, news about the Philippines was sought from the largest number of media.

Uses of mass media from different territories—the host country, the Philippines, and other countries—qualified the content sought from each medium. Rated in terms of use were TV shows, music, and VCD/DVD from the Philippines, and newspapers and magazines from the host country. The respondents most frequently visited Philippine Web sites and chat rooms, supporting the use of the Internet for Philippine information.

During their tenure abroad, the respondents' use of all media became more frequent. However, they said they used mobile phones and texting much more frequently than they did landlines, which paralleled the dominance in the last five years of mobile phones over landline phones in the Philippines (Table 1.1., see also Paragas, 2003). Further, they also watched TV more frequently than listened to the radio. They sought more information about the Philippines than about world news, aided in part by the emergence of transnational Philippine networks such as "The Filipino Channel" (ABS-CBN Global, 2006). And, finally, their more frequent use of the print media and radio was at the same level as their online surfing, buying of VCD/DVD, and surfing the Internet.

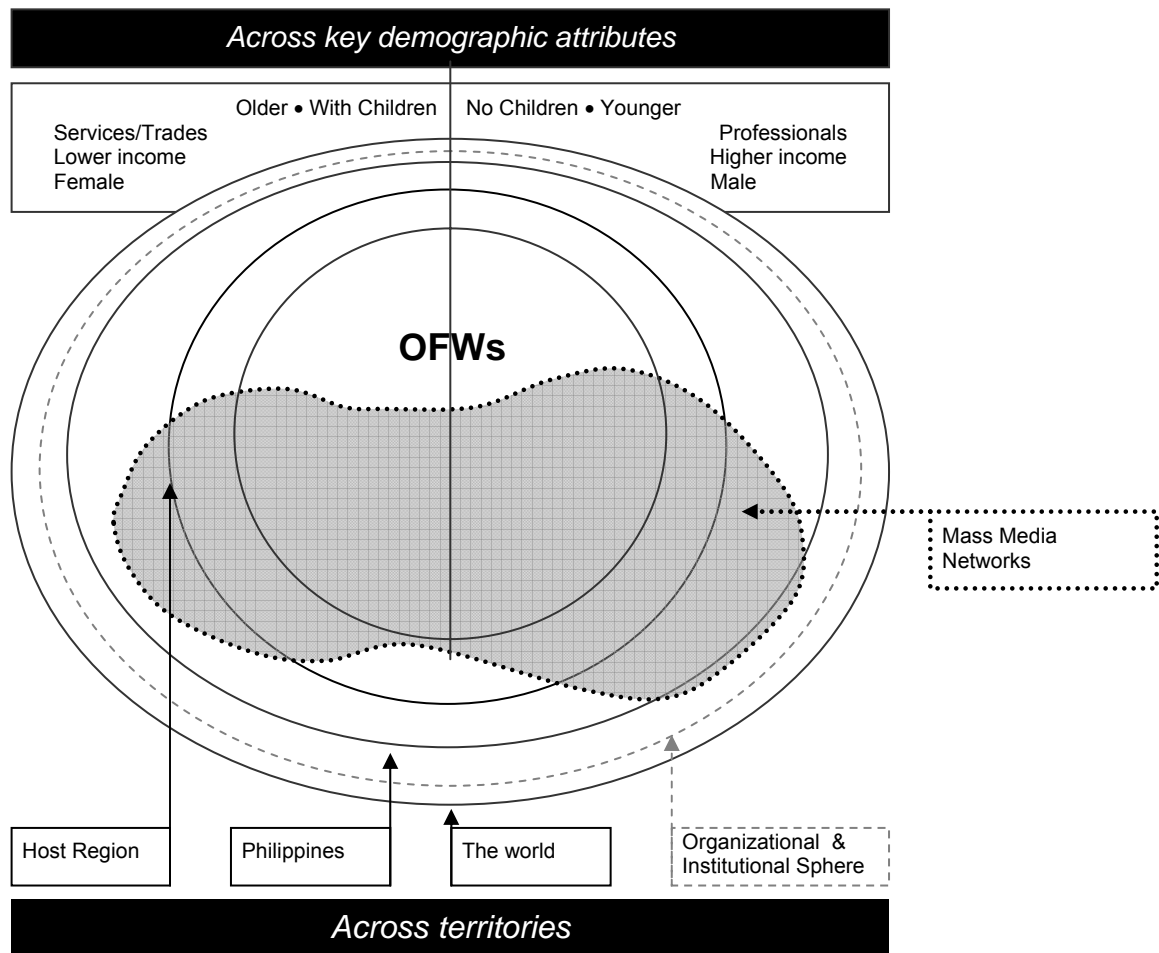
The changing uses of media have been made possible with the deregulation of the telecommunications industry. Just over a decade ago, there was hardly a landline

phone network in the Philippines and the mobile phone network was just being established, making telephony not only an expensive, but almost unavailable, communication option. The reform of the industry and the entry of new players have since strengthened telephony systems in Metro Manila and its adjoining regions where most the respondents resided (Tyner & Donaldson, 1999).

Mass media networks were eccentric, with higher income professionals having complex uses of specific media for particular content (Figure 8.0.). Men, meanwhile, appeared to be glued to their television set with its cable connections and disc player which they used to learn about the Philippines and the host country. In effect, they used media as a surrogate to personal and non-mediated interactions with people in the Philippines and the host country. Women shared their access to most mass media forms with other people, precluding highly nuanced mass media practices. Instead, they depended upon radio, a more personal medium to which they could listen while they did their predominantly domestic and caregiving labor.

Younger respondents widely used the Internet not only as an interpersonal medium for chatting and e-mailing, but also as a mass medium for news and online communities. Parent-respondents, while very positive about how developments in media were helping them become better parents across distances, did not significantly use various media more extensively and intensively compared to those without children because of their smaller disposable income.

Figure 8.0. Mass media use networks



## Chapter 9

## SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

For a dozen years beginning in 1984, a full decade after the Philippine government first sponsored the export of its citizens as overseas contractual laborers, my father worked first as a salesman then as a sales supervisor for an airline cargo company. He lived with his co-workers in a high-fenced villa, right next to the warehouse where they stored the cargo. In many ways, the respondents in this study reminded me of his living and working arrangements then, as his co-workers were mainly Filipino and south Asian migrant workers. However, unlike many of the respondents, he was not cooped up in the villa-cum-warehouse hauling boxes. Instead, he moved across Al Khobar, the northeastern Saudi Arabia province that borders Kuwait, visiting the barracks and houses of other Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to persuade them to use his company's courier service.

I noticed that as he rose through the ranks, his social and work life became more active and expansive as he won bowling tournaments and went to airline conferences in Asia and Europe. Likewise, halfway into his tenure, his letters increasingly spoke of nurses and pharmacists who began working in Al Khobar's hospitals. Fortunately for him, he was able to move into their professional circles as smoothly as he interacted with the laborers in the oil fields and the domestic workers of Saudi's affluent families. It did not occur to me that he was bridging what could be described as dichotomous networks of OFWs. Though bound by citizenship, their deployment abroad, and the continued centrality of the Philippines in their daily lives, OFWs of different occupational and income groups did and do not gravitate to each other. Thus, with the rise in the deployment of professionals who also work in professional capacity abroad, the communication networks of OFWs both inside and outside the host country are



increasingly divergent. However, some people like my father can cross these networks. And it is they whom organizations depend upon to assist distressed workers with little access to the world outside the home/workspace in the host country.

My father's stay abroad preceded the expansion of the landline phone infrastructure and ended just as mobile phones were introduced. He was part of our daily conversations, but we did not talk to him as often since our primary means of contact were letters, pictures, and cassette tapes sent through the post office or the kindness of friends. Our rare correspondence precluded simultaneous sharing of experiences.

In 1996, I interviewed OFWs on how they communicated with their families. Among the 20 informants for my baccalaureate thesis, one woman stood out most vividly. She was a domestic worker in Hong Kong who had stopped writing letters to her family as she kept in touch with them through the phone. I knew then that transnational communication practices were changing, but did not realize the full extent and the repercussions of these changes. Now, ten years later, these changes are more profound than improvements in telephony. The expansion of Philippine media networks abroad through online and cable outlets amid the overall growth of global communications systems means people who have access to media can simultaneously talk about what they collectively read, watch, listen, and experience.

Thus, today's cross-border communication may be marked by its potential for simultaneity. By negotiating various interpersonal, organizational, and mediated channels, OFWs can have regular and synchronic transnational interactions with people and institutions across different nation-states. However, I particularly underscore the word potential because, as this dissertation reveals, communication is arguably simultaneous only for specific segments of the OFW community. As a result, OFW

communication networks are eccentric, meaning they neither have a central point nor cover symmetrical, uniform spaces.

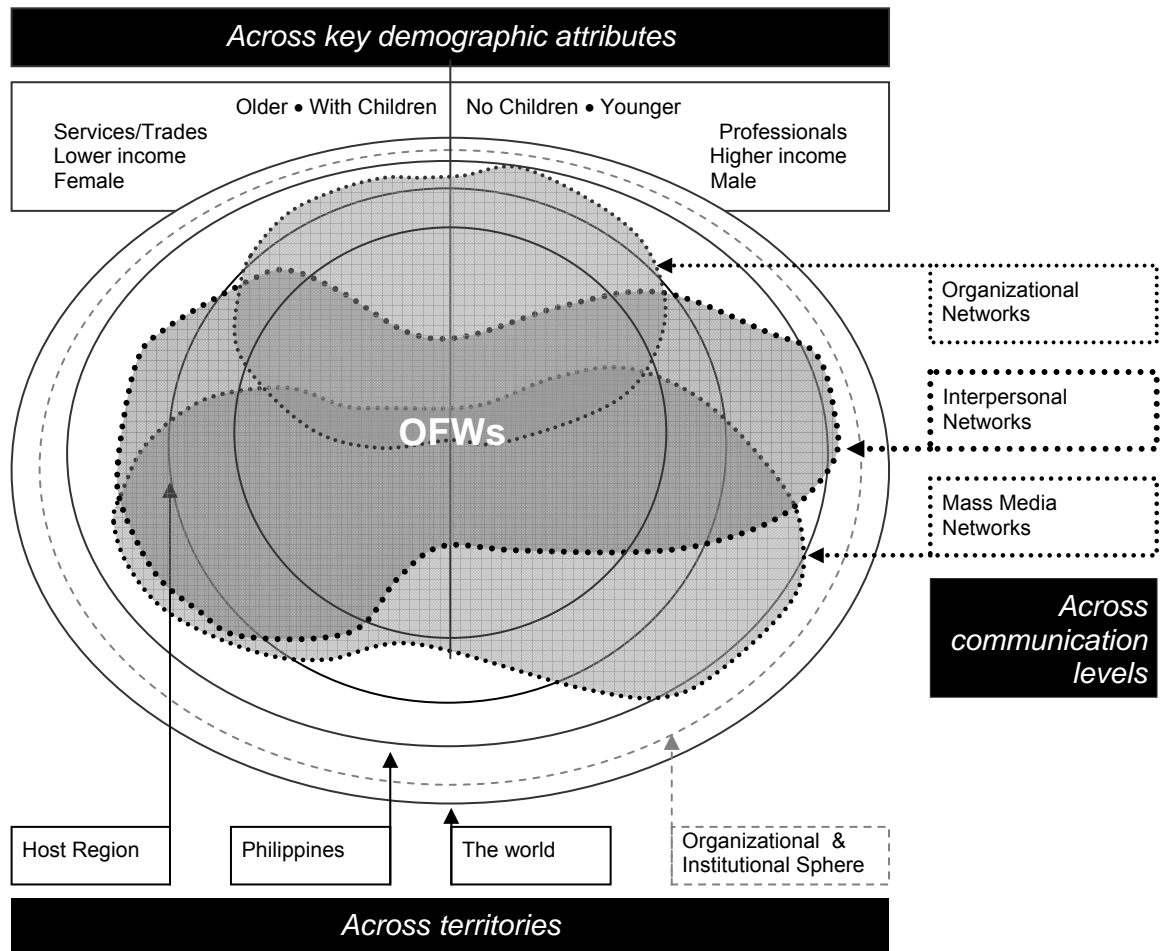
Thus, unlike my initial conceptualization of OFW networks as orderly and symmetrical relative to a homogenous OFW population (Figure 3), this dissertation shows, and Figure 9.0. illustrates, that OFW networks encompass differently sized and nuanced spaces. To substantiate this argument, I explore the eccentric networks of OFWs across 1) communication levels, 2) demographic attributes, and 3) territories. I then conclude by exploring globalism as the next stage of OFW communication networks.

#### The networks across communication levels

Previous studies have argued that OFWs are global citizens because they imagine they belong to a pool of global workers and that their tenure abroad has exposed them to the workings of the global economy. Following this premise, OFW networks would be decidedly global, straddling territories beyond those of the host country and the Philippines. However, as I suspected, daily transactions, through which multi-territorialism can be appreciated, remain transnational between home and host countries. The only networks that have a semblance of globalism are those of some higher-income professionals, advocacy organizations, and governmental agencies. These groups maintain regular interactions with their global contacts.

Interpersonal communication networks are the most multi-faceted of the three levels because of their mix of mediated and non-mediated exchange of messages within and beyond the host country. At the center of these interpersonal networks are the Philippines and the OFWs' work abroad. Save for those who are employed directly by citizens of their host country, usually the domestic workers and caregivers, it appeared

Figure 9.0. The eccentric transnational communication networks of overseas Filipino workers



to me that OFWs largely lived in expatriate bubbles in the host country. That OFWs live with their employers and co-workers means there is limited divide between the personal and the occupational, leaving the OFWs open to being overworked and underpaid (Grande & Kerr, 1999). Likewise, they enjoy little privacy and personal freedoms as their movements are constantly monitored by their supervisors and peers (Parrenas, 2001; Gibson, Law, & McKay, 2001).

That OFWs were confined in expatriate bubbles also confirms the absence of cosmopolitanism for many of the OFWs, as Hannerz (1990) argued. It also opens a new area of investigation on who constructed this expatriate bubble and why. On the one hand, was the bubble personally constructed by the workers to focus on their job or to preclude cross-cultural encounters out of shyness and the hostility of the host country citizens? On the other hand, was the bubble designed by the host government to prevent the integration of migrant workers in mainstream society as well as to mitigate the reaction of citizens against the presence of foreign workers?

From the confines of their bubbles in the host country, OFWs said they interacted most frequently with their family in the Philippines. This transnational interaction was sustained by the average expenditure of US\$57 on international calls, which, through the use of phone cards, could pay for over ten hours of phone conversations with people in the Philippines, facilitating frequent conversations about the homeland although they rarely returned to it (Alegado, 2003). Tung (2000) noted her informants spent between US\$150 and \$400 a month to call their children in the Philippines. Her study, however, was conducted in the United States where OFWs generally have higher incomes than the rest of the OFW population.

Vertovec (2004, p. 219) referred to international calls as the “social glue” of globalization. However, because OFW communication practices are more transnational than global, I would argue that telephones serve as the umbilical cord that tether OFWs’ expatriate bubbles to their family and friends in the Philippines.

Mobile phones were the primary medium of transnational communication, with most respondents having two phones that were connected respectively to networks in the Philippines and in the host country. The respondents’ use of a Philippine mobile phone even while abroad was particularly telling for me, especially after a series of

interviews I conducted in 2004 with OFWs about their mobile phone use. Even if their other mobile phone that was subscribed to a network in their host country could be used also to call and text the Philippines, the OFWs hung onto their Philippine mobile phone because it gave them a sense of perpetual connection to their families. The Philippine mobile phone thus appeared to me as their virtual umbilical cord to their family.

Within the host country, OFWs talked mainly with their employers or co-workers, and spent even their weekends at the workplace. What I found interesting was not that work was central in their lives abroad; after all, that was what brought them there in the first place. Instead, it surprised me that the respondents did not automatically consider their co-workers as friends despite their frequent interaction. They remained strangers even though they led shared lives within their expatriate bubble. Apparently, the contractual nature of migrant employment results in constant new job assignments and precludes bonding within the workplace. With their co-workers kept at a distance, the respondents did not have the support mechanism that could alleviate their main problem abroad: the homesickness which perhaps emanates both from a sense of solitude abroad and their physical separation from their family. Indeed, psycho-social stress and culture shock has been most widely noted as the main concern of OFWs abroad (Anderson, 2003; Piper, 2003; Gonzales, 1998; San Juan, 1996; Cueva, 1995).

The ability to correspond more frequently with the Philippines helps mitigate homesickness due to the latter, but there is no ready answer to address the seeming alienation of OFWs even among their peers.

An opportunity for OFWs to bond among themselves is presented by the recent export of Philippine media. Indeed, "The Filipino Channel" (TFC), an international cable service operated by one of the Philippines' biggest broadcast companies, can serve as a

frame of reference through which OFWs can connect to each other. This, however, is not without undue consequences, as I explain later.

The entry of Philippine mass media in OFW host countries increases the complexity of mass media networks available to OFWs. Philippine media contribute to the array of other media content and services that are already available to OFWs: TV and radio shows, DVD/VCD, and Web sites from home, host, and other countries. OFWs negotiate this diversity through specific uses of particular media forms: print for news about the host country, and the Internet for news about the Philippines. Across media forms, TV was the most popular medium both in terms of access and use. In comparison, access to radio was as common, though its use was not as extensive. I believe this is the case because there is no radio counterpart for TFC that can provide Philippine news and music as well as rally a mass radio audience among OFWs.

I suspect, however, that the centrality of the Philippines in the daily discourse of OFWs will simplify their media uses. TFC and its new rival, "GMA PinoyTV," are bound to become more dominant among OFWs as they satisfy the hunger for information about and the desire for a direct link to the homeland. The limited free time of OFWs, the reason for poor organizational membership, would be devoted to TFC, at the expense of other media forms and content. It is thus perhaps ironic that the globalization of Philippine media can perhaps render more insular the mass media sphere of OFWs. While these Philippine media companies indeed promote the imagined global community of overseas Filipinos, they ultimately reinforce loyalty to the Philippine nation-state and essentialize the OFWs' "otherness" as a foreigner in the host country.

Organizational participation is the simplest of the communication networks since few of the respondents have either joined organizations or actively participated in the activities of religious and governmental institutions. The poor drawing power of

organizations and institutions is unfortunate as they have their own global networks through which they advocate for migrant rights (Piper, 2004) and help protect the welfare of OFWs (Weekley, 2004), especially women (Piper, 2003). The Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration, for instance, have various services for OFWs (see Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2004; Martin, Abella & Midgley, 2004; Yeoh, Huang, & Devasahayam, 1999), but apparently there is little awareness about them among the OFWs.

The textual analysis of the documents from the governmental and non-governmental informants showed incongruence between the organizations' materials and their audiences. The documents were not only in limited circulation, but many were written in a very serious tone and complicated language that are unappealing to OFWs. The organizations can improve their presence among OFWs by partnering with cable networks such as TFC and GMAPinoyTV as well as online sites such as Inq7.net.

Religious institutions and organizations are important venues in reaching out to OFWs (Lan, 2003; Mateo, 2003; Ogaya, 2003; Tsujimoto, 2003), especially women, and older, higher-income and professional OFWs. OFWs had little contact with government agencies, mainly because foreign missions are small and scarce (Tyner, 2004). Piper and Ball (2001) said there was only one Labor Attache (the main Philippine representative abroad for labor matters) for every 16,000 workers.

#### *Intersections across communication levels*

The intersections among the three levels of communication are particularly important with the emergence of personal media and the convergence of communication technologies—developments that enable synchronous and multi-media exchange of messages within and across territories.

*Interpersonal communication and organizational participation*

Membership in organizations was not common enough as to be part of respondents' routines. In fact, organizations were ranked poorly as a venue to pass the weekend. Moreover, few of the respondents who encountered problems during their tenure abroad approached organizations for assistance, despite the many services that organizations are offering to OFWs.

I was pleased, however, to learn that organizations are now working within interpersonal networks to strengthen support for their projects. Salome Mendoza started her work as a Labor Attaché in Macau by talking to the Filipinos there in order to gain their support for her community outreach projects. Mendoza's experience highlighted the need for Labor Attaches to be as knowledgeable about public relations as they are about migrant workers' rights and the workings of government in protecting distressed workers.

Other informants explained the importance of interpersonal and mediated interaction between organizations and distressed workers during moments of distress. By working through the social networks of OFWs, the informants said they were able to provide the needed assistance to distressed OFWs. Thus, while in general organizations were not central in the lives of OFWs abroad, they were pivotal during problematic or critical moments. The wider use of interpersonal media also enabled organizations to coordinate with OFWs abroad to aid workers. For example, Kanlungan and the Center for Migrant Advocacy have been using mobile phones, e-mail and e-groups to keep in touch with migrant workers. Similarly, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration has started a 24-hour Operations Center that enables OFWs and their families to report and address the problems of distressed workers. Finally, Migrant Forum in Asia uses e-mail and telephony groups to sustain its transnational network of over 260 organizations in more than 30 countries.



However, the limited membership of OFWs in organizations and the infrequent contact between them and other institutions means that their shared transnational habitus (and its attendant predispositions and inclinations) is far from becoming a public sphere where participants “debate their common affairs, contest meanings, and negotiate claims” (Levitt, 1998, p. 928). I believe there are two reasons behind this. First, OFWs, like most migrants (Levitt & Schiller, 2004), are apprehensive of asserting their rights for fear of being replaced by workers from other countries (Cheng, 2004; Piper, 2004; Lan, 2003). Second, the rather serious and severe nature of the ideological statements in the brochures of the non-governmental workers can be a turn-off to OFWs who surely want to discuss Philippine politics but do not want to align to specific philosophies or commit to particular courses of action.

#### *Organizational participation and mass media use*

Relations among the organizations that participated in the study and mass media outlets were limited. Organizations provided content for the media outlets through press releases, while media outlets invited organizational representatives as guest speakers in shows about the plight and problems of OFWs.

The recent export of Philippine media gives organizations and media outlets a chance to produce content together more proactively. Organizations can serve as contributors to shows on OFW organizations and migrant Filipinos, as “The Filipino Channel” and GMA PinoyTV have started doing.

The strong use of online resources by younger and professional/higher income respondents also shows the viability of the World Wide Web as a mass medium through which organizations can communicate with OFWs. Right now, however, organizations’

Web sites serve the needs of scholars seeking to study migrant workers rather than to reach OFWs who could benefit from the projects listed in the Web sites.

Organizations produced their own mass media materials, though they were of limited circulation. They admitted that their newsletters, brochures, and other print materials were mainly for advocacy work. Thus, while the materials evoked their ideology and outlined organizational services, their tone, language, and presentation were not for OFWs. They were distributed mainly to universities, government agencies, and other non-governmental organizations.

#### *Interpersonal communication and mass media use*

Migrant workers were heavy viewers of television, especially of shows on Philippine cable networks such as “The Filipino Channel.” Since TV, and TFC by extension, provided extensive and diverse information to OFWs, it could be surmised that it played an important role in the migrant workers’ daily discourse. The dominance of TFC among OFWs has implications that have not been discussed yet. Since OFWs mainly source their news and information about the Philippines from TFC, the cable service is in a strong position to influence how overseas Filipinos interact with the homeland. This is particularly important during election time, when OFW absentee voters learn of candidates and campaign issues as framed by TFC.

OFWs’ social networks are also increasingly becoming the subject of TV shows. Other mass media are not as central in OFWs’ lives, though they still play valuable venues for interaction. For instance, Inq7.net and Philstar.com both receive e-mails from OFWs who thank them for the news reports about the Philippines, which could pave the way for a discursive interaction between media outfits and OFWs.

*Across communication networks*

An interesting convergence of communication networks I was able to attend was “Philippine Fiesta in America” (PFA) A two-day, privately-organized exposition where overseas Filipinos, non-government organizations, and media companies converged, its activities included parallel sessions on issues involving migrant Filipinos, sales pitches by various companies, and cultural shows. The annual event draws over 20,000 people and serves as an important socialization and educational project for the Filipino community on the U.S. East Coast.

I believe the PFA model can be used by the government as an on-going, perhaps semi-annual effort to rally OFW support for various products and services for them. Indeed, a couple of the informants have already participated in roadshows like PFA.

An OFW Fiesta would not need public funding since the rent paid for by the private company participants could defray the costs while the shows could be staged by the various Filipino organizations within the community. Advocacy groups, meanwhile, could provide the content and speakers for the parallel sessions. All these surely could be broadcast by the local affiliates of The Filipino Channel.

*The networks across key demographic attributes*

With its increasingly complex gender and occupational mix, the OFW population is far from homogenous. Based on the demographic profile and the communication patterns of the respondents, I visualized OFW networks as a continuum where female lower-income services and trades workers are on one end, and male higher-income professionals and associate professionals are on the other. Men and higher-income professionals generally had more expansive and complex transnational interpersonal communication, organizational participation, and media access and use networks

compared to their counterparts. However, despite the supposed invisibility of the female migrant labor in private workspaces, women had developed more nuanced socialization patterns within the host country compared to men.

Cutting across this continuum were respondents younger than 34 years old whose communication networks involved greater use of online media. Chatting, e-mailing and surfing online are activities of younger respondents regardless of their gender, work, and income, indicating the eventual shrinking of the digital divide observed in the general sample. However, the pull of income and work still skewed ownership of and access to new media towards higher-earning professionals. Thus, while parent-respondents were very positive about the role of communication in their family, their media patterns were similar to respondents without children, largely because of parent-respondents' smaller disposable income. Finally, across host regions, sea-based respondents and those from North America/Europe represented extremes in terms of the diversity of their communication and media use, with the latter having more comprehensive communication practices.

In this section, I explicate the specific impact of each the six key demographic attributes (KDAs)—as gender, age, parental status, host region, work and income—on interpersonal communication, organizational participation, and mass media use.

### *Gender*

Female respondents tended to be less educated and more underemployed compared to male respondents. I found this especially interesting since more Filipina women are actually better educated than Filipino men, with more female college students in the Philippines. This implies that migrant employment attracts not only the relatively fewer number of women who have been unable to pursue a college degree,

but also those who have completed a post-secondary degree. In either circumstance, this underscores the limited job opportunities for women in the Philippines.

A majority of female respondents worked in the services and trades sectors, and earned a lower salary compared to the overall sample. Despite this, female respondents saved more since many of them were single and went home less frequently. Unlike Tacoli's finding (1999), however, single respondents' remittance patterns did not differ across gender. She observed that single women sent twice as much money to the Philippines as men did, a finding that I believe was skewed by the predominantly female OFW population in Italy, where she conducted her study. My findings are validated by a cross-country study on remittances by Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2005).

In 2003, Constable said that migrant work gave female OFWs the opportunity to support their family, as this study also discovered. The considerable number of separated female OFWs bears further investigation since it is their adolescent children who have some apprehensions over their parent working abroad (Asis, 2003).

Much has been said about the contradictory class mobility of OFWs—that most OFWs exchange their middle class social status in the Philippines for servitude in the host country in order to earn a higher income. I felt, however, that this contradictory mobility can ultimately be transformative. Though they worked in lower-status jobs that earned them lower incomes compared to men, women still found relative financial and social independence by working abroad. Indeed, migrant employment provides women work that is neither available nor equally compensated in the Philippines and allows them to negotiate—though not necessarily escape—the traditional male-breadwinner, female-homemaker paradigm (Gibson, Law & MckKay, 2001, Vertovec, 2004, 2001). Naturally, this transgression of traditional gender stereotypes is not left undisciplined.

Female OFWs, for instance, have been accused of abandoning their family and causing “broken homes” (Parrenas, 2003).

The largest group of female respondents lived with their employers, and thus had no co-workers, illustrating the isolated life and work of domestic workers and other women laborers abroad (Anderson, 2003; Sassen, 2003; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003). Among those who did have co-workers, these came mostly from the Philippines as well. Though their labor in private spaces might render them invisible, their more public social life enables them to assert their presence in the host country. Indeed, compared to men, women gathered more in malls, churches, and parks as described in studies in the United Kingdom (Anderson, 2001), Taiwan (Lan, 2003), Hong Kong and Singapore (Parrenas, 2001). A weekend spent socializing with fellow OFWs actually indicates a higher social status among women because it means their employer gives them considerable freedom and they can afford not to take on additional jobs to earn as much money as their colleagues (Parrenas, 2001).

As regards media use, more women than men depended on the radio for various entertainment, and news and information. Thus, while radio listenership was low among all respondents especially compared to radio ownership and access, it remained an important mass medium for women. Radio is a more portable medium which women in the services sector can listen to in private while they do their domestic duties.

Male respondents, meanwhile, sent more money to the Philippines. They roomed with their co-workers, a majority of whom were from the Philippines or from states other than the host country. Being cooped up with other foreigners means they have a culturally-diverse workplace that provides little direct interactions with the host country citizens, rendering all of them practically invisible in the host country. That most men work in these expatriate bubbles raises the same issues of abuse and distress that are

said to attend the invisibility of female labor. Asata (2003) and Tyner (2000) have earlier said that female workers are prone to abuse because of their invisible labor in private households.

Men are already adapting to living in their expatriate bubble through their much heavier consumption of media. Compared to women, they had wider access, ownership and use of TV, cable TV, and DVD/VCD players. In their limited interactions with the host society, they consumed many more TV shows, newspapers, digital discs, and movies from the Philippines than women. They also updated themselves with Philippine and world events more than women did. Further supporting the argument that men live in an expatriate bubble tethered to the Philippines was their greater interest in and use of TV shows about OFWs, and “The Filipino Channel,” the Philippine transnational cable service. Further, while Internet use was the same across gender, men, unlike women, surfed for OFW news and information. The high level of information-seeking about the Philippines among male respondents, most of whom were married, shows a strong desire to learn about the state of the homeland where their family is. This was also a way of transnational parenting, to rephrase Parrenas’ “transnational mothering” idea (Parrenas, 2001b).

### *Age*

The age of respondents was only related to the number of years abroad and marital status: respondents younger than 34 years old tended to be single and had a shorter tenure abroad. Respondents across age groups thus had the same work and financial profiles. Because this implies that migrant employment does not promise much career growth for its participants, younger respondents must channel their comparatively bigger disposable income towards savings and investments in preparation for their

eventual reintegration in the Philippines, the ultimate goal of most OFWs. However, younger professionals are an exception since they have been and would be promoted in their occupation, though it remains to be seen whether they will ultimately encounter a glass ceiling because they are migrant workers.

One of the perhaps obvious findings in this dissertation is the complex use by young respondents of newer media. While mobile phone ownership, access, and use were almost universal across age groups, a significantly larger share of younger respondents had a camera on their phone. Further, they engaged in mediated communication much more heavily as they used mobile phones, texting, e-mail, the Internet and online chat rooms to converse with people in and outside the host country. Computer ownership and use, as well as Internet use to surf the World Wide Web was also markedly higher among young respondents. Indeed, younger respondents sought a very diverse trove of news and information online and from across the world.

However, the important nuance of this finding is that newer media use is the same across gender, which means women are not disadvantaged in the digital community as was the case with traditional mass media. Thus, as these younger respondents mature, the Internet and mobile phones will be the pivotal media to communicate with OFWs regardless of gender.

The Philippines remained a part of the discourse of both older and younger respondents, though it was approached very differently by the two groups. Younger respondents sought Philippine entertainment through music, digital discs, Web sites, and chat rooms from the Philippines. Older respondents discussed Philippine news as they updated themselves much more constantly with the country's events and appeared to have greater concern over OFW issues with their higher interest in absentee voting and their use of print media to learn about OFW news.



Older respondents were involved with organizational and institutional activities. Indeed, they spent their weekends in the church, at the park, and with organizations much more than their younger counterparts. They participated also in church activities beyond religious services. Based on this demography, the Kanlungan Center Foundation is tapping into an older segment of the OFWs that has a smaller disposable income. To reach out to younger OFWs requires the delivery of services via the Internet or mobile telephony.

#### *Parental status*

Over half (55 percent) of the respondents were married. The 21 percent of married respondents whose spouses did not work form part of the families (10 percent all households in Metro Manila and seven percent in the entire Philippines) which depended on remittances as their source of income (Tyner, 2004; Tyner & Donaldson, 1999; Huang, Yeo, & Jackson, 2004). They also represent the dependence of an increasing number of households on migrant employment (Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

The parental status of respondents was related to their gender, age, length of tenure, and marital status. Respondents who had children tended to be older and married, and had been abroad for a longer period of time. More men than women in the sample were married. Age and parental status generally influenced communication patterns the same way.

Having children did not necessarily impel respondents to maintain more frequent ties to the Philippines. Because of their comparably smaller disposal incomes compared to single and younger respondents, parent-respondents were not able to exploit truly newer media. However, they remained favorable towards new communication technologies (NCTs) as it enabled them to practice “transnational parenting.”

Indeed, compared to their single counterparts, parent-respondents gave significantly higher ratings for the ability of NCTs to be in constant contact with their family, which made them feel like they are part of their family in the Philippines and gave them a sense of security. NCTs thus help mitigate the emotional strain on parents and children separated by migrant work, as noted by informants Father Fabio Baggio of the Scalabrini Migration Center, Philippine Association of Service Exporters, Inc. (PASEI) President Victor Fernandez, and OWWA Director Rustico de la Fuente (Tyner, 2004; Asis, 2003; Parrenas, 2003). Illustrating the importance of finances in transnational communication, parent-respondents complained that spending on NCTs was expensive and ate up a lot of their budget. All these findings and arguments indicate that telecommunications services such as Globe Kababayan that target OFWs need to explore family plans for transnational calls.

As with older respondents, those with children sent more money back home, which explains their smaller disposable income. Their daily topics, the TV shows they watch, and their participation in church activities all showed the primacy of the Philippines in their lives, reflecting a desire to connect directly with the rituals of their offspring. Parent respondents are more politicized as they were concerned with OFW issues such as absentee voting, interacted more frequently with Labor Attachés, and updated themselves on world events.

There was only slight difference between younger respondents who have or have no children. Young respondents without children saved more money but paid more for their mobile phone use compared to their counterparts. Again, this reflects the greater importance of disposable incomes and interest in technology than the desire to communicate with the family. Younger respondents without children also e-mailed, surfed and chatted online more frequently, apparently to communicate with their friends

in the Philippines. They also had a more global sphere since not only did they travel more to other countries, they also sought out online material and chat rooms from the host country, the Philippines, and other territories.

### *Host regions*

I also found in this research the gendered occupational flows that have been explored in literature. Respondents from West and East Asia were the most equally distributed across genders and earned the lowest income compared to seafarers and those from North America and Europe. Seafarers were primarily married men with some post secondary education. The largest portion of North America/Europe respondents, meanwhile, was composed of educated women who had high incomes.

In countries where there are highly-structured social mores such as those in West Asia, interpersonal connections between OFWs and host citizens are limited. In this case, TV serves as a surrogate venue for interacting with the host country. From within their expatriate bubbles in West Asia, respondents indeed heavily viewed TV shows from their host country. And true to the tethering of such bubbles to the Philippines, there was also a much wider subscription base to TFC in West Asia. The impact of telecommunications policy on the use of interpersonal media is also evident in West Asia, the only region where landline phones were heavily used for international calls. There was some reservation about the use of mobile phones in West Asia, especially those with more advanced features such as cameras, as an informant in one of my studies (Paragas, 2005) said before. While the informants noted the emergence of electronic-groups among West Asia respondents, Internet use for OFW issues was generally lower among them compared to those from other regions. As the informants explained, it was the communications personnel and engineers who served as their links

to West Asia, professionals who comprised a small section of the OFW population there. While participation in church activities in West Asia was weak, awareness for a political issue such as absentee voting was high.

Across the respondents from land-based regional groupings, I found those from East Asia to be the only ones who were not particularly orientated towards Philippine news as reported by the media. After all, it is in East Asia where female workers converge in public spaces during weekends. These regular gatherings, during which they surely call their family in the Philippines, then provide them with the opportunity to talk about the homeland without having to depend upon the media. Such gatherings then become a hybrid of mediated and non-mediated interpersonal and transnational conversations.

OFWs in North America/Europe enjoy the greatest freedom of movement and communication options among all of the respondents for three reasons: 1) the region's generally relaxed social atmosphere, 2) its relatively large segment of socially-mobile higher-income professionals, and 3) the historic Western orientation of the Philippines as a former colony of Spain and the United States. Even in the post-colonial period, Filipinos, especially those in the middle class or above, continue to be heavy consumers of Western media. Thus, compared to the rest of the respondents, North America/Europe respondents immersed themselves in their host country's popular culture through their attendance in concerts and use of TV shows, newspapers, magazines, music, and cinema. Despite this flurry of activities in the host country, however, the respondents remained connected to the Philippines through frequent phone calls.

While other OFWs live in metaphorical expatriate bubbles within their host region, sea-based workers spend their stint abroad literally separated from any host

society. Just the same, however, their communication patterns hew closely to those of other male OFWs who have limited contact to their host country's citizens. Life in ships involved work even during weekends, and the sea-based respondents said they had no days-off spent at "home." It also entailed communicating to various places mainly by landline phone, and very infrequently via e-mail or letters. Internet use was lowest among seafarers, both for entertainment and news. Seafarers sourced their information from cable TV, especially "The Filipino Channel." They were heavy users of portable media content, as they favored newspapers, magazines and digital discs of movies and music from the Philippines.

The percentage of seafarers who said they were members of an organization was highest among groups of respondents, though they were mostly connected to seamen's unions, rather than to organizations that met regularly. This unionization of the sea-based workforce obviously empowers seafarers to voice their problems at work. It remained, however, that homesickness is their main woe in being constantly out at sea. Since most studies on OFWs have focused on women, who were thought to be particularly vulnerable to physical and emotional abuse, this homesickness felt by men and their apparent invisibility in host societies during their deployment have not been studied.

#### *Work and income abroad*

Studies on OFWs have focused on the 3D (dirty, demeaning and dangerous) range of their low-status occupations (Lan, 2003). However, the recent deployment of professionals in the same jobs abroad has created a new segment of professional OFWs that does not fit within this range. I thus feel this emergent portion of OFWs, with its markedly different communication and media use patterns, needs more scholarly

attention. Thus far, discussions about them have centered on issues of brain drain and deskilling. Indeed, by deploying its professionals, the Philippines is losing the highly-skilled individuals which it needs to lead long-term national development from within (Krinks, 2002; Parreñas, 2001; Gonzales, 1998). I feel, however, that the deployment of professionals working in their real capacity mitigates the concern over deskilling, which is a major issue for currently underemployed OFWs.

Though representing only a third of the sample, higher-income professionals were markedly different from the other respondents in the complexity of their communication networks. Compared to other respondents, they more frequently maintained contact with co-workers in the host country, and with family and friends in third party countries. They had more mediated communication using their mobile and landline phones and texting within the host country as well as e-mail and chatting within and beyond the host country. They spent more time at the mall during weekends, and even more frequently attend concerts for overseas Filipinos. Moreover, they traveled around the world and sought news about the Philippines, the host and other countries. They also participated more actively in organizations, though not necessarily those for OFWs. Finally, they were more involved in church and embassy activities.

Among all the groups, professionals/associates and higher-earners registered the highest ownership and access of different mass media equipment. Their use of various mass media from different territories was nuanced. They read newspapers and magazines, used VCD/DVDs, and watched movies from their host country, while they bought DVD movies from the Philippines. They watched TV shows and listened to music from third party countries, and surfed Web sites and talked in chatrooms from around the world. They also harnessed the Internet for diverse information, from entertainment and socials, to news about the host country, OFWs, and the Philippines. Further, higher-

income respondents also read Inq7.net more frequently and print media to update themselves with social events in the host country.

Higher-earners discussed host and world news more frequently than did their counterparts. Together with professionals/associates, they more often updated themselves with Philippine and world news, read print media, surfed and chatted online, and used digital discs.

Compared to professionals and associates, services/trades and lower-income workers were distinguished by their low ownership and access to interpersonal media such as mobile and landline phones. Further, finances were central in their discussions, and they were more likely to seek the help of others when they encountered problems. A most interesting finding is that radio remained the most important medium for them. They used it for entertainment, for information about social events, and for news and information about the host society, the Philippines and OFWs.

This digital divide within the OFW community is a natural result of skewed work and income distributions. The government, in partnership with companies such as Microsoft, is addressing this divide through facilities that train low-status workers to use the computer and the Internet. Such initiatives are important to enable OFWs to exploit technology for transnational communication. At the same time, the divide itself presents opportunities for OFWs to cross the work- and income-defined borders. The Center for Migrant Advocacy, according to Ellene Sana, works with professionals using new media to help distressed workers who have otherwise no access to the required equipment.

The complexity and coverage of the networks of higher-income professionals speak of a certain confidence, if not a sense of self-entitlement, in straddling territories. Regardless of their location, they apparently can muster the resources to gratify their communication and media needs. Conversely, lower-income services and trades

workers have more basic concerns that prevent them from truly diversifying their networks, particularly the mediated ones.

### The networks across territories

An important attribute of OFW communication is its multi-territorial spatiality, depicted in Figure 9.0. as concentric circles of the host regions, the Philippines, and the world. The concentric depiction differs from the initial conceptualization of simultaneity where OFWs were symmetrically embedded between the Philippines and the host country (Figure 3). This depiction situates OFWs precisely in the host country where they actually live. It also underscores the importance of the people and circumstances in the host country that influence the daily communications of OFWs. The Philippines becomes the expanded sphere within which they communicate through mediated networks. Countries outside of the Philippines and the host regions comprise the biggest circle. However, as the model shows, most OFW communications rarely transcend the host region and the Philippines to reach out to nation-states.

The concentric circles note the continued importance of nation-states even as OFWs transcend their borders through regular transnational communication. The emergence of exported Philippine media is perhaps even contributing to an essentialization of national identity as constructed by media establishments (Tyner & Kuhlke, 2001). Advocacy groups are a venue for a formal deconstruction of these hegemonic representations (Anderson, 2001). However, the weak organizational membership among respondents and the limited interaction between profit and non-profit organizations practically precludes this critical reading of transnational media. Scholars could help initiate this discursive process by engaging OFWs in their use of



media now that a framework for understanding their simultaneous multi-state communication networks has been developed.

#### *Communication within the host country*

Work, which is what brought them abroad in the first place, is central in the OFW experience. Indeed, while in the host country, they mainly interacted with their co-workers and employers and spent weekends at the workplace. To some extent they did have friends in the host country, and there were opportunities to socialize in the mall, the church, and the park during weekends. Their usual topics included work and life abroad, which both ranked behind the Philippines in terms of frequency of discussion.

There was limited interaction between OFWs and the citizens of their host country aside from those who directly employed them. Those who had co-workers, meanwhile, worked with people from the Philippines or third party countries. Thus, they lived in expatriate bubbles with limited involvement in the host country.

Mediated learning about the host country was through newspapers and magazines. For professionals, professional groups, as distinguished from OFW organizations, provided another venue for interacting with host citizens. Overall, contact with host government and non-government organizations is higher than with those from the Philippines. Thus, there is a need for Philippine missions to work with their host counterparts to reach out to OFWs, especially since they appear not to attract much participation from OFWs on their own.

#### *Communication to the Philippines*

Though away from them, OFWs said their families were the ones they were most frequently in contact with. They also said their families were the most common topic of

their daily conversations. The centrality of the Philippines in their life abroad was underscored by the fact that their co-workers were also Filipinos. Thus, it appeared that together they sought news and information about the Philippines over those about the host country and the world in general. They satisfied this demand for Filipiniana through their considerable subscription to or purchase of TV shows, music, cinema, digital discs, and chatrooms from the Philippines. Services such as TFC, GMA PinoyTV and Inq7.net thus not have a captive audience abroad, but also a transnational sphere of influence over discourses of the homeland.

The importance of the Philippines in the communication dynamics of migrant workers validates what Tyner (2000b) noted as the spatial centrality of Manila, as the national capital, in the global flow of labor.

#### *Communication to other countries*

The presence of OFWs across the world has led scholars to refer to them as global workers. However, their communication networks remain transnational, with most transactions transpiring between the Philippines and the host country. Still, there are venues for globality as many of the respondents work with people who are neither from the Philippines nor the host country.

Specific segments of the sample also had more global networks. Professionals and higher-income respondents, for instance, had family and friends beyond the Philippines and the host country, while younger respondents who were active online, surfed Web Sites and chatted in rooms from across the globe. From these higher-income professionals and younger respondents is evolving a more cosmopolitan segment of OFWs which transcends the expatriate bubbles of migrant workers in the host countries. This new segment of OFWs is emerging as a counter-example of what

Hannerz (1990) and Sampson (2003) argued as the lack of cosmopolitanism among transnationals who only seek to earn money rather than to voluntarily encounter different cultures during their tenure abroad.

Concluding remarks: Globalism and the overseas Filipino worker phenomenon

In this study, I looked at the OFW experience as an example of transnationalism as the simultaneous and reflexive flow of ideas between home and host countries. Indeed, the communication patterns of OFWs comprise transnational networks whose coverage and content differ across segments of the OFW community.

Having established the transnational complexity of OFW networks, the subsequent question therefore pertains to their globalism, which, according to Glick-Schiller (1999), involves multi-state processes across the world. Scholars have asserted that transnationalism—and by extension, globalism—can be best understood as a system of practices, rather than just as frame of mind, among its participants (Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

By the sheer presence of OFWs in almost all of territories around the world, the OFW phenomenon is global indeed. And researchers have argued that segments of OFWs have imagined from this global ubiquity a sense of community (Parrenas, 2001), imbuing them with a globalist perspective. Likewise, by working abroad, OFWs and their children are automatically thrust into the global economy, raising their awareness about—and perhaps forcing them to understand—the opportunities and difficulties that it presents (Kelley, 2000; Asis, 2003). However, this research reveals limited globalism based upon the OFWs' interactions and media uses. Home and workplace, sometimes one and the same, remain as the main socialization sphere of OFWs. They live in expatriate bubbles where they discuss stories from and about the Philippines, only now

they are more frequently updated with personal and national news from the homeland because of the increasingly global reach of Philippine media networks. In this sense, the emergent global reach of Philippine media actually precludes globalism within the OFWs themselves. By being more heavily orientated towards the Philippines, OFWs actually become more nationalist than globalist.

Organizations and institutions that work with OFWs have global networks as they pursue a globalist agenda to promote migrant workers' rights. Migrant Forum in Asia, for instance, is present in over 30 countries through its more than 260 member-organizations. The Center for Migrant Advocacy and Unlad Kabayan similarly have partners in various countries in Asia. As for the private sector, media and telecommunications companies such as "The Filipino Channel" and "Globe Kababayan" are present in Europe, Asia, and North America. Around the world, the Philippine government has over 52 Embassies and Consulates, of which 28 have Labor Offices (POLOs) which are fully devoted to migrant workers' issues. There are four other POLOs in Taiwan and China. However, while organizational advocacy linkages have become diverse and extensive with their telecommunications networks, OFW support for them has not been as "nuanced" and expansive. The structure for globality thus already exists, but the grassroots participation in it is still in the budding stage.

The question about globalism, however, is only one of the many research issues that this dissertation raises. For instance, the ever changing communication patterns of OFWs call for innovative methods to study the OFW experience. Letters, voice tapes, and pictures are key artifacts of OFW communication for the period prior to the dominance of telephony. They are important documents that can be used to reconstruct the personal histories of migrant workers and their correspondents. In today's digital age, e-mails and pictures are poorly archived and the oral nature of telephone

conversations precludes them from being on record automatically. To ensure that the experiences of today's migrants can still be studied in the future, migrant workers could be involved in a participatory research project where they would keep and make sense of journals of their conversations and copies of their correspondences.

The relatively recent foreign expansion of Philippine media outlets is also ripe for several studies. Their considerable following among OFWs imbues international Philippine media companies such as TFC with the power to frame national issues and define the transnational OFW discourse. Thus, on the production side, I suggest the conduct of programming analyses of transnational cable networks and textual analyses of shows about OFWs and other overseas Filipinos. On the reception aspect, I recommend the conduct of ethnographies of media use by migrant Filipinos.

The courses of action recommended in this dissertation require the following studies and projects in order to be implemented: a feasibility study paper on Fiesta expositions for OFWs with cultural shows, parallel sessions, and trade booths as key components; the development of print, audio-visual, and multi-media messages and materials for specific segments of the OFW population; the establishment of multi-sector linkages to produce communication campaigns and to harness communication networks that promote and protect migrant workers' rights; and the development of modules on 1) media literacy for OFWs and 2) public relations for Labor Attaches.

Thus, many studies and projects remain to be done. For just as the story of Philippine migrant employment continues, so does the need to understand and work with its participants and within their networks.

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## Appendix A. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Data Gatherer		Country		Questionnaire #	
Date		Time Started		Time Ended	

### Migrant Labor and Telecommunications Systems as Transnational Networks: The Overseas Filipino Worker Experience

**Greetings!** We are gathering data for a study on the communication patterns and media use habits of Overseas Filipino Workers like you. This research is being conducted for Fernando Paragas, an Assistant Professor (on study leave) at the University of the Philippines, for his doctoral dissertation in Ohio University. Would you like to participate in this research by joining us for an interview that would last for approximately 30 minutes? Yes or no?

<b>A. Demographic Profile. Please encircle the appropriate number or specify if the answer is not in the given choices.</b>		
1. Sex	1 Male                      2 Female	
2. Age (in years)		
3. City of Residence	Abroad	
	In the Philippines	
4. Work	Abroad	
	In the Philippines (prior to deployment)	
5. Monthly income range	1 Less than US\$500                      4 1500 to 2000 2 500 to 1000                              5 2000 to 2500 3 1000 to 1500                              6 Over 2500	
6. Frequency of coming home	1 Every six months                      4 Every other year 2 Once a year                              5 Others, specify 3 Every 18 months	
7. Previous countries of deployment	0 None                                      1 Others, specify last two _____	
8. Total number of years abroad		
9. Religion	1 Roman Catholic                      Others, specify	
10. Region of origin in the Philippines		
11. Educational level	1 High school                              3 College/Postgraduate 2 Some college/Vocational	
12. Marital Status	1 Married                              2 Single                              3 Separated/Widow/er	
If married	Spouse's job	
	Spouse's place of work	1 Philippines                      2 Abroad, specify
	Number of kids	
	Age range of kids	_____ Oldest                      _____ Youngest

<b>B. Interpersonal Communication</b>		
<b>While you are in your host country...</b>		
1. Where do your co-workers primarily come from? (Encircle all that apply.)	0 None 1 Philippines 2 Host country	3 Countries other than Philippines
2. Who among the following are your housemates? (Encircle all that apply.)	0 None 1 Employer 2 Co-worker	3 Family member/relative 4 Friend
3. Who initiates contact between you and the people in the Philippines more often?	1 Myself	2 Others
<b>On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is most frequent, please rate the following. Put 0 where it is N/A.</b>		
<b>4. In terms of frequency of contact</b>		
• Employer/Boss		
• Co-workers		
• Family/relatives in the Philippines		
• Family/relatives who are also in the host country		
• Family/relatives who are also abroad, but not in the host country		
• Friends in the Philippines		
• Friends in the host country		
• Friends in the countries other than the host and the Philippines		
• Housemates		
• Others, specify (for example, fiancé/boyfriend/girlfriend):		
• Philippine non-government organizations		
• Philippine government agencies		
• Host country non-government organizations		
• Host country government agencies		
• Private organizations that offer products and services for OFWs		
<b>5. Topics usually talked about</b>		
• Family		• News and happenings about OFWs
• Work		• Finances & remittances
• Life abroad		• Problems
• News about the host country		• Lovelife
• World news		• Future plans
• News about the Philippines		• Others, specify:
<b>6. Places where weekends are usually spent</b>		
• At home		• In the mall
• At work		• In the organization
• In the church		• Others, specify:
• In the park		
<b>7. Media used to communicate with people within the host country</b>		
• Traditional letters		• Phone cards
• E-mail		• Mobile phone
• Internet chat		• Texting
• Landline phone		• Others, specify:
<b>8. Media used to communicate with people in the Philippines or in other countries outside the host</b>		
• Traditional letters		• Phone cards
• E-mail		• Mobile phone
• Internet chat		• Texting
• Landline phone		• Others, specify:

<b>C. Organizational Communication</b>			
1. Are you a member of any organization in your host country?	1 Yes	2 No	
2. Are you a member of an OFW organization in your host country?	1 Yes	2 No (Proceed to C2)	
3. Are you a member of...	Any organization?	1 Yes	2 No
	An OFW organization?	1 Yes	2 No
<b>C.1. If a member of an organization.</b>			
4. What are these organizations?	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____		
5. What year did you join your first organization abroad?			
6. Who invited you? (Encircle all that apply.)	0 None/Own initiative 1 Employer 2 Co-worker 3 Family member/relative	4 Friend 5 Others, specify	
7. Do you pay any membership fees?	1 Yes, specify • Amount: _____ • Frequency: 1 Monthly 2 Annual 3 Others: _____		2 No
8. What activities do you do in the organization?	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____		
9. Why did you join? (Do not prompt.) (Then proceed to C3)	1 For information 2 For job openings 3 For networking 4 For credit & finance	5 For legal assistance 6 For socials 7 Others, specify	
<b>C.2. If not a member of an organization.</b>			
10. Why have you not joined any org?	1 Not interested 2 Not allowed 3 Don't know any	4 Too busy 5 Afraid of sanctions 6 Others, specify	
11. Do you intend to join any organization?	1 Yes	2 No	
<b>C.3. Extra-organizational activities.</b>			
12. Do you attend religious services?	1 Yes	2 No	
13. Do you participate in church social activities	1 Yes	2 No	
14. Why or why not? (Use codes in items 9 or 10)			
15. Have you participated in government-sponsored activities abroad?	1 Yes	2 No	
16. Why or why not? (Use codes in items 9 or 10)			

**D. Mass Media Use**

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is most frequent, please rate the following. Put 0 where it is N/A.				
Item	The Host Country	The Philippines	Other countries	
1. Newspaper from...				
2. Magazines from...				
3. Television shows from...				
4. Radio shows from...				
5. Internet Web sites from...				
6. Online chatting/chatrooms from...				
7. Movies in the cinema from...				
8. Movies on DVD/VCD from...				
9. Music from...				
<b>D.1. Favorites. Please state your top/first three favorites/recalled titles in each category, regardless of where they originate.</b>				
10. Newspapers	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____			
11. Magazines	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____			
12. Television shows	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____			
13. Radio shows	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____			
14. Internet Web sites	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____			
15. Public figures like politicians, actors, singers, others	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____			
<b>D.2. Purchases. Please state the three most recent items bought in each category</b>				
16. Movies (either in VCD or DVD)	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____			
17. Music (either in V/CD or cassette)	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____			
<b>D.3. Across media. Among print media, TV, radio and the Internet, where would you go for... (Check all that are mentioned.)</b>				
Which medium would you go for:	Print	TV	Radio	Internet
• Entertainment				
• Phil. news & info				
• Host country news & info				
• OFW news & info				
• Social events				



<b>D.4. Products, activities and services for OFWs. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is highest, please rate your level of use, participation, subscription or purchase of the following. Put 0 where it is N/A.</b>			
• Globe Kababayan		• TFC/GMA Pinoy TV	
• Cross-border pasa-load		• OFW E-card	
• Remittance by cellphone		• Inq7.net's Global Nation	
• Remittance through a bank		• Concerts abroad by Filipino celebrities	
• Remittance through pakipadala		• Movies on migrant workers (Milan)	
• Remittance by wire (Ex. Western Union)			
<b>Using the same scale above, rate the following, and specify the project/group/program where appropriate.</b>			
Item	Rating	Specify one	
• Labor Attache (LABAT) projects			
• Philippine embassy projects			
• OWWA Projects			
• Credit/Finance projects for OFWs			
• Absentee voting			
• Rally/protests abroad			
• Party list membership			
• Newspapers for OFWs			
• Radio programs for OFWs			
• E-groups/Yahoo groups			
• TV programs for OFWs			
<b>E. Media Use/Ownership</b>			
<b>While you are abroad, do you....</b> (Only ask for access when an item is not owned. In either case and in items where there is an asterisk, please specify whether the item is at home (H), at the office (O), or at a public place (P) such as a café.)		Own your personal...?	Have access to...?
1. TV Set			
2. Radio set			
3. Cable TV			
4. VCD/DVD Player			
5. Personal computer*			
6. Internet connection* (If the answer is yes, ask E2)			
7. Internet webcam			
8. Landline*			
9. Mobile phone with host country SIM			
10. Mobile phone with Phil. SIM			
11. Mobile phone with cam			
12. Digital/Video camera			
<b>E.1. Per month, how much (in US\$) do you spend on... (Filter items to ask based on answers above)</b>			
13. Cable & internet			
14. Phil. media products (TFC, DVD, newspapers)			
15. Landline connection for use within the host country			
16. Mobile phone for use within the host country			
17. International long distance calls			
18. International texting			
<b>E.2. For those who have internet access... ask</b>			
19. How many hours per day do you spend online?		Hours per day	
20. What do you do online? (No need to ask again if already answered previously)		1 Work research 2 Surf leisurely 3 Chat	4 Email 5 Others, specify

<b>F. Changing Use</b>		
Please state your level of agreement to the following statements, where 5 is strongly agree, 3 is neither/just the same, and 1 is strongly disagree. (Filter items to ask based on earlier answers)		
Since I started working abroad I have more often... (Mula noong ako ay nagsimulang mag-abroad mas madalas na akong...)		
21. Watched TV		22. Texted/Used SMS
23. Listened to the radio		24. Used landline telephones
25. Bought and read newspapers and magazines		26. Used mobile telephones
27. Bought more DVDs/VCDs		28. Kept in touch with world events
29. Used the Internet		30. Kept in touch with Philippine events
31. Chatted online		
<b>G. Issues in Migrant Work</b>		
<b>G1. Finances. What percentage of your monthly income do you...?</b>		
1. Send to the Philippines		4. Invest
2. Spend abroad		5. Invest on what?
3. Save		
<b>G2. Problems abroad</b>		
6. Have you had a problem, while you were abroad	1 Yes	No (Skip to F3)
7. If yes, what was your problem/s? (Encircle all that apply. Do not prompt.)	1 Contract problems 2 Assault 3 Disagreement with employer	4 Financial 5 Homesickness 6 Others, specify
8. Did you get help?	1 Yes	2 No
9. How or why?		
<b>G3. Travel. Do you travel for leisure/tourism?</b>		
10. In the Philippines	1 Yes	2 No
11. In the host country	1 Yes	2 No
12. In countries other than the Phils. & the host country	1 Yes	2 No
13. If the respondent answered yes to any of the last three items, ask for the places s/he last visited in the last three years:	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____ d. _____ e. _____	
14. Why or why not do you travel?		
<b>H. Attitude towards NCTs in general.</b>		
Please state your level of agreement to the following statements, where 5 is strongly agree, 3 is neither/just the same, and 1 is strongly disagree. (Filter items to ask based on earlier answers)		
Statement	Agreement	
1. I am able to exercise my duties to my family because of new communication technologies (NCT) such as the Internet, mobile phone, and TFC/GMA Pinoy TV.		
2. NCTs have not made being an OFW easier.		
3. I have a lot more options in keeping in touch with my family because of NCT.		
4. I am not able to use NCT because of lack of proficiency.		
5. I am a better parent/sibling because of NCT.		
6. NCT has introduced me to limited services for OFWs.		
7. NCT is an indispensable part of being an OFW.		
8. With NCT, my family members have become more dependent on me.		
9. I consider my spending on NCT part of my basic expenses.		
10. Even with NCTs, I still don't participate in family life in the Philippines.		
11. I feel like I am with my family because of NCT.		
12. NCT has made me more homesick.		
13. NCT gives me the sense of security of being in touch with my family.		
14. Spending on NCT is eating up a lot of my budget.		
15. I am in constant contact with my family because of NCT.		
16. Use of NCT is expensive so I rarely use them.		
17. The availability of online information gives me the feeling I am also in the Philippines.		
18. My say in how my remittances is spent in the Philippines is the same even with NCTs.		
19. NCTs enable me to exercise my being Filipino/Filipino identity.		
20. I am less updated with Philippine events because of NCT		

## Appendix B. INTERVIEW GUIDES

*For government and non-government organizations:*

1. What are your main projects for OFWs? Why did you choose these projects? How are these projects implemented?
2. How does communication figure in these projects?
3. What communication-specific projects do you have for OFWs?
4. How do you keep in touch with OFWs? Explore uses of mass media, organizational and interpersonal networks.
5. What has been the best way to reach them? What lessons have you learned from your projects in communicating with them?
6. What topics have been particularly easy to communicate? The most difficult?
7. How has your communication with OFWs changed in recent years? With the emergence of new communication services and technologies? With new government policies?
8. With what organizations do you work to help/communicate with OFWs?
9. What are your future plans?
10. Ask for sample IEC materials. Discuss the production and implementation process and results.

*For private companies:*

1. What campaigns and products do you have for OFWs? Why did you develop these projects?
2. How do you see OFWs as an audience? As customers? As venues for public service?
3. How much of your revenues come from OFWs themselves? Related audiences and services? How has this grown in recent years?
4. How has your communication with OFWs changed in recent years? With the emergence of new communication services and technologies? With new government policies?
5. With what organizations do you work to help/communicate with OFWs?
6. What campaigns have been successful? What lessons have you learned?
7. What are your future plans?
8. What (private, public, or non-government) organizations do you work with to reach/serve OFWs?
9. Ask/show sample ads. Discuss these.