

The Dual Impetus of Neoliberalism and Transnationalism: Philippine Citizenship in Contemporary Governance

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2013

ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the novel transformations of citizenship articulations of Filipino transnational labor migrants and households, through the practice of social entrepreneurship, in relation to systems of governmentality. It approaches transnational labor migration as a sociopolitical problematic that provides a fertile ground for a critical examination of the Philippine state practices of community- and nation-making, the transformation of the roles it assumes, the redefinition of who its members are, and the modes of knowledge production associated with such practices under advanced capitalism. On the basis of multi-sited ethnographic research in Rome and Metro Manila between January and March 2013, I examine the values, practices and meanings Filipino transnational migrants and their households assign to citizenship. My arguments are three-fold: First, the transnational migrant communities today are the key site for, as well as constitutive of, new citizenship articulations. At the same time, it is a novel site for neoliberal governance practices. Second, I argue that the neoliberal criteria of self-governing and social entrepreneurship become citizenship ideals that further reinforce the cultural logics of transnationalism. Taken together, it follows that through the dual impetus of neoliberalism and transnationalism, OFWs and households articulate, and are regulated by, practices encouraging mobility and citizenship elements realigned with markets, governments, and cultural regimes. In conclusion, the research has revealed how neoliberalism is inflected by cultural meanings and histories, and that transnational migrant households' articulations of citizenship challenge notions of bounded national citizenship.

Keywords: transnational labor migration, Overseas Filipino workers, transnational migrant households, transnational migrant communities, citizenship, neoliberalism, governance, governmentality, social entrepreneurship, Rome, Italy, Metro Manila, Philippines

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to have worked with my research supervisors, Prof. Andreas Dafinger and Prof. Ayşe Çağlar, whose unwavering guidance and encouragement have been a great force for this endeavor to come to fruition.

I wish to express my appreciation to Ágnes Tóth and Eszter Timár, academic writing consultants, who have been of great help in times of painstaking revisions.

I am also indebted to all my informants who have wholeheartedly welcomed me into their homes and have assisted me in securing invaluable resource.

I also show my gratitude to my partner and inspiration, Aaron Flores Daza, and endearing family and friends, especially Lalah Varias, Denver Serquiña, Denise Matias and Ron Vilog, who have expressed their steadfast support all throughout my graduate studies.

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INTRODUCTION

“We are One Community”: a Social Entrepreneurship training session

It is a Sunday, one of those hectic days where church and counseling obligations are scheduled at the same time. Still, much anticipation can be felt among the participants attending today’s session on Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship (LSE). They are all looking forward to the return of the couple who started LSE in Italy in 2008. Ed and Tina are coming back to where it all began to deliver the session today. They have decided to retire in the Philippines and continue to spread LSE in Hong Kong, Dubai, and other countries where many overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) reside. They have recently started the program targeting families of OFWs in Metro Manila, which I also observe. LSE is a product of collaboration of OFSPES¹ (Philippine NGO in Rome), the Ateneo School of Government (ASoG, based in the Philippines) and several government institutions, in charge of the regulation of labor migration in the Philippines, such as the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO²), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA³) and Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO⁴).

As I step into the room, I walk towards the couple and introduce myself to them. We have been communicating through email, they know the topic of my research and that I am attending today’s session. I decide to sit at the back just as I did in my earlier observation while I greet some participants whom I have met and interviewed.

There are ten participants (relatively less compared to other Sundays) in this session which includes five students, previous participants, and some members of OFSPES. It is the third session on the module of Leadership, among two other modules on Financial Literacy and Social

¹ <http://www.pilipinas-ofspes.net/>

² http://www.philembassy-rome.net/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=98&Itemid=94

³ <http://www.owwa.gov.ph:8080/wcmqs/>

⁴ <http://www.cfo.gov.ph/>

Entrepreneurship. Tina opens the session by asking each participant to share what they have learned and practiced since they started the program. Most of them voice that they have been conscious enough to think before buying, asking if they need it or just want it. They have learned the importance of handling finances, for example, setting priorities in spending one's income, investing the earlier the better, planning for long-term goals especially when it comes to pension and knowing more insurance policies. The younger participants express the value of setting financial goals as early as one can. What strikes me is that nobody mentions leadership or social entrepreneurship even though they have had earlier sessions on those topics. Tina seems pretty impressed by what was shared. She stresses that LSE imparts life skills. "We have a limited amount of will power," she reminds the participants. "Do resolutions one at a time and try to make it easy on yourself...What you can do is join the company of prudent people and you can reinforce one another."

Topics today include migration and development, conflict management, negotiation skills and team-building. Tina presents migration and development as the first part of today's session. The objective is set on how to respond to the challenges of OFWs and their households given the impact of migration on the household and family values. Tina shows a brief history of three waves of Filipino migration, from the US commonwealth period in the Philippines, wherein agricultural workers were sent to Hawaii and Alaska to sending qualified professionals in the 1960s then to export labor, an implicit Philippine government policy. She then simply enumerates several reasons of Filipinos for migration, which include poverty and underdevelopment, migration mentality which highlights the expected gain rather than the real gains, decrease of employment in the agriculture sector, demographic factor, and a political choice in which migration is part of the economic development model of the Philippines.

Tina jumps into the meat of her presentation by providing a list of Filipino core values, which she divides into strengths and weaknesses. She enumerates hard-work and industriousness, faith and religiosity, interpersonal relationship, family orientation, ability to survive, joy and humor are enumerated by Tina as strengths. She warns every participant to move away from weaknesses such as lack of discipline, especially financial, colonial mentality, individualistic, extreme family centeredness, passivity and lack of initiative, lack of self-analysis and self-reflection. As she reads each, everyone shows their agreement either by nodding or uttering yes. She highlights the issue of individualism and what strikes me again is when she asks a rhetorical question, “Whose responsibility is the Filipino youth problem?” “We are one community,” she emphasizes. In the context of working in Italy, “it takes only one Filipino’s reputation to jeopardize everyone’s.” At this point, what is not verbally communicated makes a resounding agreement on the underlying assumptions that the cause and the solution of the “problem” of Filipino transnational migrant families in general lie in the unit themselves; and that all OFWs essentially belong to a “community,” holding each other accountable.

The next topic digs into the social costs of migration resulting from the lack of savings consciousness of the transnational migrant household, which then breeds dependency on the earnings of household members, disinterest in education and non-setting of goals. “Right, that’s true, those are the social costs of migration,” somebody whispers to me. The tone of the talk goes from bleak to hopeful by drawing attention to the staggering amount of remittances recorded at 24 billion US dollars in 2012 and 20.1 billion US dollars in the previous year. Tina relates to the participants that social costs of migration can be addressed through maximizing the gains from migration by tapping remittances for development. She exemplifies the work of 50 percent of LSE participants who invest in agriculture in the Philippines. Tina shares that she

hopes for the potential of OFWs, comprising 10 percent of the Filipino population, who can be empowered and bring about change. As she reminds everyone, “Filipino migrants can bring good governance practices to their communities through their families or they themselves...It’s our responsibility to hold public officials accountable so that they won’t be corrupt.” No questions are asked, no objections are made. Does silence imply understanding? Are they critically engaged?

Ed delivers the next topic of five principles and commitments of servant leadership taken from Kouzes and Posner, founders of The Leadership Challenge⁵. Ed enumerates the principles model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Ed asks the group to bear with him and absorb the lecture. I see Ed challenging everyone to engage in self-reflection as he goes through each point and throws in imperatives such as, “Find your voice.” “Clarify your values.” “Align actions with values.” “Envision the future.” “Imagine exciting possibilities.” “Words create worlds.” “Motivation is like taking a bath.” “Change.” “Grow.” “Improve.” “Learn from mistakes.” “Collaborate.” “Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion.” “Empower others.” “Celebrate.” “Change happens in small groups.” This self-help activity highly promotes the psychologization of the self in everyday life, devoid of social relations and the contexts of social power. It invokes the cultivation of one’s psyche through accessing their inner power in a voluntary and individualistic manner. This empowerment technique presents those imperatives as desirable goals, which then entail the regulation of the self.

Ed engages the participants in another self-reflection activity through telling the “Pencil Parable.” He reads five important things the pencil maker tells the pencil before the latter is sent out to the world and becomes the best pencil it can ever be. He then asks everyone to think

⁵ <http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/home.aspx>

of themselves as the pencil, with the same reminders. “You were made to do great things,” as the message goes. One participant expresses her delight in listening to the story by promising she will always remind herself of living a purposeful life.

Ed shares his expertise in conflict management and so he stresses the “90/10 principle” taken from Stephen Covey. One participant reminds everyone what it means from what they have learned from previous sessions, “90 percent is something you can control and 10 percent is something you cannot.” It becomes more interactive as participants share their problems when it comes to conflict management, especially their experience with employers who are in a superior position. Ed advises them to “choose your fights” and “the best way is to communicate effectively in a professional manner.” The morning session closes with these appeals.

The couple invites me to join them for lunch, as this is the only time today for interview. After getting our own meals from a buffet prepared by the participants, we go into a separate room and start talking about what social entrepreneurship is all about in the context of international labor migration from and development in the Philippines. “Social entrepreneurship is a pragmatic alternative to development in the Philippines,” Tina articulates. She differentiates it from other migrant workers’ advocacy taking their claims to the streets, which only leads one wondering what to do next. Whereas, social entrepreneurship is an approach that provides answers, Tina asserts. “What makes it social is because it targets social problems, which are the first goal of the enterprise, and not necessarily financial,” Tina continues. Ed adds that “social entrepreneurship targets communities and are involved as stakeholders.”

When asked about LSE, Tina says that “It has a holistic approach - political, economic, cultural and spiritual. The program is a call for activist citizens, who are empowered to take

action and innovation and are aware of their opportunities - and not victims. In fact, LSE is like a social enterprise itself.” Ed agrees, “LSE teaches participants skills, so that if a venture failed, they can start another one.” Tina tells a brief history of the creation of LSE. OFSPES were looking for a program that can address the social costs of migration, especially the lack of financial knowledge of OFWs, at least in Italy, and she found out about the social entrepreneurship program being promoted by the Ateneo School of Governance. The school has had previous arrangements with the Filipino chaplaincy in Rome, through UGAT Foundation, offering counseling sessions to OFWs, according to Tina. So she has made collaboration with the school to bring the social entrepreneurship program to Rome, for a start. I wonder how come the program targets OFWs and Tina discloses that it is supposed to target the Filipino youth but the attendance was not so satisfying and so they have made the program available for every OFW. Tina says that the program is still in its testing period because they have found out that not all participants want to become entrepreneurs. “We have recently made changes regarding the outputs from the graduates, they can choose from creating a business plan, personal essay, or NGO plan,” she elaborates. “Filipinos are always in groups,” Ed reasons, which bothers me as it is taken as a given.

As the lunch break comes to an end, I ask how social entrepreneurship works within or against capitalism and neoliberalism. Tina stresses that, “it is working within capitalism and neoliberalism but also fighting and questioning the current capitalist system and providing the alternative while advocating or advancing migrants’ rights.” We all pack and go back to the afternoon session while Tina makes a promise we can continue our interview in Manila.

“I am a Hero in the Family”: a Filipina migrant worker in Rome

As the sun sets and as I commute back to my accommodation with Sote, my host, after her work cleaning four houses that day, she tells me we can conveniently do the interview there and then. I immediately take my notebook and pen and ask her first how she decided to go abroad. “I take on the responsibility of breadwinner of seven family members and that prompted me to seek greener pasture. I am only an elementary graduate. Going abroad is risky, similar to gambling. However, what would happen to me and my family if I stayed in Manila longer? Our life was like a roller-coaster and most of the time we were living from hand to mouth. It was difficult to save because salaries were low and prices of basic commodities were high. I thought I could save easily by working abroad, especially if I lived in my employer’s house,” she recalls. “I was confronted with a dilemma of earning much versus family separation, just like every migrant,” Sote recounts. She has been abroad for thirteen years and was first in Saudi Arabia to do domestic work for three and a half years. Her working conditions with her employer were unfavorable. In 2010, her employer brought her with them to Italy for a vacation without knowing that Sote was planning to run away from them once in Italy. She heard from her friends in Saudi Arabia that Italy is a free country. Sote did not want to miss that opportunity and so she took the risk of leaving her employer without any papers. She waited for her permesso di soggiorno (stay permit) while doing domestic work on an informal basis and staying with her aunt for refuge. The Italian state grants amnesty to undocumented Filipino workers. “My life abroad has been full of trials, but never have I thought of giving up, especially on my family. I am used to working very hard ever since I was child. I have been in Italy for six and a half years and I can count on my employers in terms of financial, moral and stay permit support. My

ingredients for work are love, patience and understanding,” she relates. In this way, she has kept good relations with all her employers.

I have learned that there are certain rights for domestic helpers in Italy. They are given 13th month pay, a month vacation which falls in August - the same as their employers, a kind of liquidation when they reach one year of service, days off on Thursday and Sunday, and two types of pensions schemes: da lavoro when they are 62 years old (women) or 65 years old (men) for a minimum of 19-year work/contribution and social pension regardless of the number of years of contribution.

Sote proudly says, “I consider myself a hero and a leader of my family because I do not neglect them. I have never thought of giving up on them. My children are very thankful because they wouldn’t be able to survive without me being here especially because I send an average of 500 Euros a month without a miss and they go to good schools. However, I would like them to understand that I am alone working for the family, being the breadwinner.” Sote considers her household quite shy in asking for extra money and they are not materialistic. She finds it annoying, though, that there are times her household opts to borrow money from friends, and in the end, she still pays for it. She would rather give more money then.

Sote enumerates “hard-working, humble, self-confident, showing gratitude” as the hallmarks of her being a leader of the household and the Filipino community in Italy as well. I have learned that there are about 141 Filipino organizations in central Italy alone, ranging from church-based to hometown associations to hobbyists. A big percentage of migrants volunteer or hear the mass at a Filipino chaplaincy. Some prefer not to be affiliated and simply hang out with friends at Termini central station or roam around window shopping on days off.

Sote takes advantage of the new technology to be online 24/7 anywhere so she can always update with her household in Manila. Her life abroad also revolves around work, love and social life. She was active as a choir member in church. Now, she is more focused on volunteering at OFSPES through LSE and selling condominiums. She then shares her social entrepreneurship activity, AKIT Magazine, along with ten OFWs who have also undergone LSE. She says the magazine is an avenue for the Filipino youth to write columns and hopefully inspire OFWs, particularly the youth, to spend their time in something worthwhile and make use of their talents. In this way, it aims to address the social problems of Filipino youth in Italy through changing their mindset to focus on studying so as not to end up doing domestic work, just like their experience. Some of the social problems she identifies are difficulty in adjusting to the Italian environment, especially in speaking the language and in school where they experience bullying and peer pressure. Because parents are busy earning Euros, children are not guided well with Filipino values and they tend to follow what they see from other Italian youth, according to Sote. As she always imparts to her three children in the Philippines, “do not waste time, study while you are young.” Her role in this venture is to sell the magazine, for only 1 Euro per copy, and so far they have had six publications since 2010.

When asked about how her earnings are spent, Sote expresses that gaining stability in Rome has helped her invest in a condominium in the Philippines, which is being rented out. She also tries to save an average of 200 Euros a month, as what she has learned from joining LSE. In terms of paying for her daughter’s tuition fees through a remittance agent, the money is directly transferred to the university in the Philippines, which Sote says makes it very convenient.

Sote plans to stay in Rome for another 10 or 15 years, doing the same job, until she thinks her household is in a stable condition, financially speaking. On April 1st, two of her three

daughters are coming to Italy, the eldest stays for vacation and the second one stays for good. Sote has arranged their documents for family reunification.

As soon as we reach the house, Sote takes some copies of AKIT Magazine and lets me read three of them. She wraps up our talk in a self-reflective way, “it is good to live even though there are many trials.”

Visions of Development: a left-behind household in Manila

I am welcomed by Aira, Sote’s eldest daughter and Cely, Sote’s mother, into their humble home in the suburbs of Manila with a delicious lunch. I am carrying a football with me from Sote and I give it to her nephew, who is sick, unfortunately. Aira and I have already talked online while I was walking with Sote once. Both of them use android phones so they can always keep in touch. I have told Aira about the purpose of my visit and share with her some stories about Sote.

“I was only six when my mom left us,” recalls Aira, who is now 16 and in the first year university. “The last time and the only time she was home was six years ago.” Cely adds, “that was when we were living in Cavite (a province in the south of Manila). Sote has not been in this house, she has only seen photos of it. However, she pays for this house about 9,000 Php (approx. 170 Euros). She bought a condominium and she sends another 2,000 Php (approx. 40 Euros) for that. We live through her remittances for more than ten years now, without a miss. She sends it through RCBC (Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation) or iRemit once or twice a month, more than 20,000 Php (more than 400 Euros).” When asked how remittances are spent, Cely responds, “we spend it on our daily sustenance with a big allowance for groceries.” Cely shows me the bars of detergent soap she has reserved because she does the budgeting and she sometimes tells Sote how remittances are spent. “When we were still in Cavite,” Cely recalls,

“we had a micro-store business to help with the expenses.” Nowadays, Sote’s father sells ready-to-wear clothes by going around villages on foot and they rent out a videoke machine. Cely shares, “there are times when we tighten our belts and there are also times when we loosen. It depends on house reconstruction expenses, we do it slowly, and not all at the same time. We are also planning to do some reconstruction of a room upstairs.”

I ask Aira about their forthcoming trip to Rome, she smiles and shows her excitement. Aira tells me that once she and Sote were on Skype, they were creating a list of grocery items which Aira could bring for her. However, Aira’s excitement is accompanied by anxiety. She still has to process some of her and her sister’s documents before leaving. Also, she is afraid that she might not get a stay permit before school starts in June. She says she does not intend to miss classes for that.

I ask Aira about what Sote told me once that she is planning to set up a business anytime soon. Aira says that as a student of Business Administration in Marketing Management, she has been reflecting upon the idea of setting up a business in Rome when she finishes university as that is what Sote is encouraging her to do. Given the chance, her inkling says a Filipino restaurant may be profitable but she still has to adapt to the new surroundings. Aira prefers to look for a job in the business sector after graduation to gain some knowledge in the field and then set up a business in Manila. She shares with me her plan of taking some automotive courses after her graduation because she might want to pursue a business in relation to it.

“There are things that my mom and I are still discussing. I always tell her that my dream is for the whole family to be with her mom in Rome. If that’s the case, mom has to take all eight of us. If not, my mom can retire here when I land a job.” Aira has learned from her mom that

Italy has a better treatment of the elderly (which could be good for Cely) and people with disability (considering her sister who is mute) and a better pension system.

At the moment, Aira and Cely's sentiments are mostly about their lack of savings and that they would go hungry if Sote was in the Philippines.

These ethnographic vignettes establish the central theme and scope of my research - how OFWs and households' everyday practices articulate, and are shaped by, the accelerated flows of capital, people, information and cultures. Specifically, the research is concerned with the strategies and logics incorporated by individuals and governments, which are entrenched in the processes of power and capital accumulation.

Sote and her household are apt contemporary emblems as they embody novel strategies not only in enhancing their standard of living but also in realigning their values and visions with the interests of economic development induced by transnational labor migration. Filipino domestic workers in Rome - with the first influx in the 1970s (Basa, Harcourt, Zarro 2011: 13) - provide a case in point in relation to mobilizing themselves for collective action to contribute to social development projects in the Philippines, as they attempt to showcase how financial remittances *ought to be* used productively. These OFWs claim that their altruistic actions can help counter the growing social costs and the culture of transnational labor migration, wherein Filipino youth are at risk of continuing the same kind of situation as their migrant parents. Social costs include long-term household separation and heavy reliance on the constant flow of remittances, which can further lead to a culture of consumerism and dependency (LSE Training

Program 2013: 1). In addition, these OFWs give credit to support organizations such as OFSPES (see first vignette), which encourage them to shift their attention away from the conditions of their contingent work to the prospects of local resources and market dynamism to realize socio-economic change through creating social entrepreneurial activities. This phenomenon opens up distinct perspectives on a number of issues, including the role of nation-states, belongingness and citizenship, and household dynamics, especially in relation to contemporary governance of cross-border mobility.

Research Objectives

The research embarks on a proposition that by exploring transnational practices and strategies of mobile subjects in relation to identifying themselves as members of a broader polity, and the social circumstances enabling their spatial circulation across state borders, we capture how nation-states respond to capital in late modernity. Moreover, the research approaches transnational labor migration as a sociopolitical problematic that provides a fertile ground for a critical examination of the Philippine state practices of community- and nation-making, transformation of the roles it assumes, redefinition of who its members are, and the modes of knowledge production associated with such practices under advanced capitalism. Specifically, this study explores the strategies of government that reorders spatial circulation of population across borders and restructures the notion and sites for the articulation of citizenship. More significantly, I focus on the emergence of novel spaces of citizenship such as the transnational migrant “communities” and on the transformations in the institutionalized relations between the states and their “members,” within the context of the neoliberal reordering of the society.

Within this tapestry of citizenship regime and multiple seats of power, Philippine civil society organizations inject social entrepreneurship and financial literacy programs articulating

socioeconomic rights to transnational labor migrants and households beyond their precarious work, and are designed to link and advocate transnational labor migration and development in the Philippines. I critically analyze how the concept of social entrepreneurship turns into a program of intervention, guided by several questions: how can converting “poor” households into “empowered” social entrepreneurial subjects be revered as a development solution? In relation to the concerns of the household, how did the experts depict poverty and source of income technical and manageable? Through what train of reasoning did they identify that social relations were the crucial domain for expert intervention? These schemes warrant critical scrutiny because whether or not they thrive or fail to reach its goals, the emergence of this particular approach to government is - as Foucault (1991) asserts - itself a historical episode.

The phenomenon under study could be explained through the recent Foucauldian-inspired literature on governmentality (i.e. Rose’s (1999) notion of “governing through community” (p.189) and Ong’s (2006) concept of “postdevelopmental government” (p.76) of Southeast Asia), wherein neoliberalism and transnationalism surface in a dual impulse, which makes for a strategy of government that regulates flows of people and redefines the arenas and elements of citizenship. Governing through community regards community as not only a site of governance or an object of governance and a goal but *also at the same time* the subject of governance or self-governance (Rose 1999). Postdevelopmentalism alludes to a dispersed strategy regulating populations in connection to “differentiated spaces of governance, with a graduating effect on sovereignty, and on citizenship” (Ong 2006: 77).

I refer to neoliberalism as “a migratory technology of governing that interacts with situated sets of elements and circumstances” (Ong 2007: 5) and to transnationalism as “the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space which has been intensified

under late capitalism” (Ong 1999: 4). The coupling of neoliberalism and transnationalism reveals an understanding of citizenship that is no longer unconsciously associated with the frontiers of a single nation-state. These key terms are fully addressed in Chapter 1.

Methodology

I pursued a rather untrodden path of multi-sited ethnography with the aim of capturing fine grained daily transnational interactions and organizations in different settings. It involves a methodological investigation of transnational connections through multi-sited fieldwork, which allows us to take into account a greater variety of societal forms (Faist 2010). I adopted what George Marcus (2009) proposes as a way to examine global processes, which bring about the growing interrelatedness of individuals. Multi-sited ethnography vindicates the study of social phenomena that can only be unraveled by pursuing people, connections, associations, and relationships through time and space (Marcus 1995, Falzon 2009: 1-2). Thus, this methodology renders itself useful in this research given that migrants are often entrenched in multifaceted, multi-sited transnational social fields, including the movers and the non-movers (Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004: 1003). As Massey (2005) puts it, multi-sited ethnography has its way of exploring essential characteristics of the spatial and its intrinsic relation with temporality. Multi-sitedness signifies more than just sites, but spatialized cultural different sites, regardless of the number and distance of sites (Falzon 2009: 13).

Research Sites and People

Through multi-sited ethnography, I was able to analytically explore transnational processes of transactional flows to and fro transnational migrant households in Rome and Metro Manila and what community-led development strategies mean on the ground. I moved via

sojourns in mainly two spatially dispersed fields. It entailed the situational combination of various field techniques such as interviews, observation and note-taking.

Transnational households and connections are constantly established, sustained and re-shaped over time and borders. In this research, I define a transnational household as a socio-economic unit with dispersed members keeping tight relationships across borders. Sote, based in Rome, and Aira and Cely in Manila is a typical illustration; recalling the second and third vignettes. This form of arrangement results in adjustment and shifting roles and responsibilities, especially in relation to caring work and provision.

My point of entry was through online communication, using email and social media, to secure permission for interview and observation of training programs with heads of civil society organizations in Metro Manila and in Rome. The former and current participants of Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship program in Rome were also reached through email for initial orientation. These initial contacts were established with a belief that the field is based on relations of trust and that data are generated in and thick interactions between researcher and researched.

First, I observed a training session in Rome and selected two informants who were known to have an overview of the activities of the formed community. I stayed in their accommodation in January 2013. Then, I asked these informants to identify other informants representative of the group. Using chain sampling, I conducted semi-structured intensive interviews with seventeen Filipino workers by means of information from earlier informants to obtain clarification and profound responses upon re-interview. Through a research process of selection, I was able to limit the field to five informants who sustain ties in Metro Manila. I interviewed these informants several times in various settings. The choice of settings depended

on the informants; meal times, training sessions breaks, when commuting, and spending their days-off on Thursday and Sunday. In this way, I was able to get a grasp of common cultural understandings related to the phenomena under study. These informants agreed that I interview their households in Metro Manila. They introduced me to the members of their households via online communication. The interviews conducted with transnational migrant households revolved around life stories, the transnational aspects of their lives, remittances, the socio-economic conditions remittance transfers take place, visions of development and entrepreneurialism. With development practitioners and trainers, we conversed on their role in the migration-development nexus, their relationship with transnational migrant households, the rationale of the training programs, their history, goals and methods.

I observed two Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship training sessions during my stay in Rome. The training courses I attended were segments of the LSE Program, which are ongoing until April both in Rome and in Manila. Semi-structured interviews with two trainers of LSE and three heads of OFSPES completed my ethnographic data gathered in Rome. My observations centered on how ideologies are translated into technical knowledge, specifically how concepts such as social entrepreneurship and empowerment are meant on the ground, the content of the training sessions and how they are conveyed, and how connections between different domains of activity are attained.

I moved to Metro Manila and stayed there in February and March 2013. I visited some of the household members of my informants in Rome and conducted semi-structured intensive interviews with them. I also observed two LSE training sessions catered to families of OFWs. In addition, I interviewed two trainers of LSE, two heads of the *Economic Resource Center for Overseas Filipinos* (ERCOF), one program officer of *Unlad Kabayan*, and the Dean of the

Ateneo School of Government. ERCOF and *Unlad Kabayan* are non-government organizations, which provide financial literacy and social entrepreneurship programs (respectively) and other related services to OFWs and families for the development of local economies. There were not any on-going programs by these two organizations during my stay and their programs are mostly in the provinces, which set some constraints in data-gathering. Regardless of this limitation, the representatives of these NGOs supplied me with reports and publications in relation to the study at hand. On the other hand, we can recall from the first vignette that the Ateneo School of Government is a collaborator of the LSE project. The Dean is one of the advocates of social entrepreneurship in the Philippines and one of the first people to talk about it in 2006.

All in all, ethnographic and secondary data through multi-sited methodology are used to capture the existing imagined and real relations of transnational migrant households and organizations across borders.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 takes a closer look at the literature on migration and development discourse and social entrepreneurship and its relations with neoliberal governance. Then, it continues with a discussion of governmentality that serves as the analytical framework of this research. It examines the literature on contemporary governance of cross-border mobility in the context of late capitalism, particularly in relation to transnationalism, citizenship and community.

In Chapter 2 I argue that the transnational migrant communities today are the key site for, as well as constitutive of, new citizenship articulations. At the same time, it is a novel site for neoliberal governance practices. The emergence of social entrepreneurship programs is traced through the expert role of CSOs seeking to manage “self-governing,” “empowered” and “responsible” citizen-subjects that are valuable to neoliberal economies. It reveals that

entrepreneurializing the everyday lives of transnational migrant families is attached to new citizenship ideals.

Chapter 3 elucidates the questions of governmentality – the ways in which governance practices are internalized by transnational migrant households, create subjectivities and articulate understandings of citizenship. I make a claim that the neoliberal criteria of self-governing and social entrepreneurship become citizenship ideals that further reinforce the cultural logics of transnationalism. The analysis highlights the rights and responsibilities associated with transnational belonging.

Chapter 4 expounds the dual impetus of neoliberalism and transnationalism in relation to how the Philippine state responds to its increasingly transnational constituencies. It has implications for our understanding of how citizenship adjusts in articulation with neoliberal ideals, how households change as a socioeconomic strategic unit and how household connections are shaped and reshaped over time and space. Therefore, I assert that through the dual impetus of neoliberalism and transnationalism, OFWs and households articulate, and are regulated by, practices encouraging mobility and citizenship elements realigned with markets, governments, and cultural regimes.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides an analysis of what I consider necessary in understanding the emergence of a constellation of particular transnational agents and mechanisms of development under advanced capitalism. Agents of development refer to transnational communities, such as migrants and their households and migrant/hometown associations. Mechanisms of development involve the control of remittance transactions and flows and the practice of social entrepreneurship. The call for unpacking the literature becomes apparent when we consider the extent to which the discourse on transnational migrant communities exhibits their potentialities for sustaining economic development, mainly because of financial remittances; also the literature on social entrepreneurship which heavily rests on several buzzwords – empowerment, social change, local, and community – each of which has been defined broadly and rather uncritically.

More importantly, I seek to fuse transnationalism with the literature on governance and citizenship to reflect on several broader questions concerning the conceptualization of citizenship amid contemporary governance of cross-border mobility – particularly the rescaling of governance, subjectivities, and ideas of belonging.

There are three sections for a more nuanced view of these key concepts. First, I will look into the literature on the migration-development nexus to contextualize the discourse on transnational communities and remittance regulation. Second, I will explore social entrepreneurship as a development tool and its relation to neoliberal governance. The chapter ends with a discussion of governmentality, which serves as the analytical framework of this research. Specifically, the framework takes stock of the interrelation between the said agents and mechanisms of development and citizenship and community in the context of neoliberalism as a technology of governing and government being responsive to the challenges of transnationality.

1.1 Migration and Development

It has been over a decade since the edifice of migration and development has been unveiled upon the world in a special issue of *International Migration* edited by Ninna Nyberg Sørensen, Nicholas Van Hear and Poul Engberg-Pedersen (2002). Since then, scholars have published countless papers on their linkage and various international agencies have taken the upper hand in launching their own programs and new institutions such as the EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative⁶ and the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Glick Schiller (2012) rightfully argues that since the two terms “migration” and “development” have been coupled, this domain of public policy has constantly been marred by a nearsighted vision of how political, economic and social changes are brought about around the world. For example, various governments and inter- and supra-national organizations have developed policies reaching out to transnational migrants, who engage in continuous cross-border relations on personal and collective levels, to harness their development potential (Faist 2011). Such policies include philanthropy through remittances, counter-flows of knowledge through hometown associations, political engagement and migrants’ return (de Haas 2006; Østergaard-Nielsen [ed] 2003; Van Hear, Pieke and Vertovec 2004; Vertovec 2005, 2006; Faist 2010).

This current enthusiasm about migration and development is nothing but a reiteration of prior debates (Faist 2011; de Haas 2012). The debate has been marked by several shifts and claims. The discourse began in the postwar era with a certain enthusiasm, which lead to “brain drain” pessimism from the 1970s, swinging to “brain gain” from the twenty-first century (de Haas 2012: 8). De Haas (2012) makes a significant contribution by having developed a more nuanced view on migration and development. The author moves beyond the debate on “brain

⁶ www.migration4development.org

drain versus brain gain,” by analyzing the major arguments and assumptions of the “optimistic” and “pessimistic” positions on migration and development. De Haas points out that migration and development neo-optimism corresponds to the neoliberal development ideology, which has recently been characterized as minimizing the role of states in effecting development and at the same time magnifying market and individual forces to effect political-economic change and social transformation. This ideology maintains its links with neoclassical economic theory and the functionalist perspective in social theory, which fundamentally disregards structural constraints such as deep-seated socio-economic and power inequalities (de Haas 2012: 20).

1.1.1 Agents of Development

Since post World War II, migrants have been viewed as direct bearers of developmental goals because they are able to reach places, which other development machinery has limited access to (Raghuram 2007: 5). Migrants’ role in redistributing wealth has indicated that they have been recognized as the contemporary agents of development (Raghuram 2007: 5). In particular, transnational migrant associations have been rendered as significant agents. Agents such as “hometown associations, networks of businesspersons, epistemic networks and political diasporas are portrayed as unitary collective actors” (Faist 2008: 22).

In light of this recognition, Faist (2010) reasonably contends that the conceptualization of a transnational civil society coincides with the significance given to community or civil society as a pillar of development in the last thirty years. The author states that the drift toward marketization overlapped with the notion that development involved the empowerment of both individuals and communities to take on the project of development. Since the state retreated as a technique for establishing social order, the community, with an accent on local autonomy and

grassroots involvement, materialized as a compensating apparatus and a functional corrective to previous top-down development approaches (Faist 2010).

By the end of the century, international development policy agencies, through ‘third-way politics,’ positioned the community as a third force balancing both market and state (Taylor 2003). Faist (2008, 2010) expounds how these associations started to use a new concept called social capital, which is assumed to propel development. The author expresses that resources, such as reciprocity and solidarity, which are intrinsic in social ties, are understood as capital-yielding interest. Bringing back the community to the development discourse has also been considered in the migration-development nexus through recognizing the leading role of transnational migrants and communities, especially their increasing remittances (Faist 2008, 2010). The author articulates that the state has assumed the role of a service provider for the market and the community in granting them the essential infrastructure for economic development. He illustrates that this function can be found in Spain and France vis-a-vis West African states, in which migrants are believed to alleviate poverty especially if local governments work with them. This idea is termed co-development, whereby migrants are persuaded to return to their countries and are given financial packages to found businesses on their return (Faist 2008, 2010).

In a particular study of the agency of transnational communities in the context of development, Caglar (2006) correctly asserts that hometown associations (HTAs) take the lead to operate, to a greater extent, as local development agencies for governments and multi- and supra-national organizations. This process can be explained by the rescaling of political and economic space in the framework of the neoliberalization of the state’s regulatory activities. The author argues that within this agenda of evolving neoliberal market-oriented redistributive schemes,

state intervention via HTAs are intended to de-center nationally-scaled forms of state actions. Programs of sending states such as channeling migrants' remittances to development strategies can be accounted for from this framework (Caglar 2006).

1.1.2 Remittances for Development

In the international arena, the World Bank, and its affiliates, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and other international financial bodies, such as the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development have jumped on the bandwagon in hailing remittances as “the new development mantra of the new century” (Camroux 2008: 9). Remittances serve as potential development assistance for developing countries, especially those critically affected by political and economic crises (ADB 2010).

The literature recognizes two main avenues through which remittances encourage development at the household level: direct effects through savings and investment and indirect effects through consumption (Zosa, Orbeta 2009). Savings of migrant workers are sources of high liquidity which benefit the banks (Villegas 2012; Tabuga 2007). Remittances may lead to increased investments in physical assets, for example, farmlands and houses, and also increased investments in education and health (MDG-F 2012; Villegas 2012; Tabuga 2007). In terms of consumption, remittance receipts have its multiplier effect resulting in bigger demand for goods and services, wherein local production is promoted, thus advancing job and enterprise establishment (MDG-F 2012; Tabuga 2007).

This remittance euphoria, specifically the discourse on migrants' remittances and their influence on local development, is framed within animated concerns, which can breed dangerous misinterpretations. As Castles (2007 in de Haas 2012: 20) ingeniously points out, hailing

remittances as the new development mantra of the century runs parallel with the trickle-down theories of modernization of the 1960s. Correspondingly, Kapur (2003 in de Haas 2012: 20) contends that the remittance exaltation illustrates a communitarian, third way approach, embodying the tenet of self-help, wherein migrants become the biggest source of foreign aid. This is the main danger of the optimism on remittances: these views are fairly idealistic and obfuscate structural constraints to employment (Kapur 2003 in de Haas: 20). Once the state takes on this perspective, there is a tendency to be reliant on remittances as a solution to unemployment and become complacent in instigating structural reforms to alleviate poverty (MDG-F 2012).

It is important to take into consideration that not all remittances are monetary. Migrants are not restricted to financial transactions and they remit other kinds of resources, which Levitt (1998) calls social remittances. These social remittances comprise of norms, practices, identities and social capital which continuously traverse within the transnational social field. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves's (2011) careful analysis of the collective nature of social remittances circulated between the Dominican Republic and Boston in the USA reveals that social remittances can transform organizational practice, such as community development organizations, hometown associations, church or political groups. As their study uncovers, the knowledge transferred and the networks created scale up to other levels of organizations and governance. For instance, through experience in working transnationally, hometown associations take on public-private partnership projects that are consistent with their vision of what hometown development entails (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011).

1.2 The Ethos of Social Entrepreneurship

The origin of the expression ‘social entrepreneurship’ (SE) is vague, and yet the concept has been taken up to be a powerful vehicle for social change. Until the late 1990s social entrepreneurship was at first a subject of interest for practitioners who saw themselves as civic entrepreneurs working in shared arenas to enhance the resilience of specific communities or to bring about systemic change within a wide array of social and financial services, according to Hulgard (2010: 295). The author states that since the turn of the century, this picture has changed. Almost 75 percent of academic articles published on social entrepreneurship have surged in the first years of the 2000s, which demonstrates the novelty and increasing significance of the issues related to the concept (Hulgard 2010: 295).

Current definitions of SE do not represent a single body of ideas, however they establish four common identifiable themes: social value creation; a specific understanding of civil society, which demonstrates the need to differentiate from corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the private commercial sector; innovation in relation to addressing social issues; and economic activity (Hulgard 2010; Farmer, Hill, Muñoz 2012). The last three elements are rather contested. Briefly, CSR is defined as conditions where the established firm incorporates activities that advance some social benefit which is in compliance with the law (McWilliams, Siegel, Wright 2006). In this regard, SE sidesteps CSR through its operation in a different setting, wherein its vision materializes in novel organizational forms rather than existing corporations. However, social enterprises can still incorporate and even advance CSR principles (Page, Katz 2011). In terms of innovation, this element highlights SE cultivating a new approach to a social problem and not only the desire to build an enterprise. On the other hand, SE activities generally have an

economic impact either on the participating communities or on the enterprise itself (Hulgard 2010).

At this point, it is important to note that the current literature leaves critical questions unanswered: What comprises social value? What kind of civil society does SE want to build? Is SE a sign that private commercial actors are becoming more interested in the sphere of civil society as a way of enhancing market penetration at the grassroots level? How does a social entrepreneur balance resource allocations between welfare-providing endeavors and profit-making?

To understand how social entrepreneurship has emerged as a tool of development, the literature provides historical phases into which the concept has been entrenched. Social entrepreneurship is embedded in two major, yet diverse, trends that have had a remarkable impact on policy-making around the globe since the mid 1980s (Hulgard 2010: 298). The first is the marketization and the privatization of responsibility for public welfare and the shaking-up of social services with a neoliberal weave (Hulgard 2010: 298). SE has been highly associated with the decline of the welfare system in advanced liberal societies (Dey 2010: 7). It was a historical period where the weaknesses and failures of late capitalism shook up Western principles of social equality, freedom and justice (Dey 2010: 7). According to Hulgard (2010: 299), the second movement is rooted in the global financial crisis in 2008, which paved the way for *économie solidaire* (solidarity economy) as a substitute for the shareholder-based private economy. This trend is characterized by experimentation with new modes of solidarity, collectivism and social activism by civil society groups and social movements making its way into the realm of high politics (Hulgard 2010: 299). As a reaction against neoliberalism, the concept of social entrepreneurship has been advanced as the solution to welfare problems caused

by social change and the constant rate of unemployment (Cook, Dodds, Mitchell 2003: 57). To a certain extent, SE has become an important denomination for many attempts to bring together economic and ‘non-economic’ methods to the provision of public and private goods (Hart, Laville, Cattani 2010). In relation to this, Third Way writers, such as Giddens (1998), advocate social entrepreneurship as an approach to restructure welfare and implicate building social affiliations among the public, social and business sectors and making the most of market dynamism with the pursuit of public goals (Dey 2010; Cook, Dodds, Mitchell 2003). Thus, taking the two movements together, social entrepreneurship reproduces both the marketization and civil society trends as a new approach to respond to social problems in contemporary society.

The other side of the coin is that social entrepreneurship does not go against neoliberalism, rather it is one of its theoretical creations (Dey 2010: 9). Dey justly observes that SE gets situated as a government technique wherein the state is no longer understood as being responsible for the construction and protection of societal stability. Rather, the state presumes the normalization of the entrepreneur character of one’s self and the imperative that individuals must enhance their own bodies as an agency of social value foundation (Dey 2010: 2). The author argues that neoliberalism constitutes the state in ways that it induces the expansion of political forms of government to forms of self-regulation, through strategies striving to change the conduct of individuals through themselves. The author reasonably contends that the fundamental hoax of neoliberalism is that it envisages both the reason of and the answer to adversities in connection with the individual or the community. Hence, the foremost undertaking of government is to cultivate vigorous social entrepreneurs, encouraging them as both just and desirable, and tailoring them to the desires of the market, rather than the other way around (Dey

2010). Peredo (2009 in Dey 2010: 7) provides a case in point that the role of social entrepreneurs then has been defined in relation to the flight of government-led, publicly supported welfare systems, intertwined with a trend to transfer responsibility to private agents within civil society.

To conclude, social entrepreneurship is an endeavor and a phenomenon that underscores the tension between the development of solidarity approaches to markets and politics and the reinforcement of neoliberal ideologies. Social entrepreneurship carries a celebratory representation of individuals with social responsibilities and simultaneously participating in capital-generating activities and a representation of autonomous and empowered communities.

Drawing upon Foucauldian-inspired literature, I now turn to the concept of governmentality to shed light on the relations of the above-mentioned concepts (i.e. agents and mechanisms of development) and how they are instituted within contemporary governance.

1.3 Governmentality

Michel Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality regards the regimes of truth and power creating disciplinary effects that determine our self-awareness and everyday practices. The concept of governmentality refuses the idea of essentializing the state, instead, shifts its focus towards the different sites where governing occurs and the institutions implicated in governing and the power dynamics involved (Kunz 2008: 9). As Hunt (1994) states, "it is not only government that governs, but all sorts of levels or forms of social relations that are involved in governance" (p.50). In imagining the role that non-state actors play in global governance, it is more effective to recognize it as "an expression of a changing logic or rationality of government (defined as a type of power) by which civil society is redefined from a passive object of government to be acted upon and into an entity that is both an object and a subject of

government” (Sending, Neumann 2006: 652). Thus, the state and civil society oppose each other, but the participation of non-state actors in governing can be perceived as a means of governing (Kunz 2008: 4).

As Kunz (2008) explicitly illustrates, the neoliberal governing of the Mexican migration has transformed state-migrant relations. This is evident by the fact that community members in Mexico have favored turning to the migrant communities to seek help over directing their concerns to the Mexican state (Kunz 2008).

1.3.1 Neoliberalism

This research utilizes mainly Aihwa Ong’s (2006, 2007) Foucauldian-understanding of neoliberalism in non-Western contexts, focusing on its interventionist aspect: neoliberalism as a mobile set of practices governing ‘free subjects.’ As a technology of governing aimed to re-manage populations in relation to global market forces, neoliberalism relies on calculative choices and techniques in the realm of governing and citizenship (Ong 2006). Thus, according to the author, neoliberal governmentality stems from the infiltration of market-driven realities into the realm of politics. Fundamentally, neoliberalism is a thoroughly “active way of rationalizing governing and self-governing in order to ‘optimize’” (Ong 2006: 3). Neoliberal strategies in emerging Asia are concerned with cultivating “self-actualizing or self-enterprising subjects” who can vie in global knowledge markets (Ong 2007: 5).

Ong’s (2006) analysis of Singapore as a Southeast neoliberal state illustrates neoliberal governance as a complex, population-focused, and responsive instrument of state adjustment to market pressures. The author reveals that prolific interconnections with everyday lived experience in local settings are vital to the realization of neoliberal governance. Ong observes that the so-called traditional cultural values were readjusted with the more current, neoliberal

concepts of selfhood, ethics and national belonging and reengineered for new functions in the context of neoliberal governance. Thus, neoliberal logic on economic borderlessness has engendered the formation of various political spaces not bounded by the national territory, and techniques for differentiated governing with effects variegating citizenship (Ong 2006).

1.3.2 Transnationalism

Ong (1999: 6) regards transnationalism as the “tensions between movements and social orders,” which have been magnified under late capitalism. As stated in her work, transnational flows and networks in Asia have been the vital dynamics in molding cultural practices, identities and state strategies. Ong ingeniously indicates that transnational strategies are related to systems of governmentality in terms of techniques and codes for conditioning human behavior. In light of Chinese transnationalism, state, family and economic regimes regulate cross-border mobility and transnational relations. Thus, migration, flexibility and capital accumulation have become strategies to aim for, which advance a flexible understanding of citizenship (Ong 1999).

The influential transnational turn in migration research has been expounded by Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004). Diverging from methodological nationalism, the authors situate their approach within a broader intellectual project: to re-articulate the concept of society in order to highlight social processes and institutions, which are no longer routinely associated with the state. The authors rightfully argue that this transnational lens broadens our understanding of the notions of family, citizenship and nation-states as migrants’ networks and fields are multi-sited and multi-layered. They observe that the state still plays an active role especially in its adjustments and responses towards emigrants. In terms of methodology, ethnography is exceptionally appropriate for studying transnational relations, their creation, impacts and simultaneity (Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004: 1013).

1.3.3 *Citizenship and Community*

“Governing through community” (Rose 1999: 189) makes a powerful concept in the analysis of the emergence of transnational migrant communities as citizen-subjects, precisely because community appears as an established part of government. In his influential book *Powers of Freedom*, Rose (1999) presents a valid claim that the state absolves itself in responding to societal needs and so facilitates individuals and organizations to undertake a part of the responsibility for solving social problems. The author elucidates the paradox of governing wherein organizations that were once entangled in the bureaucratic force of the social state are set free to discover their own fate, however, they are made responsible for their actions. Rose calls this process “a double movement of autonomization and responsabilization” (p.174). He builds on the idea that the neoliberal form of government enables the powers of the citizens, who are “to be located in a nexus of ties and affinities that were not those of the social, but appeared to have a more powerful, and yet more natural, existence: community” (p.166). Thus, community “becomes governmental when it is made technical” (Rose 1999: 175). The author contends that politics is to be given back to society in a form of community characterized by moral individuals, responsible organizations and ethical community.

In a similar vein, Li (2006) states that community becomes a way of making collective existence “intelligible and calculable” (p.4). Li points out the enigma that lies at the heart of government through community: community radiates natural characteristics (possessing the ‘good, sustainable, democratic life’), however it still needs expert attention to help achieve its own development. Precisely, this paradox of community makes it an ideal site for governmental intervention, which gives experts work to do (Li 2006).

Take community-led development strategies as an example. In this sense, a new network of relations of institutions and actors stretching outside the limits of formal state authorities play an increasingly important role in assuring that communities possess the power to effectively take charge of their own development. Therefore, communities must entangle themselves in a set of connections that will sustain them in order to govern themselves responsibly (Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004). Swyngedouw (2005) refers to these connections as socially innovative institutional or quasi-institutional arrangements of governance that are organized in seemingly horizontal ensembles, as associational networks of private, civil society (usually NGOs), and state actors. They function at various interconnected scales, from the local/urban level to the transnational scale (Swyngedouw 2005).

Raghuram (2007) efficiently relates this sense of commitment to a community to the migration-development nexus, wherein neoliberal subjectivity is activated through the migrants' bodies. He contends that this network depends on and thus fosters the moral sentiment that is a sense of obligation to a collective - those who can be developed elsewhere. Thus, the new citizen-subject or the mobile governable subject of the nexus is responsabilized to move so as to strategize their human capital and also to act morally for the collective good of a distant place/community (Raghuram 2007: 16). The author claims that these migrants make the sacrifices needed to amend the consequences of years of development disasters. It is a sacrifice because this particular formulation of migration and development loses sight of the everyday nature of individual betterment that is not caught up in redistribution (Raghuram 2007).

Changing ways of belonging is at the core of transnational migration processes. However, contemporary academic debates on transnationalism, immigration, and citizenship have mostly overlooked migrants' perspectives on citizenship, according to Leitner and Ehrkamp

(2006). This ethnographic research questions the formation of neoliberal subjectivities highlighting the ways migrants and households understand their positionality in relation to the broader national polity.

In conclusion, the neoliberal accent on community participation, the social capital of communities, the state responses to transnationality and the increased involvement of civil society are all interrelated governmental techniques to put forward a social solution to the ailing economies in need of development. The discourse of migration and development has been a pivotal terrain, where the arrangements of neoliberal governance have materialized in the context of the emergence of innovative development approaches on the one hand and transformations in the arrangements of governance on the other. These innovative development approaches implicate transnational migrant households and communities, for instance through remittance- and community-led development strategies. It follows that the transnational household and community as the new site and subject of governance regards the energies and faculties of individuals as members of a population and as resources to be cultivated, to be utilized and to be developed, and at the same time regards itself as self-governing. This view challenges us to rethink the rights and responsibilities that actors and institutions assign to transnational belonging.

The next chapter lays out the actors and the techniques that regulate and govern subjects and revamp their social obligation.

2. REPURPOSING TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS: GOVERNMENTALITY, COMMUNITY AND CITIZENSHIP

This chapter explores how the transnational migrants, with their households, transform into responsible communities. Investigating the emergence of this significant arena contributes to an understanding of the interplay between governmental processes affecting OFWs and households, on the one hand, and these subjects responding in culturally specific ways, on the other. The chapter examines how social entrepreneurship, as a community-led development approach, re-purpose “victims of structural constraints,” “under-utilized” and “remittance-dependent households” as the instruments of development, thereby, fostering active citizenship. I argue that the transnational migrant communities today are the key site for, as well as constitutive of, new citizenship articulations. At the same time, it is a novel site for neoliberal governance practices.

The first section presents a discussion of Philippine transnational labor migration as an expression of neoliberal governmentality to contextualize the emergence of transnational civil society actors carrying the flag of social entrepreneurship. The next section zooms in on the experts, their techniques of empowerment and risk management strategies, that “translate the goals of political, social and economic authorities into the choices and commitments of individuals” (Rose 1998: 165). The third section points to the relationships between community and citizenship. Throughout, I refer to the opening ethnographic vignette and my empirical data to validate my claim.

2.1 Neoliberal Governance: Philippine Transnational Labor Migration

The postdevelopmental juncture in Southeast Asia makes the control of the population a strategic move to tie up with global course of capital (Ong 2006). Asian postdevelopmentalism

is characterized by a combination of cultural unity and stability and careful adoption of neoliberal practices, thereby, producing alternative spatialities of government and gradations in citizenship entitlements (Ong 2006). The Philippines takes up a governmental and a national modernization project that relies on the incorporation of cheap export labor and the regulation of OFWs' remittances. This strategy signifies a planned intervention and a configuration of ideas and imaginations expressing neoliberal forms of governing (Sharma 2007).

In fact, a Labor Export Policy was adopted in the 1970s as a stop-gap solution, the primary purpose of which was to offer an alternative to domestic labor market and to tackle a high unemployment rate (Cai 2011). The labor export strategy was believed to have brought about positive outcomes in terms of economic stability in the country, thus the policy still stands today (Cai 2011). The Philippine state has accomplished a large scale labor export regime that has given rise to approximately 25 percent of the labor force working abroad (Lindley 2009; Solomon 2009). In 2011 alone, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) statistics revealed that a total of 1.687 million OFWs were deployed in 190 countries. Moreover, the Philippines has earned international recognition as a global model country for labor-exporting countries (Center for Migrant Advocacy and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2009).

Transnational labor migration is an effectual opportunity through which the nation obtains foreign resources (Migration Policy Institute 2011⁷) and stabilizes its citizens to secure household maintenance and/or investments. From the US\$111 million recorded in 1976 coursed through the banking system, annual remittances as of 2012 reached the level of US\$21.39 billion, making the Philippines the 3rd largest recipient of migrants' remittances, next to India and Mexico (Central Bank of the Philippines Statistics⁸). Judging by the numbers, the state has

⁷ <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/remittances/philippines.pdf> Accessed April 8, 2012

⁸ http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/efs_ext3.asp Accessed March 5, 2013

believed that transnational labor migration can incite economic development (de Vries 2011; Rodriguez 2010). In so doing, the state has launched several programs to maximize the gains of overseas employment. These programs involve legislations designed to facilitate OFWs and their families to direct their remittances to enter into entrepreneurship or invest in small and medium-scale businesses (Villegas 2012; Tabuga 2007). As de Haas (2012: 20) argues, this view of maximizing remittances is based on a demeaning observation that migrants behave irrationally towards money. It overlooks the basic point that migrants have acceptable reasons to invest in secure investments, such as houses, because the general investment in the sending country continues to be unfavorable (de Haas 2012: 20). Moreover, this agenda of channeling remittances to productive uses unrealistically assume that financial remittances can be tapped by states (de Haas 2012: 20).

OFWs and migrant associations have been constituted by the Philippine state as a significant economic development agent. It is evident from the various heroic names the state has been attributing to OFWs: *modern-day heroes* by the Aquino administration, *citizens of the world* by Dante Ang, former Chair of the Commission of Filipinos Overseas, *economic savior* by the Estrada administration, and *overseas Filipino investors* by the Arroyo administration, *new aristocrats* and the *new ambassadors of goodwill* (Weekley 2003: 4). These labels signify how the state disciplines workers as certain kinds of citizens – who are flexible workers for the global economy, who pay taxes to the homeland, and religiously send remittances to their families in the Philippines (Rodriguez 2002).

The production of new knowledge about the potentiality of migrant workers to bring about economic local development and the emergence of new actors, such as Philippine non-government organizations engaged in the discourse, are a mutually constitutive process.

Mechanisms of the transnational migration bureaucracy, such as the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA⁹), the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), the Commission of Filipinos Overseas (CFO), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA¹⁰), and the National Reintegration Center for OFWs¹¹ find their roles to shape the nature of the scope of global labor markets for citizens. Similarly, various international organizations and NGOs in both the Philippines and the host country have been pioneering in courting Filipino migrant workers and their remittances for local development. NGOs such as the *Overseas Filipinos Society for the Promotion of Economic Security* (OFSPES), the *Economic Resource Center for Overseas Filipinos* (ERCOF¹²) and *Unlad Kabayan*¹³ have been devising programs (i.e. social entrepreneurship and financial literacy) aimed to “empower” OFWs and families, which allow them to contribute to the economic development of the Philippines. These organizations have been gaining traction by positioning themselves as mobile. They draw connections with migrant workers, hometown associations and international organizations involved in migration issues and work hand in hand with government agencies established in the governance of transnational labor migration. Specifically, these NGOs claim that transnational households and communities are “disempowered” due to their illiteracy in managing remittances and savings. Thus, being disempowered will hinder these communities from taking charge of their own development, making them at risk of not realizing their innate qualities and possibilities to mobilize as agents of development. Consequently, these NGOs assert themselves as experts in empowering these households/communities at risk and in tapping their resources to contribute to development. Through community participation and the use of inducements (i.e. heroic names, the promise of

⁹ <http://www.poea.gov.ph/>

¹⁰ <http://www.dfa.gov.ph/>

¹¹ <http://www.nrco.dole.gov.ph/>

¹² <http://www.ercof.com/>

¹³ <http://www.unladkabayan.org/>

better economic life), these NGOs promote empowerment, responsibility, competition and choice.

2.2 Civil society actors: Expertise, Neoliberal Governance and Community

The expertise of civil society actors is fundamentally about managing the risk and security of the transnational migrant population by granting them value. As they sort out various categories of the population, civil society actors assert claims on their behalf and provide them with resources that *may* be translatable into entitlements and rights. These rights and entitlements once associated with all citizens are now linked to neoliberal criteria (Ong 2005: 697).

The term expert is a broad one, but this research focuses specifically on development and culture experts who promote social entrepreneurship and active citizenship as a way of addressing societal problems and achieving change in transnational migrant households/communities at risk. This type of expertise forms the discursive and technical conditions wherein communities are able to ‘know’ themselves, recognize the challenges they face, and take the appropriate steps to guarantee sustainable long-term development (Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004: 290). These experts are a constitutive part of community-led development strategies and what Rose (1999) calls “governing through community” (p.189). The community must be “investigated, mapped, classified, documented, interpreted” (Rose 1999: 175). It takes expert knowledge to uncover the features of a community through particular techniques (Li 2006: 6). In this section, I reveal the pivotal role of such expertise in identifying, governing, and determining limits on the capacities of transnational migrant households to transform themselves into active agents in their self-governance. As Rose (1996) spells out, in making communities visible, experts provide guidance and technical resources in empowering

individuals “to conduct themselves within particular cultural communities of ethics and lifestyle according to certain specified arts of active personal responsibility” (p.348). Moreover, I indicate that a significant consequence of expert knowledge is the construction of categories of risk in which those households/communities that choose to align with the imposed course of development are depicted as ‘active’ and responsible, while those who do not are marginalized and labeled as risky and irresponsible (Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004: 290).

2.2.1 Transnational Household and Community Empowerment Techniques

“How much money do I send?” “How are my remittances being spent?” “It’s our right to know.” “If you want to reach your financial goal, you should be honest with your family.” These are some of the whole plethora of concerns OFWs need to contemplate on and eventually respond to upon undertaking the course of empowerment. Dean (2010: 82) states that since the 1960s the notion of empowering the disenfranchised, the victims of social inequalities and discrimination, economic deprivation and political subordination has urged reformers in liberal-democratic states to enable all citizens to participate in decision-making processes and to stress autonomy and self-determination. Empowerment suggests that human beings are latent agents and they must be empowered to become so or to actively participate in the transformation of their situation (Dean 2010). Empowerment programs are clear illustrations of neoliberal rationalities of government that attempt to operationalize the self-governing capacities of the governed in the quest for governmental pursuits (Dean 2010).

Techniques of empowerment are applied to OFWs and families who are problematized as “disempowered,” “victims,” or “dependent,” with low morale and self-esteem. “OFWs mind-set is to work as an employee” (Tina-LSE, interview). In addition, “OFWs find it difficult to understand that their money won’t sleep if it’s kept in the bank” (Ding- ERCOF, interview).

These labels and characterizations, adding to the knowledge of expertise, become critical in empowering transnational migrant households to manage their lives and embracing a prudent and calculative approach to self-governance. “LSE provides opportunities for empowerment. It contributes to the reintegration program which can prepare OFWs when they go back home. The goal is for OFWs and families to empower themselves” (Tina-LSE, interview), specifically their “economic empowerment” (Vince-LSE, interview). Figure 1 below summarizes the knowledge of expertise, the problematization of conduct and the rationale for empowerment.

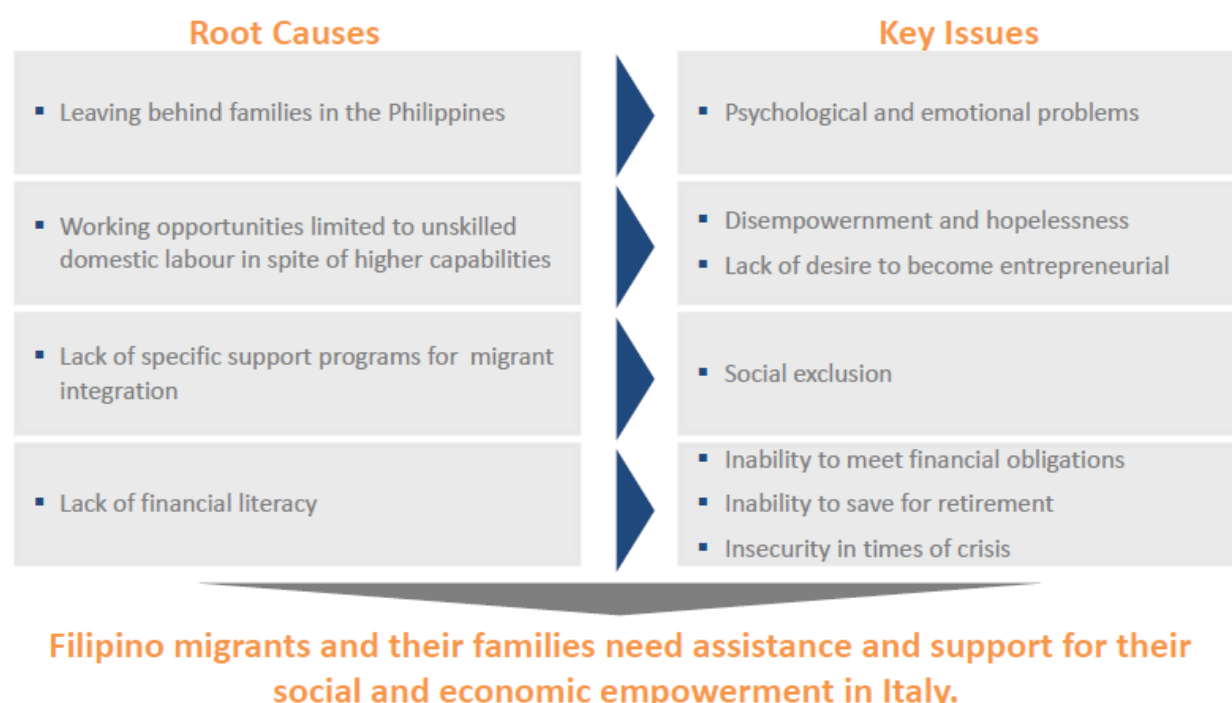


Figure 1. Rationale of the Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship (LSE) Program - An Empowerment Program for Overseas Filipino Workers in Italy
Source: LSE Information Kit p. 15

Equipped with techniques that promise improved financial management and economic fortunes and a better lifestyle, this expert knowledge seeking to achieve change in a neoliberal way acts as a key center of calculation (Miller and Rose 2008) in making ‘community’ visible, and in constituting the discursive structure in which households can ponder on their conduct and convert themselves into active agents in their self-governance (Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins

2004: 290). As the opening ethnographic vignette illustrates, the conversion to become a change-maker in the household or beyond starts with self-reflection. The list of Filipino core values functions as a checklist of how one measures up to the ideal strengths and at the same time how one surpasses the weaknesses. In this context, technologies of self-reflection and self-management (Rose 1998: 156-160) aim to “question one’s attitude” and eventually “build new habits and bring about behavioral change” (Tina- LSE, interview). To become active agents of self-governance, the development scheme imparts to the transnational migrant households a whole gamut of new responsibilities, such as “continue to learn livelihood opportunities, discover one’s self, get new skills that can get them advanced, to grow, improve themselves, change their mindset” (Tina-LSE, interview). The transnational migrant households must always align their actions with the goals identified by the development scheme: “to become leaders of ourselves and of our family, to move beyond one’s challenges to be able to help improve the situation of other people, to contribute to positive change and nation-building” (Tina-LSE, interview). Through financial literacy, OFWs and households are taught “how to handle money, especially for enjoyment and consumption, to think ahead and be able to invest, prepare for the future, meet financial goals, and harness their resources. [Also, these techniques mean] doing something for the community” (Tina-LSE, interview). Along the same line of thought, ERCOF, through their financial literacy programs, convinces people to start opening an account and manage their remittances and finances via the formal banking channels. In this sense, the management of financial insecurity has become a potentially lucrative activity. By recasting the transnational migrant households as “social entrepreneurs” and “change-makers,” the civil society actors provide fertile ground for techniques of empowerment, charting a discourse of

national responsibility and financial independence onto the bodies of newly enterprising individuals.

As Miller and Rose (2008) argue, “empowerment, then, is a matter of experts teaching, coaxing, requiring their clients to conduct themselves within particular cultural communities of ethics and lifestyle, according to certain specified arts of active personal responsibility” (p.106). Through the lens of governmentality, this expertise entails knowledge of the powerlessness of the transnational migrant households, and of the process for inducing the powerless to view themselves as members of a community and take part in community-led development programs.

2.2.2 Risk Management Techniques

Civil society actors and SE schemes target OFWs and households as their intended beneficiaries. Several factors drive this: from the realization that migrant workers are risk-takers as exemplified by their leaving the country to the representation of households being dependent on remittances as a source of income and the household at risk of impoverishment due to mishandling finances. The notion of risk in this discourse can be understood through the lens of governmentality, in which particular forms of conduct are thought as risky as a result of being rendered visible by means of representation and calculation. As Dean (1999) argues, risk “is a way of representing events in a certain form so they might be made governable in particular ways, with particular techniques and for particular goals” (p.177). Moreover, governing functions through community to produce and order risk, which means communities are effectively rendered as key sources of risk (Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004).

In this regard, Miller and Rose (2008) elucidate the notion of risk as a valuable entry point into the altered relations of expertise and community. The facility for power, or the lack of it, which is the key object of expertise is re-thought concerning the relations of risk and

community Miller and Rose (2008): the risks posed to the individuals themselves if they are not able to govern their life within the community *and* the risks the individual might pose to the community in consequence of their failure to manage themselves. From this perspective, all transnational migrant communities are in effect ‘at risk,’ but those who opt to take steps to ‘accurately’ diagnose this risk through expertise are most likely to be esteemed as having the capacities for effective self-governance and eventually effecting social change. On the contrary, failure to handle risk is regarded as a problem in developing innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to local decline and in aligning with the demands of a global economy. In the same way as Dean (1999) reasons, risk “can be minimized, localized and avoided, but never dissipated” (p. 167).

The significance of civil society actors as experts of transnational migrant community is illustrated most clearly by the generated list of Filipino core values, divided into strengths and weaknesses, and the five principles and commitments of servant leadership (see the first vignette). They serve as checklists to identify what it means to be an entrepreneur and an agent of change. They are provided by development experts as a way of supporting transnational migrant communities in measuring if they are performing up to par, and in finding out whether corrective measures to augment that performance are necessary. The mere construction of the checklists is a type of governmental technique that attempts to constitute, embody and shape community and risk in a neoliberal way. First, they serve as technical means of problematizing the conduct of transnational migrant households and rendering their ‘deviations’ visible. As transnational migrant households manage their own risks in a responsible way, it is essential that they subject themselves to technologies of self-examination and self-reflection (Rose 1998: 156-160) so as to ‘know’ themselves, the risks they face and their capacity to manage those risks

aply. Alex (LSE, interview) elucidates their expert role in governing the process a migrant has to go through in becoming an agent of change.

We intend to impart leadership, planning, communication (including negotiation and conflict management) skills with the LSE participants. The LSE financial literacy modules provide practical exercises and insights on how participants can plot, work towards and achieve their financial goals. This involves thorough understanding of the reasons why they left the country to begin with. It forces them to examine how they have managed their resources since they got here. It allows them to look into their remittance practices – a crucial component in reaching financial goals. During this stage, we invite them to dialogue with their families to share their financial goals and how this will eventually affect their remittance behavior.

This entire process requires a shift in mentality and the courage to confront deeply rooted cultural issues. We hope that this course equips them with the right mindset and attitude to deal with the hard choices that come with financial literacy. They have to decide what they want for their future, the sacrifices and initiatives that need to be made to achieve those, and how to handle relationships that are affected along the way. We expect them to become more independent thinkers, to be more resolute and disciplined in pursuing their goals, once they learn these skills.

Second, civil society experts subject transnational migrant households to the norms of conduct that are deemed to exemplify responsible leaders, entrepreneurs and change-makers. They also ease the process wherein transnational migrant households act upon and convert themselves in accordance to these norms, through the provision of training.

2.3 Active Citizenship: “Proper” Relationships between Community and Citizenship

The connection between community and citizenship is rather complex precisely because the responsabilization of citizens takes place under the guise of obligation and community and the shifting responsibility for well-being away from the state (Staeheli 2008: 8). As Rose (1999) claims, “[community] is a moral field binding persons into durable relations. It is a space of *emotional relationships* through which *individual identities* are constructed through their bonds to *micro-cultures* of values and meanings” (p.172). Citizenship, then, is now realized in this moral space and not in relation with the state.

Building and empowering the transnational migrant community serve as a strategy for entering the public arena as citizens. “Migrants’ rights are advanced through basic financial and cultural education. Their right to information is promoted through the provision of tools and helpful insights and practical suggestions from the resource persons” (Alex-LSE, interview). In the same vein, “financial literacy is related to socio-economic rights. The greater the knowledge, the greater the ability of the public to develop a culture of resource management. As a consequence, the greater ability to provide their children the right to education, even awareness on how to enforce other rights, and hopefully obligations” (Ding-ERCOF, interview).

In other words, these civil society actors encourage transnational membership through the practice of social entrepreneurship and financial literacy. OFWs who are excluded from mainstream economic institutions turn to their migrant communities as sites for establishing themselves as self-responsible and self-enterprising citizens linked to social obligations of building the Filipino nation. “We teach families of OFWs on how not to be dependent on remittances,” (Vince-LSE, interview) which means, paradoxically, migrant workers can exercise their right to return home. OFWs cannot afford to do so unless they have savings and investments. Melanie (Unlad Kabayan, interview) imparts, “going back home is not a choice for OFWs because they have no other means of living. OFWs must prepare for a ‘dignified return.’ Would-be returnees will not be able to survive with only 50 Euros in their wallet in this economic crisis, or I call war. OFWs must be able to earn, invest, save and create jobs.” Melanie shares that Unlad Kabayan is advocating migrants’ right to development, wherein one is able to cultivate not only one’s character but also one’s social entrepreneurial activity. They teach OFWs on how to be strategic, resourceful, passionate and to utilize common sense in the creation of a social enterprise. “It is not something the books can teach you.” In addition,

Melanie says they advocate migrants' right to mobility, wherein people should migrate out of choice and not out of poverty.

There is a belief that OFWs are the ones to be blamed for their own circumstance, specifically, their exclusion. As Vince recounts, "if they don't start changing their behavior [of remitting without limit, not saving nor investing], they would remain as domestic helpers and they would forever be outside the Philippines." He always reminds OFWs that "if your family wants your remittances to be permanent, it means only one thing: they don't want you back home."

Thus, the notion of citizenship is given a specific form through governing institutions. As Staeheli (2008) asserts, the attempts to promote "active citizenship" presume a model of community and citizenship wherein membership evolves out of place-based community. Rose (2000) highlights that the relationship between citizenship and communities can be manipulated through an exercise of power and politics, that is, to make communities responsible for citizens and vice versa. It is a specific kind of politics, called "ethopolitics" that "works through the values, beliefs, and sentiments thought to underpin the techniques of responsible self-government and the management of one's obligations to others" (Rose 2000: 1399). Ultimately, citizenship lies on values of care and community instead of liberty and freedom (Staeheli 2008).

Overall, social entrepreneurship as a community-led development scheme wed development practice and the pursuit of profit, upholding that development aspirations can be realized by merely extending the scope and scale of capitalism to the ten million men and women, and their families, who seek sustenance working abroad. It is a vision propelled by a mesh of civil society actors who are professed to "do good" and who reinforce "ethopolitics." This scheme promotes a form of development that positions the economically marginalized

individual and household rather than the state or the market as fundamentally responsible for bringing about (or not) development. Techniques of empowerment and risk management allow transnational migrant households and communities to be mobilized for the intention of extracting community knowledge to bring about previously concealed practices visible, knowable, and thus governable. As Vince (LSE, interview) expresses, “what we do is an attempt to influence the state in this advocacy.”

The next chapter looks into the practices of the transnational migrant household and community, which make them active agents of their self-governance.

3. THE “EMPOWERED” MIGRANTS AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS: TRANSNATIONALISM AND CITIZENSHIP

This chapter seeks to bring into the discussion of governance the practices of transnational migrant and households, which are entrenched in the processes of capital accumulation, citizenship moral value and transnationalism. These practices include mobility, flexibility, remittance control, social entrepreneurship and financial literacy. OFWs and households subject themselves to “autonomization” and “responsibilization.” I assert that the neoliberal criteria of self-governing and social entrepreneurship become citizenship ideals that further reinforce the cultural logics of transnationalism.

The first section places cultural logic or strategies at the center of discussion on self-governance. The following section highlights the neoliberal practices of OFWs and households in relation to their changing understanding of citizenship. Throughout, I refer to the second and third ethnographic vignettes and empirical data to substantiate my claim.

3.1 Flexibility: The Everyday Practices of Transnationalism

Transnational processes are increasingly viewed as embedded in a broader phenomenon of globalization, denoted by the demise of the nation-state and the expansion of world cities that function as key sites of flexible capital accumulation, communication and governance (Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blanc 1995). I focus on the transnational migrant households’ practices and imaginations highlighting flexibility, which are the cultural logics shaped by the encounter with transnational movement of capital and responses of the Philippine state to capital and mobility.

3.1.1 *Strategies of Mobility*

It is a cultural logic of Filipinos to migrate for employment as a common strategy to make a living, experience a better quality of life and most especially send their children or siblings to quality schools. This strategy of mobility is stimulated by the dual impulses of escaping economic instability and pursuing livelihoods (Ong 1999: 93-94). Once given permanent residence or work permit in Italy, OFWs arrange their families in relation to time and space so that over time, members of the household who are under 18 can take advantage of the Family Reunification Act¹⁴ and those who are older can earn a degree in the Philippines and opt to follow after. Filipino migrant parents in Italy verbalize that the education system in the Philippines is much better than in Italy. They emphasize the value of education, which is the key to success. As the old Filipino adage says, “education is the only inheritance your parents can leave you with. Compared to money, education can never be stolen from you.”

Facing the possibility of severe deprivation, Sote (second vignette) took a calculated risk and migrated, with an indefinite time frame. Her strategy to do a menial job is inseparable from choosing a particular location to work in. Italy is highly dependent on OFWs in the care sector to compensate for reduced state welfare and social services in the country (Basa, Harcourt, Zarro 2011: 13). However, there is no bilateral labor agreement between the two countries. Because of that, OFWs in Italy usually enter the country via “direct hire” coursed through the assistance of relatives already settled there. There are also some Filipinos who riskily moved to Italy without any legal papers to stay longer.

¹⁴ “According to Italian law, children under 18 are entitled to family reunion, even if only one parent is from The Philippines or the parents are not married, with the condition that the parent, if alive, agrees; children over 18 can also apply for an Italian resident permit if they require further economic support from their family.” (Decreto legislativo 8 gennaio 2007, n. 5, Ministry of Internal Affairs, www.interno.it IN Basa, Harcourt, Zarro, 2011, p.21).

OFWs in general consider whether their work is “stay in,” requiring them to live with the household, wherein they spend nothing for accommodation and sometimes food. This means less expenses and more remittances. They still get two days off in accordance to the labor code. However, if the offered salary is relatively low, this set-up will not allow them to earn extra Euros through part-time jobs. The other scenario, called “stay out,” compels them to find their own accommodation, which can cost up to 700 Euros a month. This is difficult to afford, that is why OFWs take part-time jobs even on their off days and share a flat with other OFWs. In most cases, they earn more with this set-up.

3.1.2 Strategies of Accumulation

For many OFWs in Italy, strategies of accumulation begin with the acquisition of a stay or work permit. Like Sote, OFWs find a job in the care sector through referrals while waiting for their permit, which can take up to three years. Nevertheless, there are Italian families who hire only legal workers. This process of settlement nursed the development of transnationalism (Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blanc 1995: 54). Thus, OFWs extend manifold social, economic, and political connections across borders.

Most OFWs continue doing the same domestic work for years. According to Jane (OFW, interview), it is easy to get stuck in this line of work. They are faced with a language barrier in the beginning and some of them refuse to pursue in Italy the careers they left in the Philippines. It would require them to go back to formal training and earn a certificate. “They are ego-driven. They reason that they already have an equivalent degree in the Philippines.”

Evelyn, Mayet and Mila (OFWs, interview) plan to stay in Italy for five more years until they get their pension. They have been working in Italy since the 90s and they need to have a total of nineteen years to complete. By then, they can finally return home while receiving

pension from both Italy and the Philippines. Many OFWs simultaneously contribute to the Philippines's Social Security System (SSS¹⁵) so they may claim benefits either when they retire or get injured at work.

Tess (OFW, interview) intends to continue doing domestic work for seven to ten more years until she finishes paying for three condominiums in the Philippines. Tess's household receives some extra income from renting out the condominiums. With Tess's 900 Euro monthly salary, she is able to pay for additional two lots, which she considers to give to her children.

These strategies of accumulation are encouraged by several stimuli: transnational relationships, constantly providing for the household, becoming self-sufficient, visions of development and fear of financial instability. In other words, mobility and flexibility, from being compelled, have become practices to strive for as opposed to stability (Ong 1999). On the one hand, to be able to provide for the household, OFWs need to be flexible so as to fill the market demand. On the other hand, by reconfiguring and activating transnational practices, households insure themselves to maximize the utilization of labor and resources in several settings and subsist in situations of economic uncertainty (Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blanc 1995: 54).

The interweave of transnational household relationships and financial transactions invoke the reservation of a place for returning OFWs, compensating for their global vulnerability (Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blanc 1995: 53). These ties have enabled OFWs during their years overseas to have children cared for by kin at home, to remain as actors in important household decisions, to visit at regular intervals, and to purchase property and build homes and plan businesses in the Philippines. Concisely, transnational flows are entrenched within the life

¹⁵ <https://www.sss.gov.ph/sss/index2.jsp?secid=812&cat=7&pg=null> Accessed May 10, 2013

experience of individuals and households, weaving daily activities, successes and fears into a pattern (Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blanc 1995).

3.2 The Neoliberal Hero: Re-articulation of Citizenship

Transnationalism has been intensified through the practice of social entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Highlighting community, responsibility and active citizenship, this particular practice has increased OFWs' effectiveness in capital accumulation strategies. Civil society actors, through their expertise and techniques, have laid out the migration for development framework onto the bodies of newly enterprising individuals. These techniques encourage OFWs to redefine a particular post-colonial cultural inscription with a neoliberal twist, that is, self-sacrificing and self-regulating members of a transnational migrant community linked to solidarity of a broader national polity. In other words, the "empowered" transnational migrant community reinforces the concept of modern-day national heroes of the Philippines.

Filipino heroism or nationalism has been symbolized by a life of suffering and sacrifice, modeling the courage of a significant historical, cultural and political figure, *Jose Rizal*, the first pronounced national hero of the Philippines (Guevarra 2003). Rizal devoted his life as an advocate of achieving Philippine independence from the Spanish colonizers through peaceful institutional reform. He died as a martyr fighting for the restoration of Filipino dignity.

The symbolic figure of the OFW *bayani* (hero) inhabits the collective imagination and intensifies the demands on individual migrants to make each migratory project a success (Basa, de Guzman, Marchetti 2012). This is evident in Sote's case whose personal development and goals and visions of development are realigned with community development. Success is now often defined as fulfilling household responsibilities, providing better health and education, acquiring properties, securing finance *and* giving something back to the community.

Mayet perceives herself as a “wonder woman” as she remits to her three children, parents and extended family twice a month for ten years, with only five percent left in her salary. Without any savings in the past, she was even borrowing money from her employer just to go back to the Philippines for a vacation. Aside from her familial responsibilities, she gives counseling sessions as an active member of a Filipino church organization in Rome.

“‘Modern-day heroes’ is a real concept because of our remittances,” Eva (OFW, interview) believes. She also exudes Filipino heroism through assisting her sister to raise eleven children in the Philippines. However, not even one of them is able to finish studies. She expresses her deep regret regarding this situation when she recalls it took her seven years to take a vacation in the Philippines because she was extremely considering the expenses it would incur. She tells her nieces and nephews, “I have helped you build your future but you have never even appreciated my efforts. Anyway, you are the ones who create your own future.” Eva is a pensioner, who receives benefits from both the Philippines and Italy. She has never married but has raised one of her nieces like her own daughter. She has also assisted seven of her nieces to work in Italy. Eva has been in Rome for thirty-six years and has been a domestic helper for a sole employer since 1981. She says she is not able to leave the family (her employer), who has been generous and understanding to her.

Through financial planning, investing wisely and creating a social entrepreneurial activity, citizen-subjects establish their human capital and capacity to internalize techniques of empowerment and to act upon market logic (entrepreneurialism, risk management, financial security and personal responsibility) and development goals. These neoliberal practices demonstrate the transnational migrants cultivating the right blend of competence and self-management.

3.2.1 Empowering oneself

“What would happen to me if I didn’t change my perspective,” Tess considers. Tess, along with other informants, claims that they have gained social awareness, especially in terms of selecting socially responsible investments. These investments must cater for the improvement of impoverished people’s lives, protection of the environment and empowerment of the marginalized to exercise their human rights. Mayet has gone through the process of outlook change from self-demeaning to self-determining; from being a victim of poverty and end up doing domestic work to thinking of long-term goals while helping others. “I can’t give up now,” as her motto says. LSE has opened new doors for her. She enumerates, “I have had a balanced social life. Before, I would always feel bad to consume the money for myself because that could be used to pay the bills in the Philippines. I have learned to manage my income, say ‘no’ to my children once in a while, separate my needs from wants, which help me to stop borrowing money. In terms of relationship with my family, I have shared with them my financial goals I have set and I have made sure there is division of work in the family, instead of just me working. I believe setting goals is lacking in every OFW.”

Controlling remittance transfers is also an indication of an empowered OFW. Eva now thinks about the future of returning to the Philippines and so has made a decision not to transfer all her income. “LSE has helped me to invest in a condominium, divide my finances, and encourage myself to stop sending remittances to my kin once they finish their studies.” OFWs have been learning to “break the cultural trend” of sending remittances to children and sometimes relatives even though they have their own families, in order to save for themselves, specifically for retirement.

Jane felt compelled to follow her parents and siblings to Rome. She left a career in the Philippines and ended de-skilled doing domestic work. Through LSE, she claims she has regained her self-esteem and found her purpose in life. From then on, Jane always asks herself, “what can I do to develop myself, my family, and my community?” After LSE, she has decided to become active in family counseling through a church organization. She claims she has found her passion. She has become zealous in constantly raising herself and in taking risks. “Filipinos are very talented and these must be put to good use,” she believes. Jane hopes to pursue long-distance MA studies in the University of the Philippines for a year. She has realized she has become “dull” and inactive in Italy without any true friends.

These “*bagong bayanis*” or “modern-day heroes” conduct their behavior as “socially responsible, multi-skilled, entrepreneurial, and most of all, nationalistic” (Guevarra 2003: 20). If OFWs fail to re-style themselves as a more dynamic and better functioning community member, they suffer the blame for the lack of development in their household. As Eva observes and justifies, “We OFWs are the ones blamed for the luxurious life of dependents back home. I have been sending remittances because I want them to experience what good life means.” Lenlen (left-behind household, interview) shares that her household has become dependent on their mother’s remittances. They have not finished university as there is constant financial support even though they have their own families. She emphasizes, “because our mother has been away, we have not gained much confidence, we are not competitive and we lack motivation. Our jobs are usually on a contractual project basis.” Their household has come to a realization that “it’s not forever that our mother is there to support us. So we’ve started to think of setting up a business even though we didn’t finish university and until our mother can support us with the capital.”

3.2.2 Capitalizing on strategic skills

All my informants have started to save and invest since they realized that their work overseas has its time limit and there is still no available job for them in the sending country. They, together with their households, have considered entrepreneurial plans which are rooted from their passions. It is exemplified by Evelyn and her daughter, Kheng who have been *transnationally* planning on setting-up an event organizing service, which they intend to operate in the Philippines. However, they are still open to other interests and are willing to study more about them.

Likewise, Jane has started to look for alternatives since now earning is not her main objective. She has learned to live simply, reward herself once in a while, not live a life she cannot afford and not incur debts. In fact, she keeps a mission board on the wall of her bedroom for inspiration each day.

“Dream big, start small,” is Mayet’s guiding principle. Her goal is to put up a tailor shop when she returns to the Philippines, which can serve as her children’s source of income. Guided by this vision, she has stopped sending remittances to her extended family for their electricity bills. Mayet has also taken some time to budget her money and accordingly tells her children how much is allotted for what. As a result, she is now financially free. She has been to the Philippines three times without borrowing any money and overspending.

In the case of Sote and Tess, they capitalize on their self-knowledge and desires to be able to work better and give something back to the community. Both earn extra income through selling condominiums (located in Manila) to fellow OFWs. Their being strategic, able to persevere and face challenges are utilized in their quest to mobilize capital.

Active citizenship coupled with cultural norms and values become apparent in the ways citizenship is understood and constructed by political subjects within community spaces. Both two cases below - socially investing and founding a social enterprise - highly illustrate the ways in which this particular understanding of citizenship becomes a standard of political subjectivity against which all other citizens are measured. The first example takes place transnationally and the second one in Rome.

3.2.2.1 Transnational Social Investors

A pensioner for eight years now, Rupert reveals he is now on the phase of capital-building, which is directly correlated with the dream map he drew during the LSE program. He and his wife have lived in Rome since 1986. They both do domestic work. They have raised one daughter who is now in second year university in Italy. The couple still send a part of their remittances to assist their niece's tuition fees. Rupert receives two pensions, one from Italy and one from the Philippines. He recommends, "the higher amount and the longer years you pay, the more pension you get." He always attends LSE even though he already finished one program. He says, "I am always curious and challenged what LSE offers. I always ask myself why Chinese become rich. Filipinos are still impoverished even though their salary is high!" Through LSE, he has found the answer and become part of an investment group with Eva and two more LSE participants. They gather a pool of funds which they invest in Social Enterprise Development Partnerships, Inc. (SEDPI), one of the partners in LSE doing microfinance. "The OFW investment in SEDPI is leveraged with loans from commercial banks. For every peso that OFWs invest in SEDPI, SEDPI can borrow an additional four to five pesos. This increases the available funds for SEDPI to reinvest in microfinance institutions and social enterprises. Thus, even if the financial literacy operates at a financial loss in the short term, SEDPI greatly benefits

in the long run” (SEDPI website¹⁶). Rupert’s group gains 7.5% per annum. They have earned 300 to 383.91 Euros in two years time. Rupert believes it is a social investment since they share a part of their capital to local farmers in Mindanao (the second largest and southernmost island in the Philippines). “I tried investing in 1985 but unfortunately it failed. Investment needs time and time is a sacrifice. What I do for the investment group is free labor, a voluntary work. I find it difficult to convince other members to work more. If we devote more time and money, we earn more. Filipinos have still so much to learn in investing: first, we need to develop a cooperative mind and not ‘how much can I earn from a cooperative? is it secure?;’ second, we need to know how to work together to fight the rich and not spend our money on *fiestas* - that is what we are good at; third, we have to share what we learn, for example, ‘if you see your neighbor eating dried fish while you are eating meat, what would you do? you can’t let them eat something like that if you know that you can help them.’ Other Filipinos are scared to take risks. Their mentality is to help only the family. They only know how to borrow money but don’t know how to pay back. The good thing about social entrepreneurship is the essence of community wherein everyone is on equal footing in terms of distribution of wealth. Everyone has the right to resources and mobilize capital.”

Aside from “not putting your egg in one basket,” Rupert has learned some strategic skills in capital-building. He enumerates, “first, always study. Learn both theory and practice and implement it. Second, ask resource people. Third, learn from others and test it. Fourth, be patient, investment takes time. Fifth, be frugal, which means stay away from luxury. Sixth, make sure your investment is godly. Do not be greedy because you cannot take your investment to the grave. Lastly, discipline.” If he could only make reforms in the education system, he said

¹⁶ <http://www.sedpi.com/social-return-on-investment-of-sedpis-financial-literacy-program-for-ofws/> Accessed May 10, 2013

he would want financial literacy be taught to young kids instead of language learning, for example. Rupert is keen on continuous learning. He advocates OFWs must change their mindset, which is antagonistic to investment. “Let’s all get into investment,” as his motto says. Rupert’s next target is exchange trading fund and focus on the “social” aspect of an investment.

3.2.2.2 ‘AKIT’ Magazine: A Social Enterprise in Rome

AKIT stands for *Ako, Ikaw, Tayo Tungo sa Pagbabago* or Me, You, Us Towards Change. Since its first issue released in 2010, *AKIT* Magazine has been dubbed the most visible social entrepreneurship endeavor in terms of social impact. As one of the editors of the magazine, Jane says that OFWs in Italy could relate to the published stories. It is something different. Jane herself notes that the magazine intends to showcase the concept of modern-day national heroes in written form. The editors and contributors voluntarily devote their free time. Part of *AKIT*’s mission is to level-up the status quo of Filipinos who are stuck in domestic work and to unite OFWs in Rome. As Ling (OFW, co-editor of *AKIT*, interview) imparts, “I want to be an inspiration to others.” *AKIT* is an avenue for the contributors to prove to themselves and others that they are able to harness their potential, especially their talent in writing.

Jane says *AKIT* is an alternative project for her personality development. Her yearning to pay it forward and to share profit with others is fulfilled by this social entrepreneurship project. Working in this activity, Jane has utilized her resourcefulness, eco-friendly consciousness and not immediately wanting for big returns. She believes her role in *AKIT* is an example of “servant leadership: a model of good work, teamwork, responsibility and service to people accomplished by giving tasks to everyone according to their strengths, because each is valuable and appreciate them.”

Migration to Italy is a process wherein Filipino transnational strategies are incorporated in the “‘flexible accumulation’ systems of late capitalism” (Ong 1999: 94). Capitalism has become globalized, which favors geographical dispersion and the quest for niche markets in an extremely precarious competitive environment (Harvey 1989; Ong 1999). Increasingly, strategies of Filipino flexibility are propelled by a fusion of social, economic and political reasons that articulate self-governance and cultural competence to navigate in global settings. The trajectory of OFWs illustrates the internalization of neoliberal practices, which normalizes a *responsibilization* and *autonomization* of citizenship. These elements of citizenship associated with market criteria and cooperation between citizens, state and civil society underscore the cultural logics of transnationalism. The logic of flexibility highlights the governmentality of transnational capitalism wherein many struggling households are caught up and their multifaceted strategies around state policies bring to light the limits of such practices (Ong 1999: 128-129).

4. CONCLUSION: THE DUAL IMPETUS OF NEOLIBERALISM AND TRANSNATIONALISM

The research engaged in a rather untrodden path of multi-sited ethnography to capture the everyday interactions, connections, social institutions and processes with regard to labor migration in a transnational setting. I explored how Filipino migrant workers in Rome and their households in Metro Manila articulate, and are shaped by, the strategies and logics entrenched in the processes of power and capital accumulation.

While the research discusses transnational labor migrants and households in a new light, it is valuable to contextualize it in the debate. There are several interrelated aspects that are important for our academic praxis with which I conclude.

First, as demonstrated, Philippine postdevelopmentalism stems from a deliberative neoliberal calculation as to demarcating which populations are beneficial in luring global markets. This strategy has been highly responsive to the challenges of transnationality, thereby positioning the state as an exporter of its citizens as preferred labor to global market (Rodriguez 2010). Through transnational labor migration, the state envisions its people not only to contribute to economic development but also to fend for themselves, and so manages its movement. Through the framework of governmentality, the fusion of neoliberalism and transnationalism becomes apparent in a dual impetus, which governs the transnational constituencies and thus restructures citizenship on the basis of various regimes - institutions, practices and values. These regimes shape opportunities for transnational migrant households to constitute themselves as citizens and claim rights as members of the Philippine polity. The dual impulse of neoliberalism and transnationalism for the Philippines constitutes an assemblage of optimizing strategies and technologies that stipulate and manage the movements of population and capital. It leads to the conclusion that through the dual impetus of neoliberalism and

transnationalism, OFWs and households articulate, and are regulated by, practices encouraging mobility and citizenship elements realigned with markets, governments, and cultural regimes.

Second, the current analysis on OFWs in Rome has highlighted the ways the Philippine state benefits from having access to its population. Given the magnitude of financial and social remittance transactions, it has extended the boundaries of citizenship (i.e. ‘overseas absentee voting’) and instituted inducements to funnel economic remittances for development and strengthen migrants’ sense of lasting membership. Moreover, its neoliberal governmental stance has placed an emphasis on the participation of mobile civil society actors involved in governing, especially in terms of instigating empowerment programs. Their expert knowledge has identified an inexplicable problem of OFWs and households: they do not optimize the potential of migration for development framework. Consequently, they have envisioned a governmental technique in the form of social entrepreneurship that could enable communities to activate their power and bring about empowerment, community participation and social capital. Put together, these elements serve as the building blocks of the networks of neoliberal governance (Miraftab 2004: 239). Thus, through their expert attention, these CSOs gain power over “natural” transnational migrant households and communities to regulate their conduct and represent their interests to the state.

The ethnographic discussion in this study suggests that CSOs contribution to social change appears dubious. To repurpose “subsistence” migrant workers and ‘underproductive’ household members as entrepreneurial-development “partners” casts neither the state nor the CSOs as a grantor of rights, protections, or opportunities. Through building active and social entrepreneurial citizens, CSOs constitute and contour the transnational migrant households and communities in a neoliberal fashion. This constructs communities as novel sites and managers

of risk who engage in self-regulatory modes of governance, or what Foucault (1977) terms the “technologies of the self,” rendering the entrepreneurial citizen as the vehicle through which development goals can be realized. In what Rose (1999) describes as the “double movement of autonomization and responsabilization” (p.174), the entrepreneur - the transnational migrant household or community - is both a subject and an object of power, “set free to find their own destiny....[but] made responsible for that destiny, and for the destiny of society as a whole in new ways” (p.174).

Third, this multi-sited research attests that living transnationally becomes the norm among migrant households constituted transnationally. Labor migration to Italy provides an illustrative example on how Filipino households come to see overseas work as the way to attain economically what they could not achieve in the Philippines. Migrants use the income they earn in Italy to improve their households’ social standing at home and to claim substantive rights such as education, property and socio-economic. At the same time, because they are drawn to the promises of financial freedom and economic development instigated by the technical knowledge of CSOs, OFWs and households realign their values with the neoliberal logic of responsabilization and entrepreneurialism. As exemplified by the transnational social investors and the social entrepreneurs-cum-magazine editors in Rome, transnational migrants found migrant associations to create alternative topographies or new spaces, which exude meaningful allegiances. Though multi-sited fieldwork, I have uncovered how these transnational practices bring about a re-inception of the state as it adopts new roles, thereby, rethinks governance, reconfigures actors’ roles and reconstitutes who its members are.

In becoming social entrepreneurs, transnational labor migrants have exploited the networks of neoliberal governance to create innovative and efficient solutions to social problems.

These actors see their role as mending a gap that the state has been unable to fill, yet do so as if they were an equal partner with the state. In doing so, they work within a mesh of various sectors: the civil sector, private family life, business and the state. The state on the other hand lays out the regulatory foundation for social entrepreneurs through subcontracting CSOs. This neoliberal strategy involves nurturing a relationship with social entrepreneurs that will allow creative and innovative solutions to boost the overall economic activity on their part.

Fourth, citizenship is the guiding principle of a transnational population management that yoke a transnational collective care of a Filipino culturally grounded national community and a neoliberal accent on the individual's responsibility to actively belong to that community. The re-articulation of Filipino citizen-subjects does not purely depict the imperatives of mobile capitalism, it is also sculpted by the powerful effects of a cultural regime that defines what it means to be Filipino migrant workers in contemporary governance. OFWs are culturally esteemed because of the risks and responsibilities (from the household to the state) they take and the strong transnational familial and community ties they maintain; even more so through the practice of social entrepreneurship, which generates various arenas for affirming one's enhanced status and for acquiring social capital and resources. Indeed, through their social entrepreneurial activities, Filipino migrant workers in Rome can actively claim transnational membership. They also become emblematic of the re-envision of cultural values as entrepreneurial, innovative and active.

The overall aim of this research was to tease out an understanding of citizenship articulated by transnational political agents and the ways in which it becomes an indicator of political subjectivity, and at the same time challenge some taken for granted aspects of transnational labor migration and development. The intention of this critique has not been to

discredit the transformative promise of participatory collective action. Instead, it has been to put into question some of the ways transnational strategies and practices and the concept of social entrepreneurship have been grasped without considering the broader processes they are embedded in and their implications for citizenship.

My contribution has been to delve into the dangers associated with romanticizing social entrepreneurial activities and “change-makers” as emblematic of community-led development scheme, which in fact resonates with neoliberal ideologies. The approach shifts the attention away from the role of the state as the major labor exporter to the role of OFWs and their households who represent a lack of development *and at the same time* assumed to catalyze local development. While the social entrepreneurship approach offers new avenues for income generation for some “poor” households, the practices through which households are “converted” into “empowered” social entrepreneurial subjects can stimulate novel forms of discipline and control, especially in excluding those who cannot manage risks.

Furthermore, the preceding analysis on Philippine citizenship contributes to the critical literature on citizenship (Chapter 1.3.3) exposing the boundaries of a notion of citizenship as an established set of stabilized rights and obligations. With the assemblage of citizenship regime and neoliberal criteria, civil society actors wield implicit power over transitional migrant populations at a particular political scale. This confluence engenders the formation of various techniques for differentiated governing, thereby affecting notions of citizenship and ideas of belonging. Today, OFWs and households seek to make sense of their circumstances and struggles and develop strategies as political agents in relation to a broader community. They maneuver to changing conditions, institutions and opportunity structures across borders and scales. In constructing a substantive form of citizenship in contemporary governance,

transnational migrant households identify and devise an extensive set of institutions, agents, allegiances and practices in terms of keeping their jobs, making ends meet, sustaining transnational linkages and building allegiances. In this process, the spaces of the community play a pivotal role. Thus, as illustrated, citizenship is neither a fixed legal category nor an abstract concept, rather it is a malleable one (Staeheli 2003: 101).

In conclusion, the research has revealed how neoliberalism and transnationalism are inflected by cultural meanings and histories. In addition, it has centered on transnational migrant households' articulations of citizenship, which affirm mutations of citizenship. More importantly, theoretical and methodological research concerns have been raised about the relevance of the discourse of cross-border mobility and citizenship considered from the level of everyday present life, the importance of temporal and spatial dimensions in investigating transnational practices, and the significance of multi-sited ethnography.

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