

## **Transnationalism and Reintegration**

### ***The influence of transnationalism on reintegration outcomes for Filipino returnees that stayed irregular in the Netherlands***

#### **Abstract**

The influence of transnationalism in relation to reintegration has become an increasingly important issue in temporary society to understand the processes, outcomes, and policy implications of migrants' return. Drawing on 15 qualitative semi-structured interviews with Filipino returnees and stakeholders involved with the return and reintegration process of irregular Filipino migrants, this study shows how transnationalism influences the reintegration outcomes of these returnees. A simple categorization of returnees and their reintegration trajectories was constructed using different forms of capital and the different dimensions of reintegration. Then, after distinguishing different forms of transnationalism before and after return, the results show that transnational involvement before return can go hand-in-hand with positive as well as negative reintegration outcomes after return. It can result in full reintegration, but can also create a false belief or false idea of 'preparedness', resulting in negative reintegration outcomes.

***Keywords:*** *Filipinos, irregular migrants, return migration, reintegration, transnationalism*

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## **Introduction**

As a sub-process of international migration, return migration has been subject to a contrasting set of propositions (Cassarino, 2004). At first, return migration appeared to be straightforward. It was defined as the movement of migrants back to their homelands to resettle (Gmelch, 1980). Many migration scholars posed the question whether return migration can be seen as a success or a failure of the migration experience. On the one hand, migrants usually return to their country of origin after accomplishing specific objectives they had set out to achieve (Gmelch, 1980; de Haas, Fokkema & Fihiri, 2015). By returning they were merely fulfilling their original plan and return migration can be interpreted as a result of success. On the other hand, migrants might fail to find a job or housing to improve their lives, in which case they are more likely to return (de Haas et al., 2015). Here, return migration is mainly interpreted as failure.

Return migration is not always the simple process of going 'home'. Migrants have been abroad for a long time in a foreign country with a different set of rules, status, and culture. Therefore, after return migration, they begin the process of reintegration and sustainable resettlement (Kuschminder, 2017). Ruben, van Houte and Davids (2009) argued that return can only become sustainable when returnees are provided with possibilities to become reintegrated in terms of different dimensions of reintegration and possible additional migration projects. According to Ruben et al. (2009), sustainable return is labelled as the ways how individuals find and define their position in society and create possibilities for participation in society after return. For all types of return migration, sustainable return and reintegration can be seen as a process that is influenced by the structural and cultural conditions of the return environment (Kuschminder, 2017). It is important to notice that the term reintegration has different applications and factors for different types of return migrants. Therefore, this study examines the voluntary return and reintegration process of irregular migrants.

However, in the story of transnationalism, return does not constitute the end of a migration cycle, but the migration story continues (Cassarino, 2004). Therefore, return migration can be seen as a stage within an ongoing process of spatial mobility (Hammond, 1999). In an era in which mobility patterns are becoming increasingly complex and with nearly all countries exposed to migration in some way, transnationalism is a prevalent phenomenon that presents both challenges and opportunities for returnees (IOM, 2010). Transnationalism constitutes an attempt to formulate a conceptual and theoretical framework aimed at a better understanding of the strong social and economic links between migrants' host and origin countries (Cassarino, 2004). The contextual aspects, especially in the relation to the context of return, are crucial to understanding the reintegration process of irregular migrants. According

to Black and Gent (2006) the notion that sustainable reintegration of returnees might involve transnational linkages by returnees is arguable, but also consistent with developing literature on ‘mobile livelihoods’ and the ‘migration-development nexus’. Through transnational connections after their return, they can act as ‘collective agents of change’ by remitting political ideas, such as ideas on rights and responsibilities, forms of government, and democracy (Faist, 2008). Therefore, Faist (2008) and Rother (2009) argue that return migrants are frequently praised as agents of development by international institutions and academic scholars, and have the potential to be agents of democratization.

A lot of research documented the relation between transnationalism and integration (Glick-Schiller, Basch & Blac-Szanton, 1992; Portes, 2003; Snel, Engbersen & Leerkes, 2006). Initial research on transnationalism saw the process as opposing to integration. More recent research has indicated, however, that integration and transnational ties are not necessarily substitutes, but can be complements (Snel et al., 2006). However, there is little research on the influence of transnationalism in relation to the reintegration of returnees, despite its critical importance to understand the processes, outcomes, and policy implications of irregular migrants’ return (Battistella & Liao, 2013; van Meeteren et al., 2014). There are also inconsistent findings in the field of transnationalism and the reintegration of returnees. Reintegration strategies can be influenced, positive or negative, by transnational ties (Cassarino, 2004). Economic and social relationships may facilitate reintegration, but can also create that returnees do not belong anywhere anymore (Cassarino, 2004; Koser & Kuschminder, 2015; Ruben et al., 2009).

Furthermore, programs and funds from international cooperation that assist irregular migrants with their voluntary return, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), argue that reinforcing the sustainable livelihoods of return migrants could be considered as a contribution to development (IOM, 2001). The development of indicators of reintegration and sustainable return could assist in monitoring the impact of the IOM return programs. Post-return assistance by non- and inter-governmental organizations, such as IOM, will be particularly helpful when human guidance is combined with financial support and practical information to enhance a more sustainable return process (Ruben et al., 2009). One response to the problems of reintegration and return programs has been the emergence more recently of flexible programs, which seek to access the positive contributions that can be made by transnational ties, without promoting definitive return (Black & Gent, 2006). Including a more ‘transnational’ lifestyle and continued mobility, instead of looking at return as an ending, permanent or durable solution. Therefore, it is useful for organizations such as IOM to know

how to deal with transnationalism before and after return.

Return migration and transnationalism of irregular migrants are two key phenomena in research on international migration. This leads to emerging discussions in the area of ‘post-return transnationalism’ and a debate as to if and how engagement in transnational activities upon return may or may not assist in the reintegration process of irregular migrants. The examination of transnationalism from a return perspective is an emerging area that needs further development. Moreover, there is a lack of understandings of how irregular migrants reintegrate and a shortage of theoretical models to explore the different dimensions of reintegration (Kuschminder, 2017). Within the recent migration and development debates, there are high expectations of diaspora returnees with transnational ties to act as agents and structures of change. Therefore, this study focuses on irregular Filipino migrants that return voluntarily back to the Philippines with the help of IOM or other NGOs after having achieved or failed their migration goal. There is an expectation that the Filipino returnees are able to reintegrate upon return, yet there is little understanding of the process of return and reintegration of this group in relation to transnationalism. By focusing on the connections that Filipino returnees establish between the Netherlands and the Philippines, the transnational paradigm can serve as an angle of analysis for the wider issues of return migration and social change in both host and home societies (IOM, 2010). Therefore, this research focuses on the question *how does transnationalism influence the reintegration outcomes of returnees?*

### **Dimensions of reintegration**

In general, after return migration, individuals begin the process of reintegration (Kuschminder, 2017). Reintegration is considered as a multi-dimensional and long-term dimensional process, often complicated and challengeable by multiple actors (Lietaert & van Gorp, 2019). A combination of individual and structural factors in both the origin and receiving or destination country have been found to influence reintegration and sustainable return (Koser & Kuschminder, 2015). An important understanding is that the circumstances of migrants in the country of destination, for example their irregular status, may influence their prospects for reintegration after return. Reintegration processes are often complex, and most returnees face multiple challenges in their attempt to reintegrate into the communities of return (Stefansson, 2006). Reintegration incorporates multiple patterns to varying degrees. Gmelch (1980) stated that there are two ways to assess reintegration. First, by examining the social and economic conditions of returnees, and second, by focusing on the own perceptions of migrants. More recent work also included cultural reintegration processes (Kuschminder, 2017; Lietaert & van

Gorp, 2019; Ruben et al., 2009; UNHCR, 2004). For example, migrants' cultural orientation towards the home and host country and the sense of belonging (Kuschminder, 2017).

Distinguishing between the different aspects of reintegration provides nuanced information on how reintegration works in the life of returnees. Furthermore, it has also been suggested that reintegration is needed for the returnee to maintain life, livelihood, and dignity (Lietaert & van Gorp, 2019; UNHCR, 2004).

### ***Economic reintegration***

The existence of a stable socioeconomic environment is an important factor contributing to the sustainable reintegration of migrants (IOM, 2015). According to multiple scholars, economic reintegration forms the basis for the self-sufficiency of the returnee (Cassarino, 2004; IOM, 2015; Kuschminder, 2017). Tizazu, Derluyn and Lietaert (2020) state that, with regard to economic reintegration, income, employment and housing are important indicators that are well-matched to economic structures.

Economic reintegration mainly focuses on returnees' challenges to mobilize resources and sufficient income (IOM, 2001). It is even argued that, although sustainable resettlement involves reintegration in different domains, access to gainful and productive employment is often stated as being the most vital element for successful reintegration (Lietaert & van Gorp, 2019). But also establishing a material base for living after return is one of the primary concerns of returnees themselves. According to Black et al., (2004) sustainable reintegration is achieved if returnees believe they have an adequate level, or have reached an adequate level of income, assets, jobs and housing.

Therefore, the absorptive capacity of the local economy must be placed against the potential demand by returnees for employment (Arowolo, 2000). The skill set of the returnee may not be well matched to the economy in the country of origin (IOM, 2015), and they are unable to secure wage employment (Arowolo, 2000). Furthermore, depending on the amount of time spent abroad, economic activity in the community of return may be different compared to when the migrant left it. Labour markets may be underdeveloped or economic opportunities may be low for the population as a whole.

Lastly, feelings of dependency on financial support from (non-)governmental organizations in the host country can present an important challenge to returnees' economic reintegration (IOM, 2015). According to IOM (2015) these conditions can have a negative effect on returnees' sense of agency and self-esteem, which reduces their chances for successful

economic reintegration. Therefore, return might be considered unsustainable for returnees if there are inadequate jobs or incomes (Black et al., 2004).

### ***Social reintegration***

The social dimension of the reintegration process is equally critical to full reintegration compared to economic reintegration (Arowolo, 2000). According to the UNHCR (2004) social reintegration includes friendships and family, relationships with the local institutions, and local and transnational ties in general. A returnees' perception about their social life and the reception by family and friends after return and the personal disposition of the returnee are also vital to social reintegration (Arowolo, 2000).

Social changes in origin societies, depending on the duration of stay abroad and the change that occurred before and after migration, are critical to the social reintegration process of returnees (Cassarino, 2004). Therefore, (re)building of social networks and group reintegration greatly contributes to the social reintegration of returnees (Ruben et al., 2009; IOM, 2015). Social relations in the country of origin provide return migrants with the feeling of being accepted as a crucial factor of reintegration (Ruben et al., 2009).

Social networks are important for social capital in sharing personal and intimate relations with peers, acquiring information, and discussing experiences (Ruben et al., 2009). Social capital could lead to a more stable and efficient position of individuals in society. Whether and how return migrants can benefit from social capital depends on the type of social networks. Besides, social networks are crucial for understanding the ways in which returnees reintegrate and mobilize resources (Cassarino, 2004).

However, returnees are not always perceived positively, the tension can develop between local populations and the migrants who left (IOM, 2015). Return might be unsustainable for returnees if there is an irretrievable loss of assets or livelihood. (Black et al., 2004). Furthermore, returnees' social network and family often change during the period abroad. Parents could have passed away or their children have started their own families during the period abroad. Therefore, returnees often need to rebuild their social networks.

### ***Cultural reintegration***

Apart from personal background characteristics and the community levels variables referred to above, cultural reintegration calls for understanding of the cultural environment, both at their country of origin as their destination country (Arowolo, 2000). Adjustment to life and culture at migrants' place of destination invariably calls for change in lifestyles and living conditions. The work of Kuschminder (2017) proposed an understanding for reintegration as an

'individualized process' also shaped by the cultural environment of return. According to Arowolo (2000) return migration means that the old or traditional culture must be relearned. It assumes that the returnee needs to adapt to the dominant society and re-accepting the norms and values, with no consideration for the returnees' changed identities, positions, or interests (van Houte & Koning, 2008).

However, being free to construct one's own identity in all these aspects, and having this identity accepted in a wider society, enhances the feeling of belonging (Koser & Kuschminder, 2015; Tizazu et al., 2020). Complex situations emerge when migrants return and their new hybrid identities do not necessarily fit into a home society that possibly has also undergone significant changes (Ruben et al., 2009). Return migrants may try to combine the best of both worlds, but this situation can also create a feeling of in-between-ness; not belonging anywhere anymore.

Therefore, the process of cultural reintegration can be smooth or rough depending on the extent of assimilation of foreign culture, and the nature and intensity of links with the home culture while away. Re-adjustment in the country of origin depends on the cultural or international identity of the returnee. Living abroad influences someone's self-concept, which consequently influences the ease with which they can re-adapt to their country of origin (Lietaert & van Gorp, 2019).

### ***Structural reintegration***

The politics of return and the structural reintegration of returnees into civil society can be confounding (Arowolo, 2000). The structural dimension of reintegration, referring to access to legal processes and legal support, are regularly mentioned in studies on irregular return (Lietaert & van Gorp, 2019). According to Black et al. (2004) sustainable reintegration is achieved when the returnee has gained access to public services, or believes he/she has an adequate level of security and access to public services. However, the problem of unsustainable return may rise when there is a wholly inadequate access to services or security (Black et al., 2004).

Furthermore, returnees tend to be politically active and their potential for political activism upon return can be a cause for concern in political circles (Arowolo, 2000). Equipped with political experience of the migration country, returnees tend to make a significant input into the political system.

### **Use of integration theories in reintegration approaches**

The integration literature is more theoretically developed than the literature on reintegration and offers different insights that can be applied to the return context (Kuschminder, 2017).

Initial theories of incorporation, especially in the USA, assumed migrants to uproot themselves from their country of origin and begin a process of assimilating to the country of destination. Assimilation was viewed as a one-sided process wherein migrants were incorporated in society through a process of adaption (Miller & Castles, 2009). From assimilation, the concept of integration and multiculturalism gained popularity, especially in Western Europe, which encourages migrants to maintain their cultural identities. Integration came to be understood as a two-way process that requires adaption both on the part of the migrants as of the host society (Castles, 2003). From a return perspective, according to Kuschminder (2017) the incorporation of returnees into the core institutions of the return environment and the acquisition of rights are essential components of reintegration. Return migrants have to re-adapt to the country of origin and the local culture and can choose different balances between the culture of the country of migration and the culture of the country of return (Berry, 2011; Kuschminder, 2017).

Therefore, different approaches to assimilation and integration can highlight the similarities from reintegration approaches. The first approach is the one by Esser (2004). According to Esser (2004), integration is generally understood as cohesion between the parts of a systematic whole irrespective of the basis of this cohesion. The parts must constitute an integral component of the whole. Esser (2004) makes a distinction between integration into a system and social integration. Integration into a system is the cohesion of an entire society or group. Social integration, by contrast, is the inclusion of migrants in various areas of a society or group. It is directly concerned with the orientations, motives, intentions, and relationships of the migrants. However, in general, what is mostly meant by the integration of migrants is their social integration into the host society, for example granting of rights or participation in the labour market and educational system. Therefore, it can be assumed that the successful positioning of migrants and the native population will enhance the prospects for identification with free and liberal principals (Esser, 2004).

The second approach is the one of segmented assimilation and downward assimilation by Portes and Zhou (1993). Here, the concept of segmented assimilation is introduced to describe and explain the diverse possible outcomes of this process of adaption. According to Portes and Zhou (1993) there are three different forms of adaptations that can explain the pattern of segmented assimilation. The first one is acculturation and integration of the second generation migrants into the white middle class. The second one is assimilation into the underclass with permanent poverty, also described as downward assimilation. The third one is a rapid economic advancement because of tight solidarity within the own migrant group, preservation of their own cultural and available material, and social capital. The contemporary



context of segmented assimilation makes the options of assimilation less clear. Assimilation into the host society depends on the specific profile of the immigrant group and the vulnerabilities and resources of this group.

Therefore, as reflected by Portes and Zhou (1993), reintegration may be segmented into different areas of society and depends on the profile, vulnerabilities and resources of the return migrant. Finally, as highlighted by Esser (2004), self-identification and social integration are also important in the reintegration process. Return migrants may identify themselves as having multiple or dual allegiances or identities that may be maintained by dual lives in both the country of return and the country of migration.

In addition to what is meant by economic, social and cultural reintegration returnees face a variety of challenges. These challenges and the specific related contextual indicators can be categorized into factors at the individual, family and community levels and factors at the government level (Tizazu et al., 2020). Therefore a key question remains the outcome for individual returnees, or collective outcomes for the community in relation to transnationalism.

### **Transnationalism**

The migration experience is as much about migrants as it is about the people who stay behind (Levitt, 2010). The cross-border activities of migrants are interweaved into the way migrants live in the receiving societies and non-migrants in the country of origin (Levitt, 2010; van Meeteren, 2012). Therefore, transnationalism is an important aspect of migration, because migrants who are connected to more than one country are increasingly common (IOM, 2020). Immigrants can live their lives across borders and maintain their ties and activities with the country of origin, even when their countries of settlement and origin are geographically distant (Glick Schiller et al., 1992).

The significance of transnational involvement is widely recognized in studies of migration, such a perspective is yet to gain a strong foothold in the field of irregular migration (van Meeteren, 2012). There is little attention to the transnational involvement of irregular migrants because transnational activities are consistently associated with legal status in the country of origin. The common view is that irregular migrants are transnationally inactive because of the obstacles they face (Lietaert, Broekaert & Derluyn, 2017). They are less able to create a stable situation in the host society and some scholars even assume that irregular migrants have no opportunity to engage in transnational activities (Bloch, 2008; Staring, 1999).

However, van Meeteren (2012) found that irregular migrants, a category facing important structural barriers, quite frequently engage in transnational activities and that these

include economic and social undertakings. Irregular migrants manage to find ways of engaging in transnational activities that are important to them, despite the limitations they face in order to survive. They even prioritize their transnational involvement over their own well-being in the receiving society, to create a better life for their relatives back home.

Developments in transport and communication technology, such as the internet and social media, also made it easier and cheaper for irregular migrants to maintain multiple relations and activities across borders (Bloch, 2008). These transnational ties are fundamental in material terms because non-monetary goods and remittances flow through them (Black et al., 2004; Dahinden, 2005). Remittances, send for basics like medical care and education, concern the most important process of migrant transnationalism (Vertovec, 2004). The regular contacts irregular migrants maintain with their households in origin countries and the sending of remittances allow their return to be better organized and prepared (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999). Transnationalism interacts with intentions and actual plans for return migration, post-return experiences and reintegration, and future remigration (Carling & Erdal, 2014).

Therefore, Cassarino (2004; 2008) introduced the theory of ‘preparation for return migration’ that attempts to explain different reintegration experiences across different contexts. According to Cassarino (2004) preparedness pertains to both the readiness and willingness of migrants to return. How migrants reintegrate and perceive their return is related to their willingness to return (Cassarino, 2008). The preparedness for return is also related to the readiness to return, which in turn depends on the financial, social and human capital resources the returnee is able to mobilize. van Meeteren et al. (2014) found in their research that migrants that made a conscious choice to return made proper preparations and maintained contact with family and friends and experiences positive reintegration an post-return experiences. These migrants also usually maintain transnational contacts with the destination country after their return and take pride and comfort in that (De Bree, Davids & De Haas, 2010). In particular, they use transnational ties as a coping strategy to deal with the financial and emotional hardship caused by their return (Lietaert et al., 2017). van Meeteren (2012) argued that after return irregular migrants are not involved in economic transnationalism with the host country. Therefore, the remittances send before return are of great importance for the people who stay behind, but they are also important for returnees (Dahinden, 2005). The remittances guarantee temporary financial support and help overcome financial shortfalls, and therefore create a better change to reintegrate. Most returnees that have transnational ties are relations either with relatives who live abroad or friends the migrants got to know during their stay in the host country (Dahinden, 2005). However, at the same time, these ties can function as a reminder of

the shame of their return, giving transnationalism an ambivalent meaning (Lietaert et al., 2017).

Therefore, the transnational turn in migration studies has not only revived interest in return migration, but has also led scholars to emphasise the importance of transnational activities in explaining and understanding reintegration trajectories, experiences and outcomes of irregular migrants (van Meeteren et al., 2014). The ability to mobilize resources through transnational ties is what explains different reintegration outcomes (Cassarino, 2014). The actual conditions of returned migrants and migrant's own subjective perceptions, desires and beliefs play a role in the reintegration outcomes (van Meeteren et al., 2014). It is not just transnational activities that take place before return that are crucial for reintegration, but also transnational practices and activities after return shape different reintegration outcomes as well. Therefore, the situational and contextual factors in both the destination country and the origin country need to be taken into account when understanding the influence of transnational activities in different reintegration outcomes (van Meeteren et al., 2014).

### **Case study: Filipino return migrants from the Netherlands**

The Philippines is a country with a long and vibrant history of emigration (Garchitorena, 2007). At present, in 193 countries Filipinos can be found and there are an estimated 40 percent of the 10.5 million Filipinos that live and work abroad (Saguin, 2020). Filipino migrants in the Netherlands are a small, but fast growing group (Maas, 2003). Most of the Filipino migrants that stay in the Netherlands are irregular and unskilled working in the domestic sector as au pair or housekeeper. For example, they overstayed in the Netherlands after their visa has expired (Boone & Kox, 2012). The duration of their stay is also decided on beforehand, resulting in temporary migration (Maas, 2003).

Therefore, in terms of migrant incorporation, irregular Filipino migrants in the Netherlands are a rather invisible migrant population (Maas, 2007). However, as Maas (2007) showed, irregular Filipino migrants in the Netherlands are well organized and have strong relations with other Filipinos in the host society. They engage in collective activities to share their faith and beliefs with their fellow Filipinos in the host country. For example, the Filipino Catholic Church in the Netherlands is an important centre for sharing religious and linguistic identity, as well as interactions between fellow Filipinos, reinforcing community relations, and represents a social institution supporting irregular Filipino migrants with their life abroad (Fresnoza-Flot, 2010).

Furthermore, the realities of the global migration of Filipinos made Filipinos all over the world deploy the diaspora discourse and transnational involvement (Aguilar Jr., 2015).

There is a dense web of economic and socio-cultural relations between them and the origin country (Maas, 2007). Temporary irregular Filipino migrant workers are active in transnational practices to prepare for their eventual return home. Maintaining transnational ties is important for irregular Filipino migrants, because they know they go home someday. Therefore, according to Maas (2007), transnationalism helps with successful reintegration. The long history of mostly temporary labour migration with economic development goals makes irregular Filipino migrants an interesting case for return migration (Yang, 2006; Saguin, 2020).

However, due to the lack of a system collecting data, the Philippines do not have comprehensive information about the scale of return migration in the country (Saguin, 2020). Rough estimates put around 20.000 return migrants every year, also from the Netherlands (Battistella, 2018). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic led to massive global layoffs of irregular Filipino migrants. It was expected that more than 300.000 irregular Filipino migrants would return, but only 95.000 asked for legal support to return (Aquino, 2020). Furthermore, the Philippine government sees Filipino returnees as economic agents that are economically active as part of their reintegration back to the country (Saguin, 2020). However, as for irregular migrants, there is no way to confirm governmental estimates, because they are unlikely to avail themselves of reintegration programs. When caught in difficult situations or having achieved their migration goal, they require for official intervention (Battistella, 2004). However, state intervention in the Philippines is largely limited (Saguin, 2020). Reintegration programs are offered only to returnees that had a legal status and legal job in their host country. Therefore, irregular Filipino migrants come to IOM or other NGOs with the request to return. IOM and NGOs provide these migrants assistance in their return process and reintegration.

In general, the context of irregular migrants that return back to the Philippines with the help of IOM or other NGOs brings several expectations for their reintegration outcomes. It is expected, in line with van Meeteren (2012), that irregular Filipino migrants engage in transnational social and economic activities and practices before return to create a better life for their relatives back home. Because of their temporary stay and irregular status in the host country it is expected that they stay oriented towards the Philippines and the Philippine community. According to multiple scholars the contacts with the origin country and the sending of remittances allows the irregular migrants to be better organized and prepared for their return (Cassarino, 2004; Portes et al., 1999; van Meeteren et al., 2014). Because of their transnational involvement with the origin country, irregular Filipino migrants are better prepared for their return and create a better change to reintegrate. Therefore, this study expects that irregular Filipino migrants know an easy process of reintegration after return, with positive reintegration

outcomes as result. Transnational involvement with the destination country after return is not expected to necessary influence the reintegration outcomes, but positively supports the returnee with their reintegration process.

### **Data and Methods**

In order to gain a better insight on the influence of transnationalism on reintegration outcomes, this study drew on a qualitative research design. 15 Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 4 Filipino returnees and 11 stakeholders that are involved with the return of irregular Filipino migrants. The selection of respondents was in collaboration with the Dutch department of IOM and a Phd student who is conducting research on irregular Filipinos in the Netherlands. For further selection of the respondents, snowball sampling was used. The selected respondents were Filipino return migrants, stakeholders of Filipino migrant organizations and NGOs in the Netherlands, stakeholders of a Philippine governmental organization, and employees of IOM. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted online or via phone and lasted around one hour. The return migrants were interviewed about their experiences on return migration, reintegration and transnationalism. The key informants of the Philippine governmental organization, NGOs, and employees of IOM were interviewed about their organization and the role of their organization as part of the return process. All the stakeholders included in this research have intensive contact with return migrants and provided different examples and cases in terms of return, reintegration and transnationalism of irregular Filipino migrants.

The Philippines were chosen as country of origin for several reasons. Firstly, the Philippines is seen as the world's largest labour exporter par excellence, involving mostly temporary and unskilled labour migration, which causes high return rates (Saguin, 2020). Secondly, Filipino migrants are well organized in the Netherlands and therefore stakeholders and returnees are easily accessible. Lastly, the returnees are familiar with the English language.

The interview topics were designed based on the theoretical framework. Therefore, the interview format followed the different elements of reintegration, focusing on economic (*labour market, housing position*), social (*personal relations, belonging and identity*), cultural (*traditions, standards, values and norms*), and structural reintegration (*access to legal processes, legal support*), migration history, transnational activities, future plans and incorporation in Dutch society.

In addition, the following sub questions were formulated to cover the topics of the different reintegration outcomes and transnationalism: 1) what types of reintegration

trajectories occur among Filipino returnees, 2) what forms of transnationalism are Filipino returnees involved in before and after return migration, 3) how does transnationalism influence return decisions.

In order to analyse the data of the interviews, the interviews were recorded by note-taking and on tape after having asked the respondents permission. The interviews were conducted in English and Dutch. Each interview was transcribed verbatim enabling the deductive coding of the data. This involved coding all the data reviewing the key topics from the theoretical framework (Bryman, 2015). Examples of such codes are *strong ties origin country*, *obtained skills* or *remittances to support oneself*. Other codes were inductively derived from the obtained data itself, such as *false belief reintegration* and *adaptability*. This is in line with the qualitative research guidance by Bryman (2015) that there need to be a strong link to the theoretical framework and also being open to unexpected information. The resulting list of codes was distinguished in two ways. First, the codes were categorised using three different types of reintegration outcomes (*full*, *partial*, *struggling reintegration*). Secondly, the codes were categorised using the different types of transnationalism (*Economic and Social-Cultural*) before and after return. The last step was to see whether the data provided the mechanisms of the influence of transnationalism on the reintegration outcomes. The outcomes of this analysis are described, quoted and summarized in the results. Finally, the results were applied to the theoretical framework and research question in a coherent discussion.

To guarantee the privacy of the respondents, ensure that the rights of the respondents are preserved and to meet the required ethical standard, an informed consent form has been verbally explained to the respondents at the beginning of the interview. Furthermore, to ensure the anonymity of the respondents all names used in the analysis are anonymized.

Finally, some limitations can be mentioned. Firstly, due to the limited number of interviews, saturation was not reached, meaning that more interviews could probably uncover more and new mechanisms (Bryman, 2015). Secondly, the respondents were not selected on a random base and only as small group of return migrants were interviewed. The other respondents provided indirect cases and examples, meaning that conclusions cannot be generalized.

## **Findings**

Each of the sub-questions is discussed below. First, a simple categorization is provided that helps to understand the different reintegration outcomes. Secondly, the analysis revealed two different forms of transnationalism, economic and socio-cultural, before and after return, and

lastly, the influence of these forms of transnationalism on the different return decisions and reintegration outcomes will be discussed.

### **Reintegration trajectories**

As Lietaert and van Gorp (2019) described, reintegration is considered as a multi-dimensional and long-term process, often complicated by multiple actors. In line with this, different reintegration trajectories were identified during the interviews that occur among Filipino return migrants. Each trajectory is constructed with their own characteristics. These characteristics determine, in large parts, the reintegration outcomes for Filipino return migrants on the different reintegration dimensions. The most important characteristics are the extent of reintegration of the return migrant.

#### ***Fully reintegrated***

The first reintegration trajectory consists of return migrants that are *fully reintegrated* into the Philippine society again. Those return migrants have all forms of capital, economic, social and cultural, that they used for their reintegration process. For example, *'The solution is to have real capital. That you have saved enough money and start your own business. As an entrepreneur you can still make it in the Philippines.'* (R15) As the interviews revealed, running a business is the most common outcome of economic reintegration. It is important that return migrants can make a living after return. *'When the returnee has started a business or job they need to keep the dynasty here.'* (R2) Finding a job for full reintegration is only possible, as a respondent explained, if you are in a specific profession. *'They can also find a job there, because if they are graduated as a nurse or teacher, then they can find their work there again.'* (R5) Otherwise, returnees are fully reintegrated when they have started or continued a successful business that provides their daily income. *'I have a small store here in our place and it really helps a lot with our everyday needs. Finally I can continue in the store that I have been dreaming of, that I have one thing for my family, because I wanted to have a store for my family. It is an everyday income. So it is not really hard.'* (R10)

When it comes to social capital, family is an important factor for full reintegration. *'But look, it's also a Filipino thing. Family is our foundation, we are very close. That is really important for us. Especially in the villages and provinces is it still very strong.'* (R15) Filipino returnees who are fully reintegrated feel welcomed back into the society, have strong ties with their family, friends and the community, and receive moral support from them. *'My family introduced us again to the things we love here and helped us emotionally to cope with the new*

*era here in the Philippines.*' (R9) This expresses that fully reintegrated migrants are really family oriented. Some of the returnees also stated that they always felt they belonged to the Philippines. For example, *'I would say that I am a proud Filipino. I feel that I belong to the Philippines.'* (R10)

Furthermore, fully reintegrated migrants have a quick adaption of the Filipino culture, norms and values after return. *'I think we can adapt easily. Filipinos are very easy and I think when we come home we will be the same again.'* (R15) As one of the returnees explained in a simplified way: *'All is going well. We just adjusted with everything, like food, weather, people, customs and traditions. We adapted our culture and traditions and adjusted again.'* (R9)

### ***Struggling reintegrated***

Contrary to fully reintegrated returnees, a second reintegration trajectory consists of returnees who have struggled with their reintegration. These *struggling reintegrated* migrants have to deal with negative or failed reintegration outcomes. *'I think to start somewhere that is difficult without money. I think the problem would be the feeling of having nothing is hard. To come back to your own village, without anything.'* (R6) This expresses the beginning of the reintegration process of struggling reintegration with negative reintegration outcomes as result. The return migrants come back after working many years abroad, mostly as domestic workers, with no obtained skills that they can use on the (labour) market back in the Philippines. *'Operational wise they are not skilled to establish or manage a business and they also do not have the papers, experience or education to find a job.'* (R15) Moreover, they often do not have money or savings that help them with their reintegration. *'If I did not succeed, then I do not know what will happen. Because I mean, I do not have a big amount of money or big savings.'* (R8) Not having any savings or skills to manage a business result in struggling reintegration, where the returnees do not have a job, running business or income. *'Well, because I had an easy life there in the Netherlands. Every day I go out, I clean houses. The end of the day I have some money. But now, here, I do not have a job and I do not know how I will receive or how I would earn money.'* (R8) The majority of the return migrants are still the breadwinner of the family, so they need to find ways to establish their reintegration even if they lack skills. They immediately need to create a source of income to support their family and own daily needs after return. However, as mentioned above, they do not have the skills to run a business what results in failed economic reintegration in the long run. *'Most of them their businesses will not be successful or operational after a year, then they need to find another way to survive or to earn.'* (R12)



In terms of social and cultural reintegration, the returnees do not feel welcomed back or do not have a social network. This happens because the family is used that the migrant is away and sending them support. *'Some people they do not feel welcomed. Like when the money stops. Because the family has always seen you as a kind of economic support and then you go back and the money is gone. Then they suddenly make you feel like you are a burden.'* (R2) They feel like a foreigner, differentiated from their relatives. Their socio-cultural reintegration results in a forced individualistic way of living. *'It is difficult to go home when you have no one to return to and going home old, broke and alone. You have to start over, all by yourself.'* (R6)

### ***Partial reintegrated***

The third reintegration trajectory consists of cases with mixed reintegration outcomes, *partially reintegrated* return migrants. These returnees are only reintegrated back in their country of origin in some reintegration dimensions or limited reintegration over all the different dimensions. *'So there are several contexts or levels of difficulties when it comes to reintegration because you cannot just say that your family is happy with me going back, but reality wise your financial or economic context is difficult.'* (R4) This explains that full reintegration is only achieved when all dimensions of reintegration have positive outcomes.

The migration experience can also bring personal changes for the migrant. In some cases these personal changes causes that the return migrant is not willing to fully reintegrate back into the Philippine society. For example, *'So I was a bit independent. I mean I can do thing with myself alone without help from others. I got some of your culture I really adopted. Sometimes when I am here, I feel different, but that is okay. I do not want to adjust completely to the Philippine life again.'* (R8) Here, the returnee does not want to fully reintegrate back into the Philippine society, but combine the best of both worlds.

Overall, fully reintegrated return migrants know an easy reintegration process, because of good preparation and social and financial support. On the other hand, the struggling reintegrated return migrants do not have any savings, failed there businesses and do not have any social network. This contradiction shows the distinction in reintegration outcomes between reintegrating with the support of your family, or reintegrating all by yourself. The partially reintegrated migrants reveal a mix of family structures and individualistic structures as reintegration outcomes.

## **Types of transnationalism**

During the interviews, different types of transnationalism were expressed. This section describes these types of transnationalism before and after return.

### ***Economic transnationalism***

Before return, Filipino migrants earn money that they send back to their country of origin. *'So what they basically do, a repeated cycle like earn, spend and send, earn spend and send.'* (R15) The sending of money, economic remittances, can be distinguished in two types: migrants who basically sent all their money back to their origin country and do not save anything for themselves, and migrants who sent money, but at the same time also putting aside or invest money for when they return back to the Philippines.

The first type of sending remittances is to support family back home. All respondents expressed that the main reason for migrating to the Netherlands is to take care and support their family back home.

*'I have my family, I have a son and a wife. So I want to provide a better life specially to give my son a good education. For me, it was difficult to leave them here in the Philippines. But I have to look for a better opportunity, so I can give them a much better life.'* (R8)

Therefore, remittances are sent to pay for medical care for the parents, education of family members or starting a business for the family to create a source of income.

The second type of sending remittances before return is to make more direct investments back home for their own future life. The purposes of this type of remittances are to build a house, to start a business for oneself or to buy land or property. *'They build a house, they buy properties, you know, just to make sure that they have something when it is time to go back.'* (R6) These investments express that the migrant is already preparing for his return and reintegration process after return.

However, after return, none of the respondents engaged in economic transnationalism. One of the reasons, as explained by one of the returnees, is that they are surviving back in the Philippines and are therefore not active in transnational economic activities after return. *'No, not anymore because we are to live and survive here.'* (R9) Another reason, as revealed in the interviews is that the returnees had no legal status in their host society. Therefore, they were not economically incorporated in the host society and only focussed towards their country of origin while abroad.

### ***Socio-cultural transnationalism***

In addition to sending economic remittances, before return Filipino migrants try to maintain their networks, ties and contacts with their family and friends back home. In line with the theoretical framework, the interviews showed that social media is an important source to maintain these transnational networks, ties and contacts. *'The internet has provided many ways. Almost everyone has Facebook and communicates to their family via Messenger. There are group messages if they are part of it.'* (R7) Social media has made it easy to follow every step of their relatives back home and stay connected to their friends and family. Keeping these ties with family members and friends back home strong is very important for Filipino migrants. As the interviews expressed, family is an important factor in the Philippines.

After return, the returnees only seem to maintain relatively little ties with the host country (i.e. the Netherlands). Returnees only have little contact with their friends, organizations and employers that helped with their return migration or incorporation in the Netherlands. *'I have some friends and also my previous employers. Just that I don't talk to them too much. Sometimes we say 'Hello, how are you doing?''* (R8) The interviews with the returnees nonetheless show that they feel that it is important to maintain these contacts to create a better opportunity for possible remigration. For example, it can create job and housing opportunities by former employers. However, the interviews also show that it is hard to invest time in these contacts because of the reintegration back in the Philippines.

### **Importance of transnationalism on the reintegration trajectories**

The different forms of transnationalism all have different influence on the reintegration trajectories. As mentioned above, Filipinos migrate to earn money abroad and send remittances to their country of origin to invest in oneself or their family. Therefore, the remittances can support with full reintegration. Returnees already set up a business back home, build a house or buy some land or property. Other remittances are used to pay for the education of family members, that they can support the return migrants financially after return.

*'So if they go back and the mother or daughter has paid for education or a medical treatment, maybe this creates a feeling of 'I have given, then give something back to me'. When those children have graduated and have a job, they support their mother financially. It is about giving and receiving.'* (R4)

This reveals that the sending of remittances has also other purposes. The remittances have not only the purpose to provide a better life for their relatives back home, but also seem to guarantee or create some expectations of financial support for the migrant after return.

Furthermore, in addition of sending remittances to their country of origin, maintaining transnational ties with family and friends back home can also provide full reintegration.

*'She tried to really help everyone in the family to build their own houses or sources of income. She made everyone strong. She also kept close contact, daily contact, with her family. She said 'when I get home I can go to everyone. I can receive support from my brothers, sisters.'* (R15)

*'They know that I'll come home one day. But indeed that is something you should see when you get home.'* (R15)

These beliefs and desires, because of the migrant's transnational involvement, seem secured when the migrants return back home. But, in some cases, these beliefs and desires are false. Migrants return home without anything, probably old and sick from working so hard for their family back home. They have invested in their transnational ties while away and have sent remittances to support their relatives financially. Therefore they expect that somebody would take care of them after return.

*'A mother has been sending money, but there was no physical love, physical warm. She came home and realized that there was no one to care for her, because everybody had their own lives.'* (R15)

Many migrants have been away for several years. They did not see their own children grow up, family members passed away, there was no physical warmth or emotional attachment, and everyone is busy with their own life. They are used to the fact that the migrant is away. Taking care of the migrant after return is not part of their life.

Furthermore, because of their transnational involvement the returnee has not invested in oneself or has any savings.

*'And so the reason to save, yeah, they wanted, but there was no choice to save. Because monthly the demand to send is very high because they have to eat, their son need to go to school, has to finish college, and there house needed to be renovated for their parents. So it is actually non-stop spending.'* (R6)

This was an example given by a NGO member of a couple that have stayed in the Netherlands for 15 years illegally to support the education for their son back in the Philippines. It reveals that most irregular Filipino migrants want to save money, but they do not get the chance to save any money. They have to pay for their daily needs in the Netherlands and also invest in their son's education back in the Philippines.

Because irregular Filipino migrants are only temporarily in their host country they are socially oriented towards their country of origin and maintain their connections, networks and contacts with their family and friends back home. They feel that their lives take place there instead of in the host country. However, you have been away for several, sometimes more than 10-20 years. There was no physical appearance. The migrants have missed all celebrations and important things in life, they did not see their children grow up. Therefore, transnationalism can have an influence on the partial reintegration, where there would be a gap when you are coming back.

Transnationalism can also create a form of prolonged identification. Returnees experience personal changes in their norms, values and behaviour. Things that they have experienced and adjust from the Netherlands, what can result in either full, partial or even struggling reintegration trajectories.

For example, return migrants are more straightforward. According to one of the respondents, Filipinos are very sensitive, through which the return migrant can be offending their family. *'When I am talking with my family I am straightforward and then they find that like, I am offending them.'* (R10) Moreover, the cultural differences that the returnee brings can also influence the social reintegration. For example, *'They are very unhappy with me, with the ideas that I am trying to impart to them. They made me feel that I am very different.'* (R10) These examples show an individualized process where the returnee needs to adapt to the dominant society and adjust to the norms and values. There is no room for the returnees' changed identity.

However, as a result of transnationalism, the adjusted norms and values brought back to the Philippines can also result in full reintegration. For example, *'So like, it's the value of the money, you will really know the value of them money. So yeah, it's very nice also because you make more wise decisions.'* (R8) These norms, brought back from the Netherlands, can support the returnee with the process of economic reintegration.

The effects of transnationalism on structural reintegration outcomes seem small. Whereas returnees have experienced a different environment with different laws and rules, they are thankful of everything the Philippine government has provided to them. Because of the situation back in the Philippines the returnees are not expecting any support from the government. *'Because if you are going to wait for the support of the government in the Philippines, you just get hungry.'* (R10) They are still aware of the political situation in the Philippines, so when they return they know what to expect.

The only small influence that transnationalism created is the personal realization and the comparison with the situation that they have experienced while abroad. This creates a feeling of desire to a better and more supportive government, but without taking any action. It evolves only on a personal level within the thoughts of the returnees, but does not have any influence on the reintegration trajectories or outcomes.

### ***Circular migration***

In terms of transnationalism, return migration is not the end of the migration cycle, but the migration cycle can possibly continue (Cassarino, 2004). This is what we call circular- or remigration. The returnees and stakeholders explained often that maintaining transnational contacts with the destination country is important to create an opportunity for possible remigration in the future. *'I would like to continue my contact with the people who helped me there, because maybe one day they can help me to come back.'* (R8) Trying to maintain contacts with former employers and friends abroad provides the feeling of an opportunity to go back if they have the chance. For lots of returnees it is a desire or a dream to migrate again. *'If I get a chance again I want to go back to the Netherlands again. It is my dream.'* (R5)

This also counts for migrating to another host country. Transnational networks can provide job chances, offers housing and creates a feeling that the migrant is not standing alone. *'My uncle knows a lot of people who worked in the oil rig platform. And well, because he said, there is a possibility that I can work there. With the help of his friends there.'* (R8) Maintaining these contacts with relatives abroad can make the migration journey more easy for the migrant.

However, returnees also explain that it is hard to invest time in these transnational networks because of their reintegration process in the Philippines.

*'Sometimes communication is hard. I mean, because I have to start all over here in the Philippines. So that is my main focus. Maybe later when I am stable I can maintain communication with them again.'* (R8)

They need to adjust to the Philippine society again, which means survive and start their lives again. Furthermore, there is also the time difference that makes it hard to communicate and they are too busy and focused on their reintegration process.

Furthermore, maintaining the contacts with friends back in the country of destination can also create a feeling of homesickness. This feeling of homesickness can hinder the reintegration process and result in struggling reintegration. It creates a feeling that everything

is better abroad and that they want to pursue their live abroad instead of in the Philippines, causing a focus on remigration instead of full reintegration.

### **Involvement stakeholders**

As the interviews revealed, the involvement of different stakeholders in the return and reintegration process of Filipino return migrants can help towards full reintegration. For example, members of NGOs provide trainings and help to invest in social reintegration:

*'It is often also a matter of reconnecting with the network in the country of origin, especially with the elder irregular migrants. Not everyone has kept contact.'* (R6)

The NGOs and try to help the migrant with rebuilding their networks back in the Philippines. They search for relatives of the migrant or try to get in contact with a partner organization in the Philippines. IOM is mostly helping people to get back economically. They help them with the transportation back to their country of origin, provide medical care if needed and for some return migrants there is also a reintegration budget of 2000 euro available.

*'That money must be spent in the country of origin, in the Philippines. I talk to them beforehand to set up a business plan, what they want with the money, how they want to invest it. In principle, it should be used for an income generating activity. So a small business or study, that you invest in the future.'* (R4)

This reintegration support can really help the return migrants with the start of their economic reintegration. With the money the returnee can start or continue a business to generate an income for their daily needs.

Lastly, the respondents explained that the reintegration support is mostly financial support, because there is no need of social support. The migrant comes to IOM with the request to return. Therefore, IOM does not ask them about their transnational involvement or network back home. *'The migrants wants to return, meets our conditions, okay then we facilitate that.'* (R1) The reason for their request to return, in most cases, is that they do not have enough money to pay for their return. In some cases there are also other obstacles. They do not have a valid passport or they are scared to buy a ticket because of their irregular status.

## **Conclusion & Discussion**

This study offers a qualitative analysis on the influence of transnationalism on different reintegration outcomes. The study is based on 15 semi-structured qualitative interviews with Filipino returnees that stayed irregular in the Netherlands, members of NGOs that are involved with the return of irregular migrants, and employees of IOM and a Philippine governmental organization that support these irregular migrants with their return and reintegration process. The central research question of this research was: how does transnationalism influence the different reintegration outcomes of returnees?

The first step in our analysis was to identify the different reintegration outcomes. This study found that after return the reintegration process of the returnees can result in three different reintegration trajectories: full, partial and struggling reintegration. These reintegration trajectories depend on different forms of capital. In terms of economic capital, fully reintegrated migrants have saved an amount of money and have a business or a job where they can provide themselves with their daily needs. In terms of socio-cultural capital, family is important and the returnees are really family-oriented. This results in strong family ties, feel welcomed back and morally supported, and the feeling that they belong to their community. Because of these factors, they also adapt quickly to the Philippine culture again. On the contrary, there are struggling reintegrated migrants. The analysis showed that these migrants have only limited capital. Economically, they have no savings or obtained skills, which results in having no job or a failing business. In addition to that they are broke, the struggling reintegrated migrants are forced to live an individualistic life. They have no social network or are not accepted back to their community. They feel like a foreigner. The last trajectory consists of partial reintegrated migrants. These migrants are only reintegrated on some dimensions because they are not able to reintegrate or are not willing to reintegrate fully. Therefore, in line with Koser and Kushminder (2015), this study showed that the circumstances of migrants and the amount of capital in both the country of destination and origin influence their prospects for reintegration after return.

Furthermore, as suggested in the literature, it is well documented that many migrants are involved in transnational activities such as supporting and creating a better life for their relatives back home (Snel et al., 2006; van Meeteren, 2012). As the analysis showed, the main reason for irregular Filipino migrants to migrate is with transnational reasons to support their family back home. This results in a temporary stay decided on forehand, oriented towards the origin society and limited incorporation in the host society. Furthermore, this study shows, in line with van Meeteren (2012), that before return the irregular migrants are involved in different



economic and socio-cultural transnational activities. After return they are mostly inactive in transnationalism. The analysis showed that, in addition to van Meeteren (2012), the reason for being economically inactive in transnationalism is because they had no legal status in their host country. Therefore, they did not participate in the legal economy or were economically incorporated in their host country. They also have only a limited amount of savings, so therefore they are trying to survive back home.

However, we did find that the returnees have small social transnational involvement with the destination country after return. As Cassarino (2004) argued, return migration is not the end of the migration cycle, but the migration cycle can possibly continue. Our analysis showed that the reason for maintaining this transnational contact is to create possibilities for future remigration. As seen in the interviews, the returnees have the desire to migrate again if they get the chance. However, to keep structural contact with the destination country is hard for the returnees because they are trying to survive and reintegrate back again in their country of origin. It causes also a feeling of homesickness, where this study showed that it can result in partial or even struggling reintegration outcomes.

Generally speaking, transnationalism does not always constitute to full reintegration. This study showed that the beliefs of preparedness for return, created through transnational involvement with the country of origin, can result in a negative reintegration outcomes against all expectations. Therefore, as Levitt (2010) argued, the migration experience is as much about the migrants as the people who stay behind. We have to take this into account when looking at return migration and reintegration. Cassarino (2004) introduced the concept of 'preparation for return migration'. Preparedness for return depends on the readiness and willingness of migrants to return. Our analysis found that transnationalism can create the idea or belief of readiness and willingness to return. Irregular Filipino migrants that were transnational involved with their home country, by maintaining social ties and sending remittances, belief that they get social, financial and moral support from their relatives back home after return. They believe that they have capital and have mobilized adequate material and non-material resources because of their transnational involvement with the origin country. As Arowolo (2000) and Ruben et al. (2009) stated, this transnational involvement does not only contribute to a social support structure, but also provides economic betterment for the returnees. However, as some interviews revealed, Filipino returnees come home broke and alone. All their relatives have built their own lives and there is no one to support them. Instead, this idea or belief of a good preparation to return caused through transnationalism results in a struggling reintegration trajectory.

Furthermore, by including employees of IOM as stakeholders that are involved with the

return and reintegration process of irregular migrants, we can show some shortcomings in their policies and provide policy implications that can be useful for policy makers investing in return and reintegration support. This study revealed that return migrants with an irregular status in their host country are mostly seen as migrants with economic needs. However, this analysis provides evidence that these return migrants also have socio-economic and socio-cultural needs. Irregular migrants with the request to return do not only need financial support to return. There are return migrants that are struggling with their reintegration, even after receiving the reintegration budget from IOM or another NGO. The reason that their reintegration process resulted in negative reintegration outcomes was because they were lacking skills to run a business or work in a specific profession or did not receive the social support they needed. Before migration, the native counsellors could ask the migrants different questions to form a more complete picture of the needs of the migrants in their return and reintegration process. In this regard, I will suggest to invest in professional and personal skills training or education, provided before or after return, in addition to the financial support.

In conclusion, these findings contribute to a further understanding of the different reintegration outcomes of Filipino return migrants. More importantly, the findings provide preliminary insights into how transnationalism and the idea or belief of transnationalism influence different reintegration trajectories. Like any research, this study knows its limitations. The limitations of this study are mainly in the field of data. Firstly, the sample size of this study is small ( $n= 15$ ). Secondly, this study focussed only on one specific research group, the irregular Filipino returnees. As this study showed, irregular Filipino migrants are well organized and oriented towards their origin country while abroad. Furthermore, as only few returnees were interviewed, the analysis is mostly based on the perceived cases expressed by the stakeholders. Lastly, this study did also not take the personal characteristics of the respondents into account. These variables can have a potential influence on transnational involvement, return decisions and the reintegration process.

Therefore, the findings suggest that further research should focus on more different cases from different migrant groups, taking into account their personal characteristics. This focus can look if the idea and belief of transnationalism works different for different migrant groups. Therefore, it would be advisable to include more returnees for direct examples and experiences. Additionally, it would be interesting to focus on the monitoring reports and counselling of IOM to see course of the different reintegration trajectories over time.

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## Appendix A: Ethical and Privacy Aspects of Research



### CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

#### INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website ([http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page\\_id=17](http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17)). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

#### PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Transnational involvement and Reintegration  
*The influence of transnationalism on reintegration outcomes for Filipino returnees from the Netherlands*

Name, email of student: Dieuwke Spierings, [581280ds@eur.nl](mailto:581280ds@eur.nl)

Name, email of supervisor: Dr. Arjen Leerkes, [leerkes@essb.eur.nl](mailto:leerkes@essb.eur.nl)

Start date and duration: January 2020 - 20-06-2021

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?

(e.g. internship organization)



## PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES - NO

*If 'NO': skip to part V.*

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - NO

*Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).*

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. YES - NO

*If 'YES': skip to part IV.*

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). YES - NO

*If 'YES': skip to part IV.*

### PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants?  
*Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).* YES - NO
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES - NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES - NO
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? YES - NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES - NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES - NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - NO

**If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.**

While it will be impossible for outsiders to identify any of the respondents they are not selected on a random base but approached through the organization they work for or the organization that supported them. Therefore, it might be possible that certain people within the organization can identify who the respondent is as they know who they put forward to participate in the interviews.

**What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).**

If data that can be identified does not contribute to my analysis I will make sure this is not mentioned and anonymized in the transcript.

**Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.**

NO

*Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.*

*Continue to part IV.*

## **PART IV: SAMPLE**

### **Where will you collect or obtain your data?**

The qualitative semi-structured interviews will be conducted in collaboration with the Dutch department of the International Organization for Migration and Lalaine Siruno, a Phd student who is conducting research on irregular Filipinos in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the interviews will be conducted through a video meeting service (Zoom, Teams) or via phone at the preference of the respondent.

*Note: indicate for separate data sources.*

### **What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?**

I conducted 15 interviews. 11 with stakeholder involved with the return and reintegration process of irregular Filipino migrants and 4 interviews with actual Filipino returnees.

*Note: indicate for separate data sources.*

### **What is the size of the population from which you will sample?**

I do not know the exact numbers of Filipino migrants that stayed irregular in the Netherlands. Because of their irregular status it is hard to give an exact number. I also do not know exactly the size of the institutions where the stakeholders are involved. However, there are definitely a sufficient number of stakeholders, so that many respondents will still be anonymous if their name is not mentioned. For the smaller NGOs, the name of the NGO isn't even mentioned to provide their anonymity.

*Note: indicate for separate data sources.*

*Continue to part V.*

## **Part V: Data storage and backup**

### **Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?**

At the beginning of each interview an informed consent will be obtained. The respondent can give their permission for recording the interviews. However, if the respondent is uncomfortable with recording the interview, the interview continues with note-taking. The storage of the data is on an external hard drive that will not leave my home.

*Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.*

### **Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?**

I, Dieuwke Spierings, am responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from my research

### **How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?**

The data will be backed up directly after recording/note-taking

### **In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?**

To ensure the anonymity of the respondents, their names will not be mentioned in the transcripts. If any other identifier comes up in the interviews that is not relevant for my study these will be anonymized too. Furthermore, all cases and situations provided by the stakeholders will be fictive.

*Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.*

## **PART VI: SIGNATURE**

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Dieuwke spierings

Name (EUR) supervisor: Dr. Arjen Leerkes

Date: 21-03-2021

Date:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dieuwke Spierings". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'S' at the end.

## Appendix B: List of interviews

Code	Description	Date	Length	Platform	Transcript	Language
R1	Stakeholder IOM	23 April 2021	54 minutes	Teams	Verbatim	Dutch
R2	Stakeholder NGO	24 April 2021	85 minutes	Zoom	Verbatim	English
R3	Stakeholder Philippine Governmental Organization	25 April 2021	89 minutes	Zoom	Verbatim	English
R4	Stakeholder IOM	29 April 2021	50 minutes	Teams	Verbatim	Dutch
R5	Returnee	6 May 2021	70 minutes	Zoom	Verbatim	English
R6	Stakeholder NGO	6 May 2021	58 minutes	Teams	Verbatim	Dutch
R7	Stakeholder IOM	10 May 2021	59 minutes	Teams	Verbatim	Dutch
R8	Returnee	28 May 2021	66 minutes	Zoom	Verbatim	English
R9	Returnee	17 May 2021	64 minutes	Phone	Notes	English
R10	Returnee	20 May 2021	70 minutes	Zoom	Verbatim	English
R11	Stakeholder NGO	23 May 2021	45 minutes	Phone	Notes	English
R12	Stakeholder IOM	26 May 2021	70 minutes	Teams	Verbatim	English
R13	Stakeholder IOM	27 May 2021	50 minutes	Teams	Verbatim	English
R14	Stakeholder Philippine Governmental organization	28 May 2021	47 minutes	Phone	Notes	English
R15	Stakeholder NGO	28 May 2021	59 minutes	Teams	Verbatim	Dutch/English

## Appendix 6: Informed consent + interview guide

This appendix contains the interview guide used during the interviews (in Dutch). The same interview guide was used, after translating, for the English interviews.

<b>Introductie + Informed consent</b>	<p>Welkom! Hartelijk dank dat u wilt meedoen aan mijn scriptieonderzoek! Ik ben Dieuwke Spierings (E-mail: <a href="mailto:581280ds@student.eur.nl">581280ds@student.eur.nl</a>) en ben een masterstudent Sociologie aan de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. Mag ik je/jij zeggen? Voor dat we van start gaan met het interview zal ik eerst nog wat verder toelichten waar mijn scriptie over gaat en hoe ik uw privacy zal waarborgen. Mijn scriptie gaat over ongedocumenteerde Filipijnse migranten die terugkeren naar de Filipijnen vanuit Nederland. Mijn focus hierbij is op het re-integratie proces na terugkeer in de Filipijnen en de invloed van transnationalisme en transnationale banden op deze re-integratie uitkomsten. Hierin ben ik op zoek naar partijen en organisaties die betrokken zijn in dit terugkeer en re-integratie proces van ongedocumenteerde Filipijnse migranten. Vandaar dat ik jou graag wil interviewen met betrekking tot de organisatie waarvoor je werkzaam bent of de community waar je deel van uitmaakt. Ik hoop met dit onderzoek een beter beeld te krijgen van de invloed die transnationalisme kan hebben op de verschillende uitkomsten van de re-integratie van Filipijnse terugkeer migranten.</p> <p>Vind je het goed als ik dit interview opneem? Dat is praktischer voor het verwerken van de informatie, maar ik kan ook alleen met de hand notities maken als je liever niet wil dat ik een spraakopname maak. De opname wordt opgeslagen als MP3, dus zonder beeld.</p> <p>Ik schrijf mijn scriptie onder begeleiding van Prof. Dr. Arjen Leerkes. Alle informatie die tijdens het interview verzameld zal worden is strikt vertrouwelijk en zal alleen voor academische doeleinden worden gebruikt. Er wordt geen persoonlijke informatie met betrekking tot uw identiteit aan anderen vrijgegeven zonder uw toestemming. Het interview zal met uw toestemming worden opgenomen en getranscribeerd voor verdere analyse. Naast mijzelf zullen de geanonimiseerde transcripten toegankelijk worden gemaakt voor mijn begeleider en de tweede lezer ter beoordeling van mijn scriptie. U heeft het recht om de transcripten te lezen en te controleren voor verdere analyse. Verder zullen de gegevens worden bewaard op een externe harde schijf tot het einde van het onderzoeksproject (uiterlijk September 2021). Voor meer informatie over privacy en gegevensbescherming kunt u contact opnemen met de EUR (mail stuur ik later).</p> <p>Daarnaast kun je het onderzoek ten alle tijden stopzetten of jezelf terugtrekken uit het onderzoek, ook na het geven van toestemming. Daarnaast heeft u ook het recht, indien u dit noodzakelijk acht, om een klacht in te dienen bij mijn begeleider of faculteit.</p> <p>In mijn scriptie en dataopslag zal ik uw naam anonimiseren. Wel wil ik graag, met uw toestemming, de organisatie noemen waarvoor u werkt / de community waar u deel van uitmaakt. Dit betekent dat ik u geen volledige anonimiteit kan garanderen.</p> <p>Het interview zal naar verwachting ongeveer een uur duren. Mocht het gesprek uitlopen dan is dat geen probleem voor mij, maar als u hierna gelijk door moet kan ik daar rekening mee houden.</p> <p>Ik zal deze informatie ook nog even op de mail zetten zodat je hier later nog naar kunt kijken en de contactinformatie ter beschikking hebt. Heb je voor nu nog vragen? Dan gaan we van start...</p>
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<b>Algemene informatie</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welke organisatie</li> <li>- Wat doet de organisatie precies?</li> <li>- Hoe lang ben je al werkzaam voor deze organisatie / onderdeel van deze community?</li> <li>- Wat is je functie binnen deze organisatie/community?</li> </ul>
<b>Migratie verleden</b>	<p><i>Kun je iets vertellen over het migratie verleden van de meeste ongedocumenteerde Filipijnse migranten die naar Nederland komen? / Je eigen migratie ervaring?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Voorbeelden/cases</li> <li>- Redenen</li> <li>- (Reis)gezelschap</li> <li>- Steun (op welke manier)</li> <li>- Verblijfsduur (vooraf al bepaald)</li> <li>- Uitdagingen en kansen</li> </ul>
<b>Organisatie gericht</b>	<p><b>Eerst de volgende begrippen uitleggen: integratie, re-integratie, transnationalisme, terugkeer (VOORBEELDEN VRAGEN: IS DIT VOORBEELD GANGBAAR, OOK EEN ANDER VOORBEELD)</b></p> <p><i>Wanneer je denkt aan deze begrippen, kun je een voorbeeld geven van een situatie in deze context?</i></p> <p><i>Houdt uw/je organisatie rekening met de re-integratie van irreguliere Filipijnse migranten? Hoe?</i></p> <p><i>Houdt uw/je organisatie rekening met transnationalisme? Hoe?</i></p>
<b>impact van integratie op terugkeer en re-integratie</b>	<p><i>Denkt u/je dat er een verband bestaat tussen integratie in Nederland en terugkeermigratie?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- op welke manier / hoe</li> <li>- Sociaal, Cultureel, Economisch, Structureel</li> <li>- Verwelkomt</li> <li>- Verblijfsduur</li> <li>- Veranderingen / Uitdagingen / Kansen</li> <li>- Uitleg / Voorbeelden</li> </ul> <p><i>Denkt u/je dat er een verband bestaat tussen integratie in Nederland en re-integratie?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Op welke manier/hoe</li> <li>- Sociaal, Cultureel, Economisch, Structureel</li> <li>- Veranderingen / Uitdagingen</li> <li>- Uitleg / Voorbeelden</li> </ul>
<b>Impact van transnationalisme op terugkeer en re-integratie</b>	<p><i>Denkt u/j dat er een verband bestaat tussen transnationalisme en terugkeermigratie van irreguliere Filipijnse migranten?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Banden hier of daar</li> <li>- Beslissing: gereed / (voor)bereid</li> <li>- Steun en begeleiding (economisch, cultureel, structureel, sociaal)</li> <li>- Op welke manier / hoe</li> <li>- Uitleg / voorbeelden</li> </ul> <p><i>Denkt u/je dat er een verband bestaat tussen transnationalisme en re-integratie?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- banden hier of daar</li> <li>- toekomstplannen</li> <li>- Steun / uitdagingen / kansen (economisch, structureel, cultureel, sociaal)</li> <li>- Op welke manier / hoe</li> <li>- Uitleg / voorbeelden</li> </ul>
	<b>IN REACTIE OP BOVENSTAANDE VRAGEN. GEBRUIK DE VRAGEN BENEDEN</b>

<b>Integratie in Nederland</b>	<p><i>Wat zijn de leefomstandigheden voor irreguliere Filipijnse migranten in Nederland? / Wat waren voor jou de leefomstandigheden in Nederland?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uitdagingen en kansen</li> <li>- Huidige situatie (sociale netwerken, rechten, participatie arbeidsmarkt en onderwijs)</li> <li>- Verwelkomt</li> </ul> <p><i>Willen irreguliere Filipijnse migranten deel uitmaken van Nederland? / Wilde je deel uitmaken of maakte je deel uit van de Nederlandse maatschappij?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hoe / op welke manier</li> </ul>
<b>Transnationalisme</b>	<p><i>Op welke manier zijn ongedocumenteerde Filipijnse migranten/was je betrokken bij transnationale activiteiten met het land van herkomst?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Verbonden met het land van herkomst</li> <li>- Bezorgd over banden tussen land van herkomst en bestemming</li> <li>- Zich thuis voelen</li> <li>- Oriëntatie gericht hier of daar, of nergens</li> </ul> <p><i>Wat is het soort contact dat ongedocumenteerde Filipijnse migranten hebben/je hebt met het land van herkomst?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- onderhouden van banden</li> <li>- voorbereid / bereid / klaar voor</li> </ul>
<b>Return</b>	<p><i>Wat zijn de redenen voor irreguliere Filipijnse migranten om terug te keren naar de Filipijnen? Wat was voor jou de reden om terug te keren?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- voorbereiding / klaar voor / bereid</li> <li>- steun / begeleiding</li> </ul> <p><i>Wat zijn de toekomstplannen van Filipijnse terugkeermigranten na terugkeer? / Wat zijn je toekomstplannen?</i></p> <p><i>Op welke manier zijn irreguliere Filipijnse migranten na terugkeer betrokken bij transnationale activiteiten met Nederland (het bestemmingsland?) / Op welke manier ben je nu betrokken met transnationale activiteiten in Nederland?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Verbonden met het bestemmingsland</li> <li>- Zich bezighouden met de banden tussen land van herkomst en bestemming</li> <li>- Zich thuis voelen</li> <li>- Oriëntatie gericht hier of daar, of nergens</li> </ul> <p><i>Wat is het soort contact dat irreguliere Filipijnse migranten hebben met het land van herkomst na terugkeer? / Wat voor contact heb je nu nog met Nederland?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- het onderhouden van banden</li> </ul>
<b>Sociale re-integratie</b>	<p><i>Op welke manier krijgen irreguliere Filipijnse migranten steun van familie en vrienden thuis? / Welke steun kreeg je van familie en vrienden thuis?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rol in het gezin</li> <li>- Steun van familie en vrienden</li> </ul> <p><i>Bij wie voelen irreguliere Filipijnse migranten dat ze horen?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- voor en na terugkeer</li> <li>- weer onderdeel van het land van herkomst</li> <li>- identiteit (gecombineerd, Nederland, Filipijns)</li> </ul>
<b>Structurele re-integratie</b>	<p><i>Op welke manier krijgen irreguliere Filipijnse migranten/kreeg je steun van de overheid en overheidsorganisaties?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nederlandse overheid (transnationaal)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Filipijnse regering (na terugkeer)</li> <li>- toegekende rechten</li> </ul>
<b>Economische re-integratie</b>	<p><i>Hoe is de economische situatie van irreguliere Filipijnse migranten na terugkeer? Hoe is je economische situatie nu?</i></p> <p><i>Zijn irreguliere Filipijnse migranten na terugkeer actief in transnationale activiteiten? Ben je actief in transnationale activiteiten?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wat en hoe</li> <li>- Geld overmaken of ontvangen</li> <li>- financiële steun van het land van bestemming</li> </ul>
<b>Culturele re-integratie</b>	<p><i>Hoe vinden irreguliere Filipijnse migranten dat ze zich na terugkeer in het land van herkomst moeten gedragen? / Hoe vind je dat je jezelf moeten gedragen nu je weer terug bent?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gedrag veranderen</li> <li>- normen en waarden (gewijzigd)</li> </ul>
<b>Afsluiting</b>	<p>We zijn nu aan het eind gekomen van het interview. Heb ik nog iets gemist? Is er nog iets dat u graag zou willen toevoegen wat eventueel belangrijk kan zijn voor mijn onderzoek? Of heeft u nog andere vragen? Ik wil u hartelijk bedanken voor uw tijd en deelname aan het interview. Wat vond u ervan? Ik zal u ook alle contactgegevens nog even naar u doorsturen. Vind u het leuk om de uiteindelijke scriptie te lezen? Dan kan ik deze ook naar u toesturen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Misschien heeft u nog andere respondenten die ik kan benaderen</li> </ul>