

Filipino Seafarers and Transnationalism

Iris L. Acejo

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Declaration


This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Abstract

The study explores Filipino seafarers' integration and cross-border practices using a transnational paradigm. As seafarers' lives span the ship and the shore, a transnational framework entails looking at whether belongingness is manifested simultaneously and the extent to which this can be possible. The study's multi-sited approach considers both the everyday realities in the community and on board the ship including the transnational linkages they maintain and deploy to remain part of both realms. The analyses show that seafarers' repeated reincorporation and conformity in the community reflects how belongingness is largely constituted as aspirational at home. Integration on board, largely work-oriented and subject to a racialised hierarchy, favours less the social aspect of integration. The limited involvement in both contexts mutually reflects fringe belonging. Under conditions of high mobility, cross-border practices are constrained inasmuch as they are facilitated through access to communication technologies. The ties of reciprocity under extensive kin relations similarly accentuate the strain affecting connection at home. Such conflicting outcomes undermine the connectivity and continuity of social relations that is purportedly enhanced by linking across borders. Such ties are nonetheless employed as a strategy of counteracting labour insecurities despite the burden arising from such tenuous links. This thesis concludes that seafarers evince a form of transactional transnationalism such that they inhabit both worlds only if on board.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The Philippines remains the top supplier of seafarers for the global maritime industry. To date, the global demand for Filipino sailors is continuously growing and stands at around 339,608 making up a third of the total seafaring workforce (POEA 2010). The growing presence of Filipino seafarers in the globalised labour market poses key issues pertaining to the experiences of seafarers in relation to the nature of temporary migration and labour condition. Using the lens of transnationalism, this thesis explores the ways of living and working of seafarers. In particular, this includes understanding the extent, direction and scope by which seafarers remain connected to both the home community and the ship. More importantly, this opens a deeper understanding of integration of seafarers and the ways in which this is experienced within the unique working condition of the ship.

Given these, the primary goal of this thesis is to understand the extent to which seafarers are embedded on board the ship and on land. The following questions aim to fulfil this goal:

- 1.) Do seafarers experience double-belongingness?
- 2.) How are these manifested on board the ship and on land?
- 3.) How do they relate with others when on board and when on land?
- 4.) Do seafarers form a community on board a ship and on land?
- 5.) Is social cohesion manifested in these communities?
- 6.) To what extent are seafarers transnationals?

To address these questions this study will collect data from Filipino seafarers pertaining to the patterns of their work on board the ship and their activities when on land. In looking at the various aspects of their lives in both settings, the emphasis will be on the depth and level of their interactions.

Thesis Structure

This thesis explores the lives and work of Filipino seafarers in the context of ideas derived from the transnationalism literature. This opens up the possibility to reflect on the adequacy of transnationalism to capture the reality of seafarers' lives. The structure is as follows:

Chapter One briefly introduces the background of the study and presents the research questions.

Chapter Two discusses the research design of this study. It provides a description of the methodological tools utilised in the study and the justifications for their use. The accounts of seafarers and their wives are employed to address important issues pertaining to the dynamics of household affairs particularly the roles and responsibilities of household members. It also discusses the selection of the sample, research sites, research questionnaires, documentary sources, access negotiation, data analysis and ethical considerations for the study.

Chapter Three presents the review of the literature on transnationalism. It traces first the early conceptual developments in migration, analyses the different definitions that have evolved and then discusses the relevant dimensions of transnationalism that can be applied to seafarers. Salient issues that have plagued the conceptual understanding of transnationalism are also discussed and reflected upon.

Chapter Four describes the historical evolution of international labour migration in the Philippines. Additionally, it also traces the development of seafaring deployment in terms of the trends and dimensions of this contractual labour market. Significant phases of migration along with the migration policy of the state are also discussed.

Chapters Five to Seven present the empirical data collected from the community and on board the ship. Chapter Five depicts the nature of community membership among seafarers in terms of the socio-economic context of the town, colonial history and other factors affecting their everyday realities. Chapter Six looks at the purported connections and the mechanisms used by seafarers to establish contact with their family and

community and to find ways to retain a presence in the community. While the previous two chapters refer to communal links and embeddedness, Chapter 7 on the other hand, explores the nature of shipboard integration. The dual role of the ship as both a place of living and working is a unique feature for understanding integration. Additionally, how dimensions such as rigidly segmented hierarchy and the mix of nationality influence relations on board are explored to explain participation among seafarers.

Chapter Eight provides a discussion. The chapter mainly reflects on the pervasiveness of transnational linkages and the form these take on shore and on board. The wider issues in thinking about the transnationalism of Filipino seafarers are considered such as the nature of the relationships sustained and whether these are transformed.

Chapter Nine, the last section, provides suggestions for future research and reflects on the contribution of the thesis to the wider aspects of transnationalism and seafaring.

Chapter Two: Methods Chapter

2.1 Introduction

Certain features of seafarers work are highly distinctive from the working lives of other temporary migrants. Their exposure to two different environments (i.e. at sea and on shore) can provide challenges to “integration and embeddedness” and it is interesting to understand how they are accepted as part of the community. In particular, in this thesis, those social relationships that expand beyond national boundaries will be carefully examined. The focus is on how this is manifested among seafarers who work on long-haul voyages and who have only short stays on land.

This chapter aims to discuss the methods that I have adopted to answer the research questions that are detailed below:

1. To what extent are seafarers' transnationals?
2. Do seafarers experience double-belongingness?
3. How is this manifested on board the ship and on land?
4. How do they relate with others when on board and when on land?
5. Do seafarers form a community on board a ship and on land?

By posing these questions, my study can hopefully enrich the theoretical understanding of transnationalism while extending and developing its scope as applied to the occupational group of seafarers.

This chapter aims to provide a thorough exploration of the methodological underpinnings of the methods considered in the study and their appropriateness in eliciting effective information. The methods used in generating the data will also be discussed, including the reason why these methods will be used and their implications to the study. I will also describe the various data sources, including their selection and contribution in answering the research questions posed in this study. Finally, the ways

in which the data will be analysed will also be discussed, and attention will be given to the ethical issues considered in the study.

2.2. Sampling Procedures

Careful consideration of the data requirements is crucial in order to be able to address the research questions. This section aims to describe the nature of the sample, the criteria for selection, the research site, access negotiation and the questionnaire/interview guide that are used in this study.

2.2.1 The Sample and Research Sites

The fieldwork for this research principally involved Filipino seafarers and included both officers and ratings; however, while on board the ship a number of interviews with other nationalities were also conducted. There were three research sites for this study: a seafarer's dormitory in Manila, a rural community in Sta. Ana, Iloilo, Philippines, and on board a container ship as it travelled between Europe and Asia. The method that was used in this study was the semi-structured interview, which was complemented with a structured questionnaire and non-participant observation. The use of these methods has helped to counteract the potential weaknesses inherent to each of the methods when they are used separately (this will be described in more detail in the following section).

Table 2.1 Sample distribution by research sites

Research Site	Officers	Ratings	Seafarers' Wives	Total
Seafarers' Dormitory	16	14	-	30
Community	5	5	49	59
Ship	12	13		25
Total	33	32	49	114

Source: This study

The semi-structured interviews at the Pier One Seafarer's Dorm included a total of thirty seafarers, of whom there were sixteen officers and fourteen ratings. The dormitory

was conveniently located near Luneta Park, a place where most seafarers gather when looking for employment. Manning agencies can also be found in the surrounding areas, making the park a convenient place for seafarers to meet; for example, after their skill training. The dormitory is a migrant shelter that specifically caters for seafarers who come from the rural areas and who need to attend training or who need to complete documentary for their contracts. Although the nearby park may have been used as a potential source of interviewees, the seafarers who can be found there cannot generally commit to a one hour interview because they have to keep watch for the manning agency staff who are advertising jobs. In contrast, the seafarers in the dormitory are more able to give their time for an interview. Most of the seafarers in the dormitory have already finished their training and are waiting for agency information regarding their contract; hence, they would be more likely to be available for an interview. Consequently, the sample obtained in the dormitory consisted of transient seafarers who were in-between contracts. The interviews were conducted for the whole month of February 2008. On weekdays, the interviews were done in the afternoon and the early evening. This was done to ensure that seafarers were finished with their training. On the weekends, when most seafarers were in the dormitory, the interviews were conducted in the morning.

In order to consider seafarers' embeddedness in their shore-based communities I visited Sta. Ana where I interviewed a total of forty-nine seafarer wives of whom ten were interviewed with their partners as couples. My original initial plan to interview seafarers in the community was changed when I discovered, that most of the seafarers were out of town, either for leisure, training, or work. Consequently, I sought out seafarers' wives and if their husbands were present then I included them in the interview. I lived in the community for three months, commencing March 2008. Most of the wives interviewed were housewives but the sample also included wives who worked as teachers, nurses or businesswomen. The community in Iloilo was chosen because of the high number of seafarers concentrated there. This seafaring village is also known throughout the Philippines for the presence of large houses built by seafarers and other migrants. Another town, Cavite, which is close to Manila, also has a high concentration of seafarers living in the community; however, the town of Sta. Ana which has sustained migration over several generations provides a broader context for understanding the patterns and processes of integration and sense of belonging. The community's long-

term involvement in migration impacts on many aspects of Sta. Ana in terms of for instance attitudes to migration and webs of social ties which can bring together issues in terms of active participation in the community.

The shipboard fieldwork was conducted on a container ship and it lasted for forty-one days (i.e. 30 March to 10 May 2009). All twenty-five seafarers on the ship participated in the study. There were three nationalities on board the ship: Filipino, Indian and Sri Lankan. Out of the twenty-five seafarers, there were fourteen Filipinos, ten Indians and one Sri Lankan. In terms of ranks, among the twelve officers, there was one Filipino second mate, a Sri Lankan third mate and a Filipino electro cadet while the rest were Indians. There were about thirteen ratings, of whom one was Indian while the rest were Filipinos. We sailed from Europe to Asia via the Cape of Good Hope in order to avoid the rampant acts of piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

The term 'seafarers' in this study is used to describe those sailors who have experienced working on commercial ships, particularly ocean-going vessels. Seafarers who work on luxury passenger ships were not included. In addition, this study has also excluded fishermen from the sample because it aimed to interrogate the manner of social integration on board a vessel which undertakes long-haul, international voyages. In terms of seafaring positions, this study will focus on both officers and ratings.

Seafaring experience was another important dimension of the study, particularly in the conduct of interviews on land. A distinction was applied between seafarers who were relatively new (e.g. who had one to two years of experience) and those who have been working as a seafarer for three to five years or more. By having two major groups, it was possible to ascertain the manner and depth of relationship on board ship and to understand how the passage of time has reinforced or weakened their social relationship. It has also provided confidence in extending some questions to other relevant dimensions, such as manner of adjustment and integration. In addition, time specific-questions pertaining to frequency and intensity may differ between groups; thereby, ensuring that this study has included a range of views and perspectives.

The choice of sample and research site for this study was guided by practical considerations and included consideration of the likely credibility and thoroughness of

the results. For example, the seafarers' presence on land was found to be sporadic and highly dependent on their contractual commitments. This raised the practical importance of prioritising time and significantly figured with regard to their participation in the research. For instance, some of the seafarers, although willing to take part in the study, had to decline due to the hectic pace of their schedules. A similar situation occurred in getting the seafarers' wives to participate in the study. Consent to participate did not automatically translate to availability. Constant communication helped in gaining their participation and served as a signal of commitment to the research. Informing the town's mayor and the director of the planning department also helped to establish the researcher's trustworthiness in the local community. A number of wives during the course of the interview asked whether this step had first been completed.

2.2.2 Access Negotiation

2.2.2.1 Dormitory and Community Fieldwork

Before conducting the interviews in the dormitory I negotiated access with the manager of the seafarer dormitories. Initial contact was made through a one-page letter that detailed my qualifications as a researcher and the salient aspects of my research. Seafarers were then informed about the study and they were asked if they wanted to participate. An information sheet was passed around regarding my purpose and the nature of the interview (see Appendix One).

When researching in the community I took the crucial step of making an appointment with the director of the town's planning department. I prepared a letter about my research in order to have a formal introduction. Subsequently, I cultivated a good relationship with my two key informants: my landlady and another resident whom I met randomly in the town. The importance of informal networks greatly facilitated the initial contact I had with my landlady and with the community in general. Barrett and Cason (2010:54) noted that such approach is "important in rural areas" and, therefore, seeking out help from available social networks is convenient and is also reliably safe. Furthermore, the broader prospects that can arise from local contacts and information

can be useful in the course of a research project. As an entry point in the community, referrals from relatives proved helpful in choosing where to stay and in identifying the seafaring households in the town.

Securing trust from these wives was made less difficult by my key informant's reputation as a respected retired teacher and a long-time resident in the community. Hence, in negotiating access she would call the wives first to tell them about my work in the community and then if they agreed to talk to me she would pass the phone to me so that I could personally make my request known. The ensuing referrals from the wives facilitated a smooth arrangement and removed initial doubt about my credibility as a student researcher. The lengthy and formal introduction was quickly glossed over by the wives who would generally require detailed information about the research as well as about my personal and academic background. Having been introduced through someone from within the community the wives were generally more welcoming. I was even invited to certain celebrations, such as birthdays and festivals. In attending these various events, I was able to meet further members of the local community. During my ninety day stay in the community, I was able to participate in many such occasions (including funerals) and I was also able to observe other ritualised events (e.g. St. Joseph Novena processions), which made certain practices, as well as my presence, more familiar.

My landlady and her immediate family paved the way for introducing me to the immediate neighbourhood and, in particular, to the seafarers' wives. As an important source of information on seafaring families, my landlady was the single most crucial contact in setting up an interview owing to the trust that the seafarers' wives confer on her and her family as a whole. However, a possible problem with this strategy, according to Flick (1998:59), in citing Hildenbrand (1991), is the nature of information and topics that may be disclosed:

‘...the stranger the field, the more easily may researchers appear as strangers, whom the people in the study have something to tell which is new for the researcher.’

As a newcomer in the community, my reliability as a researcher was associated with my informant. Without her help the other seafarers' wives who could have freely shared

some sensitive information may have avoided doing so and, hence, the nature of the discussion might have been more limited. The informant's background may have influenced the extent of the information that the wives felt they could divulge given what they perceived as appropriate and respectable.

At the onset, where the process of gaining access to families and individuals primarily involves establishing reliability and trustworthiness as a researcher, the value of having an informal back-up is vital. However, having an informal sponsor, whether as a purveyor of trust or as a way to limit involvement in other groups, poses a challenge in terms of what level of intimacy to create. Therefore, in this study I maintained a certain distance between myself and my landlady in order to allay any problems that may arise from undue close association. This technique can also be used to gain knowledge about the community's personalities. As Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont (2003: 51) pointed out, the practical and personal need for a "marginal membership, socially tolerated and free to come and go" must be balanced with a professional gap to prevent over-rapport. At the early stage of the research creating familiarity is valuable to establish a feel of what behaviour to adopt and to learn the modes of socialisation that are expected from an outsider. What information I could be entrusted with as a researcher depended on the manner in which I conducted myself as a student researcher in the community. This was particularly important in a tightly-knit community where information spreads fast, such that behaviour in one context (for instance, with my landlady) could quickly be misinterpreted and could curtail efforts to obtain a fruitful relationship in other contexts.

The demands of the present study were also considered. In reflecting on classic community studies (such as Liebow 1967; Warner 1958), Whyte (1984) mentioned that a strategy of access through informal gatekeepers should anticipate the breadth and depth of the research. For instance, in studying the whole community, the informants' social class background can be restricting in terms of who gets to be part of the study. As seafaring households may be differentially placed between social classes according to their phases of life, how this can be reflected on the study depends to some extent on the informants' referrals. Since this study was not limited to a single key informant, wider access to seafarer wives was made possible by using two other informants. The first informant was a teacher who helped me to make contact with those seafarer wives who were also employed as teachers. He planned the houses that we could visit and then

discussed with me the basic characteristics of the wives in order to confirm whether they were suitable to be part of my sample. Where most of the wives he referred to lived far from the town proper, his guidance in getting to their houses was very useful. He also ensured my safety by waiting for me to finish the interviews. The other informant was considered to be a returnee to the community. He previously lived and worked for a long time in another city and only visited this community occasionally. His wide range of views was valuable in terms of framing certain practices from an outsider's perspective, which provided understanding and sensitivity on certain traditions and practices. As has been noted by others, as an observer entering a relatively unfamiliar community, acceptance in the social scene as an initial form of access is "analytically and personally important" (May 1997:141). In the later stage of the research where broader social circulation is more manifest, adopting particular roles and identities demands more attention in terms of how field relations are negotiated, which will be discussed in more detail in the section on interviewing that follows.

2.2.2.2 Shipboard Fieldwork

This study has considered two major approaches to gain entry to the ship, which are whether to enter the workplace as a researcher or as an employee. Whyte (1984:62) has described that the dilemma of entering the workplace as a researcher is "how to explain our purposes in a way that satisfies the gatekeeper and yet does not distort or unduly limit the nature of the study." A formal arrangement requiring permission from an organisation's official gatekeeper is different to negotiating access to a community, which initially requires acceptance (as discussed earlier). In this study, the first step to gain access on board the ship was to contact the manning agency which provided crew to the vessel regarding the research interest and the objectives of the research on board. Sullivan and Cornfield (1982) in their study of access to large firms emphasised how negotiating access with top management clarifies the role of the researcher and dispels some forms of mistrust through the guarantee of anonymity (Lee 1993). In the same way that anonymity is provided to the individuals interviewed, anonymity should also be extended to the company so as not to impede access. In this study anonymity was assured when the letter of request to conduct the fieldwork on board ship was sent. Showing consideration to what the management may deem sensitive communicates a

serious intent with regard to the conduct of the study. Building trust, according to Flick (1998), becomes a practical option given that the divergence of interests between the researcher and the management will always remain.

The help extended by a colleague from the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) at Cardiff University, who was able to give me a direct referral to the agency's fleet manager, also facilitated access. The presence of an informal sponsor who also has a major role as a patron "helps to secure the trust of those in the setting" (Lee, 1993: 131). Feldman et al. (2003) notes that referral from someone belonging to the community invokes a guarantee. The same role was accorded to my colleague whose good relationship with a primary gatekeeper helped established my status as a legitimate researcher. The working relationship that developed involved a dedicated administrative assistant who coordinated the bureaucratic requisites within the shipping company and who also liaised with the ship's agent (which operates under another company) and the captain (of the ship chosen), who were likewise crucial to the physical entry of the ship. It is within these levels of access within organisations that Reeves's (2010) experience of negotiating access through a probation hostel manager raised the importance of how formal and informal gatekeepers determine the course of the research owing to the on-going nature of gaining entry. In addition, he placed emphasis on how a gatekeeper in a mid-level position (such as a hostel manager) can limit access to other higher-level gatekeepers and, therefore, pose difficulty to accessing the participants. This form of complication was not met in this study because of the supportive attitude of the fleet manager. The fleet manager handled communication to the operations manager and the key staff located in the main headquarters. The direction and flow of information consequently relied on the fleet manager who, in the first phase of access to the ship, sought cooperation from a number of different gatekeepers. After this was arranged, coordination for getting on board was undertaken with the fleet manager's assistant.

The specific shipboard environment that the study required was disclosed through repeated contacts with the assistant, which were made either by phone or by e-mail. Gaining permission to go on board was a separate task to identifying which ship was suitable to conduct the research on; however, it was nonetheless demanding. Essential details pertaining to the crew mix, port calls and timing (e.g. when to board and leave the ship) required some forbearance on the company's side. In particular, the

requirements were for a mixed nationality crew ship that would have Filipino officers and ratings, would ply the Europe to Asia route only, and which would take at most a month's voyage. The route requirement was difficult since most ships do not have a fixed route and can, on short notice, suddenly alter their destination. It was a necessary specification however due to immigration rules and regularities.

Visa restrictions played a major role in coordinating my joining the ship. Applying for the necessary visas can take a considerable amount of time and tends to be unpredictable in terms of the duration provided. In this study I asked the manning agency if they could find a ship that would have the least chance of going to America because applying for a US visa would take a further two months. Since I would have to wait until the European Schengen visa was issued before I could apply to the US Embassy, this process would greatly delay the conduct of my research. My first application for a Schengen visa in the Netherlands Embassy failed to get me on board a ship in the Port of Rotterdam in February 2009 because I was only granted a five day single entry tourist visa, despite making a three month visa request. In my second attempt I asked for supporting letters from the agency. Filling in the Schengen visa application form posed a little difficulty because I could not find myself in any of the visa categories (e.g. I was not a tourist and I did not come under the business category). Since all Schengen states technically require a return ticket and hotel booking as part of the visa application, I called the embassy seeking their help and assurance that purchasing only a one-way ticket to Brussels and having no booking for accommodation would not determine rejection of the visa. Since I could not ascertain beforehand where I would sign off from the ship, I had to ensure that my case would be fairly considered. Although it was not necessary to include a cover letter, I wrote them a letter about my previous contact with one of the staff at the embassy and explained in detail the purpose of my study. This time, I applied at the Belgium embassy since I was advised by the agency that the ship would dock in the port of Antwerp. In the second application, I also included a medical certificate stating that I was not pregnant and I also included an immunisation booklet detailing all of the vaccines I had taken in order to proceed with the trip. After about three weeks, I was given a multiple entry, six-month Schengen visa.

My preparations to apply for a Schengen visa only started around January 2009, six months after the community fieldwork in Sta. Ana was conducted. This delay was due to the wait that I had in renewing my UK visa; before I could apply for the Schengen visa, I had to make sure that I still had more than six months UK visa validity. Meanwhile, I also had to wait towards the end of the UK visa expiry before I could apply for its renewal. I started preparing all of the necessary documents in early September 2008. I finally obtained my UK visa in the second week of January 2009, which signalled that I could start preparing for the Schengen visa application. Consequently, the shipboard fieldwork only started in April 2009, ten months after the completion of the community fieldwork in May 2008. Considering the two month time allotted for the data analysis, the fieldwork on the ship was effectively delayed for about eight months. The various procedural requirements and the accompanying paper work regarding the visa effectively stalled my fieldwork timetable for this period.

It should be noted that this was not the first manning agency that I approached when looking for a ship. The first agency I approached was unable to place me on a ship that would not sail to the US; hence, I looked for other agencies that would get me on board with the least complications. Although I anticipated that shipboard entry would be more formidable compared to gaining access to the manning agencies, being affiliated with SIRC at Cardiff University helped me to gain access to a number of vital institutions. Afterwards, practical tips on the conduct of on board research were keenly sought and readily accessed from other researchers who have conducted similar studies. In addition, the studies and experiences of senior researchers and fellows provided expertise on the proper conduct of interviews and observations in a predominantly male environment.

Conducting the study on board the ship also presented a challenge to access by way of gaining the consent of the seafarers. Permission from the head of the shipping office did not necessarily equate to approval from the seafarers. The captain as the primary gatekeeper was key to getting social access on board because he is the head of the on board hierarchy and he has the power to influence the shipboard culture. Yet, the possibility that entry may still be limited or even denied at this stage from other seafarers requires another trust-building endeavour. The transition from physical to social access, with the latter presenting more of a challenge, highlights the dynamics of bridging the distance between the researcher and the researched (Lee 1993). Seeking

permission from all those involved in the research is frequently advised. Aside from being an act of courtesy, the goodwill and the rapport that it creates is crucial to cultivating harmonious relations in the conduct of the study (Randall, Harper and Rouncefield 2007). As such, and in line with the reflection of other researchers I found that the experience of shipboard access was a “full-time occupation” (Sampson and Thomas 2003: 173).

Having recognised this problem early on, my first task on board the ship was to become familiarised with each of the crew. I introduced myself to the crew after speaking with the two highest officials on the ship (i.e. the captain and the chief engineer). I soon learned that the crew were not properly informed of my purpose on the ship, which created some tension. Consequently, the first two weeks became a series of introductions with the crew members and a process of familiarisation with the ship’s social terrain. I tried to be ‘low key’ in this period by not conducting interviews and focusing instead on providing information about the focus of the study to all of the seafarers on board. In order to gain assurance that I was not sent by their manning agency to keep an eye on their work performance, I presented them with my Cardiff University identification card and a letter about my status as a PhD student. In other words, the preliminary task of establishing rapport was two-fold in terms of establishing my presence not only as a researcher but also as a ‘friend’ that they could trust with their stories. By quickly realising that the seafarers were ignorant of my study, I was able to preclude suspicions and disappointments for both parties.

2.3. Data Collection

2.3.1 Qualitative Method

I employed a mixture of methods, namely: structured interview, semi-structured interview, and non-participant observation. The research questions of this study dictated the appropriateness of the use of more than one method. Since this study endeavoured to understand the extent of the seafarers’ belonging in communities and on board ship, a qualitative mode of inquiry was deemed to be a suitable method for exploring the various ways by which this was experienced. Interviews and observations were

primarily used in understanding two different social worlds. The interviews which “yield rich insights into people’s experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes, or feelings” (May 1997: 109) were given context and more depth through observations of routines, and through experience of norms and values. Patton (2002: 264) further notes that enhanced understanding from observations is valuable in the analysis stage due to “impressions that go beyond what can be fully recorded in even the most detailed fieldnotes.” What fundamentally links the interviews with the observations is how certain spoken actions may have different meanings depending on the context in which they are performed (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont 2003). The use of a variety of methods ensured that the limitations found in one method could be compensated for by the other method. The rationale for the choice of these will now be discussed in detail in the subsections which follow.

2.3.1.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

This study primarily used semi-structured interviewing in gathering data. To truly understand the experiences of seafarers and the collective processes occurring within a social and cultural context required interviewing which was not limited to categorical responses. Rubin and Rubin (1995: 76) elaborates on this as a way to “understand what the person thinks and grounds the answers in his or her experiences to give us nuance, precision, context and evidence all at the same time”, which is the benefit of qualitative interviewing in this present study. Understanding the experiences of seafarers and the forces surrounding their “belongingness” requires a rounded view of the meaning of everyday routines. This can be obtained through an approach that elicits vivid descriptions from the seafarers’ experiences by way of stories, explanations and examples. Revealing the complexity of the seafarers’ experiences required a method to can explore their feelings and opinions aligned with the transnationality context.

As I have neither experienced living in a rural community nor experienced being on board a commercial ship, it was practically impossible to anticipate all of the relevant questions through the literature alone. The additive and flexible feature of the semi-structured interview, therefore, allowed the interviewees to provide richer accounts that would have not been the case had I used a more structured method (Rubin and Rubin

2005). The level of freedom in terms of the sequencing and wording of the questions helped in ensuring that personal or sensitive questions such as marital adjustments or financial capabilities would not inhibit free discussion. Since the type of information elicited from a discussion can be affected by subject-specific characteristics (such as their age, sex and accent) being able to actively control the interview situation allowed more detailed understanding of the seafarers' relationships and responsibilities (May 2001).

From reading the literature, I appreciated the importance of establishing rapport for a smooth flow of discussion (Arksey and Knight 1999). Since my questions touched on the personal lives of the seafarers, the conversational nature of the approach which I adopted (Lofland and Lofland 2006) allowed access to the seafarers' world with ease. They were also able to provide a thorough understanding of the seafarers' situation viewed from their own perspectives. Effective conversational skills and sensitivity to what the interviewees communicated nonverbally (including the tone of voice, emphasis and emotional quality) were paramount. Interpreting the "interviewee's demeanour, visual and spatial dynamics" was also important for data gathering purposes as well as for the creation of an engaging environment (Mason 2002: 75).

Being a novice or a 'foreigner' and a lone female researcher in an all-male workplace, I needed to familiarise myself with the work culture and the proper code of conduct (written and unwritten) governing the ship. Certain expectations regarding the degree of movement in and around the ship were followed. I made sure that I conducted myself appropriately by not attracting too much attention as 'feminine.' Sampson and Thomas (2003) in conducting their shipboard study went so far as managing private spaces (such as their cabins) to deflect gender stereotypes during their on board study. They further noted that the act of establishing rapport with seafarers was quite complicated because sexism and long-term containment on board could potentially prompt seafarers to opportunistically attempt to derive some form of sexual power over female researchers. Such situational risks, or the risks brought about by one's presence on the site, could be further magnified given the potential hazards of the ship as a dangerous setting.

Careful consideration of this array of risks was crucial to my positionality as the only female on board in initiating and sustaining a relationship with the seafarers. The degree

of engagement with seafarers was continually and consciously regarded in gender terms. This included, for instance, decisions made about the proper interview sites and managing the time spent in informal conversations to avoid malicious gossip, which sometimes appears to be one of the favourite pastimes on board. Satellite phones and a list of helpful contacts (e.g. guardians and supervisors) were readily available during my research on board in order to be prepared for unlikely events while sailing (such as physical and emotional predicament).

In the community my age was taken into account in approaching the wives and the seafarers. The etiquette of the interview in the community considers age-related assumptions, such as showing signs of respect for seniority such as attaching 'po' or 'opo' or its variant 'ho' or 'oho' when communicating to older people. Although the community does not use this when conversing in their local dialect, this is expected from a stranger in the community because this is widely considered to be a gesture of respect, either when talking to someone older or with someone who is unfamiliar. Since most of my participants were older than I was, I made sure that such local indicators of respect were employed, even though some participants responded using their local dialect. To be in accord with the community's value for respect and honour was one way of establishing myself as someone who can be trusted to uphold social codes with the hope that this will smooth the way to a supportive relationship. My gender, on the other hand, mediated the extent of the wives' and seafarers' openness. For example, in a separate interview involving a couple, although the wife extensively discussed the financial support that they give to their relatives, her husband considered it a private matter and gave only very general answers. Since issues of finance and dealing with relatives are traditionally a female domain within the community, my female gender communicated a sense of affinity with most female participants which was very helpful to the interview process. In some interviews, the intersection of my age and gender also figured in how, for instance, younger wives turned more to stories of managing their husband's drinking or going out with friends as pertinent to the topic of coping and managing with household concerns.

The conduct of interviews in the community was made easier by my knowledge of one of its dialects (i.e. Ilonggo). This became apparent in the conduct of interviews among the seafarers' wives, who normally converse in the Ilonggo dialect. I was, therefore,

able to clarify the meaning of certain words in Filipino during the interview. My knowledge of the Ilonggo dialect also helped me to identify certain nuances and explain some of the questions which may have been considered to be vague. For instance, questions which refer to coping from being away from their husbands were expressed in detail. Being able to know some of the local words pertaining to attitudes or behaviours made it easier for the participants to understand the nature of the questions being asked. It also made them more open in expressing themselves in the Ilonggo dialect because they were confident that the meaning was clearly imparted and understood within the assumption of similar cultural or moral beliefs. Equally, it also made them more comfortable in discussing certain private issues because they were aware that I could follow sentences that were purposely left hanging. For example, in discussing remittances, the wives sometimes indirectly referred to one of its uses by hanging a sentence and saying, 'you know...' There was a sense of guilt involved in their replies because some financial matters were concealed from their husbands (e.g. allotments to parents or siblings). Some of the wives, therefore, deliberately left that information out of their sentences, not necessarily to distance themselves from discussing it but to highlight the circumstantial force surrounding it. Since they were able to relate to me as someone who could pick up the impulses within such behaviour (i.e. the necessity of such an action from a moral, cultural and even economic standpoint), detailed explanations instead of a more neutral representation of their experiences were freely shared. Similar outcomes could result when the interviewees' responses mainly focused on the roles expected of them.

Significant effects on responses to certain questions concerning race, class and gender were also carefully considered given that the literature highlights the potential for such variables to have an impact on data collection (Fielding and Thomas 2001). For instance, when interviewing male seafarers it was very important to understand the threat potential of some questions and how these may impact on the interviewees. It was also necessary to be aware of how men responded to these questions as well as their accompanying behaviour. The context of locality also mattered. The seafarers who were interviewed on board the ship or in the dormitory revealed more about their financial strategies than those I talked to in the community. Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2001a, 2001b) point out that the success of interviews involving men relies on an awareness of the possible struggles for control and the effective use of strategies to get around them.

Relatedly, similar sensitivity was observed in asking questions from the seafarers' wives. Certain assumptions regarding normalcy of their community activities (e.g. pastimes) were thoughtfully evaluated to avoid intrusion. For example, playing certain card games or going to the cockpit were considered inappropriate for women. Such concerns were considered in the conduct of the interview.

The literature also highlights the extent to which being unwary of cultural assumptions can be a serious drawback of interviewing. Ordinary words or events narrated can potentially contain pithy insights that might go unnoticed yet be of importance to the topic at hand (Rubin and Rubin 1995). The seafarers' grasp or understanding of a certain word could be different from my understanding of it. The complexity of cross-cultural interviewing leaves itself open to the dangers of "misinterpretations and miscommunications" especially for studies of short-term duration (Patton, 2002: 392). Despite the use of English on board the ship, the shipboard culture has its own set "maritime speak," including set of norms, values and including social taboos that may impede accurate representation of their realities. To avoid misconstrued meanings and ignored undertones, I was cautious in my interpretation and I always asked participants to provide examples on certain topics. My own beliefs regarding the degree of belongingness of seafarers on land and sea may have prevented me from dealing objectively with them. The field notes proved useful in this context in continually reflecting and criticising the assumptions surrounding the interview, which helped me to later refine the implications of the research findings.

There was also an issue pertaining to my responsibility as an interviewer. In an endeavour to pursue certain questions in greater depth, it was highly likely that I might pull the discussion in the expected direction; thereby, severely limiting the study's contribution. This problem was also raised by Mason (2002), who pointed to how a researcher's influence extends to the quality of research process and its impact on the data. Before going to the interview, my own set of assumptions regarding seafarers' way of life may have affected the way that the questions were framed. In order to avoid the researcher bias in this method, I also recorded in my field notes my own state of mood and emotion after every interview. Such consideration became helpful in the analysis and prevented the possibility of manoeuvring the discussion towards expected responses. A detailed record of my own set of assumptions and beliefs was, therefore,

helpful in delineating the scope, specificity, depth and focus of the questions; thereby, raising credible issues on the validity of my research.

Although structured interviews cannot be the main method, they were helpful in collecting personal data information from the seafarers. Consequently, this justified the use of structured interview in this study. Information such as status, number of children, family size, years of experience, how contact is maintained (e.g. telephone and mail) was easily collected since it was properly laid out in a questionnaire with boxes that the participants could easily tick. This also saved time and gave me an opportunity to look at a seafarer's profile and get the feel, more or less, of how to approach them. This enabled me to tailor my discussion depending on the seafarer's background. In addition, I was also able to probe deeper on relevant themes that directly concerned the participants. For example, the intensity of contact with families back home differed between the seafarers who are married and who are the main breadwinner of the family, and those who are single. Consequently, although it could not wholly answer the research questions above, the use of a structured interview provided specific knowledge and information on seafarers. In other words, it imparted clarity and put into context specific circumstances surrounding the seafarers' situations.

2.3.1.2 Non-Participant Observation

In addition to the use of interviews, I also employed non-participant observation method, both when on board ship and when in the local village of Sta. Ana. The non-participant observation method, which is also referred to as simple or unstructured observation, has allowed me to record events without necessarily taking part in the activities of those being observed. The use of fieldnotes in particular has provided critical reflections about the particularities surrounding seafarers' way of living and working. This method of observation is often used in the exploratory stage of a research project. In this present study, it was used "to get a feel of the physical surroundings and how they impact on the social life of the community" (Payne and Payne 2004: 158).

The non-participant observation technique is distinct from the method of participant observation that requires the researcher to be part of the context being studied. The emic perspective generated from this participant observation requires the researcher to assume a specific role in order to be part of the setting studied. Meanwhile, the researcher's identity is often concealed. Non-participant observation is different in terms of the level of detachment from the participants and in this study my "position was clearly defined and different from that of the subjects" (Sarantakos 2005: 220). Non-participation observation was found to be a suitable method to capture the type of human activity that I wished to observe (i.e. the uninterrupted daily undertakings of the seafarers' work routines). Although participant observation could have been used in this study, it was rejected for a number of reasons. Firstly, participant observation would have required me to pose as a seafarer. Given the time constraints and my gender, this would have been difficult to achieve. Secondly, participant observation fulfilled no real goal, methodologically speaking, because I only wished to substantiate the conversations from the semi-structured interviews with seafarers rather than attempt to live out transnational relations. Thirdly, the setting on board the ship required a method that would not heavily interfere with the intensive work schedules and which would allow the seafarers to freely perform their daily duties. A number of previous studies have employed similar approaches to organisational research and they have been able to identify the culture of the workforce within a hierarchical setting as well as identifying the overall relationship within the organisation (e.g. Piore 1983, Van Maanen 1988). Researching in a natural setting meant that I was able to understand the values, assumptions and norms surrounding the seafarers' behaviours.

Given the above concerns on the use of participant observation, I will now discuss the benefits of using the non-participant observation method in my study. One of the advantages of the use of the non-participant observation method in this study is that I was able to be privy to repetitive activities without disrupting the normal flow of events. In addition, non-participant observation enabled me to gain a perspective of the dynamics on board ship that were not able to be revealed through the interviews. This ultimately relates to the validity of my research because I was able to familiarise myself with the environment on board the ship. This was an effective way of checking the extent of the validity of the accounts gathered from the seafarers, at least in their life on board. Since my previous experience of life on board ships was limited to short inter-

island travels within the Philippines, this voyage gave me a significant perspective regarding how the seafarers lives were spent on board long-haul, ocean-going voyages. Although my knowledge regarding life on board ship was not totally inexistent, owing to my many friends and relatives who have worked as seafarers, the information within my grasp was not sufficient, especially when I started doing the analysis of my transcripts. Having a complementary research tool (such as a simple observation) has allowed me to arrive at a much better understanding of the interview material that I gathered.

Since I disclosed my identity as a researcher in this study, the non-participant observation method accommodated various ways of recording information. In particular, I used field notes and a digital voice recorder to record the data. The advantage of this was that I was able to simultaneously collect and analyse my data. The relative degree of flexibility of this method helped me to smooth the progress of my data collection and paved the way for easy capture of data. Another key strength of this approach was the avoidance, to some extent, of going native, at least in the context of not having a participant's status. In this way, I was able to maintain objectivity and avoid tainting the research data.

There were, however, some disadvantages in the use of the non-participant observation method. Payne and Payne (2004) raised two shortcomings of the non-participant method, which are: selective perception and the Hawthorne or observer effect. Although it may be said that the tendency to selectively perceive was always present, I did take some steps in order to minimise imposing my own subjective interpretation. In addition to the opportunity to 'sensitise' myself to the setting, this also required a certain level of skill in how best to observe the seafarers whose working and living arrangements are by their nature inseparable. In determining how best to understand the language and culture of the seafarers a number of preparations (insofar as background reading and conversations with seafarers may permit) were carried out. With regard to my involvement, my mere presence prevented seafarers from acting naturally. Indeed, how I presented myself as a female researcher was important. Anticipating shipboard scenarios through the help of my supervisors and colleagues from SIRC and documenting any potential bias in the fieldnotes were undertaken to minimise these effects.

Much of what I wanted to observe on board pertained to the dynamics of social relations of seafarers with each other. In order to do this, I allotted forty days to watch and observe seafarers in the environment on board the ship. The observations on board looked at how the seafarers perform their duties and what happens afterwards (i.e. recreation). Where the officers and ratings had different work schedules, I apportioned my time appropriately in observing these different groups. In the course of the observation, I also needed to be alert for those situations where social relations across ranks could occur. In order to do this I fixed times when I could witness routine events. Observation commenced the moment that the seafarers started their duty. The entertainment area was another of the many places where observation was conducted. Where occupational hierarchy was strong in this type of work, I expected off-duty social interaction to be minimal but not absent. Therefore, I arranged observations at different times of the day in order to gather a complete picture of how the seafarers live and work.

Observations in the local village centred on seafarers' roles as part of a community, such as: their social interactions, the nature of their relationship with their families, friends and relatives, social networks and quality of membership in clubs and other organisations. The ways that the seafarers were incorporated in their community and the depth of their involvement were specifically noted. Interviewing the seafarers' wives provided an opportunity to determine how the seafarers are regarded within their community and the subsequent roles they play.

Observations in the seafarers' dormitory were not conducted owing to the lack of sufficient interaction relevant to the study. The seafarers in the dormitory would only stay there for a brief period of time. In such fleeting condition, creating and sustaining attachment is difficult to achieve and as such seafarers will typically consider each other as strangers.

2.3.2 Data Sources

Investigation of the dynamic role of a seafarer necessitated secondary data analysis alongside the qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts. The questions asked here pertained to the past, present and future events particularly in the community. The retrospective accounts of the participants, as drawn from different frames of reference, provided multiple perspectives and contexts; thereby, enhancing the analytic strength of the data, which was nevertheless still open to recall bias. This was in addition to the likelihood that people, for various reasons, can sometimes fabricate answers. From a methodological viewpoint, I had to be wary of prior assumptions that would lead me to put undue weight on one account over another. The differences in context had to be emphasised as I had no warrant for privileging one account over the other (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont 2003). The forms of secondary data that were used in this study are described in detail in the subsections that follow.

2.3.2.1 Secondary Data

The 2007 Overseas Employment Statistics released by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency provided secondary data on the deployment of seafarers by rank and by vessel type, including total Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). The 2005 BIMCO/ISF Manpower 2005 Update was also used in determining the worldwide demand for, and supply of, seafarers. The general seafaring situation was gathered from the aforementioned sources and was likewise helpful in determining multiple perspectives and contexts; thereby, enhancing the analytic strength of the data.

2.3.2.2 Public Documents

Prior to the fieldwork in Sta. Ana, I also read the following documents in order to gain general knowledge of the town:

1. History of Sta. Ana (from the Official Website of the Municipality of Sta. Ana);
2. Sta. Ana Local Government Unit Profile (from the Official Website of the Municipality of Sta. Ana);

3. 2002 Accomplishment Report CY 2002 Municipality of Sta. Ana, Province of Iloilo; and,
4. Sta. Ana Annual Budget 2007.

2.3.2.3 Newspapers, Magazines, and Articles

In this study, newspapers, magazines, and articles were used to illuminate the relevance, scope and relations between events and so establish the relevant outlook impinging on the seafarers. Pronouncements by the Philippine government on certain labour issues were also gathered from these sources.

Secondary materials were used in order to establish the socio-economic profiles of seafarers. The selection of documents to be used in the analysis broadly followed the strategy outlined in Macdonald (2001), which includes: authenticity credibility, and representation and authenticity.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data were analysed using a thematic approach to study the interviews. Emergent themes identified during the fieldwork were refined by categorising and identifying examples. By coding the data, I was able to explore the “structure of differences in interpretations and experiences among people, events and interactions, and in the lives of the participants” (Ezzy 2002: 103). Two major strengths of the grounded theory approach are capitalised upon by this present study, which are: effectiveness in the analysis process and the ease by which contextual issues can be linked to the phenomenon under investigation. Although the interviews were conducted with seafarers, the economic and political context was of equal interest. This was studied by looking at the “interplay between what is going on at the national level and what was going on at the biographical level as reflected in the experiences and responses of these persons” (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 184).

Meanings and patterns found in the text were analysed together with other themes which arose during the interview. The practice of linking codes is not simply a mechanistic procedure but it also opens up further relationships to explore (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). The nature of the research questions required segmenting the data into themes and concepts, recognising the relationship between them, and then unifying them into a substantive interpretation of how seafarers carry out their lives. The keyword notes taken during the interview were checked against the transcribed interviews and then converted into themes. The field notes used throughout the duration of the study were useful for noting the different aspects of the theory that had emerged from the data and for linking the categories to each other.

What made this approach appropriate for this study was the “procedure of re-testing evolving ideas to validate or negate them” (Payne and Payne 2004: 101). The continual comparison of the interviews (e.g. coding the second interview with the first interview in mind) up to the theoretical saturation that was referred to by Glaser and Strauss (1967) has highlighted the dimensions or conditions of the concepts; thereby, opening new perspectives or patterns and improving the validity of this research. Studying the data as it emerged was important in pointing to the “cyclical or spiral perception of the research process, with concept development, data collection and data analysis taking place in close conjunction and feeding into each other” (Blaxter et al. 1997: 189). The iterative nature in this analysis required the use of the NVivo 8 software program, which is useful for categorising the concepts gleaned from the codes. All the transcribed transcripts were imported into the N-vivo (Version 8) program. I began by identifying topics, themes and issues regarding transnational practices and then assign initial codes. I am aware that the range and relevance of my experience when I first undertook the basic coding was reflected in the initial coding. As I became immersed in the data and as I gained enough information, I altered the codes to reflect properly the substance of the interview. The coded text segments were then re-read to identify basic themes. Codes that reflect differences or contradictions for a particular theme were also included as part of the same theme. For instance, avoided topics when calling home appeared under the ‘maintaining links with the family ashore’ theme as it share the same underlying issue. The following are the basic themes in my thesis:

Maintaining links with the family ashore

Maintaining links with shipmates
 Community participation
 Factors affecting interaction on the ship

The sense of belonging and the extent by which seafarers sustain communication ashore and on board facilitate the linkages among the identified themes. The layers of meaning in the issues revealed by the participants were explored and this enabled the underlying themes to be identified:

Social expectations
 Family roles and expectations
 Community roles and expectations
 View of seafaring as a career
 Rites of passage
 Guaranty of membership
 Status-enhancing
 Regimented work

Where there were variations and inconsistencies, tracing back the data also became relatively easier owing to the use of NVivo. Being able to interrogate the data in a way that ensures that the source of the coded text is within at hand was useful in maintaining the context. In order to maintain the consistency of the thematic connections, I also manually scrutinised the data to note whether similar responses within a particular theme is properly reflected. Such combination of both electronic and manual identification of patterns, according to Welsh (2002), improves the quality of the research. The rigour and depth arrived at from such process increases confidence that key issues were properly identified and that overlaps and inconsistencies were addressed accordingly. The “fragmentation and decontextualisation of the data away from the social processes they are meant to represent” (Gray 2004: 340) was a particular concern throughout the analysis process. In other words, in my endeavour to obtain as much general knowledge as possible from the data, there was always the possibility of losing the surrounding context during the coding. A similar observation was also raised by Coffey and Atkinson (1996) in the use of assistive technologies like Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) as they point to the problem of losing

the sequence of processes and interactions. A vital issue regarding coding through the use of software is associating it with a form of analysis rather than simply using it as an organising tool (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont 2003). Consequently, this study has used careful treatment of the codes identified at the onset to help avoid reducing the data to mere general descriptions. The starting point of the analysis accords to what Patton (2002: 456) referred to as sensitising concepts for “a general sense of reference’ and provide ‘directions along which to look.” A thoughtful evaluation of both the interview accounts and observations (i.e. field notes) into a systematic pattern is done in terms of activities considered by earlier studies as transnational or those that occur across borders (e.g. calling home or remittances). The themes were also identified to find those that exhibit integration to the community and the ship. Constructing what may or may not be forms of transnationality involves looking at activities that may be significant.

Where data analysis is exposed to the subjective interpretation of the researcher, its validity is ultimately questioned. One way to address this is through constant reflection on the research process (Gray 2004). As such, the bulk of criticisms in grounded theory have pointed to the capacity of the researcher to distort the data and, therefore, arrive at premature conclusions. However, the use of memos and field notes has offered a solution that is able to realistically depict the processes that the Filipino seafarers undergo in the course of their lives.

2.5. Ethical Issues and Considerations

The empathetic nature of my chosen methodology gives rise to various ethical considerations. For example, awareness of potential sources of conflicts and sensitive areas help to map out the proper approach in conducting the interview. The practicalities in conforming to anonymity/confidentiality, informed consent, privacy and data protection will be discussed in this section.

Prior to the fieldwork, various ethical issues concerning informed consent presented a number of challenges to my study. For example, where I may have had access to the

seafarers through the dormitory's manager, it was made clear to the seafarers that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without experiencing any negative impact on their seafaring status. This was made explicit in order to ensure that the seafarers who agreed to be interviewed did so of their own volition and without external pressures being brought to bear on them. This also removed doubts as to whether their participation or withdrawal from the interview would affect their relationship with their manning agency. Before the start of the actual interview, the participants were informed of this matter so that they could raise any questions regarding their participation. A similar approach was carried out on board ship: the seafarers may not have been fully aware of my identity, purpose and method, so I made every possible effort to disclose this information to them individually.

The confidentiality of the information and the anonymity of participation (not only among participants but also between participant and institution) were considered. A pseudonym was allocated to each participant and they were informed and assured about this. Additionally, questions by a seafarer about another seafarer were not entertained. All of the information gathered in this study was treated with a high degree of confidentiality. In the publication of the thesis, they were told that their statement, if quoted, could not be directly traced to themselves.

With regard to data collection, there were times when the respondents were not comfortable in revealing certain answers. Hermanns (2004) raised two major possibilities in this aspect which directly applied to my study, which are: the fear of embarrassment and personality crises. Some questions could trigger painful or embarrassing experiences that can discomfit interviewees and inhibit conversation exchange. The possible intrusion from the use of a semi-structured interview method presented an ethical dilemma on my part (e.g. whether to continue the interview or proceed as planned and offer advice). The extent of probing, particularly in sensitive questions, could impose emotional harm because the interview is an act of putting the private self in the public domain (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont 2003). In cases where the discussion with seafarers' wives touched on particular sensitivities (such as being poor or underprivileged), I asked the participant whether they would still want to continue and I reiterated that withdrawal from the interview was always an option.

The setting or place for the conduct of interview was also carefully considered. The presence of sensitive questions required me to consider the location of the interview. Where the seafarers are interviewed may also affect their responses to questions. For example, interviews held in a café or at home could produce different responses. The presence of some members of the family during the interview had the capacity to inhibit the participant's freedom to discuss important issues. The interviews with the wives were usually done in their living room or on the balcony of their houses. Prior to the interview, I would inform the wives that the interview must be done without the presence of any third party. This was very effective in facilitating a freer flow of discussion. On board the ship, most of the Filipino seafarers were interviewed in my cabin's office area without the presence of other seafarers.

Non-participant observation in the community also posed some ethical considerations. Foremost among these was the degree to which the participants felt comfortable revealing aspects of their public life to others. For example, when I observed aspects of their public lives, there were instances when they may have felt uncomfortable about being observed by others that they barely know. Unravelling the depth of their community social life could also be obtrusive if left unchecked. This could lead them to question my presence or even the manner by which I conducted the study. The presentation of their lived social experiences to the public in general was open to the risk of misinterpretation or hasty labelling of their community life. Therefore, I had to be very careful regarding my role as a shadow observer. I had to explain to some of the seafarers how through this method I can achieve a more realistic view of their social relations when they are not on board the ship. Gaining trust was an important strategy in this respect (as discussed earlier). I communicated verbally and non-verbally that my presence would not, in any way, expose them to physical or emotional harm.

As a whole, this study provided proper disclosure of information to potential participants, which was strictly followed throughout the study. This encompassed a number of written practices provided by Cardiff University's school research ethics committee. Interview participants were given an information sheet which they were required to sign to confirm their participation in this study. This sheet informed them that their participation was voluntary. The objectives and aims of the research were also explained, as was my role as a student of Cardiff University and a fellow in SIRC In

addition, this study's expectations, the role of the venue in the conduct of the interview, the possible risks and benefits, the steps taken to minimise the risks, and the output of the study were detailed. In the latter part of the sheet, my contact details (including my email and work number) were given so that the participants could contact me if they had additional questions regarding their participation or about the study. The contact number of the chair of the school research ethics committee was also provided to allay any additional concerns about the conduct of the research.

Logistical concerns (e.g. getting permission to use voice recorders) were also addressed. This was an essential part of ensuring that the interview setting posed no harm for the seafarer. The data protection and copyright laws were closely observed. All of the information gathered from the participant remains under conditions of strict anonymity and confidentiality. Apart from myself, the only other people to have had access are my supervisors. Recognising the rights of the participants, including the right to be informed and participate in the study, highlights how informed consent comes with a negotiation of trust (Kvale 1996), which I undertook throughout the fieldwork. Proper data storage was also followed and all of the completed questionnaires and digital voice records were stored and locked in my office cabinet.

Another important obligation was to the sponsor of my study. Consequently, adherence to high professional standards through an objective manner of social inquiry was maintained in order to satisfy the requirements of my sponsor. I have also been constantly aware of my obligations to my sponsors during the research process. For example, I approached my research with careful awareness of duties and responsibilities towards the participants, sources, the research community, the data and the sponsors. In addition, the ethical procedures of the British Sociological Association (BSA) and the Cardiff University Schools of Social Sciences (SOCSI) ethics committee were followed.

2.6 Summary

The main research methods utilised in this thesis such as semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation were intended to explore the reality of seafarers' lives

within the context of transnationalism. In applying both methods ashore and on board, the study hopes to understand the Filipino seafarers' sense of double belonging.

The information provided by seafarers through the interview was helpful in uncovering emergent perspectives regarding experience of integration in the community and aboard ships. Exposure to natural settings through observations provided richer understanding of the motives, values and beliefs surrounding the seafarers' response. The use of secondary data showed the general trends in seafaring and migration. The data produced by these methods will help answer the question of how transnationalism can appropriately reflect seafarers' lives. Before looking at the seafarers' experience, crucial dimensions of transnationalism will be considered first in the following chapter.

Chapter Three: Transnationalism

3.1 Introduction

A conceptual clarification of what constitutes transnationalism has been undertaken in various fields (anthropology, sociology, geography) in an attempt to capture the nuances in participation of various types of migrants. Increasing concern has been given to the mobility patterns of migrants as their numbers have risen. While the use of the term 'migrants' has become a catch-all phrase to refer to these moving entities, there now needs to be a delineation of the patterns of migration undertaken by temporary migrants. This study aims to address this gap by focusing on the experiences of Filipino seafarers. The importance of the transnational character of the activities of seafarers has come to prominence as their number has risen. The seafarer's migration is temporary in nature. This in turn has raised questions about the motives in choosing seafaring as a career, the social relationships formed and sustained, and the manner of involvement in the society to which they belong. Understanding all these issues requires further scrutiny of the application of transnationalism in the context of seafarers.

This chapter aims to focus on the core dimensions of transnationalism. It will also examine various conceptions of transnationalism. In unravelling transnationalism, various definitions and contentions that have evolved will be discussed. The kind of migration they undertake (i.e. temporary migration) will also be examined under a transnational lens by theoretically distinguishing it from the experience of permanent migrants, which will establish the relevant distinctions. Accordingly, the analytical task in this chapter will centre on how effectively seafarers straddle the two communities.

This chapter will firstly give a brief outline of the changes in the study of international migration. It will then explore the distinctiveness of the transnational account of international migration by examining its various definitions and then choosing one that will explain further the transnational existence of seafarers. Finally, the essence of transnational communities will be discussed. As a whole, this final section refines the concept of transnationalism and advances the theoretical explanations of transnational activities and social forms.

3.2 Possible Sources: Explaining the Growth of Transnationalism

The conceptual understanding of migration has been broadened to incorporate the changes of the social aspects of a migrant's life as they regularly cross borders. For most of the 1920s, the trend of analytic focus in migration studies generally revolve around migrants' assimilation into the host country. For example, according to Levitt and Jaworsky (2007: 4), three likely situations can occur: "becoming part of the mainstream, remaining ethnic or becoming part of the underclass and experiencing downward mobility." These earlier approaches simplistically dealt with the migrants' place of destination and the ways in which they integrate into their new place of abode, taking note of the socio-economic and social parity outcomes of this process.

Although traditional migration theory recognises that migrants maintain contact with their families at home, it tends to focus more on their adaptation practices (Vertovec 2002). It is distinguished by using the nation-state as a reference point for migration studies. In particular, Wimmer and Schiller (2003:1) describe this as methodological nationalism, such that "countries are the natural units for comparative studies, equate society with the nation-state, and conflate national interests with the purposes of social science." Social participation is, therefore, seen as largely contained inside the nation-state. What occurs beyond it becomes analytically unexplored.

In the 1990s, the focus shifted from adaptation to attachments formed beyond the nation-state that which encompassed the physical location of the migrants.

Consequently, the analytical focus of examining migration within a fixed existence of a place as opposed to the migrants' cross-border movements in search of employment became more highlighted (Sorensen and Olwig 2002). There are a number of ways that the linkages beyond the nation-state have emerged. This has led to a broad recognition of the usefulness of transnationalism in analysing international migration.

The developments in international migration and its co-existence with global integration have led to the development of migration scholarship. This has raised a number of questions that are not only limited to the migrants' place of destination but which are

also concerned with their place of origin, especially in relation to the forces which have aided these contemporary practices among migrants. According to Portes (1996: 76), the proliferation of transnational activities is attributed to the “social and economic forces unleashed by contemporary capitalism.” An immediate consequence relates to the rising number of migrant workers faced with precarious working conditions particularly in manufacturing plants. In addition, the role of technology is significant because it makes possible the dual existence of migrants (i.e. at home and in their host countries). Portes points to the ease in communications and transportation that affords migrants the capacity to remain in touch with their hometown while establishing ties with their host countries; thereby, giving them “protection from cultural isolation and inferior legal status (1996: 77).”

The effects of global intensification and the development of modern technology (apart from connecting networks) have shrunk distance and have, therefore, challenged the traditional concept of nation-states (Vertovec 1999). In fact, Castells (1996) pinpointed new technologies as a vital component of transnational networks that reinforce pre-existing social patterns. Consequently, the social and cultural impacts of these new technologies have increasingly become of interest. In addition, dramatic improvements in modes of transportation have increased interconnectedness (e.g. air travel). Indeed, the dispersal of new technologies in communication and transportation have profound social implications in terms of developments in intertwined networks since they routinely bypass borders and become effective means of communication.

It is argued that ready access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has provided an opportunity for migrants to be virtually present at home despite being physically away at work. The instantaneous feature inherent in these technologies (e.g. the use of telephones and mobile phones) allows migrants to participate in activities in their hometown; thereby, achieving a kind of double presence in the sense of being both “here and there” (see also Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Vertovec 2003, 2004; Portes Guarnizo and Landolt 1999). Where the process of globalisation has coincided with advances in telecommunication, the social benefits (e.g. of cheaper rates for international phone calls) have been remarkable. For example, Vertovec (2004: 220) explains that a lower phone call rate acts as “a kind of social glue connecting small-scale social formations across the globe” because it facilitates the inclusion of migrants

in the day-to-day lives of their families back home. When viewed within the context of families living in less developed economies, the overall social significance and meaning of cheap phone calls becomes even more pertinent.

This transnational connectivity allows a continued presence and connected relationships' to prosper despite long distances (Wilding 2006, Liccoppe 2004). In particular, Wilding (2006) has emphasised that the effects of distance are completely eliminated by modern technology, especially during emergency situations where physical separation is accentuated. This is indicative that ICT plays an enabling role in allowing migrants to share in a social field across vast distances. For example, new telephone technology maintains continuity rather serving as substitute for the migrant's absence (see also Laurier 2001). This corroborates the description of Levitt and Glick Schiller (2003:7) whose concept of transnationalism goes beyond the "direct experience of migration into domains of interaction where individuals who do not move themselves maintain social relations across borders through various forms of communications."

3.3 Transnationalism Defined and Delimited

The development of globalisation and recent advances in technology has prompted contemporary social transformations and the intertwining of social experiences, which leads to a greater interest in transnationalism. A heightened interest in transnationalism has led to the flourishing of its definition, spawning a number of variations. In order to understand these issues further and also to explore the major themes in relation to seafarers, it is important to disaggregate transnationalism into carefully specified components to determine its applicability and determine its nuances. Initially, this will be done by looking into the various strands of the conceptual definition, highlighting their theoretical merits, and then gauging their adequacy in explaining the case for seafarers. Additionally, the nature of these engagements (i.e. integration and exclusion, social and economic) as it applies to migrants will also be explained.

Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton's (1992) study was a major influence on the development of the transnational perspective on migration. They viewed

transnationalism as a “process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders” (Basch et al. 1994: 6). In determining what is deemed “transnational,” familial, economic, social, organisational, religious and political relationships are emphasised. These domain features effectively embrace the inter-linkages of the migrants, whose host and home societies are manifested by their transnational connections.

In refining the definition, the need for a coherent distinction between the immigrants of the past and the transmigrants of the present has become crucial. Glick Schiller et al. (1992) argued that the immigrants of the past and transmigrants of the present differ in two important ways: historically and theoretically. The transmigrants are “composed of those whose networks, activities and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field” (Glick Schiller, et al 1992: 1). On the other hand, the immigrants of the nineteenth and early twentieth century revolved around the severance of ties with their homeland (see also Fitzgerald 2002) and undertaking forms of assimilation, acculturation and integration to the host country (see also Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). This suggests a change in the theoretical approach to migrants such that the transnational framework becomes increasingly considered vis-a-vis the traditional model of assimilation that is applied for previous immigrants. Evidently, what the emerging empirical inquiry has managed to put across is a new mode of migration focusing attention on how migrants establish themselves across borders, allowing them to live in more than one society.

This change in the conception of migration has been the subject of much academic debate, especially about the newness of the phenomenon. In terms of historicity, transmigrants seem to have been around before the concept was invented. This point of view is succinctly expressed by Grillo (1998), who pointed out that ‘a sense of déjà vu’ surfaces in undertaking a background reading of the transnational migration literature over the last three decades. According to Portes (2001), what happened was in effect just a re-labelling of the concept owing to its extensive scope; thereby, applying to none in particular. For instance, the study by Foner (1997) on European immigrants coming to the Americas highlighted that patterns of economic activities linking host and home

societies have been around since the start of the twentieth century. Although the concept offers analytical value, the necessary criteria to distinguish it from previous migrants form one of its major criticisms. For example, Glick Schiller (1997: 158) made reference to the possibility of “discarding previous categorizations of return, circulatory or permanent immigration” but made no explicit conditions under which transmigrants may be identified.

The concept of assimilation which is reminiscent of migrants in earlier periods has also presented itself in establishing whether there is a radical break from the previous migratory behaviour. Where previous studies on migrants ignore the migrants’ social relations in connection to their point of origin, the idea that transnationalism is a counter-narrative to assimilation has gained currency despite its doubtfulness. Consequently, various theorisations have been developed, ranging from transnationalism as an alternative (Guarnizo and Portes 2001), subset (Kivisto 2001) or a complement of assimilation (Levitt 2001a; Fitzgerald 2002).

Conceptually, elaborations on the complex array of a migrants’ political, social and economic life have started to gain ground. While delineative to some extent, there are many areas of transnationalism which have been under-examined and have led others to focus on this area. The importance of Basch et al.’s (1994) work in the area of contemporary migration has seized the interest of many researchers, most notably Portes (1996). The role of Portes (1996) in the conceptual furtherance of transnationalism is significant owing to his focus on its scope. He pointed out that the necessary prerequisites that make transnationalism an emergent phenomenon include: regularity, routine involvement, and critical mass. The role of transnationalism in forging social transformations among new waves of immigrants takes on a wider applicability by linking many recent global changes to the developments of capitalism. In this way, transnationalism is viewed under the exigencies of economic necessities. In addition, the technological conditions faced by these migrants also matter and is another of the necessary conditions contributing to the heightened frequency and scope of transnationalism. This view of transnationalism provides a refinement of the definition set forth by Glick Schiller (1992), providing a useful qualification on how migrants may be transnationals and on why only some contemporary migrants may be truly transnational. By limiting the transnational activities of migrants to those economic,

political and socio-cultural practices of a formal and stable character, Portes (1999a, 2001, and 2003) makes possible the empirical measurement of this phenomenon, in addition to providing a comparative historical perspective.

While an extensive understanding of transnationalism focusing on the daily social practices affecting all aspects of a migrant's life was proffered by Basch et al. (1994), Portes (1996) concentrated on the economic domain as the chief motivating force of a contemporary migrant's life. The unit of analysis used in the study of transnational migration is the individual and their family. Although communities, economic ventures, and political parties also constitute a part in migration, they are more comprehensible in complex stages of inquiry (Portes et al. 1999). Furthermore, looking at individuals allows the institutional and structural effects of transmigration to be examined, which makes it easy to identify how the foregoing conceptualisation operates as a middle-range theory adhering to grassroots level initiatives. This also makes it possible to discern its difference from activities which are led by the government or corporations. What is important in this definition is the role of economic demands and the migrants' independence from state rules and directives. This underpins the most widely accepted definition of transnationalism, which states that it "takes place on a recurrent basis across national borders and that require a regular and significant commitment of time by participants" (Portes 1999: 464).

Faist's (2000a) reappraisal of transnationalism casts it anew by veering away from the possible economic reductionism that is inherent in Portes' (1996, 1999) version. By treating individual and structural dimensions together, Faist (2000a) allows an analysis which enjoins not only persons but networks and organisations across borders. Therefore, this makes for a dynamic study on social, political and cultural activities in addition to the conduct of economic affairs. Faist (2000a) specifically referred to the significance of a fivefold relationship, which is composed of: the government of the immigration state; the civil society organisations in the sending country, the rulers of the receiving country; the civil society groups of the host country; and the migrants and/or refugee groups, or national, religious and ethnic minorities. The use of networks as the unit of analysis is an obvious departure from Portes (1996, 1999) who looked at individuals and families in explaining the sustainability of transnational ties. The incorporation of transnational institutions, or what Faist referred to as transnational

resources (i.e. social capital and its variants: trust, reciprocity and solidarity) existing and circulating within such networks strengthens and intensifies transnationalism. Faist remains steadfast, however, to Glick Schiller's unbounded conception of transnationalism, as evidenced by the networks' operation as going over the "container concept of space" (Faist 2000a: 243). Tackling transnationalism in this way builds upon the idea of a transnational social space that allows migrants to sustain ties across multiple states while acting as the unit of analysis in studies of transnationalism.

A salient component of the definition of transnational social space is the approach taken in examining migrant communities. Despite similarity to the general concept of transnational communities, Faist's (2000a) version carefully melds to what Smith and Guarnizo (1998) regard as transnationalism from above and from below. The differences in the level of institutionalisation distinguish transnationalism as coming "from above" or "from below" (Guarnizo 1997). Activities initiated "from above" refer to multinational corporations while those activities "from below" refer to immigrants and non-immigrant family and kin. The macro-centred approach of the former embraces economic globalisation, international relations and cultural diffusion (Sassen 2001, Meyer et al 1997). Meanwhile, the micro-centred approach highlights the grassroots activities of the immigrants by looking at how they shape the broader trends on the local level. Faist (2000a, 2000b) proposes that these two concepts are interrelated and, therefore, present in the social relationship occurring within a transnational social space. In contrast, Portes's transnational communities remain separate and discrete from transnationalism from above. Portes (1996) avers that a transnational migrant community is useful to the economically weak, who can make use of it to counteract marginality in both host and home societies.

The overlapping of boundaries and continuity of ties are concrete features of transnationalism that are agreed upon by the aforementioned theorists. Faist (2000a), however, took a bolder step by including those who were not physically traveling as transnationals such as for instance the recipients of remittances (see also Smith and Guarnizo 1998). This is, to some extent, overdrawn when referring to transnational migrants because it departs from the core feature of transnationalism, which is the capacity to live in at least two places at the same time. This presents an ambiguity in meaningfully distinguishing from those who are never physically present in one area to

those who have actually moved beyond the borders of their homeland and are undertaking the actual migration. A similar explanation applies in looking at the social networks in the home society (i.e. the left-behind families), who are also deemed to be transnationals under Faist's (2000a) definition. Although it is true that they are potential migrants, the mere reality of their immobility makes understanding of transnational migrants problematic indeed. It should be recalled, however, that this is invoked by the inclusion of institutions as a part of the fundamental concepts of transnationalism in Faist's (2000a) formulation. Nevertheless, this idea is highly arguable because it fuses transnational migrants and transnational institutions together, which makes for a vague grasp of its meaning. Consequently, while Faist essentially presents the same concept, the framework is ostensibly different.

Reconciling the major ideas of the transnational paradigm from these theorists reveals the following consensus on its fundamental nature: transnationalism is a multi-stranded process that involves the migrants' economic, cultural, political and social activities by going beyond the boundaries of the nation-states. As such, the duality in the daily life of the migrants makes individuals and families a useful unit of analysis in terms of its analytical depth. Framed within the study of international migration, analysis of transnationalism, as aptly put by Portes (1996, 1999b), allows for the analysis of different migrant categories. Situating the migrants within a transnational social field emphasises the sense of belonging in a new state while enduring transnational ties. This achieves a more complete comprehension when it is linked with the summary of factors pointed out by Smith and Guarnizo (1998: 17-18), which are: micro-dynamics of migration, globalisation of capitalism, and economic reorganisation of the economy and technological revolution. Given the aforementioned reasons, the theoretical perspective that was developed by Portes (1996) will be used in analysing the situation of seafarers and the extent of their transnationalism. The economic-related motives underpinning Filipino seafarers' choice of career, growing global presence and sustained ties (remittances amongst others) are aligned with the premises formulated by Portes.

3.4 Differentiating between Transnational, Multinational, International, and Global

Having dealt with the necessary distinction which makes it possible to establish whether migrants are transnational or not, there still remains the conflicting understanding of what separates it from other international or global phenomena. Portes (2003) dealt with the terminological aspect of transnationalism; thereby, making it possible to separate international and multinational behaviour from transnational practices. He referred to “international” as those activities which are conducted by national states and formal institutions. Large organisations affiliated with a particular nation usually carry out these kinds of activities. “Multinational” refers to those conducted by formal institutions that exist and operate in multiple countries. “Transnational” points to those activities that are initiated and sustained by non-institutional actors, whether group or individual. The core feature revolves on goal-oriented initiatives that require coordination across national borders by members of civil society.

An important difference also exists in differentiating transnationalism from what is deemed “global.” Kearney (1995:548) posited that “whereas global processes are largely decentred from specific national territories and take place in a global space, transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation-states.” Faist aptly put it when he said that, “transnationalisation overlaps globalisation but typically has a more limited purview (2000: 192).” This considers the nation-state as a unit of analysis, which becomes clearer in Glick Schiller’s (1999: 96) elaboration, where he referred to non-state actors in delineating between the two as:

“Global” is best reserved for processes that are not located in a single state but happen throughout the entire globe. Processes such as the development of capitalism are best understood as global because capitalism is a system of production that was developed not in a single state or between states but by various emerging European bourgeois classes utilizing resources, accumulated wealth, and labour throughout the world. On the other hand, I employ the word transnational to discuss 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 and institutional practices of states.

Consequently, migrants undertaking cross-border activities that involve at least some non-state actors and who are not anchored to a specific state may be labelled transnationals. It must be noted, however, that because of the dynamic nature of global and transnational forces “the impact of transnational migration differs from, but must be

understood within, the context of heightened globalisation within which it takes place” (Levitt 2001a: 202).

This delineation has reinforced the concept put forth by Smith (1992: 493), who regarded transnationalism from below as referring to “the ways that the everyday practices of ordinary people, their feelings and understandings of their conditions of existence, often modify those very conditions and thereby shape rather than merely reflect new modes of urban culture.” However, there are a number of issues about the use of this concept. Kearney (1995: 559) referred to the difficulty of identifying the nature of the ‘deterritorialised popular groups attempting to defend themselves in a globalised world.’ This problem becomes stark in cases where NGOs and the State become involved in grassroots activities by reaching out to transnationals. In order to provide clarity on this matter, Smith and Guarnizo (1998:73) put forth the concept of transnationalism from below as that which includes “mass actions carried out transnationally as well as organised or collective purposive activities.” Perhaps what should be remembered here is that “while transnational practices extend beyond two or more national territories, they are built within the confines of specific social, economic and political relations which are bound together by perceived shared interests and meanings” (Smith and Guarnizo 1998:13). The concept of transnationalism takes on a clearer meaning within the notion of transnational communities which is considered next.

3.5 Transnational Communities

The different ways in which transnational theory has come to be understood is couched beneath the overarching concept of transnational communities. Understanding the motivations and aspirations of migrants who are subsumed under transnationalism requires attention to its expression within a transnational community. This section looks at the significance of transnational community in understanding the migrants’ social relations within their host and home societies. It will also trace the conception of transnational communities, particularly looking at the various ways in which migrants have become constituted within it.

The earliest theoretical formation of a transnational community points to an assemblage of the migrants' encounters of social injustices, global inequalities and chronic insecurities as one of the stimuli for its development and proliferation (Kennedy and Roudometof 2002). Seen from an economic perspective, transnational communities become part of a migrant's coping mechanism in a highly globalised capitalist environment as they seek protection from economic and social vulnerabilities (see also Goldring 1988; Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Indeed, globalisation and its offer of a differential economic benefit for migrants has necessitated responses which are similar to the worldwide search of corporations in furthering their economic advantage. Following this logic, Portes (1997) employed the concept of 'globalisation from below' to emphasise the qualitative difference of the migrants' response to globalisation and how the informal character of their activities differs from those of corporations. This relates to the concept of transnationalism from below that arises from grassroots level initiatives as a counter response from possible marginalisation (Smith and Guarnizo 1998). In this account, the significance of transnational communities is manifested in the ways in which migrants link up across state borders.

The proliferation of various analytical conceptualisations is indicative of the degree of importance of transnational communities. A number of different concepts (such as transnational social field, transnational circuit, transnational social network, or bi-national societies) are employed to examine this phenomenon in greater depth; however, the furtherance of the concept is associated with the obscurity of theoretical articulations (Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Whereas it generally refers to social relations, the particularities differ. For instance, the transnational circuit primarily focuses on mobility while bi-national societies look at the ties between two nation-states. The analytic framework that is foundational in this area is the concept of transnational social field which was developed by Glick Schiller (1999: 97) who referred to a transnational social field as an "unbounded terrain of multiple interlocking egocentric networks" across borders. This use is preferable in terms of analytic and conceptual usefulness because it views transnationalism as a process whereby the migrants' everyday movements and flows are examined (Glick Schiller 2004). This is critical in understanding social processes and institutions on top of the individual's periodical engagement toward their home and host countries.

The existence of these processes and the links formed within a transnational social field has led to the creation of a transnational community that is led by people with dual lives (Portes 1996). What distinguishes this conceptualisation from that of a transnational social field is the emphasis on the economic connections and the rationales leading to the migrants' maintenance of ties. As previously mentioned, confinement of the analysis to formal and stable economic groupings allows for a focused examination of transnationalism. The conception of transnational communities is seen under the conditions posed by global capitalism and its ensuing potential in becoming an effective form of resistance to dominant structures (Portes 1999a). Serving as an important avenue for economic mobility, the importance of information, cultural values, knowledge and even capital for transnational communities are highlighted (Portes 1995). This does not, however, fully exclude the State's role in the migrants' transnational activities.

The most significant among these is the role of social capital in relation to their skills in sustaining transnational communities. The expansion of cross-border networks, primarily composed of the migrants' friends and relatives, is characterised by being simultaneously dense and extended over long physical distances, and by often generating high levels of solidarity by virtue of uncertainty (Portes 1995, 1997). Portes (1998a) made reference to the study of Itzigsohn (1994) which analysed the informal economy in the Dominican Republic as an outcome of workers' avoidance of low pay and menial jobs found in the industrial export sector. The social network plays a very important role in the forming of economic initiatives. The use of networks are especially notable in four instances, which are: the identification of labour markets outside the borders of a migrant's homeland, the pooling of resources for business purposes (specifically real estate acquisition), emergence of informal credit associations on a rotational basis, and the appropriation of price and information differentials between host and home societies through the formation of a transnational enterprise which depends on regularly occurring transactions (Portes 1997, see also Sassen 1994 and Light 1984).

It should be noted here that, although the original wave is economic, subsequent political, social and cultural activities follow. Finally, Portes (1995) characterises the potential of such transnational communities as outlined by:

1. The instantaneous character of communication across vast geographic distances;
2. The large numbers involved in these activities; and,
3. The tendency for these activities to become normative in the immigrant community driven by the numbers who take part and the dearth of alternative opportunities in the host society.

In comparison to previous migrants, three things set current migrants apart, which are: technology, higher levels of social capital, and proximity to homeland (Portes et al 1999:224).

There are a number of criticisms of the use of transnational communities in analysing transnationals. For example, Glick Schiller (2004) in her recent formulation replaced the use of transnational community with transnational social field because she sees community as part of the territorialised conception of culture. A related criticism on the analytic use of transnational communities perspective is raised by Kivisto (2001), who found that the use of individuals as the unit of analysis suggests the use of communities in order to properly take account of embeddedness.

The notion of embeddedness remains an important concern in the discussion of transnationals who participate in two societies. Portes (1995) acknowledges this and posits that members of a community exhibit embeddedness by way of relating to each other and by the influence of social structures. The former is what he calls the relational embeddedness while the latter he defines as structural embeddedness. How these factors are exhibited in the host society are of utmost importance. For instance, do migrants belonging to a community show similar depth of embeddedness on both counts? Or, are there differing degrees in the nature of their social interaction as manifested in the receiving society? As these migrants embark upon transnational activities, does this weaken or strengthen their mode of incorporation to their new community?

From a rudimentary perspective, migrants either form part of an enclave or assimilate. Those who belong to an enclave adhere to old patterns of behaviour and remain largely cloistered from foreign influences, such that symbolic markers (Waters 1995) like language, dress, political units and residential patterns, school, and religion are easily identifiable. Membership in this type of community is smooth because the social system is quite similar to the one back home. For example, the strong pull of enclaves to Cuban

émigrés in the United States is such that they choose to permanently stay within enclaves and work under immigrant firms despite low initial gains rather than joining the general economy. The result is “lesser opportunities for relating with Anglo-Americans and stronger inclinations to return to Cuba if political conditions were to change” (Wilson and Portes 1980: 15). On the other hand, another form of migratory outcome corresponds to the normative assimilation situation where migrants gradually and inevitably adapt to the host society as they shed the old and embrace a new way of living (Alba 1985; Alba and Nee 1997), whose significance is linked to the socio-economic position of a migrant who has rapidly assimilated with the host society. Where this has been emphasised and developed in the past, contemporary emphasis has now embraced the transnational activities of the migrants.

The preoccupation with the traditional notion of assimilation as place-bound is readdressed within the transnational paradigm. The ongoing connections of migrants to their homeland suggest simultaneous incorporation in both host and home societies. Integration is thus not confined within a particular national landscape.

Portes et al. (1999) pointed to one possibility where involvement in transnational activities does not necessarily entail adaptation (see also Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec 2003). This is exemplified by the migrants (Dominicans, Salvadorans, Colombians) in the United States who conducted transnational activities, even though they are deficient in the use of English language and are in a low economic position. Although Portes is referring to transnational entrepreneurs in the US and not necessarily those who were labour migrants, the point of interest here is their strong transnational involvement and integration in the host country (Portes et al. 2002). A similar case is found among the Kurds living in Britain, whose transnational pursuits facilitate integration into the host society (Wahlbeck 2002). This, however, does not overlook those cases where some members do not necessarily want to return to the country of origin. Snel et al (2006) made similar observations in their study but mentioned that, although (in general) transnationalism did not impede integration into the host society, the case for Moroccans and Chileans differed due to their weak labour market position in Dutch society.

The different manifestations of embeddedness discussed above highlight the manner of integration adhered to by many migrants as they inhabit two societies. Against this

backdrop, it appears that as migrants settle into a new society their transnational conduct coincides with different levels of social integration, which fall between high, low and something in between. Consequently, the locus of inquiry is about looking at the degrees of embeddedness in both societies (e.g. whether elastic or fairly constant) rather than pinpointing whether they opted for full transnationalism or full assimilation. This also aids clarification of the various types of community which are truly transnational in the sense that is used by Portes. While social groups such as ethnic minorities, refugees and diasporas may also logically grapple with various forms of assimilation and transnationalism, they are not by themselves transnational communities despite their transnational involvement. For instance, the Eritrean diaspora, despite exhibiting a “culture of transnationalism” through regular transmittal of money and gifts back home, has not crystallised into a transnational community. In its place, according to Al-Ali and Koser (2001) is an emerging category of “enforced transnationalism”. It logically follows that this social group is composed of forced migrants who differ from those labour migrants whose participation into the community is largely voluntary. Additionally, they also raise an important point in that the group’s lack of entrepreneurs or businessmen facilitating investments in the home country does not support it as a transnational community. By and large, what has been revealed is that engagement in transnational activities is not restricted to transnational communities. In addition, maintenance of transnational ties with a homeland does not automatically label a group of migrants a transnational community.

A transnational community is constituted of migrant-led economic transnationalism. For example, a group of migrants undertaking transnational activities which are “transitional and associated with the more recent and marginal sectors of an immigrant community – the less educated and more downwardly mobile” (Portes 1999b, p. 29) aptly characterises a transnational community. The manner of immigrant adaptation carried out by these migrants merits attention. The elastic nature of the migrants’ involvement between societies reveals the extent of their belonging in both societies, along with the challenges contained within a transnational community. This is demonstrated in the transnational communities of Filipino seafarers. For example, Sampson (2003) explored how seafarers on ship and those who found settlement in the ports of Rotterdam and Hamburg experienced a different kind of integration. Although both groups continued to identify with their homeland and retained their nationality, there are major

differences in the way they are embedded with their respective groups. Land-based seafarers who have lived in Holland for an average of eight years showed low level of embeddedness. In contrast, seafarers aboard the ship exhibit a relatively higher degree of social integration as indicated by the development and maintenance of close contacts with seafarers of other nationalities. In terms of transnational involvement, although both groups send remittances back home, the shore-based Filipinos exhibit an irregular pattern when compared with their sea-based counterparts. A caveat, however, may be raised with regard to the seafarers' remittance behaviour because this is mandated by the Philippine government. In addition, the contractual nature of their work consistently affords them an annual home visit. Evidently, the differing social contexts of these two transnational communities have impinged on the manner by which they maintain transnational connections and the resulting pervasiveness of their social interaction within their host societies.

The simultaneity of connection that is found within transnational communities and demonstrated among diasporas (i.e. highly dense and strong social symbolic ties) has led others to analyse it as a transnational community. For instance, when Faist (2000a) introduced the concept of "transnational social spaces" and its variants (i.e. kinship groups, transnational circuits and transnational communities), he identified the concept of diaspora as a form of transnational community. This is similarly reflected by Van Hear (1998: 6), who pointed out that a transnational community is "a more inclusive notion which embraces diaspora, but also populations that are contiguous rather than scattered and may straddle just one border."

In discussing the dynamics of transnational communities, the conceptual entanglement with diaspora remains one of its most salient issues. The expansion of rapid communication technologies and the advent of internet in the 1990s has opened up opportunities for migrants and developed the transnational character of a diaspora. Consequently, diaspora has become commonly associated with transnational communities; thereby, obscuring the distinction between the two concepts. Previous studies of diaspora have linked it to experiences of displacement. The basic characteristics initially outlined by Safran (1991) have more or less posed the real meaning of a diaspora, although they do not create one solid definition of a diaspora because not all diasporic communities embrace all of the suggested features. Cheran

(2003) further strengthened the differences between diaspora and transnational communities by emphasising that while “transnationalism is a condition of living, diaspora is about a condition of leaving.” He adds that whereas diasporas often result from forced migration, transnational communities ensue from voluntary migration. From this distinction, it is evident that migrants belonging to a diaspora construe an ‘imagined homeland’ as they continue to exist farther away from their homelands, except for haphazard transnational connections with their homeland.

Recent studies, however, have taken on a forward-looking character as they go beyond the migrants’ view of the past and examine future links with a homeland (see Docker 2001, Tsagarousianou 2004). For instance, Cohen (1997) stressed the importance of the time dimension in understanding the dynamics of the diasporic experience, which is characterised by strong connection to the past that bears on the present and future assimilation in the host society. This helps to illustrate how diverse diaspora phenomenon can eventually form a transnational community. It also challenges the contemporary view of migrants as exclusively inhabiting a transnational community. Having outlined the major issues and possibilities of incorporating diaspora as part of a transnational community, it is clear how specific delineations set it apart from transnational community. Diasporas’ infrequent connection with the country of origin, mainly operating on one national border (usually the host country), and the physical distance being replaced by an ‘imagined homeland’ means that it is a separate analytical tool from a transnational community perspective.

3.6 Understanding Transnationalism in the Context of Seafaring

Exploring the seafarers’ lives along the major themes discussed above can enrich understanding of the seafarers’ reality ashore and on board. Previous studies of transnational communities have primarily considered land-based migrants who are more or less permanently settled in a host society. Seafarers operate in a global shipping industry and, therefore, they represent a different case (Sampson 2003, 2013). The temporary nature of employment requires seafarers to regularly shift between home and ship. They tend to spend more time on board ship than ashore. Although distinct, this experience has similarities with transnational migration. Cross-border features (such as

regular contact with family and relatives through phone calls and remittances) bear upon the idea of transnationalism. Yet, the depth and range by which transnational ties are maintained (including their connections back to the ship) may vary. Among seafarers for instance, the back and forth flow of connection typifying transnationalism may depend on availability of resources and length of stay on board and ashore. For instance, Landolt (2001) in studying economic transnationalism among Salvadorans in the United States mentioned that, despite the common practice of sending remittances amongst Mexican migrants, the nature of participation may vary for individual migrants. Sustaining transnational ties is subject to widely differing motives, influences and consequences, which can result in unequal participation amongst migrants; and therefore, a different form of transnationalism.

This study aims to understand how adequately transnationalism can reflect seafarers' reality. It will ask what indications of transnationalism amongst seafarers, if any, can bring new insight into the transnational migrant experience? Seafarers are often employed on 'foreign-flagged' vessels with differing tours of duty, they work as part of a mixed nationality crew, are highly mobile, yet more often than not, confined on board the ship for long periods. This raises a number of interesting issues regarding the complexity of their work when viewed through a transnational lens. For instance, the short-term employment contracts of seafarers prevent them from assimilating into any of the countries that they come in contact with. The high level of mobility (i.e. their extensive global movement as they flit from one port to another) hardly exposes them to complete incorporation into a certain country. The seafarers' confinement on board their ships and their rigid work schedules prevent them from nurturing a healthy social relationship with other seafarers. It highlights why studying seafarers is helpful in understanding transnationalism and it looks at the potential of this study to advance existing knowledge on transnational migration.

In seeking a coherent discussion of transnationalism in relation to seafaring, it is imperative to look at the crucial factors raised earlier in the theoretical discussion of transnationalism. The level of assimilation experienced by seafarers is foremost among these factors. The concept of assimilation operates within a well-defined political border where, given an adequate length of time, migrants adjust to the norms of a nation (see also Brubaker 2001). This is atypical in the context of seafarers whose likelihood of

becoming incorporated to a certain culture is undermined by the short time that they spend onshore and the lack of political boundaries on board. It may be argued, however, that the flag state of the ship can be likened to the traditional conception of a host country. The nationality of a vessel is the country of registry which has national jurisdiction and control of its operation. In this sense, the ship adheres to the laws of the flag it flies and therefore remains part of a national territory, only detached. Along with the recent trend of multinational crewing of seafarers, the ship also resembles a deterritorialised “hyperspace” for there is no dominant culture attributed to it (Sampson 2003). Such difference between the nationality of the ship and the nationality of the seafarers hired (and to some extent, the nationality of the shipowner) is part of the complexity of thinking about assimilation amongst a multi-ethnic crew in a global set-up industry. How they then interact within their host country under a limited amount of time, albeit regularly, remains inadequately unexplored. Similar questions arise, such as: How does their participation within the ship affect their behaviour? To what extent do they feel connected with other seafarers of different ranks and nationalities? Viewing the ship at sea as a total institution serving the dual function of being a place of residence and work largely affects the seafarers’ social behaviour (Zurcher 1965). Essentially, this highlights one of the areas where transnationalism can further understanding of seafarers’ mode of participation and belonging.

For the seafarers, “fitting in” occurs primarily in two different contexts: on board for the duration of the contract and their re-integration once ashore. How these connections are sustained through time will be seen more clearly in the discussion of the developments in global integration and the significant contribution of the role of technology found later in this chapter.

Efforts to maintain cross-border ties constitute an important feature amongst migrants forming a transnational community. Advances in the technology of communication and transportation have been apparent in the activities of seafarers, especially when it comes to seeking out social and emotional solace. Technological developments (specifically telephones, e-mails and internet access) have benefited seafarers in maintaining relationships with friends and relatives overseas as they demonstrate what Szerszynski and Urry (2006) describe as multiple mobilities. They classify three kinds of travel which creates the conditions for a cosmopolitan mode, which are: bodily travel,

imaginative travel (via media exposure), and virtual travel. Seafarers, in this context, can be seen as mainly following two kinds of travel, which are the physical and virtual travel. Virtual travel of communication points to post (e.g. cards and letters), telephone and mobiles (e.g. call and text messaging), satellite phones and e-mails. The impact of these multiple mobilities is a new form of social orientation where humans only inhabit their world from afar (Szerszynski and Urry 2006). By and large, the simultaneous physical and virtual travel of seafarers allows them to participate in daily trivialities back home. In her study of seafarers, Thomas (2003) highlighted the cost advantages of telephone communications and email, such that seafarers can take part in decision-making concerns related to household and family matters (i.e. children's welfare). However, the impacts of these new technologies may vary according to rank and nationality of seafarers. This is demonstrated in the study of Sampson and Wu (2003), who found that the advent of containerisation and developments in ICT in the shipping industry have brought about changes which limit many ratings from access to the outside world. While this does not mean that the officers' work context has not been altered, the balance seems to be less in favour of the ratings although seemingly more positive, cost-wise.

Interpersonal and verbal communication found in telephones and the instantaneity derived from e-mails is notably attractive for maintenance of regular contact; thereby, expanding the seafarers' transnational clout. There are concerns, however, on the level of access to these technologies, which suffers from a lack of academic attention. For example, do seafarers with a higher rank encounter less restrictions in terms of the length and frequency of calls? Those at the lower end of the pay schedule may be confronted with cost constraints and, therefore, encounter less frequency in communication. This becomes more glaring in deep-sea voyages where the high cost of satellite phones prevents frequent calls. As discussed previously, social, economic and political ramifications of cheap telephone calls allow for a more or less regular form of contact, highlighting the importance of time while drawing social connections together (i.e. acting as a "social glue") (Vertovec 2004).

E-mails may contribute positively to the seafarers' life on board and at home in terms of accessibility and frequency of contact. In Wilding's (2006) study of families communicating in a transnational context, the content of emails, commonplace or

mundane as they may be, allowed migrants to feel closer to their left-behind families. Thomas (2003) provided a similar explanation when she found that the seafarers remain updated of the small day-to-day influences on their families in telephone calls and e-mails in ways that may be omitted from traditional letters. In the case of seafarers, the accessibility of e-mails compared to mobile phones (Davies and Parfett 1998) needs further examination. In a recent survey conducted by Ellis et al (2012) on accommodation and facilities of cargo ships, around 41 percent of seafarers do not have access to e-mail on board and about 32 percent have restricted access to e-mail. Only a small proportion of about 27 percent have free and unrestricted access to email. Type and age of ships influence the presence of technology communications on board. Understanding this may help to articulate the extent to which the seafarers' activities may be transnational and ascertain the factors reinforcing or hindering their actions. In this way, the capacity of these technologies in "managing the transition from home to work and work to home and in linking the two domains so that movement between the two was less problematic" (Thomas 2003: 46) may be sufficiently addressed. This agrees with Levitt and Glick Schiller's (2003:7) description of a transnational field that goes beyond the "direct experience of migration into domains of interaction where individuals who do not move themselves maintain social relations across borders through various forms of communications."

Situating the above mentioned activities of seafarers within the globalised character of shipping industry shines a light on their cross-border activities. Mainly driven by cost minimisation considerations, shipping companies through recruitment agencies in developing countries are able to hire seafarers from anywhere in the world. Kahveci, Lane and Sampson (2002), and Wu and Sampson (2005) have noted that a significant number of the seafarers are hired come from developing economies. Indeed, the present shipping industry has evolved from being international to global as it sources able-bodied seafarers (Sampson 2012). The operation of the shipping industry differs from other industries because "this industry faces less difficulty and fewer restrictions relating to visas and to the social embedding of workers in a host society" (Sampson and Schroeder 2006: 63). Articulating whether this produces a context for the formation of transnational community is of considerable interest in this study; for example: Do seafarers experience belongingness in both their host and home countries? What is the quality and frequency of their interaction in both locations? How does looseness and

tightness of ties with kin and friends manifest? What are the factors influencing these behaviours? In other words, it is critical to explore the nature and quality of their participation in both domains.

A study of the daily routines occurring within a ship and the ensuing similarities and differences of their lives to those working on land can inform this debate. Although seafarers do not live within the confines of a traditional community, certain similarities liken their working environment to a society. For example, a ship-owner may register a vessel to a flag of his choice. In effect, the ship assumes a nationality; thereby, defining its rights, duties and regulations. Consequently, the ship functions as a host society to its population of seafarers, which has the capacity to attach and detach from one country to another. However, a major difference between a ship and a traditional community is its multi-ethnic setting. No one single culture prevails because they dwell in a “hyperspace”, which makes them members of a small-scale global community (Sampson 2003). Subsequently, it is necessary to ask how seafarers make sense of the ways in which they cultivate their ties and connection within the ship while consolidating solidarity beyond its boundary. Probing at certain peculiarities (such as duty-bound nature of work, location of work and mixed-nationality crewing) can provide some illumination on this phenomenon and lay the groundwork for its contemplation and comprehension.

The hectic work schedules at sea means that the seafarer’s daily life mainly revolves their duties on board the ship. This corresponds to what Goffman (1961) describes as a total institution because it encompasses the totality of the lives of its members. The structure of a seafarer’s daily life is heavily interwoven with their work routines, so that it becomes difficult to separate one from the other. By further exploring the meaning of what ‘total’ means on board a ship, Lamvik (2002: 78) refers to the “different needs of a person and what concerns the scheduling of the everyday life inside the institution.” The provision of basic needs and strict adherence to time schedules comprise the totality of a seafarer’s life on-board ship. The latitude for departures from the routine of work rarely occurs (if at all). In this sense, the normalcy of their life aboard is a sharp contrast to those migrants who are in land-based employment. Life on-board becomes “something more than a formal organisation, but [...] something less than a community” Goffman (1961: 103). Where seafarers interact with other seafarers who are also obligated to their

respective duties, their depths of involvement may operate around certain kinds of expectations and, thereby, facilitate interaction among them. Social life depends on the variation in workload and trade (ILO, 2004).

The location of the ship highlights the isolated environment of the seafarers' workplace. Personal contacts are largely confined within the vessel, except of course when the ship is berthed in a certain country and face-to-face contacts with other people are momentarily established. Yet, for most of a seafarer's life the ship is where their social interaction is formed and shaped. Set apart from their familial networks at home and society in general, the need for social proximity between seafarers may become magnified. While on voyage, apart from the recreational activities that may be provided, the seafarers can only rely on one another in order to wrestle with the monotony and tedium of living on board the ship. Subjected to a common feeling of deprivation, seafarers share the same feelings of loneliness with other seafarers. Notably, this is a mark of their membership within the community.

The multinational crewing inside a ship provides another significant perspective. The distribution of nationalities within a ship affords seafarers a better working environment where there is "a lack of ethnic identity attached to ships, as places, which allowed people to occupy them without being culturally dominated or oppressed" (Sampson 2003: 274). The positive influence of working and living side-by-side with other nationalities is manifested in the way they relate to each other through sharing jokes and joking strategies. This form of social interaction is particularly impressive in its "ability to overcome cultural barriers and uncertainties" (ILO 2004: 102). This may also serve to soften stereotypes, discriminatory behaviours, and power struggles. Having the English language as a common thread, seafarers are more willing to mix due to isolation and, therefore, enhance cultural appreciation characterise seafarers' involvement. Single nationality ships, or those with only two or three nationalities aboard, are confronted with the problem of social division. According to Kahveci, Lane and Sampson (2002: i), "cooperation and integration increased amongst mixed nationality crews as the number of nationalities aboard increased".

A related outcome of multinational crewing is the communication sustained inside a ship. The use of the English language allows seafarers to reinforce their relationships.

Although this imposes restrictions to the depth of social contact, a single language serves to unify seafarers in forming close relationships with others. Sampson (2003: 274) refers to active seafarers who have described “a number of close current and past relationships with seafarers of other nationalities.” By contrasting seafarers aboard to those ashore, Sampson (2003) showed how seafarers on-board a ship were more integrated to their “communities” compared to Netherlands-based seafarers. Therefore, ships are “inhabited by single recognisable ‘communities’ rather than by numbers or separate ‘enclave’ groups” (2003: 275). Despite the short duration of their relationships with each other, which is due to high crew turnover, their social participation is more active than their land-based counterparts in the Netherlands.

This complex picture presents various features affecting social dynamics on-board ship. The occupational culture on-board a ship influences their behaviour and conveys membership. Their social relationship, though work-based, is also leisure-based; thereby, allowing the formation of friendships and close contacts. Preoccupation with norms and standards is enmeshed together with their social life, and this facilitates inclusion and conformity to the way of life on board the ship. Once they are ashore and have returned to their respective hometowns, the seafarers once again become incorporated into their home societies. Their mode of participation in this community is very different from their shipboard community. In fact, this may provide a vivid contrast to how they may conceive their sense of belongingness due to the kinds of participation required (e.g. family networks and kin support). In this regard, the variety of ways they maintain their family and friendship networks, and whether this finds expression in strengthening the familiar feeling of belongingness, is insightful. Consequently, it becomes interesting to find out whether they still have a feeling of attachment towards the ship such that they orient their lives around it. In other words, do they still imagine being part of the ship despite being back home? And, to what extent?

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the development of transnationalism as a concept that applies to contemporary migrants whose increasing global connectivity allows cross-

border relationships to be sustained. In reviewing the major strands that have contributed to the conceptualisation of transnationalism, I emphasized that the migrant-led economic transnationalism by Portes allows for the study of another migrant category such as the seafarers. Whether seafarers experience a sense of belonging and how this is actually lived, certain transnational features are considered. This involves the notion of embeddedness and sustained links to home. How Filipino seafarers can be said to constitute 'communities' and forge a sense of belonging due to their means of working and living is considered an important dimension of being part of a transnational community. For instance, issues of adaptation and mechanisms for coping amongst Filipino seafarers reflect a form of resistance which underpins a transnational way of life. A broader view which includes understanding of how the nature and patterns of labour migration unfolded in the Philippines is essential in order to understand the political, economic and social factors that shaped the practices and norms of Filipino labour migration today. This is the task of the next chapter.

Chapter Four: International Labour Migration and the Philippines

4.1. Introduction

The rise of the Filipinos as the world's biggest source of seafarers has to be understood in historical context and that this necessitates amongst other things a knowledge of the different waves of migration that have characterised Filipino society, and which have helped constitute migration and working abroad as an accepted part of life; the existence of a seafaring through the U.S. fleet, the emergence of English as a language following American occupation, the development of a relatively advanced educational system, the role of the government, the economic downturn due to the world oil crisis in the 1970s, and the subsequent deregulation of the shipping industry.

Within this context, the next section will trace the emergence of labour migration in the Philippines from its historical roots up to the form that it has currently taken in the next section. The second section will then look at the history of labour migration, noting the waves by which migration has occurred. The third section looks at the changing profile of labour migration in the present period. The fourth section presents the character and dimension of overseas migration. The fifth section focuses on the global presence of seafarers, specifically its scope and pace in the global arena. Finally, the sixth section discusses the roles and responses of the Philippine government in the orientation and nature of migration.

This chapter aims to provide a description of the historical growth of labour migration in the Philippines. It will begin with a brief history of migration in the Philippines. It will then proceed to the background of labour migration, which is followed by a description of the major features of the migration processes in the Philippines. This description will deal with the scope, patterns and trends, magnitude, destination, and major characteristics of external migration flows in the Philippines. The chapter will finally describe temporary migration, especially in relation to seafaring.

The search for better conditions or greener pastures is often put forward in explaining the migrant's motivations to move. The local conditions found in the migrant's home country and the various factors that prompt them to search for opportunities elsewhere are distinct features influencing migration. In this regard, much of the attention of earlier work has been focused on a range of factors contributing to this phenomenon, such as wage differentials and push and pull factors. Basically, these approaches seek to answer two core questions: Why do migrants move? And, where do they move to? Over time these questions have been refined and understanding of these issues has been given greater depth. A number of additional questions have been asked, including: Who moves? And, what are the impacts of these movements? Newer dimensions pertaining to international labour migration in present-day discussions do not foresee a tapering-off of this global trend but instead refer to its perpetuation across time and space.

The growing interconnectivity between nations has led to a complex and dynamic environment where an economic crisis in one country is felt across the globe (Dicken 2011). The main players in this are generally characterised as 'labour-scarce' and 'labour-abundant' countries, or 'developed' and 'developing' countries. The labour needs of developed countries have become part of the route to development for less prosperous regions, on both macro and micro levels (OECD 2002). Remittances from migrant workers have now become an important element of the domestic economies of a number of developing countries, such as the Philippines. Consequently, the remittance earnings of the migrant workers have become an arena for competition among developing countries competing to supply the labour demands of developed economies by enhancing their labour-supply base (Wickramasekera 2002, Adams and Page 2003). Labour flows arising from this context are, therefore, predicated on triggers with which labour-supplying countries must comply.

Within this context, the Philippines has come to be recognised as one of the largest exporters of labour to developed nations. The unprecedented scale and pace of labour flows in the Philippines is evident at both the national and global level. To date there are around 1.2 million Filipinos who are scattered in more than two hundred countries around the world, altogether making up roughly 10 percent of the total population of the Philippines. This global presence annually generates an equally sizeable remittance of USD 14 billion to the Philippine economy. The demands for higher levels of state

control are growing as this flow increases (i.e. the en masse outflow of Filipino workers and the considerable inflow of foreign exchange). The participation of the Philippine state, by way of initiating or responding to these challenges, entails a repositioning in the global field. The process of shaping, framing, and reorganising this volume and diversity of migration is underpinned by various economic, socio-cultural and political realities which shapes the state's involvement. Evidently, the magnitude and scope of labour migration taking place in the Philippines asserts the pervasiveness of this phenomenon and the emphasis on the transnational quality it has recently gained as Filipino migrants increasingly lead dual lives. Whether there was a significant shift in the orientation and nature of migration in the Philippines will be explored in this chapter.

To put the present level of migration into perspective, it is instructive to trace the emergence of labour migration in the Philippines from its historical roots up to the form that it has currently taken. The second section will then look at the history of labour migration, noting the waves by which migration has occurred. The third section discusses the roles and responses of the Philippine government in the orientation and nature of migration. The fourth section presents the character and dimension of overseas migration. The fifth section focuses on the global presence of seafarers, specifically its scope and pace in the global arena

4.2 History of Labour Migration in the Philippines

The mid-1970s are often viewed as the starting point of Filipino labour migration. Prior to this point no large-scale movements of Filipino workers have been recorded. However, in order to fully grasp how this considerable labour migration has evolved it is necessary to look a little further back in time to the country's colonial past. A consideration of the systematic series of actions and events that have incorporated large numbers of Filipinos into the international migrant labour force will enhance an understanding of the interconnectivities and character of migration flows in the Philippines.

In this section, the perspectives of the history of the Philippines by Constantino (1993) and Corpuz (1997) will be substantially referred to. During Spanish colonial rule the Filipinos were initiated into a culture that was significantly different from their own. The Philippines was administered from Madrid from the mid-sixteenth century until the late nineteenth century. With more than three hundred years of Spanish influence, changes in the Filipino way of life were inevitable. Foremost and most enduring among them were the introduction of Roman Catholicism and the formation of landed elites. The sons of these elites, the *illustrados*, were sent to Spain to pursue their education. Meanwhile, those belonging to the working class crewed the Spanish trading ships plying the Manila-Acapulco route, which is commonly known as the Galleon Trade. When the trade ended in 1810 some Filipino workers who later settled in Mexico played important roles in Mexico's eventual independence from Spain (Mercene 2007). Trading activity flourished for the duration of the Spanish occupation. Trade was from the start established as the primary source of income for the Spanish colonists in the Philippines (Constantino 1993; Corpuz 1997) and also a vehicle for out-migration of Filipinos.

A series of revolts against Spanish rule culminated in a truce in December 1897. On 12 June 1898 Philippine independence was proclaimed, marking the end of Spanish colonial rule. However, independence was short-lived and the Philippines were almost immediately annexed by the Americans under the Treaty of Paris (signed with Spain on 10 December 1898). A settlement of \$20 million dollars ceded the Philippines to American rule. The "Benevolent Assimilation" Proclamation of United States President McKinley meant that the Philippines were effectively under a new foreign sovereign rule (Constantino 1993). According to Bankoff (2005: 67) the immediate concern of the Taft administration was the labour shortage problem in which the issue "was not that there were too few people to work but that those people saw no reason to labour for someone else in return for a wage." Since notions of labour under the Spanish rule largely revolved around voluntary, reciprocal and compulsory work relations, working in exchange for money did not effectively constitute a persuasion in the Philippines at this point in time. A neoliberal labour system that introduced higher wages and better working conditions eventually helped to establish the concept of wage labour in the Philippines; notably, amongst the younger generation and those working in Manila which was later extended into the rural areas (Bankoff 2005). Easy entry to Hawaii and

California were granted to Filipinos in 1906 while Chinese and Japanese workers faced restricted access to the US and its territories. Consequently, many Filipinos took advantage of this opportunity to work abroad. Although protection from exploitation remained a difficulty for Filipinos in Hawaiian plantations (Espiritu 2002), acquiring an expanded work horizon paved the way for their integration into paid labour elsewhere overseas.

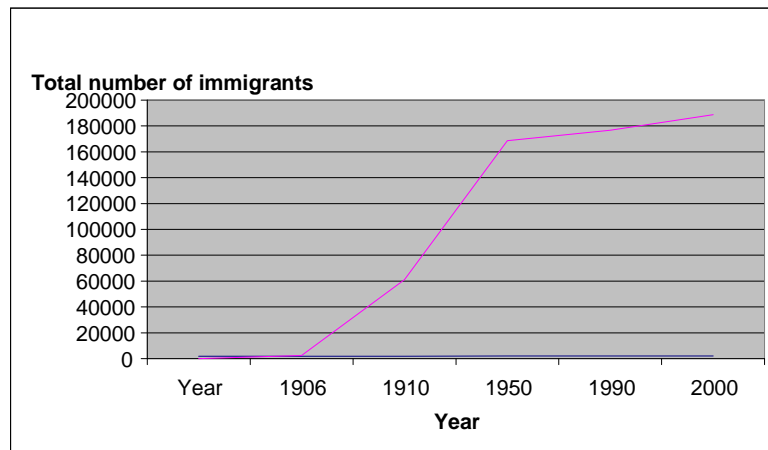
4.2.1 The First Wave of Migration, 1900 to 1946

As nationals of the US, Filipinos became part of a large labour market encompassing mainland US and its other colonies (e.g. Hawaii). Changes that were made through the education system likewise influenced the economic, political and social environment of the Philippines. For example, the Spanish language was no longer spoken in schools and English became the primary medium of instruction. When the Philippines became a US colony, all Spanish traces were removed and the Filipinos learned to do things “the American way.” In fact, it was even suggested that “Filipinos not only adhere to ‘American ideals’; they are ‘living American life’ even before stepping foot on the colonizer’s shores” (Ponce 2005: 6). The first wave of migrants included plantation workers in Hawaii and cannery workers in the US mainland; it also included a number of Filipino scholars (or the *pensionados*).

An extensive account of the first cohort of labourers was provided by Espiritu (2003), whose ideas I draw upon in this section. Espiritu (2003) described how the majority of the early Filipino labourers recruited for Hawaii came from the northern part of the Philippines, which is also known as the Ilocos. Although the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association (HSPA) also undertook labour recruitment in cities such as Manila and Cebu, agricultural experience from those in the rural areas was found lacking compared to the workers from the rural area of the Ilocos. The low level of economic development and dire circumstances in the Ilocos were due largely to the export/import policy that was initiated by the US government, which destroyed the regions’ textile industry that had been booming during the Spanish era (Espiritu 2002). Consequently, in 1946 there were an estimated 125,000 Filipinos working in U.S. sugar plantations (Sharma, 1984:337). Between 1912 and 1928, the Ilocos became the main supplier of labourers to

the U.S., amounting to around 65 percent of the total. Meanwhile, outside of the Ilocos region, the people from Visayas (the central part of the Philippines) made up 26 percent of the total (Lasker 1931). The province of Cebu ranked as the second primary source of agricultural migrants to Hawaii (Mojares 1983). To date, the Ilocanos account for 70 to 90 percent of the Filipino population in Hawaii (Agbayani 1991:78). Information on Filipino workers in the US mainland was restricted due to the migratory nature of their work. Most Filipino workers in the US followed the agricultural harvest, fishing, and canning seasons. They significantly grew in number by the 1920s, which allowed them to form the Cannery Workers and Farm Labourers Union that later became Local 37 of the American Federation of Labour.

Figure 4.1: Filipino immigration to Hawaii, 1906 to 2004



Source: Historical Statistics of Hawaii, by Robert C. Schmitt (University Press of Hawaii, 1977); 1980 Census of Population: general population characteristics - Hawaii (U.S. Census Bureau, 1982); 2000 U.S. Census of Population; 2004 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004)

From 1906 to 1946, the Filipino farm labourers continued to fill the manpower shortages in Hawaii. When the Philippines was released from American occupation in 1934 under the Tydings-McDuffie Act (or the Philippines Independence Act of 1934), the Filipino entry to the US was restricted to only 50 persons per year. This restriction continued until 1965. From 1934, Filipino workers were no longer classified as US nationals and they were required to relinquish their American passports, effectively transforming them from internal migrants to international migrants facing immigration restrictions.

At this time, a number of *pensionados* were sponsored by various American universities. The 1903 Pensionado Act supported the education of one hundred Filipino students, mostly male, who mostly came from elite family backgrounds. They studied in prestigious universities such as Harvard, Stanford, Cornell and the University of California, Berkeley. In 1938 the US scholarship programme produced fourteen thousand *pensionados*. After their education, many Filipino scholars went back to the Philippines and became leaders in different various political, social and economic fields (Tyner 2007). However, there were a number of exceptions and a few *pensionados* found themselves unable to return to the Philippines for a variety of reasons. In the nursing profession, Filipino nurses who studied abroad (either through the pensionado programme or through sponsorship by other American institutions or individuals) were able to advance their career upon their return. Between the 1900s and the 1940s, such

transnational dynamics formed close links between US education and occupational mobility in the Philippines, which gave particular prestige to nursing as an occupation among elite Filipino women (Choy 2003). The subsequent institutionalisation of nursing through Americanised education and training informed later streams of migration of nurses, which became integral to the motivations and aspirations of many Filipino women hoping to secure work abroad.

In addition, Filipinos were also allowed entry into the US Navy. The US has historically had extensive military bases in the Philippines, which they developed as part of the colonial process. Consequently, this created a situation where “Filipino nationals are the only Asians who have served in the US Armed Forces in sizeable numbers without possessing US citizenship” (Espiritu 2002: 94). The US recruitment process began immediately after they acquired the Philippines from Spain in 1901. In 1903 there were only around nine Filipino recruits in the US military. During the First World War this number had grown to six thousand. It slightly fell to four thousand recruits in the 1920s and the 1930s. By 1970, there were large numbers of Filipinos in the US Navy largely working as stewards and mess attendants, which reached to around fourteen thousand (Melendy 1977; cited in Espiritu 2002). In other words, there were more Filipinos serving in the US Navy than there were in the entire Philippine Navy. The large numbers of Filipino applicants to the US Navy (up to one-hundred thousand per year) was also due to the presence of US Navy bases in the Philippines which exposed them to “US money, culture and standards of living” (Espiritu 2002: 95). The combined Spanish and American influences penetrated much of the local way of life and preconditioned the Filipinos’ preferences, behaviour and outward orientation.

4.2.2 The Second Wave of Migration, 1946 to 1970

Filipinos were technically classified as US nationals until 1946 and constituted a convenient and practical pool of inexpensive labour. Most Filipinos went to the US to work in agriculture or in canning factories. A small but growing number turned to nursing and the US navy. This was the context of the first wave. The end of World War II significantly changed the Philippine migration landscape. Two outstanding patterns emerged during this second wave of migration. The first pattern saw a general decline in

migration to the US immediately after the war. Meanwhile, in the 1950s new labour markets opened up in Asia and Europe. In this period nursing as a profession steadily gained ground and the mass migration of Filipino nurses increasingly became apparent. The second pattern occurred in the late 1960s when the number of Filipinos going to the US once again picked up as labour markets for doctors, nurses and teachers were developed. In all, the second wave of migration saw the steady outflow of both skilled and unskilled workers, whether on a permanent or temporary arrangement, to the US, Asia, and Europe.

1946-1965

Migration to the US slowed down when World War II broke out. Following the declaration of Philippine independence in 1946, Filipinos were no longer considered US nationals. After the end of World War II it was estimated that there were between ten thousand and twelve thousand Filipinos in the US working as labourers and military personnel, or who had travelled as war brides (Asis 2006). A host of legislation was passed to address this situation, including: the Filipino Naturalisation Act of 1946, which allowed for citizenship; the 1946 War Brides Act; the 1947 US-RP Military Bases Agreement; and, the 1946 Fiancées Act. The easing of restrictions and the naturalisation of rights granted to Filipinos brought about the resumption of “large-scale immigration to Hawaii and California...while areas with large Filipino student populations remained stagnant” (Liu et al 1991). Tyner (2007) has estimated that there were around forty thousand Filipinos who migrated to the US between 1946 and 1965. Tyner (2007) adds that in the 1950s around 1,200 wives of American military personnel migrated to the US.

The entry of Filipino nurses into the US was revived by the passing of the US Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) in 1948. Choy (2003) describes how the Philippine government participated in this migration by facilitating exchange placement. Choy (2003) claims that since nursing was already considered a profession by the 1920s, the mass migration of Filipino nurses that resulted from EVP comprised the first wave of nurse migration to US, which is in contrast to the prevailing knowledge that this migration began from 1965 onwards. The nursing recruitment agencies in the US and travel agencies (e.g. Philippine Air Lines) in the Philippines who catered to the nurses helped to mobilise

this migration flow by acting as placement agencies. Rodriguez (2010) also argues that the ensuing active involvement of the Philippine state and the proliferation of recruitment agencies (including agricultural recruiters for Hawaii plantations) were outcomes of this phase.

In 1949, the Philippines suffered an economic crisis because of its balance of payments and it initiated foreign exchange and import controls. The pre-war exchange rate was maintained and selective importation was established. The import substitution industrialisation (ISI) programme, which was in place from 1950s to the 1960s, was used as an effort to industrialise the Philippines and to stimulate the manufacturing and assembly industry. The export of agricultural products, which the country heavily depended upon at that time, grew but there was a decline in industrialisation in the 1960s. In addition, there were few domestic incentives to increase agricultural productivity in food crops (Rohwer 1995). In the second half of the 1950s the Philippines experienced a decline in manufacturing growth rates and a Balance of Payments (BOP) crisis, which was addressed through loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). When the Philippines devalued the Philippine Peso, and removed import controls and exchange licensing in 1962, manufacturing industry declined even further as import demands outpaced exports. The Philippine manufacturing industry recovered slightly following the reintroduction of exchange controls in 1968. Proposal to reduce tariffs was not embraced by industrialists at that time because they felt that it would make more competition for their products. The change in the Philippine political landscape became evident as industries formed under the ISI program gathered political weight and links with an international financial institution materialised (Kelly 2000).

Non-professional contract workers, on the other hand, came into demand in the rich East Asian countries in the 1950s and the 1960s. Many Filipinos worked as artists, barbers and musicians, these were followed by loggers to Kalimantan, Indonesia (Gonzalez 1998). In addition, US involvement in wars in French Indochina and Korea meant that many Filipinos migrated to US facilities in Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, Wake Island and Guam. Many Filipino medical workers also migrated to Canada and Australia in these decades (Carino 1995).

The 1960s also marked the beginning of Filipino workers dispersion beyond US borders and into different parts of Europe in the search for better opportunities. Filipino migration to the European continent largely began in the post-war recovery period. It increased due to the rapid expansion of the European health and tourist sectors (Hoegsholm 2007). Most of the Filipino migrants who travelled to Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, Greece, Germany, France, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Ireland in this phase were women. Thus, a prominent feature of this migration was the large number of Filipino females found in unskilled, skilled, and semi-skilled jobs. The following section will provide information on the beginning of Filipino migration to US and Europe.

1965-1970

The largest source of Filipino immigration to the US occurred in this wave (Liu et al 1991, Espiritu 2003). In 1965, the US Immigration and Naturalisation Act abolished the previous national origin quotas and introduced two chains of emigration from the Philippines, which were: family reunification and occupational categories. This increased migration to the US and many Filipino medical technicians and professionals (mostly doctors and nurses) took this opportunity and travelled to the US with their families. The immigrants of this period were highly skilled compared to those who arrived before 1965. They formed new Filipino communities on the east coast, especially in Illinois and the New York – New Jersey regions which lacked trained medical professionals. The choice of area that they travelled to was largely dependent on the locale of the sponsoring firm. This new wave of migrants had few social and physical ties to the pre-1965 migrants and many joined voluntary associations.

Under the stricter laws governing occupational preference categories, most Filipinos wanting to go abroad began to use the family preference category. The way that many Filipinos entered the US labour market changed significantly between 1971 and 1985. Petitions from their relatives abroad meant that the number of Filipino migrants who travelled to the US under the reunification program doubled from 8,200 in 1971 to 16,050 in 1984 (De Jong et al. 1986). Carino et al. (1991) reported that from 1976 the number of Filipino professionals who migrated to the US drastically dropped to 20 percent from the 51.5 percent level that it achieved between 1971 and 1975. On the

other hand, those who migrated under the family reunification programme showed a marked increase, from 48.4 percent in 1971 to 79.6 percent in the late 1980s. The large scale of Filipino migration to the US in the twenty years after the 1965 Immigration Act made the Philippines the second largest source of US immigration. The 1990 census of the US population estimated that there were 1.5 million Filipinos in the US, about half of whom were living in California. De Jong et al. (1986) further explain that this made the prospective migrants structure their plans and behaviours according to the immigration provisions put forth by the US government. Since they tend to be of similar socio-economic backgrounds to their petitioner, the migrants under the family reunification category corresponded to the unskilled and semi-skilled migrants who came to America before 1965 (Espiritu and Wolf 1999). This was in contrast to the professional migrants who came from the middle to upper class levels. Accordingly, the composition of Filipino migrants to the US changed based on the post-1965 immigration policy and they became “diverse along regional and socioeconomic lines” (Espiritu 2002).

In Europe, the presence of Filipino migrants initially became manifest from the 1960s – 1970s which further gained prominence in the 1980s onwards owing to the Philippine government’s involvement. In the interest of preserving the flow of discussion on Filipino migration to Europe, the events involved from the 1980s onwards will be discussed in this section. According to Palpallatoc (1997), Filipino migration to Europe can be traced to the early 1960s when Berghaus, a garment factory in Achterhoek, hired six hundred Filipino women to work in their textile factories. Arriving in three batches, the seamstresses were recruited under a three-year work contract. Two Dutch catholic missionaries arranged their employment through advertisements in Manila. These women were mostly professionals (e.g. college graduates, teachers, and office workers). The first batch of Filipino nurses to travel to Europe arrived in 1964, following the invitation of Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands. They worked in the university-affiliated hospitals of Leiden and Utrecht. After three years, a number of midwives arrived to work in other parts of the Netherlands. In the 1970s Filipino seafarers started to travel to Europe. This was followed by spouses in intercultural marriages, performing artists, students and political refugees in the 1980s. By the 1990s, most of the Filipinos in Europe were working as au pairs and oil rig workers. Palpallatoc (1997) briefly mentioned that some Filipino musical artists were also present in 1960s.

By the 1970s, migration to other parts of Europe (such as Italy, United Kingdom and Germany) became more prominent. These migrants were predominantly female Filipinos who worked in care services in Italy. By the mid-1980s, the presence of Filipinos was felt in Western Europe. Parrenas (2001) pointed to the influence of the economic instability that affected the Filipino middle-class as a result of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) devaluation of the Philippine peso as an influence on this phase of migration. At this time many middle-class Philippine families were in constant danger as they became prone to economic crises (e.g. exchange rate shock). What was interesting in the inception of migration to Italy by Filipinos was that it was not sanctioned by the state, the Catholic Church played a major role in bringing many Filipino women to Italy (UN-INSTRAW 2008). In 1983, due to the increasing numbers of Filipinos migrating to Italy, recruitment agencies became more popular. Since Italy did not require Filipinos to hold official travel visas until 1981, most Filipinos in this phase entered Italy using a tourist visa obtained from any country in Europe. This changed in 1986 when Italy's immigration policies were tightened. They were tightened even further in the 1990s when Italy became part of the 1990 Schengen Agreement. Pressures from other European countries caused Italy to move away from its earlier lenient migration control (Parrenas 2001).

Meanwhile, shortfalls in labour in the UK became prominent. Between 1968 and 1980 20,226 work permits were issued, around 47 percent were issued to Filipinos working in hospitals and welfare homes as hospital auxiliaries, catering workers and nurse-trainees. Chambermaids constituted the second-largest group in the UK, followed by catering and waiting staff. Under the Immigration Act of 1971, many Filipino workers were forced to leave the UK due to the withdrawal of their work permits. Only the domestic servants employed by diplomats and Middle Eastern monarchs were allowed to enter; however, this was on the condition that they remain employed with the same employer. Leus (1995) referred to two waves of Filipino migrants who travelled to the UK. The first wave began in 1979 and was composed of college educated migrants, who were trained nurses, teachers, engineers and accountants. In 1979, around 90 percent of Filipino migrants to the UK were females with at least two years of college education. Due to the work permit restrictions, they were classified as unskilled labour. The second wave of migration saw a large number of family members follow the first migrants. In

addition, the second wave of migration also included students, many of whom went on to become professionals.

In the 1970s, Filipino migration to Germany was also characterised by two waves. The first wave consisted of nurses and midwives who worked in Germany's hospitals and retirement homes. The second wave followed in the 1980s and was dominated by Filipinos who were married to German men.

Filipino migration to Spain started in the 1980s. Before 1985, regulation of entry to Spain was lax. A Filipino could enter Spain using a tourist visa and then change for a work permit afterwards. The Ley de Extranjera (Law on Foreigners) of 1985 provided special treatment for the Filipinos and other foreigners, such as: freedom of movement and choice of residence, right to education, right to form associations, hold public meetings and demonstrations, and the right to join Spanish trade unions or professional organisations. In the 1990s, regularisation programmes were undertaken (i.e. 1991, 1996 and 1999) in order to provide work permits to undocumented workers. Most Filipinos during this time were granted legal status. Currently, the Filipino community in Spain is the oldest group of Asian migrants in Europe (Pe-Pua 2004).

France was quite different because when large numbers of Filipinos came in the 1980s most of them worked as domestic helpers. By the 1990s, many young Filipino workers came to France under the au pair exchange program. As an educational exchange program, the au pair program existed for those who were interested in learning a new language and culture by living with a French family. The Filipino workers who came in under this category were not given an employment contract. Between 1993 and 1995 the number of Filipino au pairs in France reached around seven hundred but it declined to one hundred when the Philippine government suspended its hiring (Oosterbeek – Latoza 2007).

In Belgium, Filipino migrants included a group of Filipino seafarers as well as female domestic workers. These seafarers were "either transit on board international vessels in Antwerp or stand-by' while waiting to be hired, or 'jump-ship' and take up employment on land." Others stayed permanently when they married Belgium nationals or other Europeans. (www.philsol.nl/of/country-profiles.htm)

4.2.3 The Third Wave: 1970s – 1990s

Whereas the first two waves of migration were dominated by travel to the US and Europe, the prominent feature of the third wave was the rise in contractual employment of Filipino workers in the Middle East and Asia. The temporary character of migration and the resulting wide dispersion of Filipino workers around the world made this wave significant. Essentially, the temporary and widespread character of labour outflows marked the 1970s. The significance of this wave was in the “push” by the state for Filipino migrants to work abroad.

Visible efforts to integrate the Philippines into the global economy were undertaken by the newly established Marcos government in 1972. Foreign capital through the form of export processing zones were geared towards taking advantage of low Filipino wage rates. A temporary overseas employment programme was also immediately launched. In this period the Philippines attempted to fill a niche in the world-wide demand for inexpensive, temporary contract workers (Tyner and Donaldson 1999: 219). Manpower shortages in other countries (such as Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea) were filled by Filipino migrant workers. Effectively, the Philippines wanted to establish a presence in the emerging economies of Asia. The Marcos administration at that time, under the development diplomacy policy, regarded the export of surplus manpower as one way for ‘less-developed countries like the Philippines play in the North-South division of labour’ (Gonzalez 1998: 34). Sills (2007) emphasised that “a combination of economic and demographic mechanisms has resulted in a very sizeable, young population with high rates of unemployment and a lack of domestic opportunities” which left the government hardly any options in stabilising the economy.

The oil crisis of the 1970s caused further losses in the economy which resulted from large numbers of firm closures and job losses. As an oil-importing nation, the Philippines were severely affected and it had to grapple with internal as well as external problems in repairing the worsening employment condition. Gonzales (1998) clearly put this into context by referring to two opposing consequences of the oil crisis to the Philippines: large unemployment within the Philippines and the subsequent influx of

Filipino workers to the Middle East. When the construction industry in Saudi Arabia announced its need for additional workers, the Philippine government took this opportunity to export its excess labour. Notwithstanding the temporary motive of the government, it soon became apparent that this solution was largely relied on to curb the aftermath of the oil crises of 1973 and 1978. This surge lasted until the early 1980s. Although males were mostly recruited to the construction industry of the Middle East, females soon followed after the buildings were finished. The majority of these Filipino women travelled to the Middle East to work as domestic workers and care workers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Consequently, structural changes in the shipping industry also made it favourable as an alternative source of overseas employment for Filipino workers. Developments in sea trade, such as the growth of open registers from around the 1950s (Alderton and Winchester 2002) emphasised seafaring's potential as an income source. Under the open register system, nationally registered ships could be registered or re-flagged in another country, which is commonly known as Flags of Convenience (FOC). The global oil crisis of the 1970s led to more FOC-registered ships, which allowed for the development of multinational crewing. A global labour market for seafarers consequently emerged (Winchester et al 2006). As the restructuring was also evident in technical and technological terms as in 'financing, ownership, shipbuilding, ... the shipping industry has emerged as the most globalised of all economic activities.' (Couper et al. 1999: 9). In such deregulated, globalised environment, national boundaries were dissolved in crewing ships and seafarers were hired from different parts of the world. The Filipinos, whose primary exposure to this trade had been through the US Navy, were now able to work beyond military-related operations and into the merchant trade. The earliest recorded estimate of sea-based workers by the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) in 1984 showed a total of 50,604 which constituted 14 percent of the total Filipino workers abroad.

The promotion of overseas employment in the Philippines through formal recognition of the Philippine Labour Code of 1974 (or Labour Export Policy) specifically ensured "the careful selection of Filipino workers for overseas employment in order to protect the good name of the Philippines abroad" (Article 12 Philippine Labour Code of 1974). A component of this labour policy was the export of labour envisioned to achieve

economic growth and development for the Philippines by easing unemployment and bringing in foreign currency. An offshoot of this was the creation of two agencies: The Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB), which was established for market development, and the National Seaman's Board (NSB), which was established to manage the recruitment and deployment of land-based and sea-based workers. The Bureau of Employment Service (BES), which was already in existence, functioned as transitory, government-run employment agency while simultaneously regulating private recruitment agencies (Tyner 2004: 33).

In the following year (i.e. 1980) the Commission on Filipino Overseas was created to formulate policies to promote the welfare and interest of Filipino migrants. This office replaced the Office of Emigrant Affairs. In January 1982, when the increase in the application for private employment agencies rose to "more than 300 recruitment agencies," a Letter of Instruction (LOI) 1190 from the Office of the President Marcos suspended all applications (Pernia 2008: 2). This was done to avoid cut-throat competition and also to protect workers from exploitative practices by other recruitment agencies. In March 1982, a reorganisation of the Ministry of Labour and Employment created the Philippine Overseas Employment Association (POEA), which assumed the functions of OEDB and NSB. Overall, the POEA was tasked to efficiently manage labour flows, whether land-based or sea-based, and to remove "widespread corruption and mismanagement within the previous organizations" (Tyner and Donaldson 1999: 2). Nevertheless, it should be noted that around this time recruitment agencies had become the main conduit for migrant workers. For instance, after 1983 most migrating Filipinos used recruitment and placement agencies to find work in Italy (Parrenas 2001). Putting in place a processing and regulatory body for deployment of workers abroad can be seen as a facilitative mechanism and also as a way of encouraging workers to maximise opportunities abroad.

In the early 1980s, a surge of Filipino women migrating to Japan on entertainer visas became more evident. Filipino musicians had migrated to Japan since the nineteenth century. This migration continued up to the 1960s; however, it was only in the 1980s that the female Filipino workers in Japan were classified as more than an entertainer, with a hint of prostitution. This connotation had not existed before because the previous Filipino migrants were musicians who had traditionally dominated the Japanese

entertainment industry (Yu Jose 2007). Despite the new nuances of meaning in becoming an ‘entertainer’, many Filipino female workers continued to flock to Japan to work in this trade. Yu Jose (2007: 10) aptly says that, “it is a well-known fact that Filipino workers are all over the world, but it is only in Japan where most of them are entertainers.”

Most Filipino migrants to Hong Kong and Singapore were hired as domestic workers. Ozeki (1997) describes how Filipino migration to Hong Kong started when one thousand Filipino domestic workers were hired by European expatriates in Hong Kong. They were followed by Filipinos who were hired as domestic workers by the Hong Kong Chinese. This was most visible when Hong Kong became part of the newly industrialised economies in Asia in the 1980s. It is a trend that continues up to the present day. The ability to speak English and a high level of education gave Filipinos an edge over their other Asian counterparts. Meanwhile, in Singapore the rising number of women professionals paved the way for the hiring of foreign domestic helpers, many of whom were Filipino. The higher wages offered in Hong Kong compared to Singapore could be another of the reasons for the higher number of Filipinos who migrate to Hong Kong (Gibney and Hansen 2005).

The distinct character of the waves of migration discussed above highlight a number of important facts about the Philippines’ history of international migration. Firstly, the Philippines have a long tradition of migration that pre-dates the 1974 Labour Export Policy. Indeed, labour migration from the Philippines was happening as far back as the Spanish colonial rule in 1700s. Secondly, the composition and character of the migrants have varied with the numerous policies and other external factors (e.g. US immigration laws and the Philippine government’s facilitation of migration). Thirdly, and this was underscored in the first three waves of migration: “for much of the 20th century, ‘international migration’ for Filipinos meant going to the US and its Pacific territories” (Asis 2006).

These waves of migration help to explain why Filipinos have scattered throughout the world. The *first wave* (i.e. 1900 to 1946) brought about two streams of migrants: the pensionados in mainland US and the plantation workers in Hawaii. The former prefigures the highly educated labour that became visible in the second wave while the

latter consists of agricultural labourers tapped by the US colonial regime to augment its own labour shortage. Since the Philippines were an American colony at that time, the Filipinos were exempt from entry restrictions to the US. The *second wave* (i.e. 1946 to 1970), started when Philippine independence was gained in 1946. The entry restrictions imposed at the beginning did not avert migration flow because the flow of migrants to the US resumed and new avenues of migration emerged. For instance, petitions from relatives in the US ensured a flow of unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. The massive outflow of a number of technicians and professionals (i.e. doctors and nurses) from the Philippines into the health care institutions in the US followed from 1965 to 1970. At this time, the Philippine government started to show involvement in facilitating nurses as exchange participants to US. Meanwhile, there was a marked rise of migrant Filipino workers, mostly nurses and domestic helpers, who travelled to Europe. As such, the first two waves revolved around the migration of Filipinos to the US and Europe while in the *third wave* (i.e. 1970s onwards) the composition of labour flow was predominantly unskilled and largely female. The destination was mostly to the Asia-Pacific (e.g. Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan). The rise of contract jobs, prompted by the labour demands of the Middle East and the globalisation in the shipping industry, saw the Philippine government actively managing and promoting migration. How labour export has become institutionalised in the Philippines will be discussed in the next section.

4.3 The Present Role of the Government

The number of Filipino migrants has steadily increased in number and migration has become an important way of keeping the Philippine economy afloat. The government, through POEA, continues to play a highly regulatory role in making the workers ‘in-demand’ by using various cultural, administrative and legal mechanisms. Following a long history of migration that started in the Spanish period in the 1700s, the present migration sees the increasing role of the Philippine government in managing and facilitating the mobility of its ever-increasing numbers of migrant workers.

The Philippine government has actively pursued the facilitation of outflows of labour. It has also explored other labour markets abroad while ensuring the competitiveness of

Filipino workers (e.g. via training and certification). Initially conceived as part of a temporary development strategy, sending Filipino workers abroad has evolved into one of the “most well-developed bureaucracies and extensive institutional structures that deal with the various aspects of labour migration” (‘International labor’ 2007).

Since the 1970s a number shifts in Philippine state discourse on overseas labour employment have occurred. The state’s actions to facilitate the sending of Filipino workers abroad and the creation of a governing body to manage them have sent mixed messages. The salient issues have particularly revolved around the government’s main motive in a supposedly temporary arrangement and the issues surrounding its facilitative role (e.g. whether it is simply managing migration or promoting it). In order to get the most out of labour migration, the Aquino Administration in 1988 called the Overseas Foreign Workers (OFWs hereafter) *Bagong Bayani* (i.e. New Heroes). This announcement was made in front of the Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong. This strategy highlighted the migrants’ role in keeping the Philippine economy afloat. Other forms of acknowledging migrant contribution have followed, such as the declaration of December as the ‘Month of Overseas Filipino Workers’ and the presidential award for overseas Filipinos which began in 1991. The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (R.A. 8042) formalised the state’s commitment to protect the rights and welfare of migrant workers, their families and other overseas Filipinos in trouble. Its basic policy framework on overseas employment reflects the government’s strategy on migration management. This is also considered the first law in Asia which provides protection for OFWs. This Act evolved as a turning point in the history of Philippine labour migration policy because it catalysed more effective public policy reform for overseas workers (Gonzales 1998).

More recently, the Arroyo administration (2001 to 2010) has taken an explicit stance on international labour migration. This can be seen in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 2001 to 2004, which was “a legitimate option for the country’s work force, opportunities and modes of engagement in overseas labour market...consistent with regional and international commitments and agreements.” In the current MTPDP 2004 to 2010, the same outlook has been provided by the Philippine government. In order to strengthen the welfare and protection services for Filipino workers, the Philippine government incorporated its Strategy Planning Matrices in

pursuance of bilateral agreements with the private sector for “securing employment, and ensuring protection and welfare of Filipino workers abroad” along with the sustained implementation of “a comprehensive social service package for OFWs on-site.” This is reflected in how the POEA, as the overseer of migration flows in the Philippines, performs its core functions of industry regulation, employment facilitation and worker protection. Tyner (2009) noted that how Filipino migrants are constructed by the state runs counter to the supposedly temporary objective it initially adopted. By framing overseas work as an individual right amongst rationally-acting Filipino workers, working abroad becomes the sole responsibility of the migrant. For the most part, the state, having adopted a neoliberal stance, intervened in a way that privileges migration outflow as crucial to development, although it does not privilege the workers. Since the welfare of the workers is increasingly subsumed under economic imperatives of the state, protection for Filipino workers abroad is often relegated as being of secondary importance.

Given the myriad number of roles carried out by the POEA, it has managed to affirm the key position of Filipino workers in the international market for labour. Initially tasked to monitor the Filipino migrants, the POEA’s role has developed into not only managing flows of migrants but also promoting them. By pro-actively seeking other markets abroad, it has managed to secure for the Filipino workers a system in which labour is keenly sought and sustained. In order to extend POEA services to OFWs, labour attaches under the Department of Labour and Employment have been established abroad. The existence of these field offices, or the Philippine Overseas Labour Offices (POLOs), abroad makes it easier for prospective employers to hire Filipino workers. POLOs provides an official list of licensed private employment agencies that can recruit Filipino workers. Once a recruitment agent has been identified, the employer needs to submit requirements at the nearest POLO, which is usually based at Philippine consulates. This process ensures the existence of a company (i.e. prospective employer) and the demand for Filipino manpower. This set-up, where POLOs are not directly under POEA, effectively creates the POEA as a “locally based manager for a global labour market” (Agunias 2008: 4). In fact, POLOs are not the only source of potential labour market prospects abroad because many ambassadors and consulars also take part in scouring for information. “Much of this information is passed through casual conversation at State dinners, parties or hallway gossip” (Tyner 2000: 66). Within the

Philippines, the Pre-employment Services Office of the POEA promotes employment of Filipinos through marketing missions, and promotional campaigns. Equally vital to the role of POEA is the efficient management of various recruitment agencies. The majority of the recruitment agencies are based in Manila. For example, Tyner (2000) estimates that around 99 percent of private employment agencies (PEA) operate in Manila, mostly in the Ermita and Malate districts. For sea-based workers, most manning agencies can be found in Manila (55%) followed by Makati (28%).

The rising number of Filipinos abroad, across a wide range of employment, was due to the Philippine government's effort to achieve a global niche as a labour exporting country. A state-sponsored labour brokerage ensured an outflow of migrants and it also retained linkages to the homeland. The various ways Filipino migrants have been constructed by the state, from being a 'balikbayan' in the Marcos era to 'new heroes' in the Aquino administration reflects a strategy that incorporates a sense of belonging only by being abroad. Such transformed meaning of patriotism and nationalism constituted a notion of what Rodriguez (2010) termed as migrant citizenship. In reconfiguring the migrants' relationship to the Philippine state, employment regulation and policies have paradoxically become as much about propelling Filipinos out as it is about reigning them in. In essence, these are neoliberal strategies that are crucial to maintaining the global supply of Filipino migrant workers.

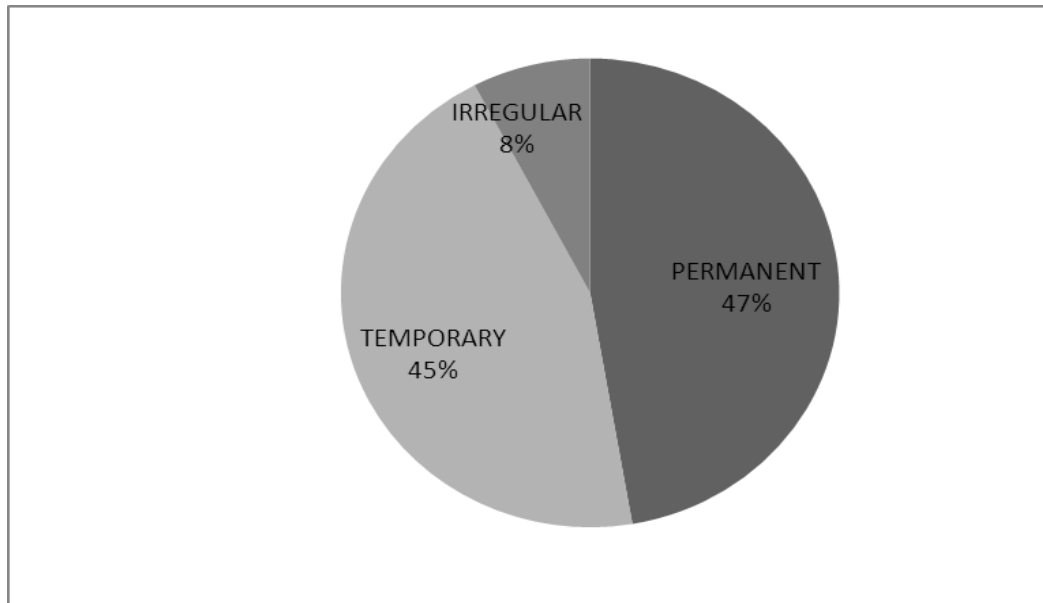
As the orientation from permanent to temporary mode of migration became increasingly prevalent, the forms of labour became more diverse amongst unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled Filipinos. Consequently, the diverse Filipino workforce can be found working in a number of countries across a wide range of jobs. The next section highlights the extent of labour migration in terms of magnitude and distribution.

4.4 Trends and Dimensions in Contractual Labour Migration in the Philippines

Filipino migrants in the Philippines are more popularly known as overseas Filipino workers, or simply OFWs. The total number of Filipinos abroad is currently estimated at around 8.6 million. Figure 3.2 shows that a large number of Filipinos abroad are

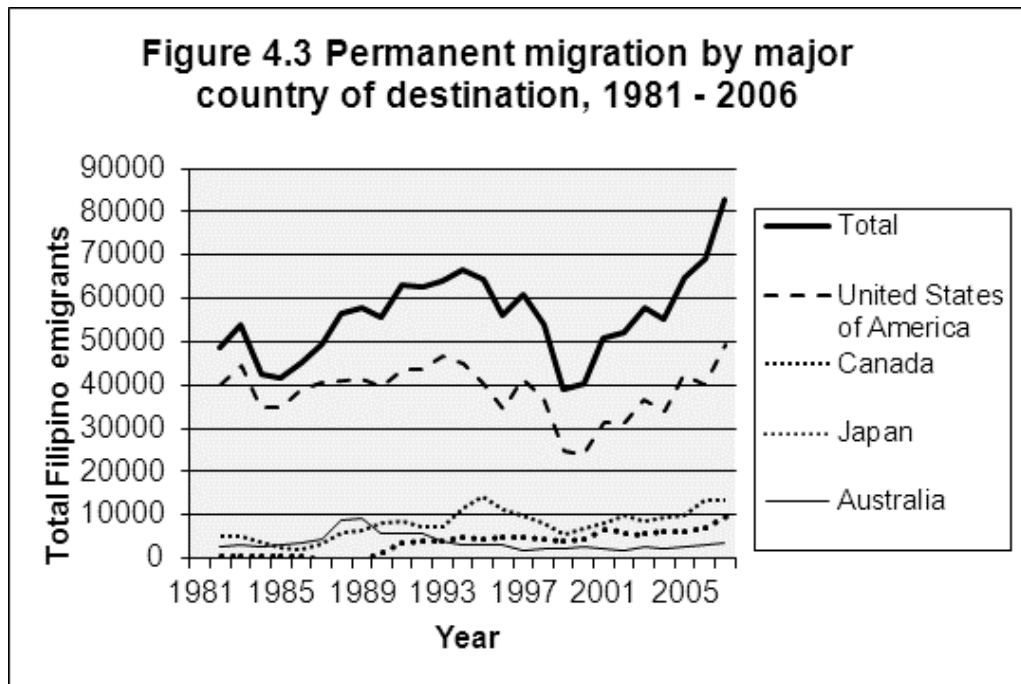
temporary migrants, with a total of 4.1 million, or 48 percent, of the total share of OFWs.

Figure 4.2 Stock estimate of overseas Filipinos (as of December 2009)



Source: Commission on Filipino Overseas

OFWs fall into three categories of migrants: permanent workers, temporary or Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs), and irregular workers. Permanent migrants are defined as holding a foreign immigration visa that is not dependent on work contracts (ADB 2004: 3). Those who acquired citizenship prior to departure also belong to this category. As discussed above, as a consequence of the 1965 Immigration Act, the US was the main destination for Filipinos from the 1980s until 2003. Professionals and highly skilled workers who went to the US gained resident status and petitioned for their families to join them. In the 1990s, despite the high share of permanent Filipino migrants in the US, their numbers declined relative to the numbers of Filipino migrants in Canada, Australia and Japan (see Figure 4.3). Filipino migration to both US and Canada peaked in 1993, and dipped in 1999 and 1998. In Australia, although heavy Filipino migration was noticeable in 1988, it slowly declined afterwards. The total migration flows of permanent Filipino migrants are strongly shaped by the flows of migrants to the US.



The total share of registered emigrants by country of destination is given in Table 4.1. Despite the high share of Filipino emigrants to the US, the trend is steadily falling. Canada emerges as the next most popular destination for Filipinos, and it exhibits a rising trend. A similar picture is seen in the growing numbers of Filipinos migrating to Japan.

Table 4.1 Share to total of registered emigrants by major country of destination: 1981 - 2007

	USA	CANADA	AUSTRALIA	JAPAN	UK	GERMANY	NEW ZEALAND	OTHERS	TOTAL
1981	82.5	10.7	5.6	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.4	48,867
1985	85.4	4.6	7.6	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.9	45,269
1990	69.3	13.3	9.3	5.7	0.5	0.5	0.1	1.4	63,149
1995	61.5	20.1	5.3	8.7	0.3	1.2	1.0	2.0	56,242
2000	61.4	16.2	4.5	12.7	0.3	1.1	0.5	3.3	51,031
2005	58.4	19.7	4.4	10.2	0.7	0.5	0.6	5.5	69,028
2006	59.7	15.9	4.5	11.7	0.7	0.6	2.4	4.5	82,967
2007	57.6	18.1	4.3	10.9	0.8	0.5	2.0	5.7	80,599
2008	48.3	23.2	5.2	10.9	0.8	0.7	1.8	9.2	70,800
2009	50.9	25.0	4.8	6.6	0.8	0.6	2.2	9.0	79,718
2010	48.8	31.7	3.6	4.4	0.9	0.6	1.3	8.7	86,075
2011	46.1	31.4	4.7	4.8	0.9	0.7	1.4	9.9	83,410

Source: Commission on Filipino Overseas (CFO)

Table 4.2 shows that of 82,967 permanent migrants, only 30 percent (24,332) are employed while the remaining 70 percent (58,635) are classified as “others” (i.e. housewives, retirees, students, minors, out-of-school youths). The same pattern emerges

across all of the countries; employed Filipino migrants have constantly lower numbers than the “others.” The share of employed migrants (especially in the US, Canada and Australia) is around 32 percent to 35 percent. Japan and New Zealand present a different case. In Japan, most migrants are non-working (93%) while in New Zealand the share between “employed” and “others” is roughly equal. Overall, “professional, technical and related workers,” “housewives”, and “students” command a 61 percent share of total Filipino migrants.

Table 4.2 Registered Filipino emigrants by major occupation group prior to migration and major country of destination, 2006
(percent share to total)

TOTAL FILIPINO EMIGRANTS	TOTAL	USA	Canada	Japan	Australia	New Zealand	Germany	United Kingdom	Others
EMPLOYED	82,967	49,522	13,230	9,742	3,735	1,973	457	556	3752
Professional, Technical and Related Workers	24,332	15,899	4,564	690	1,323	964	117	156	619
Administrative, Executive and Managerial Workers	51.5	56.7	42.9	12.9	51.2	59.0	26.5	29.5	21.8
Clerical and Related Workers	6.0	4.5	9.2	3.6	8.7	13.8	6.8	7.7	3.6
Sales Workers	8.0	6.9	9.8	6.4	11.4	9.0	23.1	14.1	12.0
Service Workers	14.6	14.0	14.1	36.1	13.9	8.6	27.4	27.6	18.1
Agricultural, Animal Husbandry and Forestry Workers, Fishermen and Hunters	4.9	4.5	4.0	14.5	5.1	2.2	7.7	13.5	12.4
Production and Related Workers, Transport Equipment Operators and Laborers	4.5	4.5	4.9	7.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	1.3	11.0
Members of the Armed Forces	9.3	7.9	13.2	17.7	6.9	4.0	7.7	6.4	20.4
OTHERS	58,635	33,623	8,666	9,052	2,412	1,009	340	400	3133
Housewives	1.3	1.0	2.0	1.2	1.9	2.6	-	-	0.8
Retirees	30.2	21.6	14.6	77.1	25.6	10.0	39.7	50.0	36.1
Students	5.4	8.1	4.0	0.1	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.8	1.3
Minors (Below 7 years old)	34.9	37.4	53.6	9.0	36.2	53.8	10.3	15.8	29.5
Out-of-School Youth	11.4	12.2	12.8	4.3	17.7	27.9	4.4	8.0	10.5
Not Reported	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	-	0.6	0.3	0.7
	17.8	20.4	14.7	9.2	19.4	7.5	44.7	25.3	21.8

Source: Author's computation

Notes: Commission on Filipinos Overseas

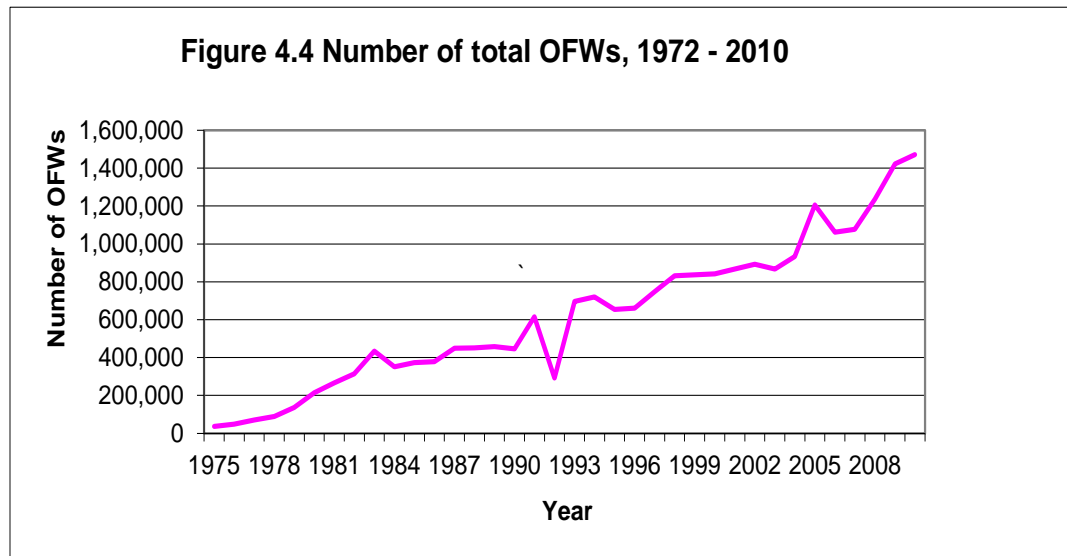
Among those employed, the bulk of Filipino emigrants are “professional, technical and related workers” consisting of roughly 52 percent of the total. More or less the same proportion can be seen in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In fact, within these four countries, the “professional,” “administrative,” and “clerical” categories range from 68 percent to 80 percent. New Zealand exhibits the highest share of top three tier workers at 82 percent. The picture in Japan is different because Filipino workers in the “sales” and “service” categories make up around half of those employed. For Germany and the UK, Filipinos working under the “professional” and “sales” category make up 57 percent.

Overall, Filipino emigrants classified as “others,” “housewives” and “minors” make up 42 percent of those who are not working. “Students” come second at 35 percent. In terms of total migration flows, housewives command 20 percent. On a per country basis, Japan has the most number of housewives, around 70 percent of the total and 77

percent of the “others” category. Notably, the share of students is highest at 25 percent of total permanent migrants. A large number of Filipino students can be found in the US, followed by Canada, Japan and Australia.

Temporary migrants are contract-based workers and return to the Philippines after the end of their contracts. Employment under a short-term arrangement became a common feature in the Philippine labour market following the influx of Filipino workers to the Middle East during the 1970s. From the 1980s to the 1990s, Filipino contract-based workers were found in many Asian countries working as domestic helpers and factory workers (e.g. Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore) and as caregivers (e.g. in the UK). Presently, Filipino workers are scattered in more than 190 countries around the world (POEA 2010).

Figure 4.4 below shows how the number of OFWs jumped from 14,400 in 1972 to more than one million by 2007. The trend is generally increasing, having reached over one million by 2005. Two key points emerge from this figure. The first one is the gradual increase from 1972 to 1977 and the spurt in 1980, which increased to more than half from the number of OFWs in 1979. This increase was caused by the rising number of females in the uppermost and lowermost tier of the occupational category. The second point is the sharp decline in migration flows in 1992, which is attributed to the first Gulf War. The trend picked up by 1993 and continued to rise until 2007. So far, 2005 marks the highest number of OFWs. The dips in the graph for years 1991 and 1992 reflected the 300,000 Filipino workers repatriated from Kuwait due to Gulf War (Lan 2003).



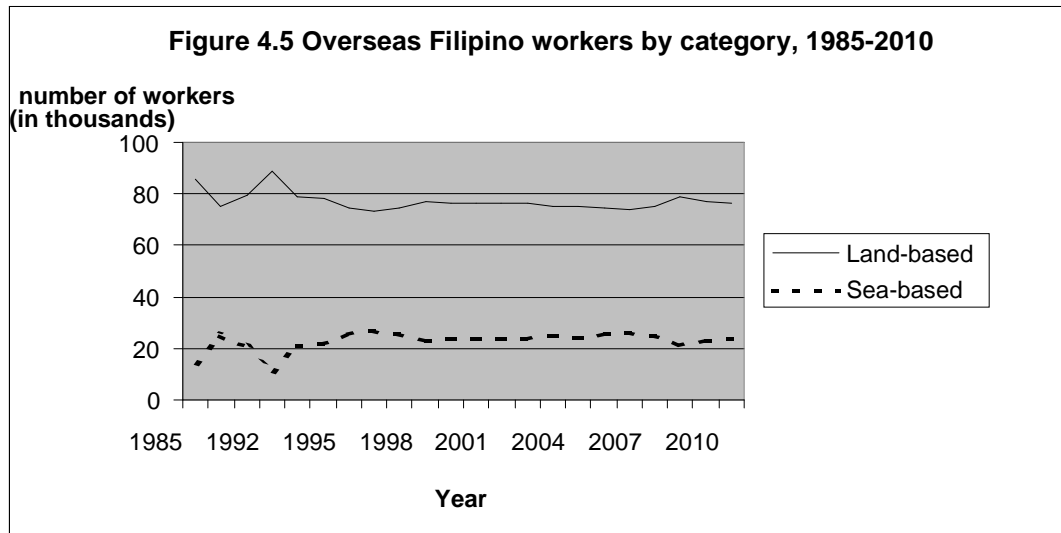
Source: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

Workers who work abroad under a contract are specifically called Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) and they are generally divided into two groups: land-based and sea-based workers. Land-based workers are those engaged in activities whose occupation requires that the majority of their working/gainful hours are spent on land. They can either be hired directly by the employer or through the POEA. Sea-based workers, on the other hand, are those working on ocean-going vessels and they usually have fixed contracts. Those who are working for a shipping company abroad are also included in this category. Table 4.3 below shows the total number of overseas Filipino workers between 1972 and 2007. The total number of OFWs in 2007 is around 1,077,623, of which 75 percent are land-based workers and the rest are sea-based. The picture was slightly different in 1975 and 1976, when sea-based workers outnumbered land-based workers by a 2:1 and 1.5:1 ratio, respectively. From 1977, land-based workers have overtaken sea-based workers.

Table 4.3 Overseas Filipino workers, 1985 - 2010

Year	Total	growth rate	Land-based	growth rate	Sea-based	growth rate
1972	14,400					
1973	26,400	0.83				
1974	32,700	0.24				
1975	36,029	0.10				
1976	47,835	0.33				
1977	70,575	0.48				
1978	88,741	0.26				
1979	137,137	0.55				
1980	214,590	0.56				
1981	266,245	0.24				
1982	314,284	0.18				
1983	434,207	0.38				
1984	350,982	-0.19	300,378		50,604	
1985	372,784	0.06	320,494	0.07	52,290	0.03
1986	378,214	0.01	323,517	0.01	54,697	0.05
1987	449,271	0.19	382,229	0.18	67,042	0.23
1988	451,030	0.00	385,117	0.01	85,913	0.28
1989	458,626	0.02	355,346	-0.08	103,280	0.20
1990	446,095	-0.03	334,883	-0.06	111,212	0.08
1991	615,019	0.38	489,260	0.46	125,759	0.13
1992	291,219	-0.53	258,436	-0.47	32,783	-0.74
1993	696,630	1.39	550,872	1.13	145,758	3.45
1994	719,602	0.03	565,226	0.03	154,376	0.06
1995	654,022	-0.09	488,621	-0.14	165,401	0.07
1996	660,121	0.01	484,653	-0.01	175,468	0.06
1997	747,696	0.13	559,227	0.15	188,469	0.07
1998	831,643	0.11	638,343	0.14	193,300	0.03
1999	837,020	0.01	640,331	0.00	196,689	0.02
2000	841,628	0.01	643,304	0.00	198,324	0.01
2001	867,599	0.03	662,648	0.03	204,951	0.03
2002	891,908	0.03	682,315	0.03	209,593	0.02
2003	867,969	-0.03	651,938	-0.04	216,031	0.03
2004	933,588	0.08	704,417	0.08	229,002	0.06
2005	1,204,862	0.29	898,565	0.28	306,297	0.34
2006	1,062,567	-0.12	788,070	-0.12	274,497	-0.10
2007	1,077,623	0.01	811,070	0.03	266,553	-0.03
2008	1,236,013	0.15	974,399	0.20	261,614	-0.02
2009	1,422,586	0.15	1,092,162	0.12	330,424	0.26
2010	1,470,826	0.03	1,123,676	0.03	347,150	0.05

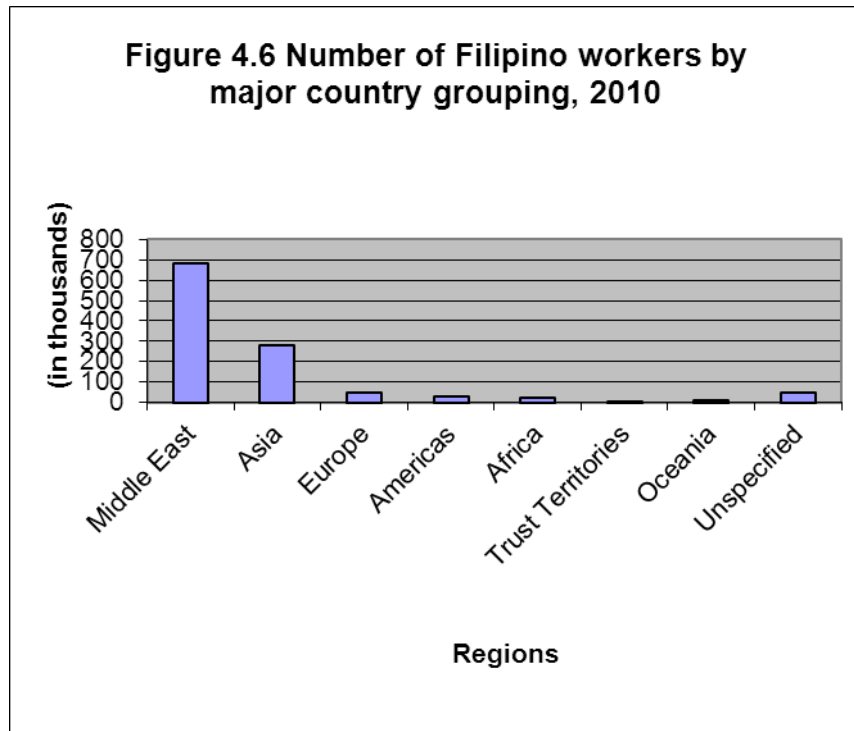
Source: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration



Interestingly, the share of sea-based workers has risen through the years. Starting from 14 percent in 1985, the number of seafarers has risen fourfold since 1984. In 2010 there were 266,553 seafarers in total (see Figure 4.5).

In terms of the growth rates of OFWs, this is consistent with the trend that is shown in Table 4.3. The year 1992 saw the largest decline of total overseas workers with a negative growth rate (-0.53). This was followed by a large inflow of temporary migrants by 1993 (1.39). Similar patterns apply for both land-based and sea-based workers for 1992 and 1993. By 1993 the figures for land-based workers doubled and sea-based workers more than tripled.

In terms of the destination of land-based migrants, the Middle East maintains its position as the top destination. Meanwhile, since the 1980s the second most popular destination for Filipino migrant workers is Asia (as shown in Figure 4.6). The number of migrants to Europe has also continuously risen.



Source: POEA

Between 1995 and 2010, the number of newly hired migrants has increased. ‘Service Workers’ and ‘Production Workers’ have a rising trend and constitute about a third of total deployed land-based workers. In 2010, these two categories constituted the bulk of migrants leaving the country (i.e. 80 percent).

The high share of women in the “service” category explains the rise in the bulk of employed female OFWs. The majority of the men are found in managerial, agriculture and production work. The 1997 Asian crisis may partly explain this phenomenon because male-dominated sectors like “production” and “construction” were badly hit while the service sector was relatively unaffected (OECD 2001a, p. 289).

Table 4.4 Total number of newly hired landbased overseas Filipino workers

SKILL CATEGORY	1995	2000	2005	2010
Total	214,157	253,030	284,285	340,279
Professional and Technical Workers	20.4	31.1	22.5	12.3
Managerial Workers	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4
Clerical Workers	1.6	0.9	1.9	3.1
Sales Workers	0.9	0.8	1.5	2.1
Service Workers	37.8	36.0	47.1	45.4
Agricultural Workers	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.3
Production Workers	38.5	22.8	26.3	35.5
For reclassification	0.1	7.9	0.4	0.8

Source: Author's computation

Note: Source of basic data is POEA

The category where men dominate is in seafaring. Around 96 percent of seafarers (or 216,874) are men (see Table 4.5). Most of the female seafarers work on board cruise ships. In terms of the ranks of seafarers, most of the seafarers are ratings, who make up an average of 60 percent (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.5 Total seafarers by sex, 2006 - 2007

	2007	2006
Male	0.96	0.97
Female	0.03	0.03
Not Stated	0.02	0.00
Total	226,900	230,022

Source: POEA

Table 4.6 Seafarers by category, 2007-2010

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Officer	26.9	36.9	46.2	39.6
Rating	73.1	63.1	53.8	60.4
Total	191,093	156,493	170,920	206,526

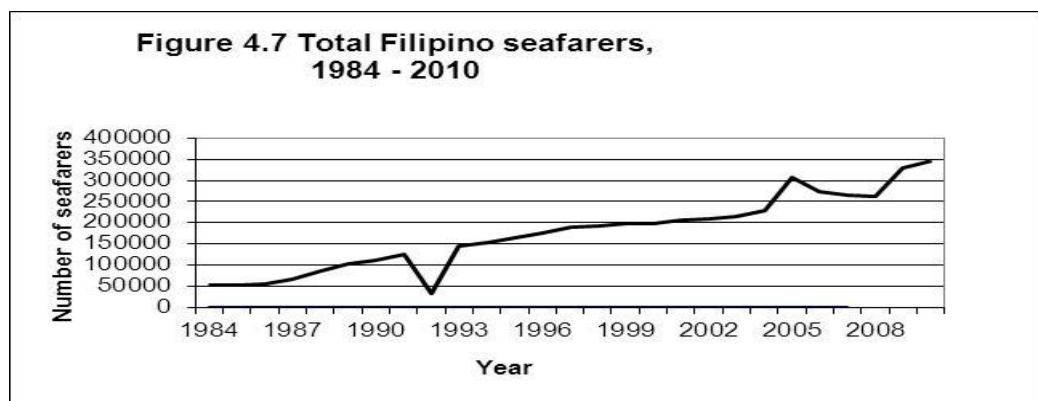
Source: POEA

Given the current high number of Filipino seafarers, it can be said that the Philippines has dominated the largest share of seafarer supply in the world. Accordingly, this makes the Philippines the crewing capital of the world. The latest estimate from POEA is that 20 percent of the total 1.23 million seafarers around the world are Filipinos.

In order to establish the Philippines position as the number one global supplier of maritime workers, the next section will look at the situation of Filipino seafarers. The analysis will look at the current trends in seafarer deployment and it will then briefly look at the proliferation of maritime schools in the Philippines. Finally, the role of the national government will be discussed, along with various issues and concerns relating to seafaring management and welfare protection.

4.5 Trends in Seafaring in the Philippines

For the past fifteen years, seafaring numbers have demonstrated an upward trend, as shown in Figure 4.7. Since 1987, the Philippines have been the leading supplier of seafarers. The figure below shows an upsurge in the number of the seafarers from the late 1980s. There was a high jump of 23 percent in 1987. In the 1990s, the trend goes upward, with the exception of 1992 when there is a decline of 74 percent leading to only 32,783 seafarers deployed, which plunges below the 1984 levels. After the recovery in 1993, a steady upward trend can be seen until the early years of 2000. By 2005, the number peaked to 306,297 or a jump of 34 percent from 2004 levels. The current estimate for 2007 shows a total of 347,150 seafarers; however, this figure includes those working in the cruise ship industry.



Source: POEA

Table 4.7 shows the rank distribution of the seafarers. The majority of Filipino seafarers working as ratings can be found working as able seamen, oilers, ordinary seamen, messmen, and bosuns. In the officer category many can be found working as chief cooks in the catering department. In the engineering department the top positions belong to the rank of third engineer officer, followed by second engineer officer. Filipino deck officers working as second mate and third mate were also a large share of the total. These figures exclude those working on cruise ships.

Table 4.7 Top five occupations of Filipino seafarers, 2010

Ratings	Officers
Able seaman	Chief cook
Oiler	Second mate
Ordinary seaman	Third engineer officer
Messman	Third mate
Bosun	Second engineer officer

Source: POEA

Table 4.8 Seafarers by vessel type
(share to total)

	2010
Passenger	20.4
Bulk carrier	19.8
Container	13.2
Tanker	8.3
Oil/product tanker	6.9
Chemical tanker	5.8
General cargo	4.3
Tugboat	3.1
Pure car carrier	2.7
Gas tanker	2.1

Source: Author's computation

Note: Source of basic data is POEA

In terms of vessel type, Table 3.8 shows the top ten vessel types that Filipino seafarers work on. It can be seen from this that around 62 percent of Filipino seafarers are found on passenger, bulk, container and tanker ships. The remaining vessels constitute about 25 percent of the total.

Table 4.9 shows that 40 percent of seafarers are working under the Panama, Bahamas, or Liberian flags of registry. The other 30 percent are scattered in the Marshall Islands, Singapore, Malta, Italy, UK, Netherlands and Bermuda.

Table 4.9 Seafarers by flag of registry, 2010

	2010
Panama	19.6
Bahamas	12.3
Liberia	9.6
Marshall Island	6.4
Singapore	4.8
Malta	5.0
Italy	3.5
United Kingdom	3.5
Netherlands	2.8
Bermuda	2.8
Total	339,608

Source: Author's computation

Note: Source of basic data is POEA

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has showed that the development of the international labour migration in the Philippines started during the Spanish era, was ingrained during US rule, and was institutionalised from the 1970s onwards. The historical context has showed that under a long colonial rule, adapting to the notion of migration, paid labour and overseas work created a culture of migration in the Filipino society. Crucial American legacies such as an advanced system of education and English language ability have equipped Filipinos to undertake various kinds of work abroad and likewise served as significant influences to the Filipino outlook in migration. The emergence of a global demand for labour has encouraged the development of temporary and contract based migration flows. The initially opportunistic response of the Philippine government to ease local economic pressures and adapt to the global changes has become a long-term strategy for development and growth.

Filipino overseas workers, specifically seafarers, have inevitably been the result of not only economic and social constraints but broadly, developments transpiring in the global realm. Within this context, Filipino seafarers are faced with an array of complex issues concerning their position, participation and prospects, both within their home country and on board ship. As they slip in and out of the ship and their community ashore, the internal local processes within their community and the global situation inherent in their unique occupation raise important questions about whether they are transnationals or not. The task of the next four chapters is to probe these dimensions and to seek the extent to which seafarers may or may not “double-belong”.

Chapter Five: Community Life in the Philippines

5.1 Introduction

The present chapter aims to examine Filipino seafarers' conditions of integration within the community. The discussion looks at the historical experience of migration, the economic context, and the social affiliations that evoke the sentiments and dispositions that are crucial to the seafarer's sense of involvement when at home.

Transnational migration literature repeatedly emphasizes the importance of contextuality, or location, among various categories of migrants (Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Glick Schiller 2003; Portes 1989; Portes 2005; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999; Vertovec 1999; Smith and Guarnizo 1998). If a consideration of transnationalism is to be the main objective, then the context of exit and reception is useful in terms of understanding the extent to which migrants remain attached to both their host and home communities. As a starting point, the local situation depicts the Filipino seafarers' lived reality. In providing a shared sense of place, the community provides the condition for a sense of belonging. This in turn determines the nature and strength of the transnational links that can take shape.

Since various ways of engaging in the community may lead to fundamentally different paths of integration, Section 5.2 discusses the necessary historical background of Sta. Ana community and its long standing experience of migration. Section 5.3 will then focus on the relationship networks that embed Filipino seafarers in the community. Section 5.4 provides a picture of how the seafarers are perceived in their community. The last section describes the sense of belonging that seafarers obtain from their community.

5.2 The Community and its Migration Experience

The town of Sta. Ana is a municipality of Iloilo province situated south west of the capital city of Iloilo province. This municipality is subdivided into barangays¹. The town of Sta. Ana is ninety-five percent Roman Catholic and is steeped in religious traditions. Most of the town's events and activities reflect Spanish influence and include fiestas, cock fighting and other similar celebrations. In an earlier chapter (Chapter 4), I have described how the Philippines have passed through different waves of migration, which have led to an outward looking orientation in the country. The town of Sta. Ana has gone through a similar migration pattern. Consequently, a large number of migrants (including U.S. Navy and U.S. Air force retirees, nurses and seafarers) are residents of this town. The latest census estimates that the total population of Sta. Ana is 60,498 (Census of Population 2007).

The long experience of migration is a main feature defining the town of Sta. Ana. As a major factor affecting local conditions, migration has influenced the outward-oriented outlook of residents, including their career choices. The distribution of migrants in the town was found to be quite diverse, reflecting the historical waves of migration mentioned above. The importance of this in the community is reflected by the segregation of “migrants” and “seafarers.” The table below illustrates the migration experience of Sta. Ana community. As of the most recent data, which comes from 2006 (Municipality of Sta. Ana), there were around 2,494 migrants, of whom fifty-seven percent were seafarers, which includes both male and female overseas workers.

Table 5.1 Migrants in Sta. Ana

	Number of migrants	Percentage to total
OCWS	1,070	42.9
Seamen	1,424	57.1
Total migrants	2,494	100.0
Total population	65,242	3.8
Total number of households	14,446	17.3

Source: Author's computation

¹ In the Philippines, political subdivision occurs at the level of regions, provinces, cities, municipalities (or towns) and barangays (this list is presented in order of decreasing land area). Barangay is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines.

The remaining forty-three percent of the migrant population were Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) or land-based workers (such as nurses, physicians, IT professionals and domestic workers). In total, these migrants made up around seventeen percent of the total number of households in the community. Meanwhile, out of the 199 municipalities of the town, only two contained no migrants.

The number of OCWs and seafarers influenced community attitudes towards migrants. In addition, these indicators emphasised the community's increasing global ties. They also revealed the growing number of families with long-distance connections. Notably, the town's long history of migration coincided with the nation's waves of migration and was reminiscent of the current migration flows and culture of migration that has developed. However, the form of migration that developed in Sta. Ana saw the emergence of a specifically sea-based group. The categorisation of migrants into OCWs and seafarers reflects the salience and distinctiveness of their situation. At its most basic, the distinction refers to the permanent nature of land based work and the temporary nature of work at sea. On the other hand, the historical and geographical influences on the migration profile of the town provide an insight into how the town's residents construe seafaring as an occupation. The mere dominance of seafarers, in terms of numbers, reinforced seafaring as a lucrative enterprise and it was, therefore, regarded as a viable livelihood option. On the other hand, by having the ship as destination, the seafarers were not seen as migrants by the town's residents. By not being situated within a certain geographical boundary, the seafarers were incomparable to the land based migrants. In this regard, they were not technically viewed as having left the community because they did not leave for another country.

Another example of how seafaring is regarded as an occupation in Sta. Ana concerned the seafarer's status as returnees. When at home, the complexity by which seafarers managed certain aspects of their lives (such as access to housing, income, division of time and participation in decision-making) highlighted their distinguishing characteristics. Relative to other migrants, seafarers could be considered "regular" returnees with improved status and acquired privileges. To some extent, this allowed seafarers to be more amenable, if not predisposed, to emphasising success as defined in the community. By conforming to community expectations the seafarers distinctively

identified themselves relative to other migrants, which further amplified the community's conception of their specific nature of work and migration. Seafarers, as regular returnees, were more visible to lifestyle embellishments because they recurrently demonstrate a material improvement. Upholding the advantage of status conferred to seafarers by the community meant highlighting some distinguishing aspects of a migrant, primarily economic success.

The common presence of a large number of grand houses in the town also follows from the same principle of aligning with community expectations. As a place that is historically oriented to migration, many of the migrants who were able to earn and save money abroad built Western-inspired houses in this town. Owning a house became a showcase of wealth, a status symbol and it was, therefore, a "must." However, the owners of most of these houses, particularly those who worked for the U.S. Navy, U.S. Airforce including nurses, chose to permanently reside abroad. Hence, only their designated relatives looked after the house. On the other hand, the houses owned by seafarers were occupied by their wives and children. Although in both settings the house was unoccupied by its owner, the dynamism of family ties in constructing the house was significant. This is akin to Aguilar's (2009: 109) observations of land based migrants in Italy, which found that "houses provide the solidity to these transnational ties."

Given the historical condition of migration in the community, the residents' predilection for migration could also be seen as being related to their socialisation in the transnational process. Where the field of social relations within the community was continuously influenced by those who were regularly abroad, the economic and social benefits that permeated within the community evolved continually. The mode of incorporation was similar to the second generation effects of transnationalism, so that socialisation of children became heavily influenced by the transnational process occurring within the community through time (Fouon and Glick 2002). Hence, "upbringing and subjectivities" found within the formed social field of residents in the community ensured the transnational engagement of its residents. In particular, certain cultural practices and conventions enabled a sense of belonging. This includes the long-standing custom of fiesta celebrations and some other pastimes that are practiced in the community.

5.2.1 Significant Community Events

Like most rural areas in the Philippines, Sta. Ana has retained many of its traditions and customs. The town's annual festival celebrations, or "*fiestas*", were celebrated with much pomp and gaiety. There are generally two kinds of fiestas celebrated by the townspeople in Sta. Ana, which are: municipal and patronal fiestas. Both are held annually and showcase the traditional, religious, cultural and social essence of their time-honoured heritage. The municipal fiesta, called the Atake Festival, is a local initiative which takes place over a week, thereby allowing everybody to participate in the merry-making. Various entertainments are played out, such as a beauty pageant search for the "Queen" of Sta. Ana and cultural dances depicting the successful overthrow of the Muslim pirates by the townspeople and the Spanish soldiers. In addition, various stalls set-up in the activity halls or in the municipal grounds promoted the town's products. During this fiesta many of the people who have migrated from Sta. Ana endeavour to return home. In addition to the activities already described, some specific events at the fiesta are specifically designed to "honour" returning migrants.

Meanwhile, the patronal fiesta is known for its lavish preparations. The residents of Sta. Ana make serious efforts to ensure the success of the patronal fiesta. Since the celebration is open to all, large quantities of food are prepared to cover lunch, dinner, and snacks in-between the main meals. The following extract from my field notes shows the serious efforts dedicated to the fiesta:

The family who owned the house spent a minimum of 250 pounds sterling for the food. The selection of food served is not simple. Elaborate dishes with pork, beef and fish abound. Soft drinks of all kinds are served. Guests for this house, just for lunch time alone are around one hundred people. I was told that as long as people keep coming in, the owner of the house needs to provide food for them. Even the religious altar has a plate of food in front of it. (Fieldnotes 2008)

The feast normally starts by noon and it might last until early morning due to the numerous drinking sessions with friends, neighbours and other visitors who come from the neighbouring provinces and from nearby barangays or towns. By that time, hundreds of visitors have already dropped by to partake in the celebration.

In collecting my data, I spent some time learning about the role of seafarers in the shore. For the seafarers who made it home, the celebration was given considerable emphasis. Households with absent seafarers were not spared as the expectation for lavish preparation remained. Where the seafarers had returned home, they made use of this occasion to reconnect, not only with relatives and friends but also with other key figures in the community (such as the town's mayor, barangay captain or the parish priest); the ability to do so, however, also varied by rank. Those with a captain's rank would most usually have visitors that included local big "names." In this way, celebrating the fiesta also carries with it certain form of status; that is, a manifestation that the household had in some way or the other "made it".

The great importance accorded to the celebration of the fiesta can be glimpsed from the efforts put into it by town's residents. Well-to-do seafarer wives hired extra helpers for the preparations. Often these helpers would include their relatives living in a different area. In celebrations where the number of visitors could swell to more than a hundred, hiring the services of waiters became a likely option, as the wife of a second engineer explained:

This year, we got a waiter. We experienced it last year...it is very hard if you do all the work from cooking to hosting. So he decided to get a waiter. He said it is fun because we are able to entertain our guests. (Wife, Community, Interview 101)

In this way, they did not end up overly fatigued after the celebration. Another wife who was married to a captain described how she did everything with regards to the fiesta. She said that her husband always told her not to push herself hard and just leave everything to the hired cooks and cleaners. However, describing herself as a workaholic, she explained that she found it very hard to just stand by and let all the helpers do the work. During their last celebration of the fiesta, she ended up sick from too much fatigue and suffered stress during the preparations:

With the past fiesta, we killed one pig and then one lechon, then thirty pieces of chicken, then ten pieces of big fish. We also have vegetables, embutido...and other additional food. (Wife, Community, Interview 109)

The amount of time and effort in the preparations of the fiesta suggested the importance of this annual festivity in the decision making of the residents, including those who returned home from overseas.

Many of the town's festivities are closely associated with the church. Apart from these festival events, there were also religious activities that enjoined participation from the town people. For example, amongst my interviewees a devout wife who was married to a chief engineer said that she went to mass every morning and served as the lector for the mass. Her daughter was also a member of the Daughters of Mary. Involvement in the church was always exalted in the town and it could range from being a choir member, to a sacristan, or to a member of the Catholic support group. In my interview with the town's parish priest, he informed me that they were currently considering forming a group in the church composed of those family members whose spouses were working abroad to help the members adjust to a one-parent lifestyle. The priest noticed that there were many families in Sta. Ana whose teenage members had early pregnancies. He believed that this sometimes happened because the parent left to take care of the children was often out of the house playing in the cockpit or playing card games or mahjong, which were the two favourite pastimes of the people of Sta. Ana.

5.2.2 Pastimes

Cockfighting was a popular pastime in Sta. Ana. The cockpit is a place where the gamecocks are pitted to fight against each other. Where members can place a bet before the gamecocks are left to maim or kill each other. At the time of the fieldwork, there was a fee of roughly three pounds to participate in the cockfight. Surrounding the cockpit were some food stalls for the punters. It was very easy to spot a seafarer in the cockpit as they usually wear gold necklaces. Their clothes were not only new, they were also branded and stood out from the crowd as upmarket. Going to the cockpit was another way of the seafarers showcasing to the community some of their material possessions. For seafarers whose hobby was cockfighting, visiting the cockpit was a way of reinstating themselves in the community and resuming comradeship with their fellow cockpit goers. There were also instances where the seafarer's frequent presence in the cockpit became a habit. One wife described to me how she preferred her husband

to be on board the ship because on land he would frequently visit the cockpit with his friends and stay until late:

I want him to be far away from here because if he is here, he does nothing to help. He is always in the cockpit and he comes home late at night around eleven or twelve midnight. So I think it is better when he is far from here. (Wife, Community, Interview 58)

She feared for the life of her husband because he was prone to accidents during the night time. However, the vice notwithstanding, routine visits to the cockpit maintained the seafarers circle of friends when they returned to the community. For example, the same wife further mentioned that:

Yes, that is why I tell him he can run for Mayor. In the cockpit, he knows many people. (Wife, Community, Interview 58)

The games mahjong and tong-its were also popular in Sta. Ana. Both are Chinese in origin. Mahjong is played on a table of four players using tiles while tong-its is a card game. Of all the seafarers wives interviewed in the study, only one played these games regularly. She was a school teacher but she stopped playing after marrying her seafarer husband. A wife playing card games on a regular basis was frowned upon by the local society. The game was regarded as acceptable by the local society only as long as it was played for fun. Most of the interviewed seafarer wives revealed that their husbands engaged in this activity habitually. One wife explained how she and her husband had developed a time schedule that included the amount available for the bets. One wife, a teacher, explained how her husband developed the habit of playing mahjong when at home when he had been living in a compound with his relatives. Playing this kind of game was stress-relieving and enjoyable when played in a friendly way (i.e. with minimal bets). However, withdrawal from these games could often pose a problem, as revealed by one of the wives:

Before he goes to play we will talk about the time when I should go there and fetch him. If we don't do this, he can never come home because the game seems to never end. (Wife, Community, Interview 64)

In the above account, the husband actually told his wife to fetch him by midnight because it was usually hard for him to withdraw from the games by himself. Leaving the game when the others were still enthusiastic to play, was prone to misinterpretation by the other players as having no sense of camaraderie. Involvement with this game conveyed that ‘nothing has changed’, despite having gone abroad to work. Participation in the game, in effect, rekindled the feeling of belonging to the community and reassured those in the neighbourhood that socialising with them meant that they still considered themselves as part of the community. Joining the games became a way of rejoining the group that they had left behind. It was a way to regain the lost time spent with friends and relatives in the community.

5.3 Re-establishing Social Roles

When at home, the seafarers’ immediate family and neighbours constitute important social networks that help them to re-establish their presence. By enacting a range of sociable practices they derive satisfaction and status as part of the local community. Resumption of a variety of roles was manifested including the adoption of various social obligations, such as acceptance of responsibilities within the family and observance of community rituals. These examples raise the importance of the manner by which they recoup their social networks “by demonstrating what they perceive to be the correct forms of social and symbolic capital” (Gardner 2008). The following discussion will look at the Filipino seafarer’s ways of belonging with their family and neighbours, including the character of social networks in strengthening their position in the community.

5.3.1 Family Relationships

In line with the general Filipino family outlook, the Sta. Ana family system assigned a high importance to migration. Having a long-standing tradition of migration, Sta. Ana’s family structures may best be described as outwardly oriented. Various studies have emphasised how the prevailing experience of migration has transformed the family way of life and have pointed out how transnational configurations may vary (see, for

instance, Smith 1999). The decision to work overseas was primarily a family issue (Massey et al 2005, Stack and Burton, 1993). In working abroad, Filipino seafarers concordantly adhered to the obligations and responsibilities that these necessitated. Performing family duties and upholding traditions serve as “guideposts for living” (Miralao 1997: 209) which encompassed the general view of Filipino migrants. The majority of the migrants belonged to nuclear families, yet being near to other relatives rendered their situation similar to that of an extended family. These arrangements are broadly manifested in most areas in the Philippines and this “proximity determines family” ethos creates a new dimension in the decision-making of husbands and wives, incorporating communal relationships (Aguilar 2009: 95). It was usual for families to live near each other within one area. In this way, their living arrangements resembled that of a traditional ‘compound,’ which consists of a subdivided large parcel of land where mostly close family and relatives reside. Each compound I visited during fieldwork was situated within a single fence and its single entrance served all of the families residing within its enclosure. Usually, the compounds had three or more houses constructed side by side. They were named after the surname of the landowner or the great ancestor who bequeathed the land.

Although atypical, the life situation in a compound could provide a picture of the many ways by which family life in the community were lived, including the avenues for inclusion. Within a compound arrangement, social ties were strengthened through different forms of socialisation, such as playing cards, drinking with each other, or holding parties. The type of social activities usually involved a collective endeavour. Since card games were a very common pastime, most of those who knew the game would participate. In hosting a party, all those in the compound would be present. It was, therefore, impossible for a family to host a party with a budget that could not provide for all of the residents in the compound. One would feel slighted if left out of the party. For instance, a wife described the compound in which she lived:

In our compound, there are twenty-three grandchildren...there are eight siblings of his mom. Here you really have to give chocolates to those in the compound. They really ask for it and they open the box themselves. (Wife, Community, Interview 107)

In an event hosted by a seafarer, the relatives living within the compound would automatically expect to be invited. The mandatory nature of a family gathering was taken as a given and it was understood as part of the conventions of maintaining relationships. Part of the aim of cultivating this relationship was to show that common values were being practised and recognised as essential to family togetherness. The help extended during the seafarers' absence was priceless and seafarers recognised this by sharing in the family's upheld values. It showed respect to what was deemed to be a commonly held view of close family ties. Within a Filipino family "linkages of interdependence where reciprocity is at work becomes a way by which security is provided for" (Ramirez 1984: 42).

Despite separate household arrangements, the families from each household functioned as an extension of the other household. For instance, domestic issues (such as household management) were also regarded as the general concern of a seafarer's parents. In one family, the seafarer's mother would monitor the wife's money management by observing the shopping frequency and level of indulgence with the children (i.e. toys and clothes). Even the utility bills would be opened by the husband's mother to check on the electricity consumption. The parents and their relatives assumed the role of a guardian and a spy who reported directly to the seafarer. Their presence acted as a form of social and financial control for the wife. For the seafarer, this provided a measure of the extent to which he belonged to the family because it signalled that his return was being anticipated. However, it often posed some conflict with the seafarer's partner. Despite the functional and affectual support coming from the immediate family and relatives in the vicinity, living together in an enclosed space could prove to be a problem owing to a loss of privacy. The experience of one wife provided an example of this problem. She discussed how, when her seafarer husband arrives home, most of their relatives would start looking for the presents themselves without waiting for her. This would be done while she was at work. So when she came home, she was shocked to find that the content of the boxes was almost gone since most of her husband's relatives had taken their own share in her absence.

The nature of family experience relates to the fulfilment of responsibilities and the complexities therewith. It also highlights how 'the family is perhaps the strategic research site for understanding the dynamics of immigration flows ...and of immigrant

adaptation' (Rumbaut 1997: 4). Since the family remains the primary mode of inclusion, different ways of living arrangements emphasise not only varying obligations but also rebound to the ship as a space of achievement. Having gone on board a ship, the seafarer's family lives were shaped in significant ways by this experience. Equally important was the way that this experience enabled the seafarer to further his place among his family and kin. The recognition conferred to him was perhaps the most common way this was lived. Going abroad symbolised not only economic improvement but also social advancement because the seafarers and their family suddenly became part of their richer relatives' circle. "*The more money you have, the more relatives you have*" was a local aphorism that was attached to this phenomenon. Eventually, this enhanced capacity to earn comes to be critically balanced between the realisation of a seafarer's duties as the financial provider and their willingness to abide by the expectations of close family members. However, the latter will always bear more weight because it also signals realignment with the main principles on which the family is perceived and embraced in the Philippines.

Functioning as the primary social network which sustains a seafarer's ties to his hometown, the value of family in this town mainly revolved around the mode of the seafarer's participation. Adding to the work of Oakley (1992), Ryan et al. (2009) identified five levels of social support offered by a family, which are: emotional, informational, instrumental, companionship and socialising. In a town where almost all of the neighbours are relatives, there was access to a good deal of support (whether economic or social). This allowed the seafarers' families to operate within secure settings; it also eased the burden on seafarers who were able to know that their family was protected within and by the community. Transgression in terms of failure to acknowledge such tacit rules could mean less aid and access to resources and, therefore, strained relationships.

This also highlighted the importance to the seafarer of maintaining contact, not only with his immediate family but also with other relatives, for purposes of reciprocity. Where families of multiple generations coexisted, the result was a complex web of interaction. Membership in the family was defined by obligations, expectations, reciprocity, trust, loyalty, and status. The Filipino seafarers derive a strong sense of belongingness within this close family kinship arrangement. The system of expectations

and obligation was inscribed with the family at the centre, which potentially included extended family relationships and other significant non-relatives. The web of thick relations became a source of connection for Filipino seafarers. In examining the German-Turkish case, Faist and Ozveren (2004) explained that kinship ties tend to be formal and dense, and have a very hierarchical relationship. This bears some similarity to the experience of Filipino seafarers in this study, for whom relationship to the family is highly formalised and follows a distinct pattern. Special treatment and privileges are afforded to relatives and non-relatives who may have shown efforts in the past to help the Filipino seafarers in their endeavour. As the seafarers' relationships continuously evolve through time, family networks expand to form new solidarities. This may often involve people with connections in the community, including those that belong to the upper level of the local community. This consequently changes the seafarers' position in the community as they gain status and recognition in the community. How such relationships advance and create a sense of inclusion for the Filipino seafarer can be seen through the essential repertoire of neighbourly acts that will be discussed in the next subsection.

5.3.2 Neighbourhood Relationships

Aside from their family, seafarers like any migrants have to deal with their neighbours and friends recurrently. Neighbourliness in this town implied more than being situated close to each other; it also included the provision of various forms of support and security. It was common among neighbours to obtain favours for each other when the need arose. These could range from providing each other with a little help such as lending some kitchen tools (e.g. knife or coconut grater) to lending money during an emergency. It was by doing these favours for each other that mutual support developed, leading to certain expectations from both parties, developing to a strong concept of "utang na loob" or debt of gratitude. Implicit within this was an understanding which meant that, "because I have helped you in the past, then you are supposed to help me in the future when I need it, and vice versa". The mandatory tone implied in the phrase "utang na loob" underpins interaction among neighbours in this town.

The circuitous return of favours in such interpersonal relationship suggests a never ending repayment of debt to two involved parties, or between two neighbours in this case. This sense of indebtedness primarily identifies a complex interpersonal relationship in this town, one which is upheld by all of the town's people. No matter the size of the favour, there is a belief that it is not measured in money or another form of favour returned on top of the giver's absence of such expectation. However, what complicates this concept is the receiver's desire to pay back in any form despite the knowledge that whatever they give will not equal the giver's gift. So when an opportunity arises, the giver will offer assistance in order to express gratitude. The giver now becomes the receiver and the same process continues with an intensity far stronger than when it started. A strong undercurrent is attached to the phrase "utang na loob" because it is only mentioned when one of the parties failed to reciprocate. So, for as long as both parties are reciprocating in some form or another, the value of utang na loob is understood to be part of a wholesome outlook governing their relationships.

The case of a seafarer sending remittances to their parents or relatives can illustrate this strong sense of gratitude. The act of sending and the remittance itself is the operationalisation of "utang na loob". The support from the seafarer's parents or relatives in the past, say in providing for his education, strongly influences his decision to provide remittances for as long as he can. This becomes the main avenue by which he can repay them in return for their sacrifices, along with his benefactors' expectation that it is his obligation to do so. It should be noted that the form of gratitude exhibited in this example is quite complex due to the involvement of people instrumental to his seafaring career. The giving or sending of a remittance is underlined by the expectations of support, usually financial, emanating from his parents or relatives instrumental to his success. This implicit expectation working in close conjunction with "utang na loob" may be one of the factors influencing the seafarer's remittance-sending behaviour.

A less intricate and more straightforward manifestation of "utang na loob" can be found between neighbours who have no history of indebtedness. For instance, if a newcomer moves, it is common practice for their immediate neighbour, as a way of welcome, to offer practical information. This simple act of assistance is considered a form of investment because they will also receive assistance from the newcomer when the time comes. Stature also affects this relationship. If, for instance, the newcomer has a higher

stature (i.e. has more wealth) then they will be given favours by neighbours of a lesser stature. Favours, in this way, signify the givers' need of attention. On the other hand, the newcomer of a higher stature can repay this either by inviting the neighbours to his parties or by helping out the neighbour in some other areas of concern (for instance, referral to a job).

Understanding how "utang na loob" develops and works between neighbours gives meaning to the specific way that the residents in this town create not only familial but extra-familial bonds. For instance, a neighbour suddenly realises that they have ran out of a kitchen necessity such as vinegar, sugar, salt, or coffee and the store is a long way from their house, she can ask for it from her neighbour but this would definitely make her beholden to the helpful neighbour. So the next time that the neighbour needs something, say her iron broke down, the neighbour will be more than willing to lend hers. By virtue of the utang na loob that she has developed she will, to a certain extent, comply with the other's wishes for as long as she can. So even if this iron is new and she is not quite keen on lending it, she will not skip the opportunity to return the favour and repay the kindness. As in Sta. Ana, this unbound reciprocity operates for most of the communities in the Philippines. Turgo's (2010) study of a fishing community in the Northern Philippines showed a similar indication of the elastic boundaries of reciprocity, which effectively create a strong bond for the members of the community by virtue of continuous expected engagements from its members.

In the case of my fieldwork, I found that membership of the neighbourhood required a range of acts of sociability. At the minimum, the residents within the town acknowledged each other when they happened to meet, such as on the street. Smiling or nodding towards each other as a form of acknowledgement was a normal practice. It was also noticeable that they would wave to someone from afar or from a moving vehicle. Non-practice created a negative impression of being self-centred and uncaring, and increased the possibility of being talked about in the town. If one walked in the street, people would directly look you into the eye and greet you. Turning your gaze away by looking down or elsewhere to avoid it was uncommon. In this town, the act of maintaining relationships indicated sharing with the community's sense of neighbourhood, at least in fulfilment of the minimum requirement. Tolerance of

different behaviour was only proffered to the stranger who did not know much about their customs and local ways.

The formation of neighbourly acts among the town's people would typically start from helping out in each other's household and domestic affairs. This basically ranged from giving food stuffs to seeking each other out in emergencies. The situation of one of the seafarer's wives gave a glimpse of the extent that this relationship can evolve between neighbours. She narrated how she benefitted from her neighbours' help whenever she needed someone to look after her children:

Here we have a neighbour. So when I need someone to take care of the children, they are the ones I always turn to. (Wife, Community, Interview 67)

Living on her own with her children, she sometimes needed the support of her neighbour. For example, if there were transactions that she needed to do in the city, then she could directly ask her neighbour for help. This in return would be remembered through various forms of repayment, for example, by giving food stuffs. Another seafarer's wife clearly referred to this when she said:

It is not bad to give to our neighbours since we ask favours from them from time to time. (Fieldnotes, 2008)

As with having "*utang na loob*", giving each other food stuff did not suffice as a form of gratitude since when the seafarer came home he would likewise show gratitude by giving something from abroad, such as chocolates, cigarettes, or wine. As implicit or as non-existent as the expectations may be from the neighbour, this was also a way for the seafarer to personally show his gratitude regarding the help extended to his family while he was away and unable to perform his role of looking after the children. The neighbour in return would continue showing forms of goodwill to the seafarer's family. Later on, when that neighbour needed help (for instance, if his son was aspiring to become a seafarer) he could approach the seafarer and ask for help. This shows how giving and receiving help can start between neighbours and create a stronger bond that continues for the foreseeable future, unless a breach of trust occurs. This likewise revealed how the seafarers' social networks are formed, maintained and valued. Being embedded in such local conditions requires seafarers to configure their actions to what is deemed

socially acceptable by their immediate social networks as a strategic move to ensure their family's safety while away at sea.

Since membership in this town includes a range of financial, economic and moral demands pertaining to health, education, and income, a seafarer's wife would often be the first one to be asked for help by a close neighbour who is suddenly faced with a family crisis (such as caring for her disease-stricken child or when the typhoon ravaged their farms and they need money for the education of their children). In other words, borrowing money is one of the salient features in terms of neighbourliness in this town. Since the expectations of the seafarers were high, there was a belief that the seafarers had a lot of money to give. In times of emergencies, seafarers would often be asked for some financial help. Refusal to lend money would cause bad feelings on the side of the would-be borrower. There was an understanding that refusal was a form of stinginess and was not caused by a lack of money. However, despite this, one wife reported that when it was their turn to borrow, nobody lent her money because the people would not believe that they did not have money to spend. In fact, even during a fiesta the neighbours rely on one another by borrowing money to have something to serve the visitors. Households with seafarers were automatically expected to donate more compared to others and this carries with it a form of pressure to conform:

Also, they expect you to give huge amount of money. But for me it depends. So I just tell that that I don't have money. I just participate with what I can give. I give because that is my way of thanksgiving for the blessings. So it is hard if you are tight fisted. (Wife, Community, Interview 66)

Meeting the expectations of the community prevents criticism as stingy and uncooperative from their neighbours. More importantly, this becomes a way to show a give-and-take relationship because the neighbours also make up for the loan with considerable support for the seafarers' family.

Given the tacit understanding of community membership, seafarers readily agree to their wives' request for additional remittance. Participation in such forms of neighbourliness is a hidden recognition that although they may be financially relied upon by others households in the community, this may eventually change. Given the short term labour contracts of most Filipino seafarers, there is no security of tenure in

their employment. Hence, although the Filipino seafarers might complain about the extra financial burden that this entails, the necessity of being on good terms with the neighbours dissipates some of the uncertainties regarding their employment. Eventually, if and when the time comes that they are the ones needing the support themselves, they can rely upon the circle of social ties that they have cultivated. More than securing a place in the community and the improved social position this imparts to the Filipino seafarers, goodwill to neighbours significantly functions as a form of insurance.

Evidence regarding the reliability of community associations in the Philippines at the barrio² level is shown by Bankoff (2007), who emphasised that social security derived from both formal and informal group cooperation encourages reciprocity, specifically when the provider role of the state is weak or lacking. This is most crucial within the context of the Filipino society that daily contends with natural perils and grapples with community rebuilding owing to the lasting effects of colonialism. In addition, Bankoff (2007) asserts that such historical underpinning accounts for the community's social capital inasmuch as it influences the continuing resilience of communities in the Philippines. In this regard, the Filipino seafarer's use of remittances for community welfare becomes an investment in social capital. The pattern of social interaction, therefore, revolves around strengthening or affirming community bonds. As such, the elevated status that arises from being able to work abroad gains its full merit only if the conditions of reciprocity have been met. Concurrently, this also shows the extent to which this support is valued in the community and the favourable conditions that this sustains for the seafarers' family.

In terms of social control, neighbours also serve as a watch guard for the seafarer's family. The negative side of this is that they can also be a source of conflict between the wife and her seafarer husband. For example, in the interviews one of the wives whose neighbours were mostly also her husband's relatives related how the seafarer's uncle "spread rumours that I have a guy here who visits me in the house." She continued to say that being not from this town she felt that:

When you don't have family here and there is just you and your kid, they make gossip about you. (Wife, Community, Interview 79)

² Barrio is a political division smaller than a barangay.

The presence of her neighbours, despite being potential sources of help, also became exploiters of her vulnerability. Since every action and move can be seen, the neighbours (which in this case were also synonymous to relatives) interpreted it using their own standards for proper behaviour. In fact, this wife related that the neighbours even talked about the way she dressed when she goes to hear mass. In this town, the manner of dressing could further intensify the gossip of infidelity around her. Even talking to the tricycle driver for a long time was also a cause for suspicion by the neighbours. Hence, even though her husband was not around, the mere presence of her neighbours made her more aware of her behaviour lest she should feed the suspicion of those surrounding her. She mentioned that the trust given to her by her husband made her less wary about the gossip escalating into unmanageable proportions. Effectively, in this case the neighbours' presence has become a form of moral "support" to the couple's long distance relationship. For seafarers who are away, this is a form of reassurance. While this may indeed prove to be restrictive from the wife's point of view, it is helpful in dispelling doubts and, therefore, easier for the seafarers aboard to cope with the distance.

5.4 How Seafaring is seen in the Community

Despite the absence of seafarers in the community, seafaring remained a popular occupation. The existing pattern of migration within the community exerted influence on the contemplation of seafaring as a career choice. Although economic motives play a key role, the role of the family and of community networks also accounted for this career choice. These networks provided different kinds of information to a potential migrant depending on the bond formed: "strong ties" from family networks and "weak ties" from community networks (Winters, Janvry and Sadoulet 1999). Family network information was directly relayed to the immediate family while community network information was filtered information from the migrant's family that found its way to the community. Overtime established community networks may outpace family networks in terms of inducing out-migration from the community as shown from the rural households in Mexico. In the Philippines, the study by Abrigo and Desierto (2011) provided evidence of a phenomenon of contagious migration such that spatial contagion

positively impacts on the growth of migration networks. Reduced search costs on information paves the way for the spread of migration in a nearby locality. The town of Sta. Ana exhibits such condition as other neighbouring communities are also populated by migrants and therefore heavily influenced by migration. How seafaring is widely regarded within the community shows what are the firmly established behaviour, attitude and ways of being for retaining community membership.

Many seafarers within the community retold happy stories of sailing while at home. This led to a general perception in the community that seafarers lived an “easy going” life. Such observations of the seafarers and the presentation of their lives at sea led to positive expectations about seafaring as a career, as in these examples:

I can see that when seafarers here go home, they look happy. So I said to myself, maybe I will also be happy like that if I am a seafarer. They drink here and there. (Engine Rating, Community, Interview 60)

I hear from seamen good stories...that they live a good life. They go to different places, drink outside and have fun with girls. When they go home, they have money. So I thought to myself, this seems to be a good job. (Fourth Engineer, Community, Interview 111)

As part of reconnecting with old friends and upholding their “can afford” status, most seafarers shared a round of drinks with their friends, neighbours and relatives in the community which shows a well-off lifestyle. Since this had become a form of ritual every time a worker from abroad arrived home, this was a common scenario in the community. Living within the community, the potential migrants became observers of such heavily ingrained practices. Consequently, the financial success of seafarers was made manifest. It was, therefore, not surprising that those who witnessed the seafarers’ way of life were enticed. Seafarers interviewed in the dormitory similarly pointed out how older seafarers in the community became an inspiration, as in the example below:

I saw my neighbours in the province before. They became my inspiration in choosing to be a seafarer. I was a child that time. I told myself, when I grow up, I will be a seafarer. (Ratings, Dormitory, Interview 29)

I observe a seafarer in our place, my uncle. He is a seafarer. So I told myself, “this is nice.” (Second Engineer, Dormitory, Interview 31)

Witnessing the economic improvements in the life of a seafarer, many young people became inspired to follow in their example. The visibility of the seafarers and their economic and social potency in the community encouraged others to create a positive perception of seafaring as a career.

Another seafarer’s choice of becoming a seafarer was also affected by similar observation of display or image management. What stood out for him was the lifestyle of the alumni from his maritime school:

You know college. You face half that fancy real flaunting of what really happens, the actual scenario on the ship. So you get to travel for free, you earn dollars. Different menus, per se. They have that artificial or superficial way of telling you this is the life on board. Like, travel for free, earn dollars and different women in different ports. As if you won’t do anything that is much better than this. Overseas workers are like that. Seaman, if they go for a vacation, they are like one day millionaire. So you get attracted to those kind of lifestyle. So it is like, wow someday I get to be like that!

(Second Officer, Dormitory, Interview 38)

All the positive sides of being a seafarer were flaunted by those who had experienced working life on board ship. Displays of wealth or stories about different countries and other perks (such as sampling different kinds of food, meeting beautiful women in various ports and going on extravagant vacations) were all highlighted. Another seafarer made reference to the seafarers he had met in school as a major factor making up his expectations:

For example, on the ship, life is enjoyable. Look at the other seaman, when they go home, they look very well dressed. But of course, you don’t know what will happen to you there. (Third Officer, Dormitory, Int 21)

He referred to the impression he received as he noticed the seafarer’s expensive clothes. Since the seafarer’s manner of dressing was most visible, this impinged on their

aspirations despite the uncertainties of being a seafarer. Furthermore, roaming around the world for free and the financial gain from seafaring made it a worthy and financially viable endeavour. As the seafarer above mentioned, the superficial image created from their stories tends to mask what difficult work seafaring is. Hence, there was a sense of excitement attached to being a seafarer. The lifestyle of a millionaire conjured up images of an enticing career at sea. This behaviour, according to McKay (2007) emanates from a “double masculine consciousness” in which seafarers, specifically ratings, disguise their lowly position on board ship with extravagant displays of wealth at home. In effect, this became a way for them to deal with their contradictory social locations, a transnational manoeuvre to better their secondary labour position.

When back in their home town, and after their experience on board, the seafarers would give a negative reply when asked to reflect about their pre-on board expectations. The affirmative reference found in their expectations weakened at this point. The picture changed and became an open admission of having had a wrong impression of life on board the ship, having been acquainted with the harsh truth of life as a sailor. This was particularly true with the nature of the work they took on board the ship, which was far from their initial expectations.

Yes, it was difficult. The stories that you hear before and the one you experience are different. When you go home, the one you tell people are happy stories. The difficult work in the ship you don't tell to people when you are home. (Engine rating, Community, Interview 60)

Encounters of disenchantment with ship life were usually revealed only within their family or in very close circles. These were not openly discussed or referred to when they were generally recounting their on board experiences. Even the seafarers' families veered away from comments pertaining to the hardships of seafaring. The tacit collusion inherent in such behaviour was manifested through the projection of a satisfying image of success in the community. This often took the form of a display of an affluent lifestyle worthy of emulation by others in the community. Seafarers in the community were perceived to never run out of money and, hence, have become the focal point of help during emergency situations. As one seafarer experienced:

The people now in this area do not think about how they can pay you but who to loan money from. There is a 99.9% that your money will not come back. They will even feel bad about you if you start asking for your money. (Captain, Community, Interview 49)

Another seafarer interviewed in the Manila dormitory lamented that a similar perception pervaded his own hometown:

That's the negative side, if you start borrowing money nobody will lend you because they would not believe that you don't have money. (Second officer, Dormitory, Interview 27)

Most of the seafarer's wives admitted that they hardly say no to anyone who asks to borrow money because this would not be accepted as true and would sully both their image and close relationship. This was consistent with how the community regarded seafarers as overseas workers who have "made it" abroad. Another possible reason was the denial of making a mistake in terms of choosing a job like seafaring. Doing so was equated to a confession of a wrong decision that does not augur well with their enhanced status. To save face, most seafarers and their families resorted to positive presentations of themselves in order to maintain their reputation. Hence, being a seafarer is framed within the merits of realised aspirations and upholding attachments to their community, despite the pressures and tensions of life as a seafarer.

A similar balancing act of the tensions between expectations and reality was also seen through seafarers' perception of distance from the family, which they consider to be a real problem. Being far away from the comforts of home made work on board ship more unbearable for the seafarers. The longing for the family was a constant feature, as shown by a captain who related the following:

I always experience up to now the separation anxiety. It is recurring. It seems like...But I have realised that this is my job...I have started this...and I have no choice. But the stress brought about by separation from the family really affects me. (Captain, Community, Interview 87)

Being distant from the family underlines one of the hardships faced by seafarers when on board the ship. For this seafarer, his long-term experience in working on board also meant experiencing a recurring separation anxiety. However, since this was part of his job, he expressed a feeling of having no choice about it. Separation anxiety was something that he had to bear in order to provide for his family. Amongst seafarers,

readjustment to family life is a consequence of intermittent presence at home (Alderton 2004). According to Parkes et al. (2005), among UK offshore workers who alternate between work and home within two or three weeks, tension accompany transition to home life. This is similar to the findings of Thomas et al (2005) who studied the family life of seafarers from UK, India and China. The study highlighted that prolonged separation can be disruptive in terms of emotional and psychological anxieties. Thomas and Bailey (2009) noted that the time discontinuity between home and work spheres diminished the opportunity for shared family life between seafarers and their partners. Interruptions brought about by prolonged absence and irregular presence entail crucial emotional demands from seafarers in sustaining meaningful connection with their families.

In the Philippines, the man's primary duty was to financially provide for their families. In doing so, the Filipino seafarers would most likely view the distance from home as a form of sacrifice. Ostreng (2001) highlighted that occupational ideology differs between Filipino and Norwegian seafarers. While the Filipino seafarer's identified with seafaring work as 'being a good seafarer' by provision of support to family back home, the Norwegian seafarer's emphasised having a knowledge of seamanship. There was a general positive perception of seafaring as a career in Filipino society, while this may not be readily conferred to Norwegian sailors upon their return. The differences in their economic condition could also be a reason for this. Since the construct of seafaring as a profession varies across places, the manner by which seafarers identified with their work is influenced by the ways in which it is recognised in the community.

The symbolic meaning of what it meant to be a Filipino seafarer draws from the community's outward orientation that makes working abroad an accepted norm. The limited range of jobs from the local labour market also figures significantly as a strong rationale. In rural areas, employment prospects can be found in the agricultural sector and in local government offices. However, agricultural labour is considered a low-paid job whilst non-farm work requires a strong backing from informal networks. Although employment in the Philippines remains predominantly agricultural, opportunities in the service sector secure higher and more regular income. Employment in the agriculture sector, for instance, rice farming, is subject to natural calamities (Israel and Briones 2012) making it less appealing among other livelihood choices. A

more stable income source offering a faster way of improvement in life, such as seafaring, is thus relatively favoured. Both factors, working abroad and earning above-average income, explain why securing a better future through seafaring is approved inasmuch as it is admired. The limited protection afforded by narrow coverage of social security in the Philippines (Manasan 2009) is also a factor.

In contrast with the Norwegian sailors who had nuclear families, most Filipino seafarers faced heavier responsibilities as breadwinner for they effectively functioned as part of an extended family in terms of financial responsibilities they are expected to sustain. Aguilar (2009) referred to a bilateral kinship in which the parents of both the husband and the wife are the primary features in the Filipino concept of family. Commitments to the Filipino family, therefore, occur at various levels, extending beyond immediate kin to encompass a dense set of social ties. Fulfilment of these manifold expectations and surpassing the local constraints enhance the Filipino seafarer's image in the community and build the perception of seafaring as an occupation of choice.

5.5 Conclusion

By taking the local context into consideration, this chapter shows what is crucial for seafarers' integration ashore. The shared sense of place within a long history of migration sets the social tone for all community members. The culture of migration has firmly established an outwardly oriented perspective, which has also greatly influenced the way that families and neighbours regard each other in terms of social roles, decision-making dynamics and values. Insofar as the community definition permits, the sense of achievement gains its fullness only if attained through overseas experiences. The sacrifice of being away from home that is highlighted by the seafarers and Filipino migrants in general carries with it the formation of close family ties made even more meaningful by the necessity of working abroad. Therefore, returnees (including the seafarers in this study) find that the act of migration itself has in effect firmly put them in a position to settle smoothly in the community and to re-mingle easily.

If performed according to the community's prescriptions, reinsertion becomes straightforward. Performing belonging through preserving community traditions,

customs and values accompanies the portrayal of a returning migrant and implies continuous membership in the community. Although it may often conflict with their financial condition (such as whether they can afford its practice or not), it apparently takes precedence over monetary considerations. Symbolic statements of belonging (such as expensive houses, cars and donations) are pondered along the same lines.

In many migrant societies, going abroad forms part of the community's tradition such that forming networks constitute a migration ethos that is more significant than the economic survival initially attached to migration (Massey, Goldring and Durand 1994). The strong sense of inclusion Filipino seafarers obtains from immediate family and friends facilitate active participation in the community. The analysis suggests that the Filipino seafarers' networks of relationships have a significant impact on their level of participation and sense of belonging in the community. Socialisation with the family, although predominantly a reciprocal exercise, also provides a way for seafarers to retain their inclusion. Seafarers achieve the status of a "reciprocating overseas workers" who have fulfilled the *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) within the family and immediate circles and earn social recognition. In due time, the seafarers' conformity makes it easier to ease in and out of the community.

What ultimately enjoins Filipino seafarers' participation and conformity is linked to the reassurance of support given to the seafarers' family while the seafarer is at sea. Performing reciprocity in the seafarers' network of relationships serves a greater aim; that is, to sustain the social and emotional support received by the seafarers' family. The continuous, on-going way in which this is fulfilled foregrounds the intense obligations that Filipino seafarers face in claiming belonging. Maintaining social ties embeds seafarers at home but inevitably challenges the seafarer's level of commitment. The importance of rejoining the community is always weighed against the security rendered to the seafarers' family.

This chapter has concluded that the value of embedded ties to the seafarer and their family plays a decisive role in creating and maintaining a strong sense of belonging. How the Filipino seafarers are perceived within their close networks identifies the manner by which they continued to become part of it and, therefore, actively engage in reproducing such perceptions. The overarching influence of social connectedness

accounted for in terms of the historical origin of being a community member and the firmly established symbolic construct of being a seafarer facilitate ease of re-integration. If Filipino seafarers' affiliation to the community is strong, as shown in this chapter, are the cross-border practices similarly strong? How are these specifically invoked? Which factors are particularly crucial in charting a transnational trajectory among seafarers? Chapter 6 will focus on these questions. Understanding the depth and scope of continuing links manifested by Filipino seafarers is a crucial aspect of transnationalism in terms of how community presence is reconstituted across distance.

Chapter Six: Ways of Connection to Home

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has discussed the reintegration of seafarers into their homes and communities. This chapter aims to discuss the range of transnational connections keeping Filipino seafarers rooted at home while they are working at sea. Once the seafarers are on board ship they become part of a global space, which is a marked contrast to other land-based migrants who remain bounded within a national space (Sampson 2003). However, many of the seafarers endeavour to remain part of the local community through maintaining cross-border links. How these efforts are continually challenged, maintained or transformed in the home community will be considered in this chapter in the light of achieving a sense of belonging. The system operating in the community, and the behaviour this elicits from the seafarers, is important in re-evaluating their position as members of the community. Many of the previous studies that have examined transnationalism have emphasised that sustaining involvement in the host country varies according to the beliefs, practices, and traditions of the migrant's local community (Levitt 2003, 2007). The nature of social ties maintained by Filipino seafarer's will be explored in detail through the following cross-border activities:

- 1.) Communication;
- 2.) Gift-giving; and,
- 3.) Remittances.

6.2 Communication

Distance is one of the major challenges that seafarers face in attempting to sustain involvement with families and friends back home. Although the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) means that this problem is somewhat attenuated, the ICT infrastructure on board ships greatly varies, as does the accessibility of ICT services. Although it has recently started to be improved, maritime ICTs is still marked by relatively limited availability and high cost, which often influences its adoption and

use (Hogg and Collins 2003). Typical ship to shore communication technologies range from the most expensive (such as a satellite phone) to the cheaper free e-mail service that is provided on board ship. Along with the seafarer's mobile phones, maintaining a wide array of relationships and the development of closer connections with families and friends allows them to exhibit what Szerszynski and Urry (2006) described as virtual travel for which a new social dimension is formed. Currently, many seafarers can attest to the benefits of technological developments in the shipping industry. Compared to the previous implementation of ICT in the shipping industry, since the 1990s ICT access has made communication faster and this has enabled the seafarers to assert a presence at home while they are working at sea. However, access to communication technology remains constrained owing to differences in uptake in the shipping side and availability of communication infrastructure at the shore end, as shown by Sampson and Wu (2003) in their paper on container ports. Additionally, drastically reduced port hours, which can extend from 13 percent to 50 percent of a ship's total working time (Kahveci 2000), make calls more irregular and more expensive for the seafarers, particularly for ratings.

An exploratory study of the impact of seafaring lifestyle on family well-being has pinpointed the crucial role of communication as a form of support (Thomas 2003) where seafarers are able to participate in family life by calling home. Seafarers and their wives are able to sustain their relationships despite issues of cost, access, and intimacy. Although the cheaper option of sending an e-mail is also popular seafarers valued being able to hear the voice of their wife and converse in real time. Although intimate insights of their lives may be daily detailed in e-mails, the instantaneous intimacy of a voice call makes it a more preferable option.

Many previous studies on transnationalism have emphasised cross-border communication between the migrant and the family ashore as an important expression of remaining involved in the host society. Amongst seafarers, efforts to remain integrated ashore contend with the high mobility of the ship traversing different time zones and ICT regimes in different ports. These are interwoven with a time-conscious work schedule which impinges upon efforts to communicate.

6.2.1 Keeping In Touch

Most of the seafarers interviewed for this study have referred to the importance of calling home in order to keep abreast of family matters. Irrespective of rank on board ship, calling home was regarded as highly desirable in maintaining a sense of connection. Both officers and ratings placed a high value on making calls. For instance, a third officer related the importance of regularly keeping in touch with family back home and, therefore, he ignored the high cost of phone calls:

I call at every port. With my last ship, I used a satellite phone and it charged me £2.50 per minute. I spend about £65 in a month. (Third Officer, Dormitory, Interview 2)

Understandably, the Filipino ratings were able to call home less often because of their relatively low salary. While the officers were more likely to use satellite phones, most ratings would anticipate reaching the port in order to stretch their money and have more time calling home. As one rating who was working on a tanker put it:

As for me, I budget for calls. There is now a satellite phone card you can use which is about £18.70 but if it's off-peak then that will be £0.60 per minute depending on where you are. One card gets used up for three or four weeks. Then, if there is a signal then you can always send a text message. (Ordinary Seaman, Dormitory, Interview 23)

Cost considerations produce differential access to communicate and this in turn defines the extent to which the seafarers can connect with their families. This accords with other research which has found that regularity of ICT use in a transnational setting requires access to capital (Sassen 2000). Income difference affects the frequency of communication and it, therefore, influences the extent of the routinisation of such activities. In the case of seafarers, differences in rank and wages translate to variations in the amount of disposable income being used for calls.

Efforts to keep in touch effectively become intermittent in nature giving way to a fragmented communication. In a long-distance and often time-constrained communication between the seafarer and his wife, selecting which issues to discuss are crucial. In a typical call, seafarers would straight away ask questions about the well-

being of each of their family members or those matters regarded as high priority. The content of communication would usually begin with the usual accounting of activities of the family members. Married seafarers' inquiries were initially directed to the condition of their children while the single, unmarried seafarers usually showed interest in their parents' condition. Casual conversation topics were about the everyday lives of their families who were left-behind:

Health conditions, that is primary. Status... news... who has died, who gave birth? Time is lacking... and, of course, your sweet nothings. (Captain, Community, Interview 87)

Mindful of time, the seafarers would tend to keep their calls short, prioritising important information, such as the condition of their children or financial problems that awaited their final say. The available time of the seafarers determined which topics were important for discussion. It was only when urgent specific matters had to be discussed that wives would initiate what needs to be discussed. As one wife experienced:

Sometimes there are problems that you cannot easily contact him. Like when his sister got sick and eventually died. It requires a big amount that should be supported for her. We should be the one to spend for it because that is the sister who sent him to school. He was in China that time. I know his local mobile number so I was able to contact him. He went home. (Wife, Community, Interview 38)

Depending on the seriousness of the topic, seafarers would usually direct the pace and flow of communication. It was only in pressing situations where initiatives from the wives put forward other relevant issues. Essentially, the core issues were primarily determined by the husband and adjusted depending on the circumstances. A wife expressed how this could be a real concern:

That is my problem, I just keep it to myself. I don't even tell my sibling. I would just wait for my husband to call. (Wife, Community, Interview 64)

Part of the struggle for wives would be the vagueness of the next call from seafarers. Except for news of death, serious illness or accidents, keeping in touch had a passive quality such that wives were often left to cope on their own or to fill-in the waiting time until the next call from the seafarers. The painstaking one-way communication was endured as it was deemed less important and not so urgent on the couple's scale of

topics. Through time, the presence of the scale of important topics of a couple would be drawn and re-drawn to account for the fragmented pattern of communication. The anxiety involved in the negotiation of topics made manifest the uneven relationship between the seafarer and his wife in getting in touch with each other. This will also affect the decision dynamics that usually accompanies the communication between the seafarer and his wife which will be discussed later in Section 6.2.2.

E-mail exchanges with their wives served to fill in the hurried conversations, and provided more details and nuances of the daily life at home. The ability to make longer calls was appreciated when the opportunity to visit the seaman's centre arose during shore leave. Within the privacy afforded to them in the phone booth, calling home was also combined with a relaxed atmosphere measured only by the minutes it takes for the calling card to expire, as in the following example:

Whether having a pint of beer and snacks while calling home to prolong the time with their loved ones, or to give them the chance to wind down, this is definitely an activity that boosts their spirits. On the way back to the ship, they are all very chatty. (Ship Fieldnotes 2009)

This enabled Filipino seafarers to catch up on a wider variety of topics, remain part of their family and community's flow of events, and generate a sort of intimacy by making the wife slightly jealous. Timely news and updates from home allowed them to realign, their lives with their families and the community.

Calls provided an opportunity for the seafarers to have an intimate conversation with their wives. The interactive nature of the conversation provided them with the feeling of being attached to their wives and fulfilling their obligation as a husband from a distance, as in the following example:

But what really makes me hotheaded is no communication. Say, it takes a long time before I can call, that really affects us especially me. (Able-bodied Seaman, Ship, Interview 145)

The ability to perform marital obligations over geographical distance reflected the desire to reduce the intimacy gap and sustain the relationship. A similar sense of connection would also be achieved on remembering important occasions (such as

anniversaries and birthdays) through phone calls and other available digital media. On board, however, the ability to connect home is challenged by the ship's movement and atypical time schedule. Since location and time zones can greatly vary on a particular voyage, efforts to maintain communication may not be as straightforward as they seem. For instance, a working wife's daily routines could be disrupted by her husband's attempts to make contact. A ratings' wife complained about this in the following way:

If he is in the port, he texts me all the time. Sometimes when I am busy I can't reply. He gets mad and tells me it is just 1.50 pence and you can't even reply. If I tell him I am busy with barangay work...he tells me 'I am not forever in the port and you still prioritise that!' (Wife, Community, Interview 95)

Given the short vacant hours available for seafarers, calling home would not necessarily mean immediate connection. The difference in time zones usually created some form of unpredictability to the calls made by seafarers. This could be perceived as a form of burden to the wife who had to ensure her own availability at the time of the call despite her own work commitments. The ship's high mobility posed an ever-present challenge in terms of maintaining continuity amongst seafarer families. This adds to the atypical work schedule which creates an erratic connection that can potentially strain relationships. As pinpointed by Thomas and Bailey (2009) in their study of seafarers of various nationalities, the risk of temporal de-synchronisation creates a fragmented family life for the seafarers and puts pressures on their family and community life. Consequently, although the use of mobile phones or e-mails allowed the seafarers to remain anchored at home, they can also create a tension that may affect both the seafarers and their families; further emphasising absence rather than presence.

A seafarer's effort to communicate involves the negotiation of time with his wife. In the case of the seafarers whose high mobility entails changes of time and location, relationships and networks become crucially reorganised around digital connectivity (such as mobile phones or emails). The emotional disconnection that resulted between the seafarer and his wife highlights one of the consequences of miniaturised mobilities that were suggested by Elliott and Urry (2010). The notion of miniaturised mobilities recognises that, within a highly mobile lifestyle, the use of wireless technology becomes interwoven with daily life that it creates new social patterns. Between the seafarer and his wife, the increasing reliance on technology influences the manner of sustaining a

meaningful relationship. The continuous rescheduling of communication becomes more apparent as time becomes increasingly flexible.

The use of e-mail facilitated to some degree the negotiation of work and home life boundaries. On some ships e-mail is more easily accessible than mobile phones because of the steady signal from satellite technologies. Consequently, the seafarer's daily connection to home was often more consistent using e-mail. The presence of this technology on board the ship has allowed for emotionally-laden details to be explored further, as one wife recounted:

With email, I can tell him a lot of things...problems...everything that is inside me. But through the phone, it is very quick. You just touch on basic things like how are you doing. If I have a problem, I tell him. But on the cell phone, I can't express everything. I prefer email because I can pour over everything...explain everything. Sometimes he will say, my load will run out...so tomorrow we continue talking. So our talk is chopped... (Wife, Community, Interview 101)

In expressing the finer points of important events and decisions, some form of reassurance was extended through the daily use of emails. E-mail became a storage for emotions. In this way, e-mail can be seen to function as a conduit for emotional containment or the 'opportunity to express and explore anxieties, doubts, worries or dangers' (Elliott and Urry 2010: 34). The reverse can likewise occur in cases of argumentative exchange of messages that may be quite unsettling or isolating for the seafarers. Such social affordances of technology in terms of reconstituting relationships can significantly affect the seafarer's connections to home. For the families and relatives at home, adapting to the space-time gulf brought about by the ship's pace, wireless communication was seen as essential.

Among seafarers on board, access to e-mail also encouraged the maintenance of contact with those who had left the ship and the preservation of friendly relations.

An officer related how through e-mail he was able to keep in touch with other seafarers:

I have one Indian second officer he keeps in touch with me through e-mail and the friendship is still there. In fact, he is inviting me to go to a beach in Goa. I have one chief officer who is always open to me if I go to New Delhi. (Second Officer, Dormitory, Interview 38)

Yes I maintain but it is hard because it is impossible for email service. I have been getting email from three of my friends, you know. I notice that as time passes by, you lose contact. When I go he is ammm..where should I send the email. If I send it to his personal email he wouldn't be able to read it. If I send it to his sea mail, then okay, but when I get off he couldn't send it here. So that's annoying. Keeping track, it is difficult to send it that way. (Chief Engineer, Ship, Interview 135)

The use of e-mail on board for sustaining contact with other seafarers may be infrequent but this provides the opportunity to fulfil and develop social needs. However, between two highly mobile seafarers dispersed between the ship and the shore at a point in time, making contact is continually challenged by coordination. Delays in reciprocity can weaken social ties and affect the relationship. As the chance of working together may not always be present, ties are at risk of vanishing.

How the relationship between work and home life was charted illustrates the extent to which seafarers inhabit two worlds. The condition of increasing network relations (Castells 1996) and hypermobility (Urry 2000) are currently regarded as intrinsic features of a global world. Aboard the vessel studied, communications were aligned to some extent with this contemporary reality. For example, improvements in shipping technology, in particular ICT, have offered more efficient and faster ways of getting updated information from home. However, while technology has progressed it has also tested the seafarer's everyday social life. Its basic role as a conduit of information between a seafarer and his wife was found to be frequently fraught with tensions. This aspect is particularly worth noting when analysing the seafarers as transnationals. The unsettling aspects of maintaining contact from afar in conditions of high mobility pose a question regarding the extent to which seafarers remain part of their society. While seafarers may show a double presence due to the regularity of their use of communication channels, the strain on relationships they face invite reconsideration of this view. This point will be discussed in more detail in the subsections that follow.

6.2.2 Participation in Decision-Making

One of the important functions of communication was to allow seafarers to participate in financial planning and decision-making. Most seafarers reported being consulted by their partners when it came to significant outlays and investments. Sometimes, even complex discussions were engaged in (e.g. the design of a new house). This was described by a ratings' wife, who related the following:

He calls and emails. So this house we both designed. He has this plan and then he asks me if I want that. (Wife, Community, Interview 81)

The yardstick of success in this community was measured by owning a house (as discussed in the previous chapter). There was, therefore, a high level of aspiration among seafarers to show tangible proof of their labour. A renovated or newly built house served that purpose.

Broadly speaking, house ownership was very important for Filipino migrants as a symbol of their hard work abroad. For example, a recent study of a community in the northern part of the Philippines that mostly involved women Filipino migrants found that they pointed to the houses as “objectification of upward social mobility and a memorial to overseas work” (Aguilar 2009). Similarly, seafarers in Sta. Ana construed their investment in their houses as the fruits of their labour, although they also emphasised their personal, non-financial contributions to the house. Self-building of the house had a special meaning to these seafarers and their families. Consequently, whether they were on land or at sea, their participation simulated their presence. Therefore, within the community, an unfinished house owned by a seafarer would most likely indicate that its owner was abroad. This sense of evolution and of change of the house in mirroring the lives of its migrant owners seemed to be a pervading feature of Sta. Ana which can also be found in other communities in the Philippines (Aguilar 2009). The timing of the house construction closely parallels the seafarer's movement in and out of the country and it, therefore, became an indication of continuing connection to the town.

As breadwinners, seafarers carry the bulk of responsibility towards the family and communication was regarded as crucial in exerting that role. Due to their absence,

seafarers' role became much more apparent through lack of involvement in minor decisions; one of the seafarers described this phenomenon:

Sometimes she will make a decision by herself. Say, the house was painted or the toilet was renovated. I will say that this pleased me, but would it be better if she consulted me? We still don't know whether the money earned for six months can sustain us. What if I don't get on board a ship right away? What will happen to us? It's already there. How can I raise any objections now? (Ratings, Community, Interview 51)

The fragmented communication between the seafarer and his wife created gaps in decision-making. Such communication gaps were left to the interpretation of the wife who would likely assume responsibilities perceived to be the exclusive prerogative of men. The tension notwithstanding, seafarers would rather keep silent to preserve family harmony despite wanting to express displeasure in what they perceived to be an incursion to their primary role in the family.

In some cases, fragmented communication led to a situation where the wives became more independent and confident from living alone. A wife explained that:

To be a father and a mother. It is tough on decision-making. When you decide and your husband is not here, it is very hard. Also when you have a problem and he is not here. Especially with children. (Wife, Community, Interview 71)

Eventually, seafarers' wives who filled in the gaps in communication assumed a position of leadership in the family which oftentimes was described as difficult for it required dual roles in the household and child-care activities. As the wives learned to integrate certain roles of their husbands with their own, they learned how to single-handedly make decisions most of the time. Implicit in such arrangement were the good judgment and toughness required to sustain and prepare for outcomes that could unwittingly strain the husband-wife relationship. At the same time, however, the communication gaps allowed the wives' temporary 'dominance' (but for some cases, prolonged 'dominance') which some women exploited and thus rendered the men vulnerable through a sense of being powerless. A wife described how she assertively defended her decisions from her husband:

In making decisions, if he knows that I am doing the right decision then he just follows it and vice versa. If he doesn't follow, then we have some petty fights. (Wife, Community, Interview 64)

As wives learned to handle multiple roles, this strengthened their ability to resolve problems independently of their husbands. Consequently, they also discovered ways to exert significant influence over other aspects of the relationship. Such changes in the decision-making dynamics put seafarers in a position to negotiate particular roles that are previously accepted without question by their wives. A particular experience of another wife related to her husband's financial responsibility when on leave could provide an example:

I don't spend much so I can also save and then you will just lend the money? When it comes to that thing...that is our conflict. I am like this not because I don't want him to lend money but usually he doesn't get his money back. He is very open...That is what I don't like. (Wife, Community, Interview 112)

Typically, management of the household's purse was regarded a wife's concern, and this tacitly comes with full discretion to spend. A seafarer's own money, on the other hand, could remain his own to keep and manage as he wish. Yet there were other households where this would be tendered to the wives for safekeeping or a portion of the amount would be retained for the seafarers' upkeep for the duration of his leave. The wife in the above example belonged to the latter. In such household arrangement, the tension experienced by the wives arose from a feeling of unfairness associated with a lack of control of the seafarers' manner of personal spending. The act of demanding an equivalent sense of financial responsibility showed a strong influence in the relationship. The capacity to firmly express disagreement on what little financial leeway was provided to the seafarers reflected a refusal to relinquish that share of 'male' authority. Conformity to traditional gender expectations became less straightforward. As wives acquired, expanded and embraced as her own those roles regarded as within the men's purview, they become less willing to submit readily and more appreciative of their changed position in the household.

The negotiation of time, topics and gender roles are outcomes of the seafarers' fragmented nature of communication. The use of technologies has been vital and necessary to sustain communication – the lifeblood of relationship. However, this has simultaneously bolstered absence rather than presence. The daily tensions experienced

by the wives as they adjust to the seafarers' sporadic calls, emotionally deal with issues on their own and courageously tackle household realm with little help from their husbands show the changed relationships seafarers face. In this regard, the dual lives led by those categorised as transnationals thus become questioned due to such tensed adjustments for it clarifies the boundaries of belonging much more carefully.

6.3 Gift-Giving

Sending gifts is regarded in the literature of migrant transnationalism as a form of transnational practice (Itzigsohn et al. 1999; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999; Al-Ali, Black and Koser 2001). This form of socio-cultural transnational participation involves a "re-creation of a sense of community that encompasses migrants and people in the place of origin" (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2001: 768). Participation in this aspect of transnational life encompasses social obligations and symbolic motives within a society's cultural norms. Under the classical notion of gift-giving, reciprocity and economic interests form the motives to give (Mauss 1954). The main purpose of gift giving is to sustain social relationships by reaffirming membership in a group. In a similar way, the practice of gift-giving among migrants is intricately connected with the family and community networks established prior to migration. The gift exchange apparently contributes to migrant's social capital. By stimulating social capital, the gifts "secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures." (Portes 1998b: 6). The role of networks also defines the meaning attached to the gift-giving act. In many ways, the gift itself is a form of investment in the community to which belonging is anchored.

Understanding the value of gift exchange depends on the specific context in which it is performed. This section aims to provide insights into how the community structures reflect the social capital created by gift-giving. In exploring the practice of gift exchange, a clearer understanding of the Filipino seafarers' transnational existence will be explored. Explanations of the motives to give gifts are explored along with the extant traditional social practices in the town of Sta. Ana. This also entails understanding the conception of gifts in two major ways: sustaining ties and reinforcing social status.

6.3.1 Sustaining Ties

Gift-giving is a significant attribute in the life of a Filipino seafarer (Lamvik 2002). Typically, Filipino seafarers will never pass up the chance to give presents (which can be cash or in kind) whether they are on ship or on shore. Before departure, a seafarer would automatically bring with him a mental list of gifts. The names on the list would be in order of decreasing importance. Those who were instrumental in the achievement of his current status would rank high on his list and would probably get more expensive presents, as in this example:

I bought cell phones that are £50 each. I bought around ten cell phones. I want to give to my children and then to my wife. The old ones will be given to the helpers. My sister-in-law also, I will give her one. They told me they want that. That is fine with me to give them. They were asking for my old phone, I told them I will give them new ones. When I was young, they helped with the children. My sister-in-law now takes care of my grandchild. (Chief Cook, Ship, Interview 150)

In most cases, these were the people who helped the seafarer finish his education, referred him to manning agencies, lent him money when he was needy, and it includes other relatives who helped him and his family, financially or otherwise, when it was most needed (e.g. in emergency situations). Close friends who expressly made their requests were included in the list. While the gift exchange solidifies the Filipino seafarer's commitment to their family and friends, on another level it also speaks of the social obligation to supportive family members. Since the gift exchange solidifies the Filipino seafarer's commitment, it effectively strengthens the seafarer's connection with the family and the community as a whole. The seafarers' gifts signify a renewable commitment arising from long absences from home.

The element of obligation, however, does not always underline the seafarer's motive to give gifts. Most of the seafarers expressed a general tendency to remain in goodwill within the community in order to show their neighbourliness. One seafarer, who grew up in another town and is quite new to Sta. Ana, mentioned how he welcomed visitors who dropped by his house by treating them to a drink:

People here, when they know that you have just arrived, ask for drinks from you. That is how they do it here, when they know that you are here, they will come in the guise that they just want to say hello to you but since I know that they are drinkers then I have to give them drinks. They won't directly ask from you. (Fourth Engineer, Community, Interview 111)

Being born in another town, he admitted not knowing many of the residents in Sta. Ana. He made reference to this practice of gift giving as part of the community's expectations of all returning migrants. This behaviour is not unique to this town, another seafarer from another town who was interviewed in the dormitory felt so oppressed by the demands of his community that he actually sought to obscure his comings and goings. He described how he did this as follows:

I don't bring chocolates when I go home. If I go home, I want to keep it a secret. I just show up in the house. You know us seafarers, we also want to minimise expenses and save. Most of us are like that. So when I go home, I make a point to arrive at night. (Ratings, Dormitory, Interview 28)

The unspoken rule of gift giving is widely recognised by Filipino seafarers. Seafarers act out on this deep-rooted practice while those at the receiving end maintain their expectations. While this may serve as a form of pressure, it also has a positive side. Gifting to relatives and neighbours facilitates ease of re-entry to the community. By maintaining a network of social relations, the seafarer's position as a member of the community is emphasised.

Expectations from seafarers comparably differ from other migrants because they have to repeatedly perform this practice to reconfirm their membership in the community and strengthen links. The seafarers' regularity of return differs from other migrants (e.g. nurses, IT professionals) in terms of a higher probability of settling down in the community. Land-based, skilled professionals usually work on longer term contracts and have the opportunity to reside in the country of destination. In this way, they have more tenuous links to the local community as opposed to the seafarers who consider the local community as a place of permanent residency. As such, the seafarer's repeated gift-giving practice constitutes a recurring rite of passage that is performed in order to re-establish his presence in the community given his intermittent appearance.

From the community perspective, giving gifts meant upholding the community's rituals and traditions. Exclusion of the context by which the gift is given ignores the social and cultural quality of the gift as a "cultural good" (DiMaggio 1991: 131). In a community with a thick web of social relations, giving gifts confers a host of advantages to the giver. The social norms surrounding the gifting behaviour and the gift itself plays an important role in attaching the seafarer to relatives, friends and to the community as a whole. It functions as a ritual of acceptance for the returning seafarer. Many of the seafarers, therefore, allotted a portion of their earnings for buying presents:

I paid £156 just for chocolates... so five to six bags, and the cigarettes, and then alcoholic drinks. So, that is apart from the gift I have to give to my wife, special things like perfume or lotion. (Second Officer, Ship, Interview 138)

For me, around £94. More on chocolates and cigarettes. Plus when I go home, I give my parents £65 each. (Able-bodied Seaman, Ship, Interview 145)

Apart from the distribution of gifts as a rite of passage to a variety of social networks (such as family, relatives, friends and neighbours), it was also an indication of respect to the on-going norms and traditions. The gift automatically suggests an unwavering sense of unanimity and solidarity to the community residents. A reminder that, despite the improvement in his situation, a seafarer was still aligned with the communal values and system of expectations that was already in place. The extent of seafarer's acceptability was, therefore, evaluated according to the extent to which he remained loyal to the community's gifting practice.

The nature of the gift bestowed also influenced how the seafarers were socially regarded. What qualifies as a gift depends on certain expectations, such as provenance, price and quality. Typically, imported and 'branded' goods (such as chocolates, liquor, perfumes, or cigarettes) were given as gifts to immediate family members who were regarded as more important than other kin. In addition, for a number of seafarers, the goods bought from Manila also embodied a more heightened symbolic value compared to other goods obtained from the seafarer's locality. As one Filipino rating said:

Whatever I can buy in Manila. If I buy here, it is very expensive. You know here in the province, even if you buy just t-shirt and shorts in Quiapo, then that is fine with them. (Ratings, Ship, Interview 132)

Filipino seafarers, when at home, conformed to the stereotypical view attached to workers from abroad since it aligned with their enhanced economic situation arising from overseas experience. Most of the seafarers interviewed referred to gifts as an indication that they somehow remembered their families and friends while away. Albuero (2005: 144) views this gift-giving as parallel to the rites of passage Filipino migrants encounter in the course of their migration; that is, having gone over the “migratory threshold.” For Filipino seafarers the gifts were more than an object of remembrance, they also communicated the “abroad” versions of themselves. In actuality, the gifts expressed the seafarer’s affection for their families if the necessary requirement of coming from “abroad” and “branded” was satisfied. A gift was also deemed appropriate if it reflected the desires of the community members. The intention to give the gift without the fitting gift to go with it disrupted the social exchange and did not accord with the community’s definition of a gift from those employed abroad. An apt gift, however, further enhanced seafarer status within the community while a refusal to adhere to such conventions created a social gap and placed a seafarer at risk of estrangement from the community.

Not all gifts were given in the forms of goods. For example, some family and relatives were given gifts in the form of cash. Cash effectively functioned to bridge the “gift gaps,” or to complement the tangible gift. Generally, seafarers used gifts of money as a form of reserve gift which was given to anyone that they had forgotten to buy gifts for or given to those with whom they maintained occasional ties (such as neighbours and acquaintances). At home, the seafarers mingled with their relatives and friends and they took the initiative to call up all their close relatives (including neighbours) for a gathering. Alternatively, the initiative could come from their relatives or friends who visited them in their house and invited them to drink. In this case, they needed to be prepared by way of giving them cash or buying them a drink. This was described by a second engineer’s wife account when she said:

My husband will say, “Ma, don’t be angry... can I keep £155 for safety?” I asked him, “For what?” He replies, “so that when I go to the store and see my friends then I can share drinks with them.” His friends even tell him to treat them to a drink.
(Wife, Community, Interview 101)

By way of this practice, the seafarers made their presence felt to their close friends, neighbours, and relatives. The seafarers used this as a way of sustaining community networks that they had built through the years and of reinserting themselves into the community's way of life. In this community, rekindling bonds with friends and relatives was usually done through hanging out in the store. These stores are known locally as a "sari-sari" store. "Sari-sari" means "assorted" and refers to the assorted, small items sold. These stores offer convenience to rural areas where markets and groceries are often far away. In terms of their social value to the community, the sari-sari was a site for exchanging small talk. Many of the town's people in this community spent time in the stores or talked to passers-by. Where benches were provided (and this was common) the customers (often the men in the community) could also have a drink while in conversation. Some store owners also put a gridiron just outside the store to barbecue pork or chicken on an open fire. This provided a venue for drinking and socialising because food and alcohol were readily available. Therefore, a seafarer seen hanging out in the store would be expected by his neighbours and close friends to at least buy them drinks (such as a bottle of beer). Within the sari-sari store set-up, gifting helped the seafarer to "break the ice" and to realise, once again, a life aligned with the community.

6.3.2 Reinforcing Status

Apart from functioning as a token for reconnection to the community, giving presents also conferred status to Filipino seafarers. A seafarer's position in the community is closely related to the capacity by which he performed what is expected of him, such as giving gifts. A costly price could arise for nonconformity. One of the seafarers described this:

They will say to you, you have changed for the worse. (Ratings, Community, Interview 132)

'Changing for the worse' implied an upward improvement in life that made the seafarer proud and arrogant, and caused him to lose hold of that modesty that he had before he found 'success.' It amounts to an insult because a Filipino seafarer is expected to have more than enough money, especially those who have recently signed off a ship. Such criticism or insult reflects the community's cynicism to migrant workers who have

nothing to share after supposedly earning more than the land-based workers. The ship as a symbol of plenty and advancement becomes a point of reference to how seafarers are regarded once ashore. Losing face in this way affects the seafarer's desire to socialise with others. Consequently, maintaining that status is crucial and it is, likewise, reflected in the shopping behaviour of Filipino seafarers:

He told me that the last time in America, he bought one dozen Victoria Secret lotions as gifts. In tandem with chocolates, it makes the gift more acceptable to friends and family. Although this takes a big share from his salary, he admitted that "you cannot do anything. (Ship Fieldnotes, 2009)

However, related tacit obligations (such as giving back a due to debt of gratitude or community expectations) make gift-giving a compulsory practice.

The practice of God-parenting was another channel by which seafarer status was emphasised and where giving gifts became more magnified. Most seafarers in this study mentioned becoming God-parents for the children of their friends or relatives on land and their fellow Filipino seafarers on board a ship. As one seafarer recounted:

My neighbours will always request me to be godfather of their babies. You also get more invites to birthday parties. On weddings, they will also ask you to attend. (Second Engineer, Dormitory, Interview 27)

This arrangement was a common practice. Indeed, it was not uncommon that on returning home a seafarer was surprised to discover how his God-children had grown in number despite his absence at sea. It was a common practice for seafarers who were on board a ship to become "reserved" as a God-parent. His absence did not prevent him from becoming a God-parent. The couple would just get someone to "proxy" for him during the baptism. Owing to the seafarer's reputable status, many residents chose them to be God-parents in their child's baptism. In the rural areas, it is impolite to refuse a request to become a God-parent. It is also regarded as unwise to decline an invitation to become a God-parent because it brings bad luck. One of the most important criteria for being chosen as a godparent is economic status. Giving gifts, therefore, becomes a tacit obligation for a God-parent. Ultimately, part of the understood arrangement of gifting which accompanies this kind of relationship is to show support to the God-child in finding work in seafaring. Consequently, since giving gifts solidifies the seafarer's

status it also compels him to be part of an ever-widening social circle that induces him to give more. As the gifting responsibility becomes more entrenched, this creates pressure to maintain positive social relations.

The findings after examining the role of gifts in enhancing seafarers' connectivity ashore showed the challenges seafarers confront in remaining aligned to the community. Within the context of seafarers' intermittent presence in the community, giving gifts has evolved as a widely accepted repetitive practice that maintains social networks. The status that underpins such giving is harnessed by seafarers opportunely as their group of networks expand and intensify. The gifting responsibility that develops generates a pattern of interaction that sees seafarers willingly obliging regardless of the associated burden. Such ambiguity should be recognised along with the frequency and scope of gift-giving among seafarers and migrants in general. As shown in the case of seafarers, the shared values surrounding the gifting relationship crucially influence the quality of participation in life ashore.

6.4 Remittances

Remittances are another equally important form of connection that the seafarers maintain to their homeland. Seafarers' remittances are an important part of a wider Filipino context. In the Philippines large remittance flows play a prominent role in the economy (as described previously). Currently, the Philippines, China, and India receive the largest remittances in terms of value of any country in the world. At the end of 2011, the Philippines end of year remittances stood at around US\$20.1 billion. Sea-based workers contributed approximately 27.5% of this amount (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas 2012).

In 2007, this massive transfer placed Philippines among the top five recipients of remittances. According to the World Bank's Migration and Remittance Factbook for 2008, the Philippines was ranked as the fourth largest recipient of remittances, beaten only by India, Mexico and China. The scale of remittances sent home by the 1.75 million overseas Filipino workers becomes glaring given the high number of migrant population of the aforementioned top three countries. The World Bank (2005) reports

that of the US\$232 billion reported to have been remitted worldwide, the Philippines accounted for US\$167 billion, which is more than double the foreign aid received.

The substantial amount of income flowing into the Philippines from abroad reflects the rising number of Filipino migrants. The mass exodus of workers which started in the 1970s shows no sign of coming to a close. The general trend of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) deployment shows that around 10 percent of the population are OFWs. The estimates of the Philippine Population Commission reveal that around nine million Filipinos are currently working abroad. Meanwhile, there are an estimated three million undocumented migrants. These figures reflect the extensive dispersion of Filipinos workers worldwide.

Exploring remittances along with the institutionalised practice of giving gifts and constant communication highlights the salient economic and social realities that the seafarer and his family are constantly facing.

6.4.1 Maintaining Goodwill

Regular remittances are mandatory and are provided for the material security of seafarers' families. However, remittances also fulfil a variety of social commitments. Primary among these is the sense of reciprocity towards the seafarer's family. For unattached seafarers, this can be seen as a form of return for family sacrifices that have allowed him to get a job at sea. For instance, a relative might have offered the seafarer free accommodation while he was looking for work in Manila. Upon finding a job, the seafarer may feel indebted and obliged to repay the good deed shown to him. The seafarer's act of sending a remittance is, therefore, a form of recognition of the debt of gratitude for the help extended to them, which is described in the following example:

For me and my siblings, we promised to help each other. We helped each other out in education. My father is just a farmer. We were able to step into high school because of my aunt. We owe a lot to her. (Second Officer, Interview 29)

For married seafarers, the allotment paid to parents often continued after marriage. The primary goal was to compensate for the lack of welfare insurance for their parents, as

well as to help their parents meet their subsistence needs. In order to meet basic needs, the seafarer's remittances to parents were as regular as those sent to their wives and children. A captain explained this as follows:

Because we are an extended family. Our parents are still alive, so maintenance. For my mom, I still give support. Their maintenance is a form of allotment. (Captain, Community, Interview 87)

The sense of obligation inherent in the act of sending remittances typified the seafarer's motives to remit. Responding to this obligation also showed conformity to expectations from their family and the community as a whole. Expectations of financial help from abroad were widespread within the community. Refusals were met with disdain because they demonstrated non-adherence to shared values, beliefs and traditions espoused by those within the community. In the face of a lack of generosity, the risk of isolation, even from within the family was high.

Understanding how remittances were valued from the community's perspective also provides insights into how they operated as a way to broaden interconnection with other relatives and members of the community. Secondary beneficiaries (such as the seafarers' nephews and nieces, children of distant relatives or sometimes even those unrelated to them by blood) became a part of the seafarers circle. For instance, in the interviews a chief mate's wife enumerated on the number of relatives that they financially support:

His nephews and nieces, his cousin in college. Also three nephews and nieces in college, they are graduates now. Then we helped two of his cousins finish high school. We also helped my nephews and nieces. But they are all finished with school now. Our helper has been with us for more than five or six years, so we told her to at least finish high school then we can decide if she wants to pursue college. (Wife, Community, Interview 51)

Since they earned higher wages than the others in the family, they were always asked for help in various situations:

We are part of an extended family, so you can see. But I will not open all. So we are faced with different situations. So normally, a mariner's problem is financial.

If it was just me and my wife and our two kids... (Captain, Community, Interview 87)

Having understood the circumstances of the extended family and being a part of it, many of the seafarers repeatedly responded to requests for help. However, this was not without problems. A tough balancing act occurs between giving to parents or family and to relatives or friends while aiming to achieve an improved lifestyle for themselves. Notwithstanding their capacity to provide, the seafarers in Sta. Ana are predisposed to help out to ensure the guarantee of community membership, especially when they return home. Remittances have become the gauge by which the seafarer is fundamentally evaluated by those in his close circle. This perspective lends clarity to the seemingly generous ways that the seafarers use remittances and take on extra responsibilities.

6.4.2 Enhancing Status

Aside from serving as an effective mechanism to maintain connections, remittances also endowed seafarers with social status in the community. The social mobility it conferred to the seafarers widened their access to various resources and opportunities within the community. An officer recounted his experiences:

The neighbours will ask me why I looked for a wife who lives far away when their daughters live nearby. The rich relatives began to notice you. (Second Officer, Community, Interview 27)

Improvements in a seafarer's economic standing within the community opened a much wider social realm that included rich, well-connected relatives. Most of them recalled their barely discernible existence prior to being a seafarer. Improving their socio-economic status meant that the seafarers obtained a variety of privileges (e.g. receiving invitations to the gatherings of their richer relatives) while at the same time they were expected to act as patrons to needy, disadvantaged relatives. In this context, remittances emancipated seafarers from social obscurity.

By being able to distinguish themselves by a variety of means (such as owning big, renovated houses or expensive cars) they are seen as successful within the community. Presenting one's achievement, however, also comes with a challenge:

My husband before was very poor. So his treatment is different. He is not noticed. So I told him, your life before and your life now is different. He dresses ordinarily; you cannot see him with big jewellery. But if there is an occasion which you know is attended by rich people, then you also have to dress and fix yourself up so you can be on a par with them. He doesn't want that. But for me, I don't want them to say that, "now that you are a captain you are still the same (in appearance and maybe manner of dressing)." I told him we should also change level. If we are going to the barrio (an inner rural area), then we should dress the same way. That is a challenge that we face. (Wife, Community, Interview 50)

In trying to project a positive image in the community, a seafarer needs to balance this with how relatives or friends belonging to the lower income stratum may perceive him. For example, the seafarer's reluctance to emphasise his material improvement in the previous example may be intended to ensure that they remain in good standing with relatives who have less in life. Essentially, this is a way to avoid being seen as snobbish and, thereby, being shunned by others. While the seafarers aim for distinction, there is recognition of its limits, such as the fragility this imposes on their relationships. Maintaining these boundaries is difficult but worthwhile in terms of enhancing good relationships in the community.

Various community rituals likewise served as an important channel by which remittances were converted into something that was socially valued. In this community (as emphasised in the previous chapter) considerable importance was given to the celebration of fiesta traditions. Where opportunities for a higher status were present, this became an opportunity for the seafarers to put into motion status-seeking behaviour through lavish preparations during the fiestas. Aside from the patronal fiesta, there was also the municipal fiesta which was also observed. The round of solicitations for money such as in the following examples were common:

They ask solicitations. This is for mass, menu, wine (for offering). During fiesta municipal, they ask sponsorship for trophies. I give them cash to buy trophies. Then those having fiesta, they will solicit money to put up the wall of the Church of the Miraculous Medal (Wife, Community, Interview 51)

We are close with the priests. So they will say this span of the church, will be yours. We say, "Okay Monsignor, that's £378." One light post, that is £113. (Wife, Community, Interview 50)

The funds contributed to the fiesta were earmarked for the various activities within the community. The seafarers did not go through a decision process in determining whether to celebrate fiesta because it was an essential given of living in that community: their relatives, neighbours and friends expected them to do so. This was done to reinforce their higher standing and, hence, sense of belonging to the community.

The increased status conferred to the seafarer partly explains the pressure for seafarers to socially conform. On the other hand, the seafarers' conformity can also emanate from their desire to display a positive image of themselves. For instance, the seafarers are distinguishable by the branded clothes and jewellery that they wear when in the local cockpit. After the cock fighting is over, the seafarers willingly buy drinks or snacks for their friends. All of these actions contribute to maintaining their reputedly successful image and, therefore, acceptance from the community. Similarly, their constant acquiescence to sponsor some of the town's activities during fiestas can be described as a strategic approach in demonstrating oneness with the community. The manipulative aspect in this use of remittances is important in order for the seafarers to gain more positive regard from community members and to be further accepted as successful members of the town. Obtaining more respect and recognition can be seen to equate with acquiring a sense of affirmation and, hence, belonging in the community. However, this did not mean that seafarers undertook this without regard to future consequences. As one seafarer lamented:

Sometimes, you want to be practical. Sometimes you get irritated. You have goals in your life...you wish that you have this or that for yourself. If you won't support your relatives, they will be like that forever. So if you can support them and they can stand on their own then they won't depend on you anymore. For example, she has a sister who is sending her kid to school. Now if you don't help them then they will be forever dependent on you. So if you help them, then they will be freed from that. But I worry. What if we get stricken with disease? What if there are mishaps? One of my kids or my wife gets sick? That is my worry, it seems as though there are no buffers. (Captain, Community, Interview 87)

Beyond the immediate relations, remittances also benefited friends, civic groups and the church. The social merits of providing remittances overrode the economic worth imputed to it by the seafarer.

Another important feature of the seafarers in this town was their involvement with the practice of fosterage. Fosterage usually arose out of the financial insufficiency of the family of those sponsored. A captain's wife mentioned how they were asked for support:

His sibling asked for help...to help nephews. So as long as we give. He gives £302. Then that's it. (Wife, Community, Interview 50)

One way this was practised was by sending money to the family of the sponsored child. Another way was to directly look after the child by letting them stay in the family house. It was implicit in this kind of arrangement for the child to render household services or become a companion of the seafarer's wife. If the sponsored child was a male, he would most likely study seafaring courses. In this way, it would be easier for the child to find work after he graduated due to the established connection of the sponsoring seafarer. Remittance commitments of this kind stemmed from a sense of duty to families. Nevertheless, they endowed the community with more educated and productive members, and possibly potential seafarers, if not migrants.

The practice of fosterage and sponsorship provides a circle of sociability for the seafarer when he is on land. As part of this network of fictive kin, the seafarer shares in socialisation, security and social control. By extending help in such forms, he is able to convert his economic blessings to those who socially benefit him. This convertibility of remittances makes up a major tool which the seafarers use to maintain their position in the community, whether at home or at sea.

The importance of the seafarers' remittance in the family and the community should be viewed within the context of economically insecure settings. While seafarers may strategically employ remittances to retain involvement it also makes seafarers more vulnerable in the face of increasing financial obligations. The burden this confers to the seafarers draws attention to the kind of involvement that is limited to financial concerns. The community's regard for remittances as a form of social participation is potentially unsettling to seafarers on short-term contracts who have an unpredictable stream of money to remit. Such a tenuous position should be understood together with the pressure of upholding status that makes seafarers more amenable for requests for financial help despite being constrained.

6.5 Summary

This chapter has focused on three major ways seafarers maintain their links with their homeland, that is: by using communication technologies, giving gifts, and sending remittances. As forms of transnational links, these connections allow seafarers to sustain ties by easing the limitations of both distance and time. This is aligned with the notion of simultaneous embedding that is crucial to transnationalism. Since seafarers do not permanently settle on the ship and return home after a particular span of time, their membership ashore remains important. The local structures informing their behaviour (such as norms, traditions and values) are useful in looking at how these linkages are ascribed and reformulated in the process of stimulating connection. The sense of continuity that acts such as calling home, giving gifts and sending remittances creates is accompanied by a variety of adjustments for both the seafarers and their families.

The presence of advanced technology on board ship extends the seafarer's reach, it also presents some disconcerting aspects of their working life. Under conditions of high mobility, making contact entails reorganisation of the family life. Since seafarers increasingly find themselves renegotiating their roles, the work-home boundaries become increasingly complex. New social patterns that emerge constantly require readjustments, which affect the way that the seafarers achieve a sense of belongingness.

A similar picture can be seen in the practice of giving gifts. Seafarers are able to ease their re-entry into the community by adhering to the community's expectations regarding gift giving. Seafarers become more recognised as their status is perceived to have improved, which expands their networks. Consequently, the pressure to maintain their relationships through gifting becomes even more magnified; otherwise, there is the risk of estrangement from the community. Accordingly, sending remittances serves as an assurance of community membership. Remittances are strategically used to improve the seafarer's position and connections in the community, regardless of the culture of dependency or high consumption lifestyle that this may potentially bring.

The findings presented here broaden the understanding of the scope and degree of community participation manifested by Filipino seafarers. By appraising cross-border

links in this manner, there is a change of focus from the prevalence of a specific practice to its varied social and cultural dimensions. This highlights what is pivotal in sustaining and reproducing ties from afar and to what extent integration is constituted and enhanced. The next chapter aim to discuss seafarers' nature of participation on board.

Chapter Seven: Shipboard Integration

7.1. Introduction

Simultaneous integration in two places by seafarers could be taken as an indication that they meet the criteria for transnationalism and would support the notion that despite their unusual context seafarers provide us with an example of transnational workers with transnational practices and connections. Their lack of geographical emplacement, highly mobile lifestyle and transitory living arrangements are pertinent considerations with regard to the central questions for this thesis. Understanding the seafarers' context including the ship is essential in evaluating whether seafarers have a dual existence. The pathways of transnationalism which have been pondered in the literature are diverse (e.g. Portes 1996; Levitt 1998; Smith 1998; Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002). It is the goal of this chapter to identify what may be crucial factors on board a ship. The previous chapters have focused on the seafarers' places of origin (Chapter 5) and the cross-border ties to families and relatives at home (Chapter 6). This chapter considers seafarers' lives aboard ship.

In understanding the mechanisms that embed seafarers within the ship, the chapter will discuss features of a ship as a workplace and as a temporary abode. Next, the particular practices embraced by seafarers to integrate and function well within the ship in a context where hierarchy and nationality appear to have a strong influence on all aspects of social interaction will be explored. Towards the end of the chapter, certain aspects of relationships on board will be emphasised to determine whether seafarers qualify as transnationals.

7.2 Background

The extent to which shipboard integration can take place depends, in general, on the pace of work, hierarchical arrangements and nationalities on board. Life on the ship typifies what Goffman (1961) describes as a total institution to the extent that there is no distinction between life and work and the ship is cut off from the wider society.

Characterised by rigid and repetitive work routines, shipboard life embodies a strong occupational culture. According to Lane (2002: 101), such characteristics of seagoing vessels “provides the necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for a high level of social cohesiveness and professional competence.” Observing the basic rules in such an environment makes it possible to thrive in the ‘total character’ of a ship.

7.2.1 Pace of Life at Sea

Life on board ship is commonly characterised by a time-conscious and fast-paced workflow. Various developments in the shipping industry and the pursuit of cost cutting have led to a reduction in the numbers of crew on ships to such an extent that “crew sizes at the turn of the century were reduced from approximately 40 – 50 per ship to 20-30” for the same sized vessels (Couper et al. 1999: 11). In particular, recent technological innovations in terms of containerisation and fast vessel turnaround have negatively affected the ratings more than the officers. As shown by Sampson and Wu (2003) in their study of a modern container terminal, reduced shore leaves and seemingly remote locations of ports have the overall effect of confining ratings to the ship in both physical and social terms. Throughout its entire voyage the ship *Manuelita* stayed no more than two days in port. The combined effects of reduced turnaround times and smaller numbers of seafarers may be said to have contributed to job enlargement and the imposition of relentless routines which see seafarers being increasingly bound to the work role on board, with little time for a social life or leisure.

On a ship, tasks are carried out in a sequential manner, interspersed by rest breaks at different points in time, which limits the extent of participation in shipboard activities. Routinised work and traditional hierarchies characterise shipboard duties. As a result, daily, unavoidable interactions are limited to a certain group of similarly situated people, oftentimes within respective departments, and lasting for the duration of the contract. Even when not on duty, seafarers’ relaxation activities are also restricted to the facilities provided on the ship. Hence, the pursuit of other collective diversions is difficult given the physical limits imposed by the ship.

7.2.2 Duties, Hierarchies and Nationalities On Board

The container ship *Manuelita* was staffed with a 25-strong crew distributed between three departments: deck, engine and catering. Hierarchy in terms of ranks was strictly observed. The chain of command governed how the crew performed their duties and kept the work flow in order. A systematised and patterned way of working permeated the overall organisation and administration of shipboard work. The crew of the deck department handled the bridge watch, operation, maintenance and cargo handling whilst those in the engine department looked after the machines used to run the ship (generator, purifier, etc). The organisational structure was typical of modern ships in that for every department, officers assumed supervisory roles over the ratings. The captain, the highest ranking official on the ship, assumed general operational and managerial responsibilities during the voyage. The head of the deck department, the Chief Mate, managed the administrative concerns of the ship. The other deck officers, the Second Mate and the Third Mate, acted as the ship's navigator and safety officer, respectively. The rest were ratings distributed between those categorised as Able-bodied (AB) Seamen or Ordinary Seamen (OS). The bosun, also an AB, acted as a petty officer, with a role entailing supervision of the ratings and distribution of job tasks for the AB and OS.

The set-up in the engine department was similar, with the Chief Engineer having overall responsibility for operational and maintenance concerns. Where other ships might have had three further engine officers supporting the Chief Engineer, on this ship there were only two: the Second Engineer and Third Engineer. The former acted as a high-grade bosun and delegated job tasks along with other technical roles whilst the latter tackled mainly operational duties. Although it varies per ship, there was an Electrician and Electrocadet on this ship. The remaining crew members were engine ratings (fitter, oiler and pumpman).

The catering department had only two members – the chief cook and the messman. The chief cook coordinated directly with the Captain, prepared the menu and was in charge of the ordering of provisions. The messman, apart from serving as an assistant to the chief cook, also functioned as a steward by cleaning the officers' cabins and alleyways of all floors on the ship.

The tables below briefly summarise the crew composition by department (Table 7.1) and by rank and nationality (Table 7.2) in Manuelita:

Table 7.1. Crew composition by department

Deck	Engine	Catering
Captain		
Chief officer	Chief engineer	Chief cook
Second officer	Second engineer	Mess man
Third officer	Third engineer	
Bosun	Fourth Engineer	
AB1, AB2, AB3	Electrician	
OS1, OS2	Electrical cadet	
Deck Cadet 1	Fitter	
Deck Cadet 2	Oiler 1, Oiler 2, Oiler 3 Pumpman	

Source: Author's data

Table 7.2. Crew composition by rank and by nationality

	Officer	Ratings	Total
Filipino	2	12	14
Indian	9	1	10
Sri Lankan	1		1
Total	12	13	25

Source: Author's data

Along with the notable division in terms of rank, a similar situation could be seen in terms of nationality. Indian nationals were found in officer level positions whilst Filipinos were mainly ratings. Whilst there was also a lone Sri Lankan deck officer, effectively the ship was bi-national in character. Among the officers, only two were Filipinos, with one each in the deck and engine departments. Among the ratings, only one was an Indian, an engine rating. Hence, there was a noticeable split along the lines of rank and ethnicity.

For the most part, in terms of the seafarers' contractual presence on the ship, work routines rendered other concerns secondary. The fulfilment of duties was a high priority

for all the crew. On the ship, duties were allocated according to department. In the deck department, two major work systems were followed and this relied on whether the ship was underway or in port. Whilst the ship was underway, work took on a more predictable rhythm for both officers and ratings. Although both deck officers and ratings worked a minimum of eight hours daily, officers' schedules were halved into what is commonly identified as "four on four" watches, that is, four hours in the morning and four hours in the evening. Ratings, on the other hand, completed day shifts which amounted to eight hours of work. In addition, at night, AB ratings performed a four hour shift with a deck officer for bridge watchkeeping. In port, deck officers were relieved of their night duties and were usually assigned to monitoring cargo handling operations in tandem with the deck ratings. In the engine department, the engine ratings worked with the officers from nine in the evening to check for leaks and spills. As this was an unmanned (engine room) ship, both engine officers and ratings worked eight hours during the day and then did only an hour's worth of work at night. Such duties were performed alternately by the three engine ratings with a partner officer.

The role of the captain was crucial to shipboard interaction. On board the ship, the captain assumed a broad responsibility covering all dimensions of the ship's operations, including oversight of the social lives of the seafarers. The ship's crew organised themselves according to the management principles of the captain. The overall atmosphere of the ship was crucially influenced by the captain. From issues of operation to the provision of food and entertainment, the captain wielded the upper hand.

The captain on board Manuelita, for instance, knew the general liking of Filipinos for singing using a karaoke machine, so he bought one for use in the ratings' day room. The crew day room was more than a place for relaxation, and served as an important area for birthday parties and other special occasions. For such events, the bond store or the mini-grocery on the ship served as an important supplier of foodstuffs, including alcoholic beverages. The captain on the ship put a limit on the amount of alcoholic drink that the ratings could buy from the bond store, which most of the ratings complained about. They would oftentimes make a comparison with the previous captain, who gave them unlimited access to boxes of beer during weekends or on important occasions. New rules regarding proper attire during meals, for example a prohibition on sleeveless shirts, were likewise a source of dissatisfaction among the ratings. As ratings usually

have longer contracts than officers, there is always the possibility that they will be managed by two different captains and hence be required to adjust to two different ways of running the ship. During the period of the fieldwork, the Filipino officers were required to eat in the officer's mess room. The second officer, a Filipino, having worked with the captain before, felt he could ignore this order as he was also a senior officer on board. The electrocadet, however, had to eat in the officers' mess room as this was seen as part of the training on how to be professional on board.

The captain's ways of enforcing his authority could affect the whole environment on the ship. In all, the captain remained a significant force in the creation and preservation of internal cohesion. Alternatively, he could establish barriers amongst seafarers whether across ranks or nationalities. The ways in which the captain handled ship management largely determined the general working method and conditions on board the ship. The personality of the other senior officers also figured in the seafarers' experiences of ship life. In the engine room, the chief engineer, who was in command of the engine crew, exerted a similar influence. When Manuelita's chief engineer signed off in one of the ports in Asia, the mood was one of abandonment and worry as most members of the engine crew had liked the engineer's style of management and were therefore anxious about the incoming chief engineer. When the new chief engineer arrived, most of the engine crew members, officers and ratings, showed uneasiness and stiffness in the process of getting acquainted with the new chief's personality and work attitude.

Among the ratings, the managing role of the bosun also played an important role in social affairs on board. The bosun not only worked as the middle man between the chief mate and the deck ratings but also stood as the symbolic representative for the ratings. The chief mate, second in command to the captain and directly working with the ratings, could also promote positive working relationships on board. For instance, to show his appreciation of the ratings' positive performance at work, the chief mate called the bosun and told him that one box of beer from the bond store was ready for him and the deck ratings for the Sunday party. In such instances, the bosun served as the link to the ratings and vice versa. The extent to which seafarers were satisfied with their on board interaction would substantially depend on the captain along with other key social movers on the ship, such as the chief mate, chief engineer and bosun. In everyday

shipboard life, they figured in both the work and social life of the seafarers owing to their capacity to enforce authority. This will be further elaborated on later in the chapter.

7.3 Communication

The importance of a common language requirement aboard ships has grown owing to the increasingly multicultural composition of crews. Since the 1970s, due to the shift in crew recruitment from traditional maritime regions to developing countries such as Asia, seafarers from different nations have worked together on board. Within the diversity found in present-day merchant vessels, English is recognised as the language of the sea and constitutes an essential requirement for seafarers. Sampson and Zhao (2003), in considering data about 14 multilingual ships, highlight the necessity of proficiency in English for crew members. Other studies on board multicultural ships have raised a variety of issues relating to the importance of communication to the working environment (Lane, Kahveci and Sampson 2003; Bhattacharya 2009) and social involvement (Sampson and Thomas 2003). The former relates to the effective implementation of health and safety on board whilst the latter pertains to the overall social satisfaction and morale on the ship. Effective communication is described as crucial both to the ship's operation and the seafarers' social well-being.

The ship *Manuelita* characterises a typical multicultural norm in crewing in that English is adopted as the shipboard language. Crew complements hail from three different nations in Asia and therefore present unique dimensions of on board interactions. Effectively functioning as a bi-national ship, the ethnic and hierarchical structure of the ship's crew highlight the importance of communication skills in achieving integration within the working and living spheres on board.

7.3.1. Work-based Communication

English remains the common working language on the ship and plays a significant role in intermingling seafarers of different backgrounds. Use and knowledge of ship talk around technical or social experiences, stories, conventions, etc. creates commonality among seafarers. Essentially, seafarers' use of English at work forms them as part of a

distinctive community of practice wherein utterances, intonation and emphasis become crucial to maintaining evaluations of each other.

Knowledge of seafaring jargon is important in facilitating integration on board, particularly with regards to work. Use of a common language is crucial in undertaking tasks and therefore getting along with other crew members. Experiences have shown that it is especially important for new crew members to make initial connections with others on board by way of getting well-versed with the language of the ship. As the learning process takes time, new recruits often struggle in adapting to the seafaring jargon. Aboard *Manuelita*, there were two relatively new crew members, with just one or two years experience of working on a ship. The engine trainee experienced difficulties at work relating to problems in understanding the job orders issued to him by the second engineer, an Indian officer. He mentioned that difficulties in understanding some of the words spoken to him forced him to rely on context clues in carrying out tasks. He stressed that:

It's hard if you are new or if you come from a different ship type as you have to adjust to words you have never heard before in your line of work. (Engine Trainee, Ship, Interview 136)

The second engineer concurred with this statement when he mentioned that because the possibility of being misheard was always lurking, he would ask one of the more experienced Filipino ratings, usually the oiler, to assist his engine trainees. From the second engineer's long experience of working with trainees, he also made sure that they were well acquainted with the engine room, to prevent accidents from jeopardising the ship operations. From the point of view of the engine ratings, particularly the newcomers, posing questions could have been viewed as a sign of incompetence at work. An effective grasp of the English language to accompany technical knowledge was considered very relevant to work performance. While this may indeed be true, Sampson and Zhao (2003) have shown that adoption of a standardised Maritime English in shipping is, to some degree, insufficient as it is more focused on resolving job-related issues rather than on informal interactions. The work-centred use of English may have social consequences such as the engendering of feelings of social estrangement amongst seafarers.

The hierarchical set-up, whilst it enables an ordered work flow, may also inhibit the free flow of communication. Lower ranked seafarers, for instance, may show reluctance in suggesting the adoption of some work strategies, as was experienced by an engine trainee and an electrocadet:

Whilst in the engine room, he (the second officer) mentioned something about doing it his way despite me having told him that it should be the other way around. So in the end, the oil spilled and I had to clean up after his mess. But I could not tell him that because he has a higher rank than me. (Engine Trainee, Ship, Interview 136)

Here you obey first before you ask why it is being asked to be done. This is part of the unwritten rules here. If you don't like to do it, then you tell them. Say if they ask you to go up the forward mast, then tell them no cause the wind is very fast. Or if I go there, I need to have a companion. But to say why? They don't like that. Just yes or no. I learned that during my first ship. That is why when he was reprimanding the other two and he asked me if I ask why I just say, "No, sir. Yes or no only here." Sometimes others are curious so they ask because they want to learn. But they don't like that. (Electrocadet, Ship, Interview 134)

In a similar way, linguistic competency facilitates adjustment to the work culture. As one rating explained:

Sometimes you will hear from someone some words like, "how about that? You have been working on the ship for a long time and yet you don't know much." Because not all ships are the same, such as how it looks etc., you need time to cope up. One week should be fine because your mates will complain if after that you haven't adjusted yet. The ABs will ask why you still don't know how to do the work. They get annoyed if you have been in this job for so long and you haven't adjusted. Work on the ship is the same throughout. (Ordinary seaman, Dormitory, Interview 214)

The demands of the work include the use of English and this applies to all positions on board. On Manuelita, for instance, an officer mentioned that long experience of working with Filipino ratings had familiarised him with ways of understanding and therefore managing them:

It is okay because you know the Filipino crew; I have got used to them because even in my previous companies, I have been working with Filipino crew. I think, 25 years now. So I am quite used to them. (Captain, Ship, Interview 163)

Having closely worked with Filipino ratings for a long time had made it easier to set expectations regarding work performance. For instance, the second engineer knew that Filipinos would not explicitly say that they do not understand the job order because of the “hiya” (shame) factor:

...the Filipinos and the Chinese people will never say no. I tell them something, they will just say okay! (Second Engineer, Ship, Interview 155)

He therefore makes sure that he clearly repeats his instructions to ensure proper communication. Given cultural familiarity, the sense of a divide across hierarchy and nationality becomes less felt, thus making the communication flow more effective.

Maritime English, however, can assume a different dimension that can render grammatically correct spoken English a liability. For communication to be effective it should therefore rely not only on technical know-how but also on the “ability to penetrate accents and indeed to understand new and particular forms of English” (Kahveci and Sampson 2001: 51 in citing Butler 1999). Various nationalities have different ways of verbalising orders or instructions and this can become problematic on board the ship. Given the work-focused setting on board, language is primarily expected to convey information and issue commands. In dealing with various interferences in communication, most of the ratings on board the ship resort to what Kahveci and Sampson (2001) refer to as pidgin language which is stylistically consistent with other seafarers’ patterns of speech. As one Filipino rating described:

When you speak using grammatically constructed English, it becomes difficult for them to be understood. So they learn how to break it up so others get what they mean. (Fieldnotes 5 April 2009)

In this case, the rating’s adaptation to his work environment requires learning how to vary speech patterns and hence “speak” like the others. Such dimensions are also crucial in integrating the seafarers to the ship by way of re-establishing and strengthening their work involvement and avoiding isolation. Knowledge of the vocabulary and phrases of maritime English immediately becomes an indicator of belongingness to the ship’s formal structures for it enable seafarers to effectively interact at work.

7.3.2 Social Communication

On board the ship, insufficient attention to social relationships was one manifestation of a strong occupational culture. While it may be the captain's primary interest to build rapport on board, this is always balanced by the tendency for dilution of respect towards officers.

On Manuelita, the captain was more comfortable with distinct demarcations in rank, and therefore social relationships were limited. Other higher level officers subscribed to the same view with regards to mingling:

I really segregated myself as an officer. We were also told by our captain not to be too close to the ratings. We should create a gap. (Second Officer, Filipino Interview 36)

It is like I have to maintain my distance from him. I cannot be close to him on this level. If I was one of the crew, then that could happen. But in this situation, I have to maintain my position. (Third Officer, Ship, Interview151)

Initiatives from the Filipino ratings to move the relationships beyond the professional realm therefore constituted a challenge. As one Filipino rating put it:

It is hard to have that pakisama because of the hierarchy. If you are very low in rank, it is very hard. For me, I don't mind even if I am the lowest. You just don't want to be blacklisted. (Messman, Ship, Interview 132)

This was in response to the question why he had not developed close relationships with any of the officers, having been on the ship for almost 9 months. Hence, on board the ship, Filipino seafarers adapted to expected behaviour by modifying habits of affability they were used to when at home. As most social relations were formed along nationality and rank lines, the use of the Filipino language was commonplace. Amongst Filipino ratings, the use of their local tongue became a vehicle for their cultural belongingness within a very structured environment. Deprived of certain freedoms, the use of Filipino language, alongside the practising of Filipino norms and values, "repatriated" them, though briefly, and generated that sense of togetherness.

Whenever Filipino seafarers gathered together in the day room, a form of Filipinoness would normally be activated. Watching local shows and films was one way to feel at home on the ship. Given their lengthy stay, the seafarers tended to watch the same shows over and over again just to pass away the time and be reminded of life back home. As one rating put it:

In the Philippines, I don't really watch videos of Filipino movies, but this somehow takes away the sadness. Well, I do watch them, but only sometimes. Perhaps, I am looking for something Filipino. I think it is the same with food, I don't like bagoong (shrimp paste) but when it is served, then I eat it.
(Electrocadet, Ship, Interview 134)

Watching local shows served to alleviate homesickness and became for them a way to break the monotony of repetitive work demands. The additional comfort of using Filipino language in conversations, especially when expressing some shared sentiments, provided a sense of unity with each other. On relaxing occasions such as birthday celebrations, for instance, the use of karaoke ensured lively participation from most of them. A Filipino rating who snubbed the occasion would be frowned upon and would most likely be criticised as “walang pakisama” or having no sense of camaraderie.

A Filipino rating failed to show up in the day room for a double birthday celebration of two other ratings. When he was called up in his room, he just remarked that he was not feeling well, and besides, he didn't sing well either.
(Fieldnotes 25 April 2009).

Invoking the ethos of pakikisama (getting along) emphasised the value of Filipino norms in maintaining togetherness. One trainee Filipino officer put this more straightforwardly:

There is no money exchange here. So being adept in getting along is your only investment, such as how you relate to others. That is very important on the ship, say if they call you for a job, even if it's not your duty, then you have to go. That becomes a form of investment for you. (Electrocadet Ship, Interview 134)

Owing to the significant differentiation within the crew, only a very limited social network was formed on board. Amongst Filipino seafarers, regardless of rank, being part of the group was important for obtaining goodwill and for drawing support from each other. The localised nature of rapport among Filipino seafarers allowed them to enjoy a form of communal experience. Along with the everyday dynamics they went

through in the course of their duties, sharing common cultural practices such as using the Filipino language or displaying Filipinoness provided a sense of togetherness in terms of sensibilities and attitudes. In times of work conflicts between a Filipino rating and an Indian officer, for instance, this could be tapped as an outlet for emotional turmoil and dissatisfaction to create a tolerable work environment and to compensate for the lack of social happenings.

Although on a very limited scale, instances of socialisation across ranks occurred. As narrated by an electrocadet:

When the chief engineer came, we were having a party. So there we were singing. Then we asked him to drink with us but he didn't want to, although he actually sent the beer. But it was different when he attended the party and then stayed there. Maybe it was difficult for him because he was alone there with a room full of Filipinos. Maybe, if the same happened to me, I would feel the same way. (Electrocadet, Ship, Interview 134)

Although the officer respectfully refused the seafarers' invitation to stay, he stayed a bit to listen to them sing, thus acknowledging the good intention of the Filipino seafarers. Apparently, nationality was an additional barrier to hierarchy in impeding the mixing of officers and ratings. The electrocadet added that the feeling of being out of place owing to nationality differences quite typically extended to off-duty socialisation:

I think they are also ashamed to invite us and the same with the Filipinos. So when I have a party, I just call those who are Filipinos because I have no close Indian officers here. (Electrocadet, Ship, Interview 134)

From the officers' side, however, priority of work was cited as one reason for not socialising at "parties":

I would rather retreat to my cabin than expend my remaining energy (Fieldnotes 7 April 2009)

On certain special occasions such as Christmas, New Year and birthdays, officers and ratings could gather together and briefly set aside work. Shore leave, in some cases, could also be one occasion where seafarers could mix together.

Although limited, socialisation during shore leave indeed gave seafarers the opportunity to interact in a different environment. Within the usual allotted time of three hours or less, seafarers had to do the following:

Buy an international call card, buy access to the internet or shop for groceries and gifts (Fieldnotes 2 April 2009)

Oftentimes, seafarers would go with their close buddies, if their schedule permitted. Given the fast turnaround for container ships, the ratings who went on shore leave had insufficient time to bond together. Meanwhile, there were even fewer opportunities for officer-rating bonding owing to the important duties the officers had to fulfil when in port, such as overseeing deliveries. In one of the ports Manuelita visited, there were some instances of officers mingling actively with the ratings:

The third officer sat with the Filipino ratings and tried to join in the singing as one of the ratings strummed a tune on the guitar (Fieldnotes 1 April 2009)

The chance to hang out together or do shopping or simply just to do something that is not part of the routine refreshes the mind and becomes a form of relaxation. Being able to get out of the ship and put their feet ashore can be a positive and refreshing change from the usual work on board.

The contractual nature of the seafaring job also influenced socialisation, despite the efforts of the officers to mingle with crew members. The following quotes referred to the challenges the officers experienced:

Most of the time, you have to exert effort. They also don't have the motivation to reach out. They don't know when they will work with you again. (Second Officer, Ship, Interview 38)

I tell them, if you don't cooperate and if you don't want a happy ship, then you don't have a place on this ship. There are people who whatever you do, have the tendency to lock themselves away in the cabin. If they act like that, then they will not set foot on the ship again. We have a warning notice. (Captain, Community Interview 49)

Apart from officers' initiatives, time was also an important feature influencing togetherness during shore leave. At one time, during one of the shore leave periods for the Manuelita crew, the chief mate played table tennis with a rating in the seamen's club. Being on duty, however, the chief mate brought the radio with him and the game was understood to last only until he was called away on duty. The demands of work, in terms of time and responsibility, inhibited a fulfilling social interaction. In another instance, when the captain and second mate were out on a shore leave:

We are in the cab and the captain is making sure that the second mate has made the necessary checks to secure the ship and safe delivery of the container units. Outside of the ship, the order of things remains as though they were still on the ship! – (Fieldnotes 28 April 2009)

The capacity to bond with the ratings, however, could be further constrained by efforts to avoid favouritism:

We usually eat at McDonald's. I don't have a regular buddy. I don't want that but just to have balanced treatment. It's possible to have one but I keep my distance. (Chief Officer, Ship, Interview 51)

I just don't want to have that favouritism. I don't want to come to a point where someday, someone will approach me and tell me that he is in trouble and it will look like I have to defend him. (Third Officer, Ship, Interview 212)

Thus, whereas shore leave may indeed allow seafarers to have some time off, hierarchy remains central to shipboard work and may discourage the development of a sense of togetherness.

The opportunity for shopping, even when not on shore leave, also brings seafarers together. During the early days of my fieldwork, the third engineer raised this as an important observation on Filipino ratings:

Take notice how they pore over shopping catalogues. With nothing to do during their spare time, this is typically what they concern themselves with. (Fieldnotes 31 March 2009)

Shopping was one major activity the Filipino seafarers looked forward to when nearing a port, whether during shore leave or just on board. For those without the time to shop,

it was common to request a fellow seafarer to purchase for them certain things such as call cards or maybe grocery stuffs, depending on the facilities of a certain port. Those fortunate enough to go on a shore leave would definitely buy things to take back home:

When I don't have much to bring, I just bring chocolates and then that Gold Blend from Japan. I bring home big cartons of that because that is what my mom likes. Then Rajo...but I don't really drink coffee. That is one kilo per container. So I just bring 8 kilos of that and she is happy with that. (Second Officer, Dormitory, Interview 31)

Among seafarers who wanted specific items to take home but could not go on shore leave, it was common to request other seafarers to buy them for them. Such an action would later on require a similar form of repayment, thereby creating goodwill. The act of shopping and choosing which goods to buy formed a significant part of 'doing belonging' on the ship (Skrbis et al. 2007: 262) inasmuch as it is doing belonging ashore. Shopping, whether in or out of the port, is one of the few pastimes, if not privileges, seafarers allow themselves to enjoy. Participation of this nature, being away from the ship, also give a different atmosphere to the form of togetherness they are used to once they are back on the ship and becomes part of the seafaring tales.

7.4 Integration As A Worker

Apart from the importance of using a common language to perform activities on board, another crucial way in which a seafarer integrates is through the context of his role on the ship. This entails reflecting on his membership in a community of practice, including the forms of work relationship this generates.

7.4.1 Community of Practice

If seafarers belong to a community of practice, then they can be seen to have integrated to a great extent aboard ship: at least as workers if not as social actors. The work on the ship is by nature high risk and demands adeptness and sensitivity to operations. In such a context, the crew members are bound to each other in terms of performing routine duties, learning a particular repertoire of practices and developing a seafaring way of

sensibility. Aligned with this workplace goal the seafarers on board the ship developed specific strategies involving a process of shared learning and mutual engagement found in a community of practice (Wenger 1998, 2002). As in other highly structured industries, the sharing of knowledge and competences facilitated the seafarers' participation on board. Roles performed efficiently within a well-defined task structure firmly situated them on the ship.

Most of the seafarers when directly asked about whether they belonged to the ship would reply in the affirmative. Such an answer usually referred to their membership of a community of practice, in particular, to their skill and expertise. As seafarers interacted with their superiors or with those in their respective departments, there was the need to show readiness for learning and training. Owing to the formal work environment, the quality of relationships between officers and ratings would largely depend on the officers' initiative. As another Filipino rating mentioned, "*we just observe, we go with the flow.*" Observing the attitude of the senior officer was very important for the crew members in general, and especially for newcomers, as this determined the work environment and level of coping required in the workplace.

The seafarers' commitment to the ship as a workplace therefore became the basis by which they integrated with other seafarers on board. More commonly ensconced within the notion of teamwork, taking responsibility for tasks and sharing practical knowledge facilitated the sense of belonging on board. This was referred to by a seafarer interviewed in Manila dormitory when asked if he felt part of the ship:

The togetherness on the ship should be maintained by seafarers. Number one is pakikisama (getting along). This is needed to build harmony. Knowledge should be shared with your juniors. In that way, you can help them and the work gets lighter. That is why for me, I don't keep to myself what I know. Seafaring is continuous learning. Even after you graduate, you still need to study. (Chief Engineer, Dormitory, Interview 35)

Expectations of harmony in the workplace were akin to the more familiar notion of family. The paternalistic role assigned to the captain highlighted his significant leadership role. The Chief mate was "the mother" while the rest were offspring performing rank-specific roles. Oftentimes, when asked to describe their relationships on board, Filipino seafarers would refer to a sense of family on board created through

teamwork. Thus a Filipino ratings who was interviewed in the Manila dormitory and was not aboard Manuelita commented that:

The philosophy on the ship is that you are like a family there. When you think about it we stay longer with each other than with our respective families. That is, 9 months with the crew and 3 months with the family back at home. (Ordinary Seaman, Dormitory, Interview 214)

Whilst an able-bodied seafarer aboard Manuelita told me:

I tell bosun that we do not want this to reach the higher level officers. If we can talk about it here then we settle it here. He says, 'I will not really tell on you. As much as I can, I help you.' It is the same with having family. (Able-bodied Seaman, Ship, Interview 142)

Whilst the concept of family within the community encompassed togetherness deriving from love and mutual support, on the ship, familial togetherness was redefined as work support in terms of efficient and prompt observance by the members of their duties.

As Filipino seafarers commonly regard being on the ship as a form of sacrifice for the family (Lamvik 2002; Knudsen 2004; Ostreng 2001), this was also invoked in the face of workplace conflicts. On the ship, a rating who was turned to for advice regarding the conflict with the bosun emphasised the conditions back home:

I always tell them that we are here to work, that you and him... both have a family. So if you fight, then what will happen to your families? (Able-bodied Seaman, Ship, Interview 142).

Such knowledge about the important notion of family was also utilised by the captain in exerting a level of control over the ratings:

Reminding the Filipino seafarers about the main reason why they are on board, that is the family, makes it easy to exact obedience from them. One mistake and they pack and go home. The captain said this was effective in ensuring compliance and avoiding troubles (Fieldnotes 30 March 2009).

As the captain had worked with Filipino seafarers for a long time, he understood the importance of upholding Filipino family values. Hence, discipline was subtly enforced by directly equating responsibilities on the ship with their impact on family life ashore.

When it came to socialisation, the notion of family was, however, secondary and somewhat unsuited to the ship. It was believed that if the distance between officers and ratings were to disappear, the quality of work would be jeopardised. In order to uphold their authority, officers avoided becoming close to the ratings. The social gap was consciously imposed in order to mark proper boundaries and put into context friendships on board:

Now, the crew has to be kept a certain distance apart. So if you try to behave with a crew member in a very friendly manner and/or put your arms around him, then the crew mentality is to try to respond in the same way. Then, if that is the case and it comes down to the actual job and you order him to do something then this fellow will not do the thing properly. (Second Engineer, Ship, Interview 155)

Getting the job done was the main reason why officers created a gap with the ratings. The nature of the job was also a significant factor. A ship is considered a dangerous workplace (Hansen 1996). Thus, the importance of professionalism to the operations of the ship and also to overall safety was constantly emphasised, effectively limiting the extent of belongingness amongst the crew.

It was necessary to maintain the relationship in a strictly business sense in order to avoid the abusive tendencies inherent in closeness. The officers kept a certain “distance” when interacting with the ratings. This manner of relating to ratings was one way the officers maintained their position on the ship. A third officer said:

It is like I have to maintain my distance from him. I cannot be close to him on this level. If I were one of the crew, then that could happen. But in this situation, I have to maintain my position. (Third Officer, Ship, Interview 151)

Officers placed a certain importance on their roles on the ship. Having more responsibility, they were stricter in terms of applying rules. This, consequently, entailed dealing correctly with the ratings not only during working hours but also outside of work. On the ship, there was also one Filipino engine cadet under the direct supervision of the Indian electrician. He was required to have his meals, especially lunch and dinner, in the officers’ mess room. According to one of the officers, this was to further hone his “*officer quality*.” They noticed how the Filipino engine cadet’s approach to other Filipino ratings developed into a “close but not too close” relationship. After the cadet’s shift had finished, however, he would be seen in the ratings’ recreation room,

watching television or playing card games with the Filipino ratings and with the ship's lone Filipino deck officer.

As a form of power, the captain's invocation of the family on board the ship is no more nostalgic than it is functional. The idea of a family back home for which sacrifices are made is effectively harnessed in a space where labour is extracted to produce more capital. Anderson (2000) notes that the metaphor of the family is similarly deployed by employers of domestic workers in Northern Europe as an indirect form of control. The notion of being a family member is superimposed in the seafarers' contractual relations as a tacit way to produce submission, cooperation and belonging. This allows the captain to overcome potential friction among crew members and therefore achieve control of the working atmosphere on board. As seafarers acquiesce to avoid work conflicts and to identify with their work roles responsibly, this affects social relations. Efforts to lower the chances of frictions with other crew members is socially isolating in what is already a very confined place. Such tension surrounds the sense of belongingness on the ship. For whilst belonging to a shipboard family may be an effective strategy to dutifully perform work, it also limits the seafarers' daily lives.

Refitting the local cultural value of the family within the context of the ship means highlighting what it takes to be a family in a labour setting. Such a manner of observation, according to Guarnizo (1997: 310), is a general tendency among most immigrants, who maintain "dual visage" no matter where they are. By comparing the situation on board to that of the community, seafarers adopt a dual frame of reference. The Filipino seafarers liken their participation to being in a family in order to make sense of ship life and as a way to cope. Referring to the ideals of a family when on board can be a means of emphasising the importance of a kind of work typically characterised as repetitive, mechanical and therefore low-skilled. Studies which have looked at similar circumstances, particularly on the shop floor (Roy 1959, Burawoy 1982), have emphasised that these less favourable aspects of the job may cause stress and therefore workers creatively thwart, if not minimise, work tensions. Amongst seafarers, giving a sense of an informal togetherness at work was a way to ease a highly structured mode of living. Moreover, under conditions of physical confinement, having a feeling of belonging to a family can provide a temporary form of connectedness that can help seafarers survive long periods of having no social attachment.

When Filipino seafarers construct their “belonging” on the ship by referring to the notion of a family ashore, they are actively drawing on their worthiness and valuable contributions as crew members. A contradiction, however, exists. Ashore, the patriarchal norm found in Filipino families was highly relevant to Filipino men, with the significance of their contribution to the family embodied in the term “haligi ng tahanan” or pillars of the home. Aboard ship, a sharp contrast emerges as the headship is transferred to the captain, thereby effectively dislodging the Filipino seafarers from a position of control. As the logic of the family becomes inverted, seafarers re-establish their relevance as part of a crew committed to the ship, despite losing the leadership quality that their ideal of family incorporates. Vertovec (2004) defined such simultaneous but different claims to membership as an emergence of bifocality or dual orientation. A bifocal sense of belonging can be applied to transform conventional practices and dispositions within the new context, namely the ship.

By emphasising the hierarchical function of the family, to the extent that it conforms to the functioning of the ship, both the officers’ and ratings’ perceptions converge into one idea – it is crucial to the ship’s orderly operation. For the captain, the notion of a family as a less apparent disciplining tool confers more control in terms of having pliant and biddable ratings. Among the Filipino ratings, the re-imagination of the local notion of family on board becomes a counter-rationale which functions to deflect pressures and create a sense of importance from work. Overall, this works as a form of self-management among seafarers who becomes increasingly bound to work roles but at the same time being less motivated to socially mingle. The differing perspectives of the family, deployed as a management ideology and as a coping mechanism, altogether create a cordial boundary tacitly acknowledged in the day to day activity on board. Ironically, owing to the focus on the instrumental aspect of the employment relationship, social solidarity is compromised and the centrality of work gains more attention.

Consequently, as Manuelita was a bi-national ship, with most officer-level positions held by one nationality, authority became attributed to one nationality. This implied a position of privilege within a hierarchy. Greater sensitivity to officer control and

discipline was accommodated due to the heightened sense of power relations on the ship. However, untoward work tensions were subdued tacitly as will be discussed next.

7.4.2 Resistance

The system of authority and control together with the ethnic composition of the workforce constrained the development of social cohesion amongst the Manuelita crew members. The difficulty of disentangling whether the execution of authority emanated from rank or from nationality confined any interaction with others on ship along the lines of nationality. Variants of resistance become employed in order to mitigate tensions and frustrations. Whilst these may allow Filipino seafarers to build on a shared sense of interests and to cultivate comradeship amongst them, this equally reflects the seafarers' efforts to ease the socially restrictive environment on board.

7.4.2.1. Humour

In the stressful, busy situation characteristically found on a ship, humour can be effective in lightening the atmosphere. The exchange of witticisms allows seafarers to cope with daily monotony and job tensions. This makes a difference to how others get through their work; as one rating said:

It makes the work more bearable. You don't suffer and you get through it happily. (Able-bodied seaman, Ship, Interview 145)

He mentioned this whilst he and the Indian deck cadet were cleaning the bridge, the chief mate had ordered them to wash the bridge floor thoroughly and he teased the deck cadet about whether he could do it faster than usual. The ability to make such jokes breaks the ice with other seafarers and is a sign of adaptability towards workmates. It becomes an effective tool for a seafarer in establishing his presence on board as it conveys the idea of a crew member attuned to the ship's internal workings. In the process, it also becomes part of a natural coping mechanism that connects seafarers when on board.

When there was conflict amongst the Filipino ratings regarding the kind of management practised by the bosun, he was called *lolo* or grandfather as a reference to his old age.

Sometimes in the morning you can hear not so nice words from him. We just smile. Then call him lolo. He doesn't know that. (Ordinary Seaman, Ship, Interview 140)

Of course, they all refrained from insulting the bosun when he was around. For instance, when the bosun was a few minutes late one of the ratings asked, “*Where is lolo?*” The collective manner in which the other Filipino seafarers connected with this joke could be seen at the moment when the bosun appeared – all of them automatically changed the topic and discussed something else. Even the ratings from the engine department took the cue and discussed other things at the nearby table. Using the word “lolo” became a way for the ratings to express contempt without being judged as insubordinate. This was what Noon and Blyton (1997) described as the “informal triumphing over the formal” (Douglas 1975). The same situation was identified by Collinson (2002: 270) among shop floor workers. In that case, joking was the manual workers’ way of “coping with deskilled, high pressure and/or physically dangerous work.” As the bosun decided not to apologise, the tensions that remained were coursed through humour in order to emphasise tacitly his unfair treatment and give voice to real feelings.

This strategy enabled all the ratings to share some form of connection with each other. Although the ratings from the engine department did not usually work under the direction of the bosun, their annoyance about the bosun’s tendency to monitor their beer consumption when in the day room was a source of tension. Hence, the act of joining in the laughing whenever a “grandfather” joke was brought up revealed their agreement with its accompanying undertones as they shared and empathised with the group’s general feeling. Although laughing with the group indicates one form of subtle resistance to domination and control, it also reinforces the sense of belonging amongst the ratings. The entertaining usefulness of a critical look at the bosun, albeit momentary, provides a way to enact social cohesion. In sum, as is succinctly expressed by Noon and Blyton (1997: 159-160): “joking at work plays an important regulatory function by providing a means of expression that assists group cohesion, deflects attention from the dehumanizing aspects of work and acts to preserve the existing power hierarchy.”

Although humour can be useful in forming cohesion in a group, it can have the opposite effect when not properly executed. Newcomers on board learned that funny stories were only amusing when used in a particular context or when expressed within accepted boundaries. An electrocadet shared his story on how he sensed a negative reaction from a joke he made about stray dogs with one of his superiors:

I mentioned how in our area, if your dog gets into the neighbours' place then it is no longer yours. (Electrocadet, Ship, Interview 134)

The awkward silence following the supposedly witty remark hinted a non-favourable attitude on his outlook on dogs. Using humour in the workplace requires a broad perspective that takes into consideration the position of those at the receiving end. On a ship with different nationalities, funny remarks require sensitivity towards the others' beliefs, traditions and practices. Otherwise, the relationship distance further widens, reinforcing the isolating conditions on board. Nevertheless, the capacity of humour to bring nationalities together was also manifested:

The Filipino messman acted gay when he saw the Indian engineer and put his arm around him. The other seafarers in the corridor laughed and teased him about it. (Ship Fieldnotes April 2009)

Joking has its risks, especially among multinational crews, but if properly executed has the capacity to bring seafarers together (Kahveci, Lane and Sampson, 2002).

7.4.2.2. Forming Names

Just as nationality may create social divisions, it also becomes a way for seafarers of the same nationality to come together using a common language. Amongst Filipino seafarers for instance, the use of localised names for the officers bonded them together. For instance, the captain was called "tatay" (father) or "apat" (which means four, and is a reference to the four stripes on his shoulders), the chief engineer was called "hepe" (chief) while the chief officer, "kamote" (a pun on scratching the head). Using a different language allowed ratings the freedom to express their viewpoints and to critically discuss certain behaviours of the officers. This was shown in the following instance:

The ship had just left the port and the Filipino ratings were having their dinner. They were chatting freely about the second engineer whom they call *hepe*. Then suddenly that person passed by the mess hall door. Everyone shared a laugh and someone said out loud, “good thing he can’t understand us!” (Fieldnotes 24 April 2009)

The use of Filipino names allowed the Filipino seafarers to express their opinions without qualms, which in a way created shared interests among the group, and thus reinforced their membership as ratings. They could, for instance, criticise the Indian officers without the threat of being reported by the only Indian rating. This was akin to hidden transcripts whereby “every subordinate group creates... a hidden transcript that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant” (Scott 1985).

More often than not, this strategy was used when gossiping about the officers’ peculiarities. The messman for instance revealed that:

We talk about this officer on board who went on a shore leave and stayed out for a long time. We thought, he couldn’t be just by himself! (Fieldnotes 7 May 2009)

There was this engine officer who requested rolls of tissue paper so many times per month that he exceeded what is allowed. We think that he might have taken some of that home... or maybe used them for something else. We talk about that. (Fieldnotes 7 May 2009)

Through this mechanism they developed and sustained strategic acts of resistance. The use of the localised language gave them the chance to refer to those in power without fear of risking their position. Lawrence and Robinson (2007) referred to the “disparity between need for autonomy and an experienced loss of freedom” as a potential contributor to frustration in the workplace. Use of Filipino language gave them a sense of privacy so that:

They wouldn’t know they are being talked about. (Ordinary Seaman, Ship, Interview 140).

It made for them an avenue to vent their disappointments about work or share stories about past seafaring experiences or even refer to current news about the Philippines government or their families in a relaxed atmosphere. The versatility of using the local language somehow recouped some of the curtailed freedom on board.

7.4.2.3. Tales of threats and revenge

Most of the stories of threats and revenge by Filipino seafarers are surrounded by myths on exacting well-deserved retribution on abusive officers. These are passed on from one seafarer to another and from one ship to another and often come to the fore in threatening situations. When asked about the desirable qualities of an officer at work, most of them referred to respect as very important in their work environment. Lack of respect, they said, could actually push them to commit extreme actions. One deck rating cited the situation that occurred in the engine department when the engine ratings were not granted their holiday entitlements. He empathised by referring to possible ways in which he could inflict revenge if pushed to extremes:

If you are really angry at one person then you can create trouble for him. For me, say I am angry at the Chief mate, I can go to the ballast room and just push on those buttons that can create trouble. Say, nobody saw me, then who will be blamed? Him! Or his computer, I can destroy all his files. Right? I can get back at him. (Able-bodied Seaman, Ship, Interview 142)

Conveying their grievance by referring to their capacity for sabotage not only highlighted the importance of the holiday entitlement but also underscored the need to retain their sense of worth when unfairly treated. However, this also underlined the potential for such events to happen given the large number of Filipino seafarers on board.

Consequently, they would refer to tales of revenge successfully gained by others, such as:

There is one crew member who got some mighty adhesive and glued the lock in the captain's suitcase so it couldn't be opened. There is also one who was thrown overboard with stones on his body... (Able-bodied Seaman, Ship, Interview 142)

By diminishing the inherent power of those in position, seafarers were able to reassure themselves that not only was this done on board the ship but that others have gone through it and therefore shared the same view. The perspective put forward by Morrill,

Zald and Rao regarding social spaces in organisations aptly referred to the creation of an autonomous social space in which “subordinates spin tales of revenge, celebrate hero myths of those who stood up to exploitive superiors and engage in discourses that underscore the inherent dignity of subordinates” (2003: 398) Moderating the degree of dominance by their superiors through the act of sharing stories of revenge creates a way for them to reinforce their common view and re-establish their potential for togetherness in unfavourable situations.

Overall, the positive consideration of resistant strategies shows how group cohesion is reinforced. At the same time this potentially emphasises how seafarers become more aware of themselves as functioning as one nationality. The divisiveness this potentially reveals can be isolating for all crew members as “belonging” becomes restricted according to nationality. By simultaneously consenting to and resisting authority, Filipino ratings adjust the boundaries of social space on board.

7.5. Integration As A Social Agent

7.5.1 Fully integrated crew members

The racial divide in positions on board constitutes a problem for socialising among seafarers. Achieving participation becomes a balancing act for seafarers as they form relationships by shifting between the realm of authority as expressed in the hierarchical structure and the dimension of commonality according to nationality. Such dynamics were observed in interactions of the Filipino officer. The Filipino deck officer’s interactions with the Indian officers were mostly work-related except for instances when he received invitations from other officers for special occasions. He usually sought the companionship of the Filipino ratings after ending his work shift. Establishing a good relationship with other Filipinos required him to interact not as an officer but as a fellow Filipino, as in the following example:

You need to be close with them, makisama (get along). You have to act like you are not an official. The same level. They will make trouble if you don’t do that. (Second Officer, Ship, Interview 138)

On nearly all occasions, the Filipino second officer's decision to connect with Filipino ratings on board the ship was borne out of an intention to show himself as someone in accord with the Filipino ratings. For instance, in the ratings' mess room, he conducted himself in a manner befitting a rating by not waiting to be served by the mess boy but helping himself out in the kitchen. He would serve himself with food and sit and talk with the ratings. Afterwards, he would also sit with them in the recreation room to watch movies. This was to maintain harmony with other Filipinos and send a message of solidarity. Such actions also prevented the ratings from criticising him as being overbearing or too caught up with his position as an officer. Thus, his presence in the ratings' area communicated fellowship with the ratings. Similarly, he understood his interaction with the officers under the light of *pakikisama*:

I socialise so they will not think that I am far from them since I am the only Filipino official. So if there is a little gathering and I am not there, they will think that I have no pakisama. (Second officer, Ship, Interview 138)

In operationalising *pakikisama* as a Filipino concept, he made reference to his position as an officer who was expected by the other officers to show his fellowship. Although he rarely visited the officers' day room, he made it a point to attend at the invitation of other officers. In this way, he was able to strike a balance between his position as a second deck officer and as a Filipino on board the ship.

Through the course of the voyage, the Filipino officer became largely detached from the other officers. As deck officers conform to four on four duties, relationships formed were largely work-related. The other officers perceived his engagement with the ratings as a form of conflict with his status as a second mate on the ship. Many of the officers interviewed showed indifference to the Filipino officer's conduct but to some extent there was a sense of general preference for participation within the officer group. References were often made to the potential for trouble caused by extending this kind of familiarity to the ratings.

The conflicting expectations faced by the Filipino officer effectively located him as someone "in-between." Pressures coming from the group of Filipino ratings required him to show his affiliation with the Filipinos and therefore altered the ratings'

perception of his position as an officer. As a result, he may be described as belonging to both the officers' and ratings' groups as he was able to switch between them.

The case of the Filipino electrocadet previously discussed could also be said to conform to the notion of full integration. In the process of acquiring the stature of an officer, he was at the same time firmly integrated within the Filipino ratings' group. He was able to develop a close friendship with the ship's messboy and maintained a positive relationship with the engine ratings. Oftentimes, he would confide the details of his life to the messboy, whose cabin was right beside his cabin. They would also try to coordinate their leave so they could go on shore leave together. During weekend get-togethers in the day room he would always be present and join in all forms of entertainment on the ship and always kept the conversation rolling. However, when in the engine room, he operationalised his officer position and subtly erected a barrier against the engine ratings. The electrician, his direct supervisor, also formed a positive relationship with him, frequently inviting him to his cabin to drink and talk about matters concerning life at home:

You ask him, I call him to my cabin to have a drink. So he is a good friend because I like the guy. I have called him into my cabin many times; he is a cadet so he is not allowed to take alcohol. So I call him into my cabin and we have two or three beers. (Electrician, Ship, Interview 161)

The differences in nationality were surpassed by their similar perspective on how work attitudes should be managed on the ship. When the chief engineer held a party to celebrate Easter, the electrocadet was also invited to the officers' day room. During the party, he smoothly and comfortably held conversations with the officers. He was confronted with balancing expectations of professionalism from the officers and expectations of togetherness from the ratings. Being in-between these expectations, the electrocadet utilised a strategic approach to getting along with the crew that involved efficient execution of his roles and responsibilities on the ship whilst carefully maintaining full participation within the social sphere of the Filipinos.

7.5.2 Isolated crew member

A similar form of in-betweenness was found in the situation of the sole Indian rating on board the ship. He, however, belonged neither to the ratings' nor to the officers' group. With the ratings, his relationship was purely professional as the only off-duty interaction was during meals, which he took a few minutes later than the Filipinos. If other Filipinos happened to be still finishing off their meal, that would offer him the rare opportunity of chatting with them outside of work. However, during his off-duty periods, he would be in the officers' day room watching films or television series for one or two hours. The remaining portion of his time would be spent in his room reading pocketbooks as he had no laptop with him.

The third officer, a Sri Lankan, on the other hand virtually became seen by the Filipino ratings as part of the majority. His nationality was effectively erased and he was considered one of the Indians. Like any other deck officer, the dictates of his schedule restricted him from extending any interaction into the personal realm. He nonetheless adhered to professionalism by consciously refraining from forming workplace friendships. Such a stance, he maintained, was important to maintaining a worry-free ship life:

Maybe if I find someone with the same rank, same level, then maybe it can happen. Mostly I prefer to stay alone, especially on the ship. It avoids problems and it is good for you also. (Third Officer, Ship, Interview 151)

Yet, given his work, it was difficult for him to totally avoid socialisation with the ratings:

Mostly with the AB because we are always together. Other people, I don't get much time with to move around. As an officer, I don't get much time with the crew. I will get the time only in port. Mostly, we are talking only on the deck because the AB is with me. (Third Officer, Ship, Interview 151)

On the ship, his proper attitude to the job and manner of relating to the ratings earned him respect from the Filipino ratings. On duty, he would refrain from shouting when giving orders and generally exuded a very respectful front to everybody. On the whole, his integration with both the officers and the ratings was work-related. He was

perceived only in a formal way by the crew as his status as an officer limited his interaction with them. The ratings saw him as an officer and therefore treated him as an officer. Among the Indian officers, his manner of fitting in only relates to work and less on informal socialisation. On both fronts, he exuded a form of in-betweenness whereby, being of a different nationality, he was able to develop a purely professional orientation.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the Filipino seafarers' integration on board ship. The routinised, hierarchical and multicultural setting on board provides the background to seafarers' integration. Due to the ship's work culture, participation is mostly achieved through being part of a community of practice and having mastery of a common language such as Maritime English. In both modes of belonging, social lives receive less attention. Instances of resistance amongst Filipino ratings are apparently a form of coping mechanism. The fact that the rank-based divide is reinforced by the split across nationality creates a work-centred form of shipboard division. Beyond this general experience, there are varying cases of integration. The Filipino officer, for instance, demonstrated a more flexible kind of integration as he was able to engage with both officers and ratings. The lone Indian rating and the Sri Lankan officer, on the other hand, tended to be more isolated. As for the remaining Filipino ratings, transnational practices such as cultural and language attachments to the Philippines serve to counter the social displacement experienced on board.

Potentially, the use of Maritime English on board can be a strong indication of seafarers' belonging. As previously discussed, in a landbased context, language may pose as a major hindrance to inclusion in a receiving society. Having a good command of the seafaring language provides confidence in interacting with the crew, suggesting good capacity for teamwork. Such a characteristic is helpful within a community of practice for it enables seafarers to signify their competence and openness to learning. Any tolerable window that may be left for social engagement is subject to the captain's control but he is primarily concerned with running the ship's operations. The social side, therefore, is neglected, with the result that connections among the seafarers are sparse. The shipboard social order described previously, and reinforced by Kahveci,

Lane and Sampson (2000) in their study of merchant cargo vessels, is a consequence of contractual engagement and occupational culture. The transitory life of seafarers makes it difficult to compare their situations with similar modes of social engagement found in communities ashore. While there may be dense, familiar social networks at home, seafarers on board are practically strangers, bound only by their relationship of employment in the seafaring trade. Cohesion is limited by the boundaries of hierarchy and nationality and therefore extends only to work. Conjuring a resistant space can serve to circumvent the resulting labour insecurities. As recounted previously, achieving genuine inclusion on board, in the sense of having a “happy ship”, is relatively challenging without the support of certain key officers.

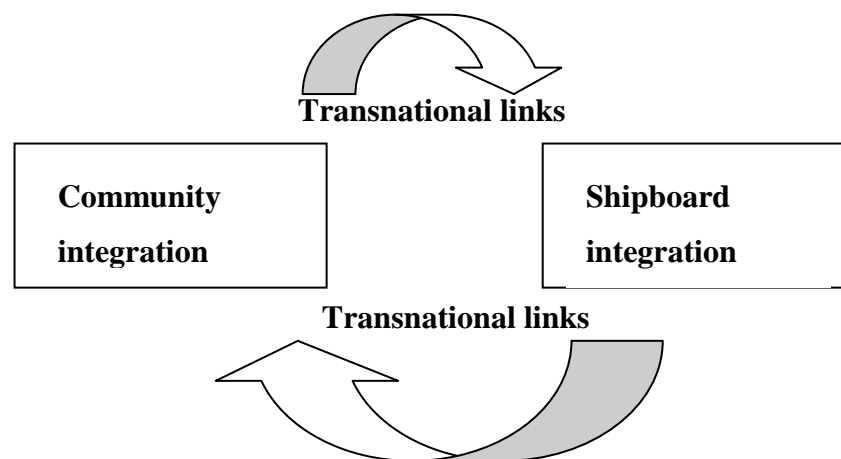
The matter is complicated further by the mix of nationalities, which potentially detracts from hierarchy and reinforces resistance. In the bi-national ship studied, hierarchy and nationality can be seen as mutually reinforcing. As their feeling of being overpowered was magnified, the Filipino seafarers formed a small group to dissipate such threats. The Filipinoness informing the ratings’ togetherness provides an outlet for emotional turmoil and dissatisfaction. Consequently, the creation of a grievance space ties the Filipino seafarers to the ship. Nevertheless, this is underscored by the fact that there is no outright renegotiation of power relations, only the evocation of feelings of belonging. Transnational links such as the use of Filipino language and practising of certain Filipino norms serve to diffuse power and to generate social encouragement on board ship, where other means of assimilation are lacking.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This study has explored the lives of Filipino seafarers, both on board ship and ashore in their home communities. It is hoped that this exploration has had value as a sociological study in its own right and that it will convey to others what it means to be a Filipino seafarer. However, there is now a vast literature on transnationalism and the question arises as to the extent to which this concept adequately captures the specifics of their position. To this end, Figure 8.1 below outlines the conceptual domains that merit consideration in this context. The earliest chapters which have been presented describe the integration of Filipino seafarers in both their home communities (Chapter 5) and on board ship (Chapter 7) and take into account the cross-border linkages from the ship to the community (Chapter 6) and from the community to the ship (Chapter 7).

Figure 8.1 Conceptual Diagram



Source: This study

The arrows in Figure 8.1 represent the transnational practices of the seafarers. The thicker arrow represents the seafarers' strong link towards their home society. Weaker links to the ship are represented by the small arrow at the top. The nature of the

seafarer's community and shipboard integration was also explored in this study. Strong community integration relative to shipboard integration was evident in the study. These findings pose a challenge to the conception of simultaneous belonging that is central to transnationalism. If the seafarers are transnationals, then they should be seen to satisfy the conditions of double-belonging such that depth of integration must be manifested in both realms incorporating the sustained connections to home and host societies.

The formulation of transnationalism as 'occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contact over time across national borders for their implementation' provides the starting point of this exploration (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999: 219). The economic motivation behind the decision to migrate is an important domain in Portes et al.'s (1999) definition of transnationals. Initiated by observations of a highly specific group of transnational entrepreneurs who travel back and forth to search for financial investments and to buy and sell goods, Portes et al (1999) demonstrated how this leads to the traders' simultaneous presence. Although members of this transnational community are oriented towards activities that are mainly economic, other flows (such as cultural and political influence) are also emphasised. The studies that have been built upon the work of Portes and his contemporaries have endeavoured to distinguish between various types of migrants and have, therefore, extended the notion of transnationalism (e.g. Vertovec 2004, Faist 1998, 2000).³

The economic rationale for migration (i.e. remittances) and the evidence of sustained communication links to the community (see Chapter 6) may indeed show that Filipino seafarers manifest transnational behaviours. The regularity and large scale by which remittances are transferred to sending countries from abroad are clear indications of transnationalism, including the improved communication channels on board ship and the transfer of cultural ideas. The nature of integration on board ship, with its opportunities and constraints, can further the understanding of transnational experience amongst Filipino seafarers. The distinctive life and work patterns on a ship as a host society characterise a unique form of migration and provides a crucial context for integration.

³ See Chapter 2 for more detail of this point.

The lack of geographical emplacement amongst seafarers, and their highly mobile lifestyle that regularly moves from the local Filipino community to the ship, provide the critical departure from the usual experience of land-based migrants in previous transnationalism studies which more or less demonstrate a fixed point of location. Within the context of the ship, seafarers live hypermobile lives as they traverse different time zones. Whereas cultural influences from countries fleetingly visited may not figure strongly, the peculiarities of the ship as a working place become a strong point of reference when connecting ashore. When incorporating a shipboard strand, topical issues on whether connection flows toward the ship (see Chapter 7) can provide further enrichment on seafaring and transnationalism.

The discussion that follows explores the broader terms by which transnationalism has been theorised by drawing on particular integrating conditions experienced by the Filipino seafarers. Insights on the practical implications of this endeavour, including areas for further research, will be highlighted towards the end of the chapter.

8.2 Embeddedness in the Community

The immediate locality and the place of reception are important components in exploring transnationalism amongst migrants (Portes 1996, Guarnizo 1997). In the previous literature, variants of transnationalism arise according to the conditions found in both societies; such as the social, economic and political structures in place. Chapter 5 has shown how the seafarer's community life in the community of Sta. Ana constructs seafarers' migration. It has also shown how seafarers locate themselves in the community upon returning home. These dimensions highlight the intensity and relevance of transnationalism for seafarers.

For the seafarers in Sta. Ana, the long-standing pattern of migration has created a migration norm in which the ways and means for returning migrant workers to become accepted have been traditionally established. The act of migration affirms such community norms and embodies the aspiration of local residents as shown in Section 5.4. Over time, as migrants have flowed into and out of the community, the transfer of

ideas, attitudes and behaviours from abroad has allowed non-migrant members to imagine, and sometimes glorify, the outside world. According to Levitt (1998, 2001b), such an exchange of social remittances can transform community and family formation in the home society. In the context of the Sta. Ana residents, the strong and continued migrant presence in the town has shaped expectations, obligations, roles and institutions in ways that facilitate inclusion. In other words, Sta. Ana espoused community values that uphold a migration culture strongly anchored on ‘overseas experience’.

Part of the migration norm that has emerged in this study is the attitude towards wealth and success. Most low to middle income households deploy strategies involving employment abroad. Wealth gained by working abroad is collectively acknowledged and is perceived differently from the wealth that is earned locally. Section 5.4 has detailed how the seafarers mentioned that social and economic gains crucially facilitate their involvement in the community. Of the various privileges that migration has afforded the seafarers and their family, the experience of upward social mobility has become important for having a sense of being part of a whole. The seafarer’s status is elevated by fitting into what the Sta. Ana community describes as the ‘can afford’ profile, which enables them to assert power (both symbolic and material). The pride and status that this confers to seafarers makes them worthy of emulation and a source of inspiration. This has wide resonance with the experience of migrants in the literature. For example, Faist (2000a) avers that such ‘migration capital’ can be converted into other more useful forms of capital. The change in social relations is a most noticeable outcome. Single seafarers become sought after for marriage by prospective mother-in-laws, which is one indication amongst many of the social recognition within the community. Rahman (2009) surveyed Bangladeshi temporary migrants and found that they use a ‘wedding opportunity’ variable to establish an indicator of upward mobility. The change in social position prior to and after migration enhances a migrants’ social capital. Similarly, the Filipino seafarers’ rise up the social ladder is a form of leverage that consolidates a more stable community re-integration.

The role of the community in constructing migration (e.g. through the potential for social mobility) has been widely recognised in the literature as one of the immediate consequences for transnational migrants (Landolt 2001, Faist 1999, Vertovec 2002, Stodolska and Santos 2006). While this situates migrants as merely responsive to the

locale's values and norms, it cannot be overlooked that migrants also reproduce the society's construct of their migration in line with their own varied interests. The diverse ways that this has been manifested spans a wide range of economic, social, religious and political transnational practices (Guarnizo 1998, Itzigsohn et al. 1999, Levitt 2001a). In this study, the seafarers' navigation of the associated obligations, expectations and sanctions reinforce the sense of fellowship with the community as a whole. Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 showed the symbolic practices that embed seafarers and cultivate a sense of belongingness. Since they are highly ritualised practices, there is pressure to conform.

One way this was made evident was through the strong tradition of religious participation in Sta. Ana. Community festivals and rituals are mostly religious in nature and are often initiated by the Catholic Church. The personal and social way by which religion is experienced in the community makes it an effective avenue for social participation. Showing support to the church's projects was one way of getting the seafarers to remain in close contact with the community. As Sta. Ana's way of life has long been influenced by the Catholic Church, this means that reaffirming the sense of community can, to some extent, be compelling. For example, this was seen in the participation in religious festivals or fiesta that is held annually in the community (see Section 5.2.1). Such festivals often include a form of dedication rite extolling the seafarer's importance in the community. In practice, this builds up the seafarer's reputation; thereby, persuading them to uphold such rites dutifully lest they fall short of the respect accorded to them. This resonates with Goldring's (1998) study of Mexican transmigrants, which makes use of the context of the fiesta and other big gatherings as a social venue to claim, deploy claims and valorise status in the community and, therefore, reassert community membership. Goldring (1998) further added that the Mexico – US transnational social fields are maintained owing to this specific leverage of shared meanings in the community. The same phenomenon can be seen amongst the Filipino seafarers whose display of extravagance and excessive generosity has become valuable in showing the community spirit. Consequently, so long as seafarers accept and understand the form of participation required from them, this effectively works to re-instate membership in the community. The strain of obligation is accommodated because supporting and participating in religious groups becomes instrumental for the seafarer's re-embedding into the community on return from the sea. This finding

corroborates the study of Landolt (2001) amongst Salvadoran migrant households, who were shown to have mobilised a strategy of economic incorporation given the interests and obligations of the locality. He further describes how in such resource-poor areas, economic transnationalism (e.g. allocation of remittances) signifies continued engagement in the home country since it often begins in the household.

The idea of migrants as active agents is a critical aspect in transnationalism because it imbues migrants with a decision-making capacity to counter or resist marginality (Portes 1996; Smith 1998; Fournon and Glick Schiller 2001) and to facilitate integration in both host and home countries (Guarnizo and Haller 2003, Roberts et al. 1999). This is equally relevant within the context of the Filipino seafarers in this study who navigate through migration culture and high unemployment in the local labour market to retain membership in the community. Of these economic, social and cultural concerns, how seafarers actively daily accord to the local lifestyles and norms shows that community re-integration is crucial. Moreover, this reflects an improved capacity to influence and stimulate certain outcomes. As previously mentioned, an immediate outcome of migrant status is the showcase of success that mirrors the living standards of the elite segment of the town's population. The seafarer's economic ascent in a resource-poor locale with households living within close scrutiny of each other has enabled the two groups to continually keep track of changes and improvements in lifestyle patterns. Since most seafarers can eventually afford to send their children to a private school in the nearby city, own big houses, hold expensive parties, and adopt a high income lifestyle in general; they exude a form of mobility and advancement from their previous middle class position. It is through such displays of high consumption lifestyles that their economic differences with the non-migrants become more accentuated and they bear closer resemblance to those of the wealthy. The increased ability to spend money indicates that the seafarers are moving towards the upper segment of the society.

Owning a house is one indication of substantial improvement in seafarers' sense of economic security and that which equally reflect an important measure of membership in the community. The ability to allocate part of their income for a private home ownership can become empowering for seafarers because this allows them to be reinstated as community members with an improved social position. However, house ownership is not seen as an investment in the way that it may be seen in parts of

Western Europe. The lack of a housing market in most rural areas in the Philippines constitutes one reason for this difference. Aguilar (2009) mentioned this in his study of migrant houses in a community in northern Philippines and made an important point that the improved social status that this generates for the owner far outweighs the desire to earn. A house, therefore, stands as a memorial to the migrant and to his family, especially for the parents left at home. From the community's perspective, being able to fulfil such an obligation is an assertion of the migrant's success, which affirms his esteemed position in the community. Despite the seafarer's lack of a secure stream of income, house ownership is given more priority. Consequently, the well-off mentality that this creates contrarily bears upon the seafarer's immediate reality.

Although the seafarers may initially seem nominally similar to their land-based counterparts in terms of consumption and ownership patterns, their contractual employment condition remains a distinctive characteristic. The precarious job tenure that continues to underlie social visibility all the more suggests the necessity of incorporation to the community since this serves to cushion potential job loss. As such, this prompts a conflictual and ambivalent form of belonging that presents a form of anxiety to seafarers who are often only temporarily employed. This contingent prosperity has been less developed in the transnationalism literature because their focus is more on the agency by which migrants strategically embed themselves. The centrality of short-lived wealth as an important concern in understanding the intensity and relevance of transnationalism and this concept could usefully be extended to studies involving land-based, temporary workers.

How contingent prosperity is broadly construed in the community can be seen in the extent to which class status is altered in the community. The seafarer's newly acquired status may remain quite distinct from those considered part of the elite migrants (i.e. the pioneer migrants who migrated as doctors or nurses). Although captains and other high-ranking officials may have successfully established themselves as part of the elite, the situation of regular seafarers may be different because their high status is tempered by the demands of extensive family networks and short-term earnings. Therefore, while consumption patterns resemble an upper income class lifestyle, in reality the migrant status of the seafarers remains aspirational and distinct from the local non-migrant elites. Reichert (1982) in his study of a Mexican community dominated by legal and

illegal migrants to the US found that the formation of an elite migrant status tended to emphasise the divisions in the local community, which weakens community cohesion. Non-migrant elites in El Salvador become threatened by displays of wealth from returning migrants and respond by asserting spending power (Mahler 2001). Amongst seafarers in Sta. Ana, manifesting a rich lifestyle, either through lavish community rituals or pastimes as presented in Section 5.2.1, shows their similarity with migrant elites and provides the basis by which to claim and valorise their improved status. On the one hand, this visibly raises their 'can afford' profile in the community. Yet, for the landed and politically influential local elites, such displays are regarded as exclusive gestures of the parvenu. An altered social status is regarded as an outcome of transnational processes affirming membership into the elite circle. However, this is challenged by a rigid class hierarchy in which non-migrant elites remain dominant. The aspirational outlook towards migrants may, therefore, account for the earlier findings that an upward status change does not necessarily transform or invert class hierarchies (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001, Guarnizo and Smith 1998, Goldring 1998).

In addition, the pre-existing class status of the returning migrant provides another distinction by which membership in the community is realised. It also shows how contingent prosperity is valued by the seafarers. While the tinge of wealth counters the sense of relative deprivation, financial risks constantly feature. In a study involving another Filipino community, Findley (1987) explained how middle class households tend to be more risk averse. Whereas a low level of economic development might generally induce lower and upper class households to search for other alternatives abroad, the middle class are less active and more concerned with maintaining the status quo. It is only when reliable information becomes available (for instance, through social networks that bring about more migration experiences) that migration for the middle class becomes an option. Being more risk averse, middle class households are sensitive to such developments and this significantly informs their decision to migrate. Most of the seafarers in Sta. Ana come from a relatively poor background and, therefore, migration has become a high risk response to poverty. Once they become part of the middle class, higher levels of risk aversion in relation to their children's choice of career can become evident. Meanwhile, the highly volatile feature of short-term contracts commonly used in the seafaring global labour market negatively impacts on the seafarers' prosperity. The seafarers' pretence of wealth in the community can be one

way of concealing their untenable financial position in the community and which can temper the various risks arising from contractual migration. As long as the social and economic potency of migration is in place, the seafarers are able to reinforce agency in the community and appear to bridge that class divide.

The many ways that the causes and effects of transnationalism are produced, recreated, and constituted gives way to distinctive ways of asserting belonging. How the seafarer's position themselves in society (i.e. the due regard that they show to the community and how the community in turn constructs them as seafarers) highlights various facets by which belonging is negotiated.

The immediate context that migrants inhabit may or may not favour transnationalism, or it may produce something in between. In this study, Filipino seafarers navigate a set of cultural and moral expectations, and economic rigidities because their temporary form of migration induces them to view the community as their final home, literally and symbolically. This distinguishes them from the forms of transnationalism exhibited by land-based counterparts or permanent settlers. Efforts to sustain links and embed in the community arise from the reality of contractual labour (and the unique employment setting on board ship) with a motive to uplift conditions at home.

As regular returnees, the seafarer's families and kin serve as the major pillar for their sustained membership in the community. The dense network of friends and family, and the overlapping relationships this entails, creates a network of migrants that acts as a support to the seafarer's migration and return. In Sta. Ana, where the preponderance of migration is profoundly felt, the role of dense family and kinship ties takes centre stage. The social capital that this creates for the seafarers and their networks arises from what Massey (1990, 2004) referred to as the cumulative causation of migration. In such processes, the network of relationships created by previous migrants in the community induces further migration, which creates a thick web of social ties leading to the self-perpetuating character of migration. Within the setting of a rural community where ties are intricately connected and highly cherished, the seafarer's attention to these networks sustains integration. Notwithstanding the strong undertone of reciprocal obligation, such ties are instrumental in creating a sense of harmony. In Sta. Ana, the seafarers who

utilise the migrant networks during job search, and who have become successful in the process, inevitably become indebted to the network's requests and favours. As was explained in Section 5.3.2, refusals are perceived as a lack of '*utang na loob*' (i.e. debt of gratitude) and the seafarer is seen as having no sense of camaraderie (or *pakikisama*). This becomes highly offensive to the ears of a seafarer since it not only points to selfishness but it also comes with a reminder of a humble beginning prior to migration. Once arrogance and superiority has been presumed to have taken over, the crude comments act as a form of insult, invalidating the migrants' right to recognition. In maintaining their social networks, seafarers have to buy into these normative expectations to maintain their integrity as members of the community.

Since seafarers repeatedly re-incorporate to the community after long absences, strong affiliation with the family and close relatives is a ready doorway for continued membership. Portes (1995) expressed the importance of such social networks in embeddedness through the notion of relational and structural embeddedness. Personal relations (which involve norms, sanctions, expectations and reciprocity) are described as relational while the scales at which different social relationships take part are structural. The latter considers that social relationships are crucially operating within the broader society and is more dynamic because it takes into account the changes in the social structure. The strong relational embeddedness of the seafarers owing to a dense web of ties and importance of immediate family and friends provides that immediate sense of belongingness. When the seafarers may be seen to be integrating, this comes with pressure to maintain good community relations through lavish spending and at the same time disregarding their precarious employment status.

The evidence presented in this study has shown how migration culture makes it hard for seafarers to break away from the mold of economic expectation that comes with it. Therefore, while social mobility may seem to improve as a consequence of having gone aboard; the seafarers become simultaneously trapped in maintaining their social status. Given the rising number of migrants under contractual labour agreement, most of whom come from large economies with a deeply embedded migration outlook, experience of this form of precariousness abounds. In clarifying the extent to which transnationalism may be applied to migrant categories, it would be appropriate to consider more than the

performative acts of belonging. References regarding integration in both family and community contexts should include the role of feelings and the sense of inclusion as part of understanding how transnational relations take place.

8.3 Embeddedness on the Ship

For seafarers in a shipboard society, the basic question to be considered is how permissive is integration and whether it is promoted. The discussion in Chapter 7 showed that life on board is predominantly work-oriented; so that social life on board, despite being important, gains less attention. Since all seafarers are essentially labour migrants in a mobile and floating work space, the sense of belonging may be different to that experienced ashore. Broadly speaking, integration within the context of a land-based community may be quite different within a shipboard setting. Primarily, the “total institution” features of the ship create various contradictions pertaining to work experiences, attitudes and values held by seafarers. A strong hierarchical distinction along with its prescribed routines entails a formalised way of life where work is centrestage.

The role of language proficiency was a crucial integrating factor on board (see Section 7.3.2). Having a good command of the English-language bodes well for cultivating good comradeship and interacting effectively within a community of practice. As previously mentioned, the use of Maritime English is more visibly employed at work in terms of jargon and specific phrases that enable a multilingual crew to communicate with each other. This finding is likewise reflected by Sampson and Zhao (2003: 42) who recognise the need to extend the seafarer’s language skills beyond what is deemed adequate (such as technical job-related terms, or a grasp of a maritime vocabulary). In particular, they raised an equal consideration that the social use of language (for instance through the joking relationship) can prevent further isolation on board ship.

Within a culturally diverse crew, a skilful grasp of a second language can help the seafarer to endure monotony, cope with prolonged hours at work, and develop more effective social support. The findings however showed that whilst seafarers integrate more as a worker, emphasis on the social side has been insufficient. The presence of a

standardised language on board may still be criticised as not sufficiently facilitating inclusion. For a ship where there is a bi-national split between ranks, the use of a second language may not be socially integral owing to the tight controls on content and form of communication. Such racial divide has become a way to estrange, rather than engage, other nationalities as this favours the use of ethnic languages to create more meaningful interaction or at least experience momentary escape from a closely controlled environment.

For a seafarer on board ship, skill competency also strongly influences occupational integration. A good grasp of shared technical practices is crucial to be able to keep pace with the work mentality on board and thrive in a community of practice as seen in Section 7.3.2. Moreover, codes of conduct and shared conventions aligned with the shipboard work culture are crucial to enact belonging. The tacit knowledge about a seafaring sensibility is useful in terms of notions of working conditions, safety and risk (Hansen 1996, Havold 2005, Oltedal and Wadsworth 2010). For instance, having awareness of health and safety practices on board promotes a supportive work climate and enhances the seafarer's ability to work in a team. The importance of this was presented in Section 7.4, which described how the seafarer's took responsibility for tasks and how sharing strategies provide harmony in the workplace. The hierarchical differentiation ensures that this form of professionalism is observed and respected. However, it can also constrain certain aspects at work, such as communication in health and safety management on board. Bhattacharya (2009) observed on a cargo ship that many ratings felt intimidated about communicating with senior officers, which poses safety risks. The rigid segmentation becomes an important factor hindering seafarers of lower rank who wish to report work-related issues to officers of higher rank. This formal distinction can be extended to socialising on board. For example Section 7.4.1 described how one captain encouraged teamwork through the notion of a family working together, which was deployed to enact subservience rather than to socially mix the seafarers together. The top-down process by which teamwork is promoted can be quite discouraging for the seafarer's pro-active involvement. The captain's ability to minimise the authority gap can be compromised by the commercial pressures he also needs to contend with. Acting on behalf of the ship owner, the social side may be at the bottom of his list of priorities. The result is a crew of seafarers who work together but who may not be socially cohesive. Consequently, while the occupational work culture

may initially see seafarers as integrating into the ship, the hierarchical layers hamper meaningful socialisation.

Seafarers can be seen as integrated in the occupational culture of the ship. Section 7.4.1 presented how the Filipino notion of a family on board ship was refashioned as a semblance of social attachment, which creates a tolerant attitude to work amongst seafarers. This has led seafarers to assume a 'dual visage' so that some aspects of family found ashore are applied to their on board relationships. A captain's role, which is premised on the principle of a family that works together, reinforces integration into the occupational culture of the ship. Where the seafarer's view this notion of a family on board according to the lens of Filipino society, they achieve a sense of bifocality that is in line with having a transnational consciousness. Guarnizo (1997) specifically termed this as transnational habitus in his case study of Dominican migrants, which is exemplified by assessing their current social situation in comparison to their position to the society they have just left behind. This results in different ways of membership claim that can be quite contradictory. On board ship the Filipino seafarer's compliance to a higher authority accentuates their submission and low status. This reality reverses when ashore owing to the social and economic leverage provided the seafarer's position of higher status in the community.

This study was based on a bi-national ship where there was a tendency to segregate along the lines of nationality. A racialised hierarchy, where the majority of the higher positions are taken up by a single nationality, contributed to an isolating atmosphere on both work and social aspects. The discussion in Section 7.4.2 suggested that invoking Filipinoness (i.e. the use of Filipino language and attitude pertaining to pakikisama, or conformity) through various acts of hidden resistance towards the non-Filipino officers became a way to mitigate the heightened sense of perceived difference with the officers. Nationality differences were emphasised by focusing on the stereotypes in terms of work ethic, attitudes and personality. Such formation of groupings on the ship is akin to an enclave community, which becomes a source of moral and emotional support to the Filipino seafarers. Where this sense of fellowship may not be as encompassing as the community ashore, this becomes a source of traditional sentiments on board the ship. For instance, section 7.3.2 illustrated how the use of the Filipino language in conversations gave private features to certain areas on the ship and created that sense of

unity and togetherness where troubles and anxieties towards the other nationality can be freely expressed. The notion of the ship as a deterritorialised space, in this sense, does not apply as there is a perceptible national attachment exhibited by the Filipino crew members. However, the presence of a genuine multinational crew can remove this attachment because the ship becomes a hyperspace where no single culture dominates (Sampson 2003).

On the same note, the reconstruction of the notion of *pakikisama*, either to avoid isolation or diminish the perceived ethnic prejudices they face when on board ship, has become a retreat from the uncertainties and pressures brought about by a bi-national crewing scheme. Notwithstanding the sense of familiarity that this creates amongst the Filipino crew members, it accentuates the division on board ship. In other words, the motivation to stick together amongst Filipino seafarers is underlined by insecurities related to pay, promotion, and employment records. The reinterpretation of nationality as a force of hierarchy conveys a power tilt biased against the Filipino seafarers. The evidence from a similar study that was based on board a cargo ship suggests that crew members coming from two or three nations tend to experience more ethnic discrimination (Kahveci, Lane and Sampson 2002). Tolerance, accommodation and submission become features of ships having less diverse national backgrounds and ways of achieving inclusion become limited. This raises questions about the extent to which seafarers can be regarded as transnationals because belonging tends to occur at the fringes of both work and social life on board ship.

In summary, the form of integration experienced by the seafarers in this study, both ashore and on board ship, shows a participation that is performative in nature. The pressure of conformity in the community and work insecurity arising from a racialised hierarchy on board the ship limits involvement to the edges of the societies that they inhabit.

8.4 Linking to the Community

The enduring multi-stranded ties sustained by migrants are central to the transnational paradigm. The degree, intensity and speed with which cross-border connections are

simultaneously forged can effect changes in the everyday social fabric of the migrant, the community, and the wider society (Vertovec 2004). The presence of such ties in sustaining social relations is integral to the dual lives evident in transnational communities (Portes 1996). Integration in two different worlds, according to Basch et al. (1994) and Faist (1999), should encompass examination of the manifold ways that transnational links are maintained and reconstituted. The task of identifying and understanding the cross-border practices of seafarers in Chapter 6 draws attention to the more visible and lasting ties anchoring seafarers to their homeland, namely: calling home, sending remittances and giving gifts.

A quintessential aspect of transnationalism is the adoption and use of information and communication technologies. Notwithstanding the prompt uptake of technological innovations in other sectors, it has slowly emerged on board ships (Davies and Parfett 1998). Despite the recent increase in usage of computers and Internet access on board ship, accessibility may still remain uneven owing to the varying, and often lacking, technological infrastructures on the shore side (Sampson and Wu 2003). Despite the less than ideal conditions that these present to the seafarers, use of ICT is intrinsically important for seafarers who wish to remain connected to their home communities. As presented in Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2, in general, the availability of mobile phones and Internet access on board ship allowed the seafarers to sustain involvement at home by receiving current concerns or information about the family and participating in decision-making at home. The use of improved communication channels amongst recent migrants is a significant feature in transnationalism studies, one which is initially emphasised as a differentiating factor from previous migrants who have limited access to technology (Portes Basch et al). As such, current perspectives regarding the important development in communication technologies go beyond the mundane instrumental role of connecting migrants (Goldring 1998, Smith and Guarnizo 1998) to their ability to construct new transnational social transformations (Glick Schiller et al 1992; Vertovec 2003, 2004; Horst 2006; Wilding 2006).

The simultaneity feature of using communication technologies is central to sustained connectivity of migrants and the innumerable ways that this has transformed their daily lives. As shown by the experience of the seafarers in this study, under conditions of high mobility a regular connection is often hampered by remote location and erratic

time schedules. This results to a fragmented communication which affects the relationship dynamics between seafarers and wives. Such an important finding of this study showed that, compared to land-based migrants who are permanently situated in a host society, the seafarer's face more restrictions in sustaining contact. This point was interpreted in Section 6.2 within the context of efforts required in order to maintain connection despite relative accessibility and affordability of calls home. The disparity in access due to costs as explored in Section 6.2.1, which showed that routine calls, either through satellite or mobile phones, remain the domain of the seafarers in higher ranks while prepaid phone calls in ports are more favoured by the ratings. However, in both instances, keeping in touch involves negotiation of the scale of important topics to discuss, which involves anxiety especially to wives who incidentally remain in the passive end. These are often underlined with tensions owing to the circumstantial nature by which this is constructed. Which topics require attention are constantly deliberated and adjusted and this impinge on the nature of connection between seafarers and their wives. As the seafarers' absence become more emphasized this directly challenges dual belonging which is the main idea in conceptualising transnationalism.

Regardless of the shift in communication modes as the voyage progresses, different communication regimes in ports limit their connections with home. The uneven price and cost schemes that the seafarers encounter reflects what Benitez (2006) described as transnational dimension of the digital divide where a disparity in telecommunication infrastructures affects the appropriation of ICT by land-based migrants. This technological split widely reflects the North-South inequality in access to technology that affects migrants who are often from developing economies. For seafarers, the perceived flexibility of time owing to use of ICT allows for continuous rescheduling of communication. However, the gap in terms of uptake of ships, including tour of voyage (i.e. ports visited) and less stable communication structures typifying rural areas among others, create conflicts with their wives. Section 6.2.1 discussed how seafarers' wives dealt with their own emotional struggles as they wait for their husbands' call. Working wives have the additional burden of making themselves available as they contend with the changeability of time. Such complexity and inconvenience in negotiating time arising both from the ship and the shore side provide tougher conditions for maintaining communication.

It was shown in Section 6.2.2 showed that decision gaps arising from a fragmented communication compel wives to contribute more to housework and therefore perform more roles that are regarded as 'masculine.' Such transformations challenge the gender ideologies of patriarchy as the wives' new sense of empowerment provides them with greater recourse to resist subordination. The decision-making between spouses has been renegotiated such that the wife's homemaking role has been extended, altered and reinforced to fulfil new responsibilities. The change in traditional household challenges the normal modes of belonging. Therefore, while the transnationalism literature rightfully looks at the continuity of connection, it assumes that extant ties have been unchanged and overlooks the restricted involvement faced by the migrants. As shown in this study, the nature of the communication links that bind the seafarers to their family back home undergoes transformation as a result of the emergent gender roles that have changed within the seafarer's household. The pathways in obtaining a sense of togetherness and belonging have shrunk in terms of the limited time available from both the ship and the shore side.

The threat to the continuity of seafarers' roles in their households may not necessarily reflect an active participation in transnational migration through the use of ICT. Seafarers tend to become less dominant at home, despite the usefulness of technology in sustaining connection, making them unable to strengthen conventional roles, much less defend them. This results in a contradiction in the use of technology in which absence rather than presence is manifested. There has been little attention within transnationalism studies of the ambiguity of the effect of technology on the seafarer's involvement at home. Morley's (2000) portrayal of technology as exhibiting 'multivalency' conveys the importance of context in deploying ICT and the Internet in facilitating or restricting communication. The capacity of technology to be both inclusive and exclusive should be examined in understanding the presence and perpetuation of transnational ties amongst migrants. Such ambivalence can be highly relevant to migrants whose high mobility has made technology an integral component of their lived reality.

The altered dynamics that come to light notably affects inclusion and a sense of being part of a whole. Earlier efforts to identify and classify which activities may be transnational have mainly featured the many ties that are regularly employed. A large

amount of empirical work has documented variations in transnational ties in terms of depth and range. Frequent links that are maintained vary in nature amongst migrants. For example in Portes, Haller and Guarnizo's (2002) study on Columbian, Dominican and Salvadoran's migration to the US showed the exceptional participation in transnational economic and political activities. Landolt (2001) raised a caveat about the limited participation in transnational activities that are economic in nature.

What is clear from the explorations of transnational practices is that the ways of connectedness of most migrants may vary, yet what forms will stand out depends on the opportunities and possibilities available to the migrant (Smith 1999, Riccio 2001). While other migrants may have developed practices that may be regarded as cultural transnationalism, others are more attuned towards political or economic transnationalism. Such outcomes emerge from "historical experience, structural conditions and the ideologies of their home and host societies" (Glick Schiller et al 1992: 8). The seafarers in this study have highlighted that migratory status highlighting mobility is a crucial element that needs to be included in understanding such outcomes. The tendency of certain groups to evince a particular dimension of transnationalism should be understood in ways that consider the physical movements of the migrants. This entails exploring the contributions on how linkages are maintained and the change in dynamics that influence the nature of integration within the community. This is similarly reflected in terms of the remittance link between seafarers and their families.

Broadly, perspectives on remittance tend to emphasise its role for development or the tendency for increased dependency. The development tendency is emphasised because foreign remittances can bolster local investment, savings and reduce poverty; thereby, contributing to strong economic fundamentals (Yang and Martinez 2005). The tendency for dependency is highlighted because the families who receive foreign remittances work fewer hours (Meins 2007, Rodriguez and Tiongson 2001). Related studies on the enhancing capacity of remittances point out that foreign remittances can cause intensification of social inequalities, high levels of conspicuous consumption, and can have adverse effects on local production (Taylor et al. 1996, Bridi 2005).

Drawing on the stories by the seafarers, Section 6.4 discussed how sending economic remittances maintains goodwill and improves status in the community and, therefore,

allow membership in family and community circles. Beyond the economic dimension which often emphasises remittances, certain social and cultural outcomes provide insights into the seafarer's sense of belongingness. The remittance link is not merely a measurable financial link which passively connects the seafarers to those at home, nor is it a development tool that is often utilised by sending governments to enhance economic position. Such a passive view of the role of sending remittances in linking migrants to their country of origin obscures their broader impacts within the family and the community. Apart from the immediate use of remittances in sustaining family needs and contributing to community projects, the act of sending a remittance ultimately demonstrates a form of social commitment among Filipino seafarers. In other contexts, such as the Pacific Islanders in New Zealand, sending remittances and giving gifts are more usually associated with the broader economic and political situation rather than commitment to the family (McPherson 1994). Such varied cultural understanding creates a divergence within which remittances and gifts may be valued and assessed. This provides a mechanism of how cross-border ties are socially textured and therefore subject to widely differing negotiations to retain belonging.

The question of the active role of remittances in creating a sense of belonging and as an influence on migrants' participation has received less attention in the literature. As explained in Section 6.4.2, in converting remittances to something that is socially valued, these have accompanying pressures such as: expected generosity to relatives (fosterage, sponsorship and gift-giving), unrelenting support to community project sponsorships (often church-initiated) and overall conformity to the community beliefs and tradition. The focus of previous studies has been mostly on the transformed social status of seafarers owing to their improved capacity to give. Consequently, while sending remittances reinforces attachment to the community, the conformity and repetitive nature of this activity constitutes a social status trap. Essentially, the findings of this study have shown that seafarers have learned to be strategic in utilising remittances through a showcase of material success. Upholding sudden wealth and the improved social position of the seafarers has crucially become part of maintaining belonging.

Goldring (1998) explains such claims to status as part of a consequence of belonging to a transnational community, which is experienced by most migrants worldwide.

Although social reputation counteracts the ‘resistance strategy’ that is intrinsic in a transnational framework, the intimacy within which this extends to his social circle depicts a struggle against marginalisation at home. As indicated in Section 6.4.2, the system of kinship within which remittance is channelled highlights the sharing mechanism underlying migrants’ agency. Since family and relatives receiving remittances also facilitate and help migrants in other social, economic and political transactions at home, sending money can neither be regarded as purely instrumental nor practical (McKay 2006). Lindley (2009: 21) argues that the role of remittance in capturing ‘familial and cultural reaffirmation’ is also evident among Somali refugees in London. Recognising the role of emotions and intimacy in transnational practices is, therefore, of importance in terms of broadening the perspectives of the social integration of migrants in the community.

A similar scenario surrounds the practice of giving gifts, as identified in Section 6.3. The tacit obligation to give and the status that this confers to the giver can reinforce a sense of togetherness at home. However, the repeated manner by which this is performed, especially for seafarers, suggests that the quality of relationship tends to become largely defined by being able to give. As mentioned earlier, the ship as a space of achievement opens the seafarers to ease in smoothly to the community when they return home. What is often overlooked is the precarious condition facing seafarers arising from the temporary and short-term nature of their job. A conflicting reality regarding seafarer’s effort to integrate emerges: the process of sustaining social and economic linkage has become a strategy of counteracting labour insecurities but the high dependency and increased responsibility this produces becomes a burden to seafarers without secured tenure.

8.5 Linking to the Ship

Once the seafarers return home, connections back to the ship that they have left are relatively few and sporadic in nature. As shown in Chapter 7, seafarers make occasional contacts to crew members who have gone ashore. Bound by the occupational work culture on board ship, most seafarers identify with a small group of people on the ship,

usually those of equal rank. This is further diminished in terms of geographical dispersal once they return home. For instance, the God-parenting practice is commonly observed between seafarers who live in the same region. Contact with those who remain on board is only rarely maintained. Maintaining connection once ashore loses its importance owing to the fast turnover of seafarers on the ship, and also because of the multitude of responsibilities at home and occasional lack of access to e-mail as shown in Section 6.2.2. However, the majority of the seafarers pointed to the instrumental use of staying in touch with the other seafarers that they have worked with. Being able to acquire work updates and prospects generally becomes a major concern. Links to the ship reflect another way of securing employment after the contract ends. Therefore, while the links to the ship may be uneven and less thick compared to ties to the shore, both are indicative of the downward pressures on a casualised workforce in a globalised industry. Since the ship is a site with high differentiation in terms of wages, crewing patterns and spheres of authority, linkages towards the ship reflect merely the prospects for claiming opportunities in a global trade other than normative social integration.

The weight of tradition and community in terms of constructing the ship as a site of achievement provides the context for links toward the ship. The way that the seafarers buy into this through the gifting tradition as practised in the community maintains the status of success. The remittance link that was discussed in Section 6.4 provides a similar deployment of the memory of the ship as a source of economic and social resources. Where the Filipino seafarers would most likely emphasise the hardships of shipboard work, this is not invoked when at home. Although they recognise the hardships, they would most likely focus on the manner by which this has afforded them comforts and stature for the family, kin and the entire community in general. The role of having worked on a ship is significant in establishing a sense of belongingness in the community. The symbolic value of the ship enables seafarers to maintain their transformed social status and assert positively their standards and ambitions in the community. The ship is, therefore, made to appear contiguous to the community by linking to it either through a personalised view or through a collective imagination. The sense of achievement it accords seafarers is salient in understanding this form of linkage.

The importance of the two-way flows is raised by Faist (2007) as an important part of a transnational approach that is often under-researched. As mentioned in the previous section, studies looking at transnationalism and assimilation are somewhat disjointed because they focus on only one society. By using a multi-sited approach in this study, reverse flows were observed. This renders rigour to studies on transnationalism and gives more valid evaluations on how the migrants remain both incorporated and connected at the same time.

8.6 Conclusion

In many ways, the seafarers' experience of integration at home resembles the experience of most migrants in transnationalism studies. The enduring role of the family embeds seafarers in the community and remains a major motivating factor in linking to home through remittances and frequent communication. Similar to other locales with a long-standing migration culture, being able to work abroad locates migrants in a position to embed. However, certain specificities distinguishes seafarers' manner of incorporation ashore. The contingent prosperity attached to seafarers' wealth and the aspirational regard from non-elite migrants, shows a form of belonging that undergoes repeated, ritualistic validation. While this is instrumental in shaping integration, such form of overexertion is regarded as the domain of those in the periphery. Accordingly, the unique context of the ship as both a place of work and living shows that seafarers tend to occupationally rather than socially integrate. The unsatisfying work relations arising from a heightened sense of ethnic consciousness in a bi-national crew set-up restricts the seafarers' social lives on board and contributes to insecurity and a sense of depersonalised relationship. In all, this suggests that seafarers' belonging in both shore and shipboard societies is manifestly found in the fringes.

While the homeward cross-border links appear dense overall, two major challenges affect instantaneous and continued consummation. Firstly, in the fast-paced context of the ship, the integral role of technology to disrupt connectivity and strain relationship is apparent. Secondly, the social status trap which underpins the gift and remittance linkages impresses a burden to seafarers as it confines involvement to materialistic outlays. The ensuing reconfiguration in gender hierarchies and family dynamics that

serve to exclude seafarers in the former, and the burden conferred by an extensive network of kin in the latter, represent a contradiction. For whilst seafarers endeavour to sustain connections, the scope allowed for enhancing integration is gradually tapering. The altered circumstances of the transnational ties together with a narrow role as a weak symbolic substitute for work insecurity aboard convey a form of connection that is essentially conflictual.

Although there is evidence of the seafarers' links to the ship, the connection is bereft of lasting flows owing to high crew turnover. The connection, if it exists, is as transitory as the fleeting relations on board and is tapped only insofar as it can invoke enhanced status ashore. In this sense, the seafarers exhibit a form of transactional transnationalism in which they enact a double-fringe belongingness as long as they are contractually engaged to the ship. As such, the lack of sustained back and forth flows of transnational practices and the forms of vulnerability characterising the nature of integration, whether ashore or aboard, are important considerations in understanding the seafarers as transnationals.

This summary has explored the transnational position of Filipino seafarers and has brought to light a number of dimensions of transnationalism. To understand seafarers' position it has been necessary to consider shore and ship side jointly in terms of cultural context and practices, extent and forms of integration and two-way cross-border linkages. The conceptual distinction between integration and linkage, artificial and genuine communities, narrow and dense links reveal what is symbolic from the actual and the fringe from the mainstream sense of belongingness. Elementary as some of these distinctions are, it may well be that other studies of transnationalism might also find them of some use. It is tempting to think in terms of an ideal typical characterisation of transnationalism whereby migrants evince successful adaptation in the receiving society as they continue to identify with those at home through intense and widening scope of ties that work both ways. However, such characteristics are unlikely to be matched uniformly in the real world. Such an ideal type is a starting point only.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The study examines the experience of belonging by Filipino seafarers ashore and on board. Using a transnational framework, the study proceeded by exploring manifestations of belongingness. To achieve this goal, the following questions were raised:

- 1.) Do Filipino seafarers experience double-belongingness?
- 2.) How are these manifested on board the ship and on land?
- 3.) How do they relate with others when on board and when on land?
- 4.) Do seafarers form a community on board a ship and on land?
- 5.) Is social cohesion manifested in these communities?
- 6.) To what extent are Filipino seafarers transnationals?

To tackle these questions, I utilised semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations on a local village of Sta. Ana located in the central part of the Philippines and on a container ship for 90 days and 40 days respectively. A set of interview, which lasted for a month, was also conducted in a seafarers' dormitory in Manila. A total of 65 seafarers and 49 seafarer wives participated in this study. Interviews were also conducted with the town's parish priest and barangay captain.

For all interviews, the semi-structured questionnaire was utilised keeping as close as possible to the major themes, but flexible enough to incorporate other salient issues that might emerge out of the interviews and observations. The conduct of a non-participant observation was helpful in substantiating the responses of the interviewees. It gave the necessary context by which the responses were framed and hence a more insightful perspective on the daily activities of seafarers when on the ship and then, with their families within the community. This also privileged me to other various aspects impinging on the life of seafarers of which interviews alone cannot fully draw out. On the community, history, traditions and beliefs were considered in understanding the

lives of seafarers when at home. On the ship, knowledge of the work culture and form of social relationship gave a significant perspective on their marginality and other vulnerabilities which would be difficult to realise if interviews were solely relied on.

Using the pattern of my structure above, I summarize in each section what I consider to be the main contributions of the study and put greater emphasis on the warrants in order to identify the extent to which the findings are supported by the data. I would then end by suggesting some recommendations and future researches.

9.2 Contributions of the study

The general conclusion put forth by the study is that the transnational way of life among Filipino seafarers only occurs at the periphery of the societies they inhabit. Although back and forth flows occur between the ship and the home society, these are only manifested when the seafarers are working on board. As such, this transactional transnationalism is characterised by double-fringe belongingness. Such pattern of transnational involvement is not fully aligned with the claims on transnationalism in which continuous involvement should be ever present regardless of migrants' location. This has however highlighted conditions which can hamper or enhance integration and/or magnify or attenuate cross-border ties. For instance, the mobility dimension as central to maintaining technological connectivity prompts reconsideration of the extent of connectivity among highly mobile migrants. Such limits, amongst many discussed earlier, crucially affect sense of belonging and should be pondered in transnational migration scholarship.

The social grounding of transnational ties from a confluence of international migration flows, colonial history and national motives are all interwoven in altering, but most of the time reproducing relations of class, gender, race and power. The major arguments put forth in this thesis such as seafarers as 'aspirational migrants' who continually renegotiate patriarchal roles and family responsibilities across distance whilst contending with ethnic discrimination on board and temporary employment reflect the dimension of precariousness underlying their lived experience. This raises a critical reflection on the accommodation of Filipino seafarers in the global arena and their home

country by looking at the rigidity or pliancy of the labour market and the wider social fabric which altogether embeds them. The overlapping experiences of marginalisation and the diluted power to resist sufficiently articulate the need to identify specific vulnerabilities in the transnational process.

The modification in gender relations in re-integration to the community is a crucial example. The effect of transnationalism for reconstituting meaning and roles takes it utmost significance in the roles taken by male Filipino seafarers within their homes. The role expansion of the wife expands to incorporate the disciplinary role of the father. My argument is that this changes the manner of seafarers' sense of inclusion as they embrace additional expectations as a father. Thus whilst the process of migration has allowed seafarers to fulfil breadwinner roles, this has also altered the manner by which they can take part within the changing family structure. Such expanded notion of husband and wife dynamics reflects the importance of incorporating the sociology of emotion in understanding new transnational social formation.

In this light, both the limits to integration and the transformation in social relations raise the importance of exploring transnational migration as a process. This allows the dialectical relations between tensions and the sense of belonging to be evaluated in claiming dual embeddedness.

The evidence in this study of sustained connection to the ship is minimal owing to limitations brought about by the highly mobile location of the ship and high crew turnover. Ties that are principally rooted in professional, hierarchical terms showing little of social requisites tend to become depersonalized and therefore difficult to maintain. This, however, informs the links between the range of social interaction that are possible and mode of belongingness on board. Work is the central mechanism influencing the social life on board and securing a shared sense of place is confronted by the mix of nationality. A racialised hierarchy undermines integration as resistance between nationalities becomes highlighted amongst the crew. Such perspectives on division raise the importance of what may constitute an acceptable level of inclusion that can counter not only isolation but also vulnerability on board. This transnational aspect has not been apparent in earlier conceptions of transnationalism for these are generally oriented towards the lived reality towards the home community. As such, the

highly fractious and conflictual realities faced by seafarers constitute an empirical contribution to understanding transnational relations and position.

9.3 Limitations of the study

There are limits to the extent to which the transnationality of seafarers can be generalised beyond the cases studied. Insofar as exploring seafarers' transnationality is concerned, the explorations undertaken were within the confines of a rural town in the Philippines and a binational container ship. The evidence presented is therefore limited to the conditioning factors of those two places. In terms of the shore side aspect of the study, Sta. Ana as a town cannot be taken to represent the whole condition underlining seafarers in other places. Relatively affluent and with a strong migratory tradition, thick linkages to the community may vary in intensity when compared to other towns. In this study, for instance, political linkages in terms of joining organisations and clubs didn't show much strength but this could be more manifest in other places.

In terms of the number of cases by type of ship, Filipino seafarers working on bulk carriers and tankers might express transnationality differently. With shorter turnaround times, bulk carriers and tankers often stay longer in a port giving seafarers more access to ports and therefore the possibility of more opportunities to establish bonds with other crew members. Genuinely multicultural ships may also impact on transnationalism. Previous studies have referred to multicultural ship where no one nationality dominated as opposed to the bi-national ship used for this study. Had time allowed, it would have been beneficial for the study if at least one other ship was included in the study.

The manner by which seafarers' lives are grounded on the ship studied, such that Filipino seafarers of the same geographic area tend to group together, could also explain the less cohesive nature of the relationship on board. This idea of regionalism amongst Filipinos, is in fact underlined by resistance between groups of Filipinos and therefore shows the group to be less cohesive. In a genuinely multiethnic ship, Filipino seafarers, being few in number, may emphasize more on their similarity with other seafarers from other ethnic backgrounds and therefore create a more inclusive shipboard environment. That the resulting social integration on board the ship studied can be an outcome of the

regionalism or group identity between Filipinos is recognised in this study. Thus while the underlying resistance among Filipino ratings, echoes the idea of a “communities of fate” discussed by Scott (1990:134) for which those within an organisation are “likely to share a clear antagonistic view of their employers and to act with solidarity,” the regionalism amongst Filipinos can generate division. This increased sense of regional consciousness may constrain work togetherness on board. Thus, the regional concentration of Filipino seafarers can also create a more inclusive or exclusive social experience that can shape the transnational trajectory for this particular ship studied.

Another limitation of the study concerns the number of seafarers interviewed in the community. Where most of the interviews were conducted with the seafarers’ wives it would be further enriching for the study to increase the number of seafarers interviewed and allot a few more months in the community to gather data. In this way, a clearer picture of their modes of integration could have been discussed. Acting within the overriding concerns of time and funding, however, I took a practical approach in terms of choosing the type of ship and community and the length of time I can reasonably devote on both fronts.

My presence on board the ship as a female, a student and a Filipino also affected the rapport and extent of information entrusted to me by the seafarers. Being a female researcher, I was continually cautious about how I positively presented myself without being too overfamiliar with seafarers on board. More than the physical access to the ship, the opportunity to obtain more than basic information required learning to blend in an all-male environment without compromising my position as a female. Being a student also provided some leverage such that association with male seafarers, often married, was justifiably formal and respectably academic. These two identities were managed at the onset by offsetting the initial weakness found in a female status with the strength of a student doing research for the shipping community. Another key component, being a Filipino, was quite instrumental in advancing my research interests. Where initially my gatekeeper, the captain, also provided a form of protection by introducing me as a female friend doing research, there was a bit of apprehension on my part whether this will make the Filipino seafarers hesitant and less willing to divulge information about their on board lives. I gradually altered this possibility by ensuring that being a Filipino who speaks the same language, I can be confided with information

that will not threaten their relationships with the Indian officers on board. As the questions deal with seafarers' affiliations with foreign officers and within each other as Filipinos, I continually emphasized that my student persona would ensure confidentiality in the interview. Given these negotiations, the data I was provided with reflected more of their predicaments as those regarded as "lesser nationalities" or those countries stereotyped as only able to produce ratings. Meanwhile, the interview accounts from the Filipino officers (second mate and electrocadet), because they simultaneously belong amongst Indian officers and Filipino ratings, showed efforts of balancing their nationality and rank. Oftentimes, the emphasis was more on their role in mediating the perceived racialised treatment on the Filipino ratings and as an efficient, credible Filipino officer in the eyes of the other foreign officer. As such, discussion of relationships at work often pertained to a demonstration of a Filipino seafarer being able to work well amongst officers from different nationality. Equally, this also demonstrated how my position as a Filipino student was regarded. Being aware of my status as an academic Filipino researcher, the Filipino officers emphasized more on the strategies employed to fit with other nationalities which overlooked their biases in cases of work conflicts.

9.4 Future areas for research

In light of what emerged from the study, certain areas for research will provide further understanding of Filipino seafarers' transnationality. As the study dealt only with rural households, including urban households such as towns in Manila that have sufficient number of seafarers living among them can provide additional insights on performing belonging. A seafaring community without a long history of migration can deepen understanding of how cross-border attachments are manifested in other contexts. This could provide a contrast to the way social connections and affiliations within the community are forged and the influence of notions of home and belonging on seafarers.

Furthermore, the overlapping results with the new themes discussed in this study could be analytically relevant in terms of the general conditions for transnational engagement, to the extent relevant to the seafarers. In places where relationships may not be as

watertight as those found in rural seafaring communities, how do the incentives and motives for maintaining ongoing connection get manifested? How is community solidarity accessed in an urban locale where migration is not generational? As this study has considered the social pressure coming from a rural community in sustaining connections, relevant lines of inquiry could include whether this affects remittance behaviour and access to alternative form of livelihood. In political terms, is there a substantive role for local politics to enhance inclusion? Whilst in the present study seafarers political involvement is relatively weak, such dimensions deserve more attention. This approach underscores the different forms of social inclusion affecting transnational dynamics and marginalised conditions referred to in the study.

9.5 Conclusion

The transnational approach provided a framework by which to evaluate attitudes, behaviour patterns and activities by enabling a context which does not treat two sites of engagement as separate and exclusive but instead enables a ship – community field of experience. The varied experience of migration reflects the comprehensive context by which transnationalism is articulated. The contradictions in Filipino seafarers' transnationalism reveal that participation and involvement is subject to economic, social and institutional disparity in both global and local sense. The view arrived at following this investigation is that there is perhaps more to be learned from such grounded observations than from brittle attempts to categorise seafarers as transnational migrants or not.

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Appendix One. Research Access Letter (Ship)

Subject: Request to go onboard ship to conduct research

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Iris Acejo, I am a PhD research student in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University, United Kingdom. I am attached to the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) as a Nippon Foundation Fellow. SIRC is internationally recognized for its high-quality researches on seafarers and seafarer-related issues.

My background is in economics but my PhD is a sociological study looking at the assimilation of seafarers. This study aims to look at the social interaction of seafarers on board a ship and on shore. For this reason, I would like to request permission to travel for 2 weeks on board one of your ships. Ideally this time period would include one or more port calls. During the time on board my aim would be to talk and interact with seafarers informally, but also to conduct formal interviews about this topic with those who are willing.

During the conduct of my research, I will adhere to the guidance of the senior researchers at SIRC who have experienced on board research. I will comply to the company rules and most importantly, I will not interfere with the work or routines of the individuals on board. Utmost anonymity and confidentiality for the company and the seafarers in my study will also be observed. All the crew on board will be fully informed of the aims of the study and I will only interview those who willingly give their consent.

The study will only focus on the subject proposed. To ensure the confidentiality of participants I regret that I will not be able to acknowledge the company in the study. While onboard I will be covered by Cardiff University insurance, and am willing to sign a company disclaimer. I also appreciate that I may have to make a per diem payment to

cover my food and other costs. I fully accept that schedules may change and my boarding and departure will be at the convenience of the company.

The project is being supervised by Professor Theo Nichols of the School of Social Sciences and Professor Helen Sampson of the Seafarers International Research Centre of Cardiff University. The protocol has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University. Further details about the work of the Seafarers International Research Centre can be found on the Cardiff University website at: www.sirc.cf.ac.uk.

I have attached my CV for your information. If I can provide any further information please do not hesitate to contact me. I am most grateful to you for taking the time to consider this request and await your response.

Respectfully yours,

Iris L. Acejo

PhD Student, Cardiff University

Appendix Two. Participant Information Sheet

I would like to invite you to participate in my study on seafarers. The following will give you a short overview of what this means for you and the information you decide to give. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand the aims of my research and what it will involve. Kindly take the time to read the following information carefully. You are free to ask any questions pertaining to the study.

Who am I?

My name is Iris Acejo and this study is part of my requirement for a PhD degree in Cardiff University. In undertaking this study, I am supervised by two professors in Cardiff University School of Social Sciences. The study has the approval of the School Research Ethics Committee. If you have further questions, feel free to contact me thru telephone: 09203967871 or e-mail: acejoi@cardiff.ac.uk. If you decide to take part in this study you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

Why am I doing this research?

This research aims to look at social life of seafarers at sea and at home and the relation between them.

Who can take part? What is involved?

In order to carry out this study, I need to interview active seafarers. The interview will last for an hour and you can withdraw at any time during the interview. Should you agree, the discussion will be audiotaped. If you participate in this study, you will be asked to discuss your views and opinions on various topics related to your ways of working and living.

What will I do with the information?

The interviews will be transcribed and you would be given a copy if you are interested. The transcripts will be kept hidden securely in my office and will not be read by anybody except myself and my supervisors. Your name and personal identities will not be identified in the transcripts. You are free not to answer any question.

What is the level of confidentiality?

All the information you reveal in this study will be kept confidential. Your privacy will be protected at all times. Other participants will not be informed of your participation in this research. In the final paper, your name and other names you mentioned will be disguised by the use of a pseudonym.

Appendix Three. Informed Consent Form**Title of Project: Transnational Communities and the Assimilation of Filipino Seafarers****Name of Researcher: Iris L. Acejo**

I have read or listened to the above information and I have decided that I will participate in the project described above. The researcher has explained the study to me and answered my questions. I know what will be asked of me. I understand that the purpose of the study is to unravel the degree of belongingness of seafarers. If I don't participate, there will be no penalty or loss of rights. I can discontinue my participation at any time, even after I have started.

I agree to participate in the study. My signature below also indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form.

Participant's signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Date _____

Appendix Four. Ethics Committee Approval Letter

Cardiff School of Social Sciences
 Director Professor F. L. W. Beynon
 Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol Caerdydd
 Cofrewydder Yr Athro Huw Beynon



Cardiff University
 Clarendon Building
 King Edward VII Avenue
 Cardiff, CF10 3AT
 Wales, UK
 Tel: Pbs: +44(0)29 2052 3175
 Fax: Pbs: +44(0)29 2052 4175
 www.cardiff.ac.uk
 Prifysgol Caerdydd
 Jastoc Morgannwg
 Rhedfa Ewros Edeuall W
 Caerdydd, CF10 3AT
 Sgwrs Y Ddyddys Goleuol

10th January 2008

Our ref: SREC/319

Iris Acejo
 PhD Programme
 SOCSI (SIRC)

Dear Iris

Your project entitled "*Transnational Communities and the Assimilation of Filipino Seafarers*" has been approved by the Cardiff School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (SREC) at its meeting on 9th January 2008 and you can now commence the project.

Please note that since your project involves data collection abroad, you may need approval from a competent body in the relevant jurisdiction.

If you make any substantial changes with ethical implications to the project as it progresses you need to inform the SREC about the nature of these changes. Such changes could be: 1) changes in the type of participants recruited (e.g. inclusion of a group of potentially vulnerable participants), 2) changes to questionnaires, interview guides etc. (e.g. including new questions on sensitive issues), 3) changes to the way data are handled (e.g. sharing of non-anonymised data with other researchers).

All ongoing projects will be monitored every 12 months and it is a condition of continued approval that you complete the monitoring form.

Please inform the SREC when the project has ended.

Please use the SREC's project reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Professor Soren Helm
 Chair of the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

cc: E Renton
 Supervisors: H Sampson & T Nichols

This letter is for retention only and confirms information previously emailed to you.

Appendix Five. Interview Topic Guide

General

- age/nationality/civil status/ rank/ length of time working at sea
- motivations for choosing seafaring career

Social Participation

On a ship

- How do you describe your work on-board?
- What do you usually do when you are off-duty?
- What kind of ships have you worked on?
- Do you have any friends on-board the ship? Do you share stories of your life?
- Do you help each other out? How?
- Are you satisfied with the degree of attachment you have formed with them?
- Do you find it hard to relate with other seafarers? How does this affects you?
- Can you say that you are able to form friendship with other seafarers?
- How does your rank affect your relationship with other seafarers?
- To what extent do you feel connected with other seafarers of different ranks and nationalities?
- Do you like working on a ship? Why?
- How long do you intend to work as a seafarer?
- Do you think you belong to the ship?

On your community ashore

- What is the first thing you do when you come home?
- How is your relationship with your family, relatives and friends?
- Were there instances were you feel you don't belong? Why?
- What makes you feel that you are part of the family?
- How often do you visit your relatives?

- Do you have to adjust everytime you go ashore? What sort of adjustments?
- How long have you lived in your community? Do you foresee living here for a long time? Why?
- How would you describe your closeness with your neighbors?
- Are there any activities in the community you participate in?
- Why did you participate in these activities?
- Are you member of any of the following?
 - o Union?
 - o Professional Association?
 - o Political Group?
 - o Church of religious group?
 - o Homeowners' Association?
 - o Sports club?
 - o Drama/music club?
 - o Group dedicated to some cause?
 - o School council?
 - o Service club?
 - o Social club?
 - o Other groups?
- Why do you join these groups?
- Do you feel you belong in the community? How about on shore?

Occupational Pride

- Are you proud of being a seafarer? How does your seafaring experience affect the way you encourage/discourage other people to this profession?
- Why did you choose this job?
- Is your job high prestige or low prestige?
- How does the public regard your job?
- Do you generally advise people to become a seafarer? Why?
- In your family, are there many seafarers? How has this influenced your decision?
- Do you see yourself being a seafarer for a long time?

On the ship

- work on-board ship
- ship activities
- work contacts

On the community

- contact with other seafarers
- group membership/community links