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Beyond Financial Support: The Social and Emotional Dimensions of Remittances among Filipino Migrants

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ABSTRACT

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Sending remittances is a deeply personal act influenced by cultural and social norms, as well as familial expectations. This thesis aims to explore how these influences shape the decisions of Filipino migrants in Sweden to send remittances and the following impact on their emotional bonds and familial relationships. By simplifying the complex phenomenon of remittances, the study investigates the motivations, challenges, and impacts faced by migrants, focusing on how they navigate their emotional ties with family and friends. Through 14 semi-structured interviews with Filipino migrants in Sweden, this research uncovers the complex balance between cultural expectations and personal values. Theoretically, it draws on Durkheim's concepts of altruism and egoism, as well as Hochschild's theory of emotion work, to understand the social and emotional dimensions of remittances. The findings show that strong cultural norms create an obligation to send remittances, significantly affecting migrants' well-being and relationships. Both altruistic and egoistic motivations influence remittance practices, contributing to family unity while also potentially leading to conflicts. This dual role of remittances underscores how they can both strengthen family bonds and create tension.

Keywords: Remittances, migrants, transnational families, cultural norms, emotion work

Popular Science Summary

Sending money back home, known as remittances, is a common practice among Filipino migrants. For many, remittances are more than only financial transactions as they represent a deeply ingrained cultural duty. This duty often begins when migrants leave the Philippines and continues regardless of their circumstances abroad. Sending money home is not just about economic support but also continuing social and cultural ties.

This study explores how cultural and social expectations shape this practice and its impact on migrants' emotional and family relationships. Interviews with 14 Filipino migrants in Sweden show that sending remittances is both practical and symbolic. It provides social validation and prestige. However, failing to send money can lead to feelings of shame, guilt, and criticism from the community. Sending remittances has a deep emotional impact on migrants. Many feel guilty about migrating, as Filipino culture values living close to the family. Remittances may ease some of this guilt, but they may also create emotional strain. Migrants balance their own needs with family expectations. Despite these challenges, all the interviewed migrants continue to send money home, driven by strong cultural and emotional bonds.

The study finds that remittances play a dual role in transnational families. They foster social unity by maintaining family bonds but can also create tension. The emotional work involved in sending remittances is significant, as migrants must balance their personal desires with their familial obligations. This study provides a broad understanding of the practice of sending remittances among Filipino migrants in Sweden, by highlighting the complex cultural, social, and emotional factors involved. By exploring these dynamics, the study offers insights into the broader effects of remittances for migrants and transnational families.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	6
1.1 Purpose and Research Questions	8
1.2 Delimitations	9
1.3 Disposition	9
2. Literature Review	10
2.1 Motivations behind Sending Remittances	11
2.2 Ethical and Social Dimensions of Remittances	11
2.3 Everyday Practices and Gendered Expectations	12
2.4 Cultural, Familial and Emotional Dimensions of Remittances	13
2.5 Summary of Literature Review	13
3. Theoretical Frameworks	14
3.1 Altruistic and Egoistic Motivations	14
3.2 Emotion Work	16
3.3 Summary and Discussion of Theoretical Frameworks	18
4. Method	20
4.1 Sampling and Participant Recruitment	20
4.2 Data Collection Approach	23
4.3 Themes and Questions	24
4.4 Interview Experience	24
4.5 Data Analysis	25
4.6 Informed Consent	26
4.7 Confidentiality	26
4.8 Researcher's Role	26
5. Analysis	29
5.1 Cultural Norms and Expectations in Sending Remittances	29
5.2 Navigating Emotional Bonds and Transnational Family Dynamics	33
5.3 The Emotion Work of Remittances	39
5.4 Gender Dynamics and Family Roles	43
5.5 Altruistic Motivations	45
5.6 Egoistic Motivations	46
5.7 Nuanced Motivations of Altruism and Egoism in Balance	48
6. Discussion and Conclusion	52
6.1 Future Research	54

1. Introduction

Remittances play a central role for many transnational families, where money is sent from migrants to their family members in their home country. While the main purpose of sending money is often to offer economic support to family and friends, these financial transfers extend beyond plain economic transactions, by involving social, cultural, and emotional aspects affecting migrants differently. This applies not only for economic migrants but also for those who migrate for other reasons, such as love/marriage or education. Even for non-economic migrants, remittances are central to maintaining ties with their home country and fulfilling social and cultural obligations.

In countries like the Philippines, which has a long history of emigration and many people working abroad, remittances have become an important part of both the national economy and family dynamics. The cultural norm of sending money has been deeply rooted in Filipino society, affecting expectations and obligations for those who live and work in other countries. Therefore, it is important to discuss remittances broadly, including their impact on non-economic migrants, to fully understand their role in transnational families. This thesis aims to explore how these individuals are influenced by cultural and social norms and how they manage their emotions and relationships with their transnational families and friends by examining remittances from multiple perspectives.

To understand the norm of sending remittances among Filipino migrants, it is relevant to trace this practice back to the history of labour migration. For decades, millions of Filipinos have left the country searching for permanent settlement or temporary work overseas, driven by different push factors including economic fragility and demographic pressures (Maruja, 2017). Over the years, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) have sent back billions of dollars in remittances yearly, creating a system where migration contributes to development, leading to international migration becoming more and more attractive (Opiniano & Ang, 2024). An important factor behind the high levels of remittances is that in 1974, an adjustment to the Labour Code made it mandatory for Filipino workers to remit a part of their foreign exchange earnings back to the Philippines (McKay, 2015, p. 114). A policy that has likely established the standard for remittance behaviour among migrants.

In 2023, the World Bank reported that the Philippines was among the top five remittance recipient countries, receiving \$40 billion and ranking as the fourth largest recipient (World Bank Group, 2023). The same year, the establishment of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) highlighted the Philippines' dependence on international migration and remittances, which stood for approximately 9 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). This big contribution highlights the importance of remittances both for individual families and the national economy (Opiniano & Ang, 2024). Beyond their economic impact at the national level, remittances are also important to the livelihoods of families in the Philippines. Except paying for basics needs such as rent, medicine, food, and water, they contribute to foreign currency reserves, to the stabilization of the balance of payments, and also supporting entrepreneurial activities and local demand for goods and services (Basa et al., 2012, p. 21).

Following many years of migrants sending remittances, the symbolic figure of the "Bayani," or the modern-day Filipino hero appeared. This term symbolizes the migrant who sacrifices personal comfort and stability to help their family and contribute to the nation's development (Maruja, 2017). In the Philippines, a Bayani is someone who is seen as brave, humble, and selfless (Eugenio, 2023). This symbolic figure leads to a collective vision and puts pressure on individual migrants to succeed in their migrant activities, where success is often defined by the ability to meet the calls of their families back home (Basa et al., 2012, p. 18).

Given this context, it is necessary to explore how the established remittance culture affects not only Filipino labour migrants but also other types of migrants, such as those who have moved for reasons other than work, including education and love/marriage. Furthermore, understanding different motivations for sending remittances and the ways migrants participate in these practices is important and relevant when studying this phenomenon. Scholars argue that remittances should not be viewed only as economic activities but as complex transnational processes that represent morals and relationships beyond national boundaries (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015, p. 2). Recent ethnographic research highlights the importance of placing remittances within social, cultural, and historical contexts (McCallum, 2021, p. 73). For example, migrants are expected to remember those at home and prove their gratitude by showing different kinds of support to those left behind. Migrants who fail to stay in touch and send remittances are often seen as ungrateful and dishonourable (Åkesson, 2004; McCallum, 2021, p. 83). Lan Anh Hoang and Brenda S. A. Yeoh (2015) highlight the need to focus on the relationships that support and surround money transfers from migrants to their home

countries. They argue that remittances should be understood as “complex and nuanced transnational processes that embody values and relations transcending national boundaries” (Hoang and Yeoh 2015, p. 2; McCallum, 2021, p. 74).

The aim of this thesis is to explore how cultural and social norms influence Filipino migrants' decisions to send remittances, and the impact of these remittances on emotional bonds and familial relationships. The findings show that strong cultural expectations create an obligation to send remittances, affecting migrants' well-being and relationships. Altruistic and egoistic motivations contribute to both family unity and possible conflicts, highlighting the dual role of remittances in creating unity and causing tension.

1.1 Purpose and Research Questions

This thesis focuses on exploring the complex practice of remittances among Filipino migrants in Sweden, especially those who have migrated for reasons other than labour, such as love/marriage or education. By digging into the motivations, challenges, and impacts of sending remittances, this research aims to reach a broad understanding of the cultural, familial, and emotional dimensions involved. Specifically, the aim is to better understand how these migrants balance their personal values with their familial obligations and how their moral and ethical reflections are influenced by social norms and expectations. The overall focus of the thesis is divided into three questions:

- How do cultural and social norms influence the migrants' decisions to send remittances?
- How do the migrants' remittance-sending actions affect their own feelings, emotional bonds, and perceptions of their relationships to family and friends?
- How do remittances contribute to both social unity and potential conflicts within transnational families, and how are these influenced by altruistic and egoistic motivations?

1.2 Delimitations

As a qualitative study, the findings in this thesis are based on personal stories and are not meant to represent all Filipino migrants in Sweden. The focus is on gaining a deep understanding of individual experiences of how different factors influence their behaviours and decisions rather than generalizing the results to the entire population of Filipino migrants. Furthermore, the research is limited to Filipino migrants living in Sweden, excluding their families living in Sweden from the analysis. Including those relationships would not fit into the size of this thesis by introducing additional aspects and dynamics that are beyond the intended focus. Instead, the focus is on the transnational sender-receiver relationship across borders. The study highlights the personal and emotional aspects of sending remittances, focusing on how individual migrants navigate their familial obligations and social expectations. This approach highlights the subjective experiences, with the knowledge that they may be different from one individual to another.

1.3 Disposition

This study is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 offers a review of relevant previous research, setting the context and background for the study. It discusses key findings and gaps in existing literature that this research aims to address. Chapter 3 contains explanations of the theoretical framework used. This chapter outlines the theories and concepts that guide the research, giving insight into how these frameworks inform the study's approach and analysis. Chapter 4 focuses on the methodological decisions and reflections. It presents the research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques used, while also reflecting on the methodological choices and their effects for the study. The analysis and results of the study are presented and discussed in Chapter 5. This chapter provides an examination of the data, highlighting key findings and their meaning in relation to the research questions. Finally, Chapter 6 offers a concluding discussion of the study's findings. It provides an overall evaluation of the research, draws conclusions, and suggests recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

Migrants sending remittances have previously been studied from different perspectives. Many have focused their research on the economic impacts of remittances on both families and societies, showing how the financial contributions lead to development and economic stability in the receivers' home countries. However, fewer studies have focused on the emotional and relational aspects of remittances, which are equally important in understanding the full view of this phenomenon (McCallum, 2021, p. 72). In this study, the aim is to fill this gap by exploring the emotional and relational dynamics that appear in the act of sending remittances, to show the complexity around the act.

Previous research on the motivations behind remittances has mostly highlighted altruistic perspectives by describing remittances as acts of selfless support aimed to improve the living conditions of family members back home. While this focus is important and relevant, it tends to overlook the complex mix of motivations that include both altruistic and self-interested factors. This study will provide a more nuanced understanding of why migrants send remittances by showing how altruistic and self-interested motivations interact.

Previous research on Filipino migrants sending remittances have mostly focused on labour migrants, and particularly Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). These studies have given valuable insights into the economic contributions of OFWs and the socio-economic dynamics within their families. However, some researchers believe it remains a gap in understanding the broader spectrum of motivations, emotional connections, and cultural contexts that influence remittance behaviours among Filipino and other migrants, including those outside the labour migrant category who I will focus on (Mahmud, 2020).

Since this study examines a broader spectrum of not only the motivations for remittances, but also the cultural, social, emotional, and relational aspects linked to the act, a wide choice of previous research has been reviewed. This includes research on remittances from similar contexts where migrants from developing countries migrate to developed nations, as well as specific research on Filipino migrant remittances and transnational family dynamics. These will be presented in four sections below.

2.1 Motivations behind Sending Remittances

Understanding the different motivations behind sending remittances is important for understanding the complex reasons why migrants send money home. While helping family members is a common reason, recent research shows that a mix of altruism, personal benefits, and cultural expectations influence why migrants choose to send remittances.

In the study "From Individual Motivations to Social Determinants: Towards a Sociology of Migrants' Remittances" (2020), Hasan Mahmud explores the complex nature of these motivations. Mahmud argues that while individual altruism is an important motive, social factors such as expectations from the community and family also play central roles. This perspective changes the focus from only individualistic motivations to a broader sociological understanding of remittance behaviours (Mahmud, 2020). Mahmud's research on Bangladeshi migrants highlights the interaction of altruism, self-interest, and social pressures, with families sometimes using emotional manipulation to secure remittances (Mahmud, 2020, p. 183-184). Mahmud concludes that other studies also find that families and relatives view remittances as obligatory for migrants, regardless of the difficulties they may face (Mahmud, 2020; Lindley, 2009; Stodolska & Santos, 2006; Wong, 2006). This study will build on Mahmud's work by further exploring how these factors intersect in the context of Filipino migrants in Sweden.

Similarly, Jørgen Carling highlights the common nature of remittances within the broader context of migrant transnationalism. He discusses the moral aspects of transnationalism by highlighting how migrants find personal fulfilment, pride, and social prestige through practices like sending remittances. Carling's research on Cape Verdean migrants in the Netherlands highlights the cultural importance and collective values linked with their financial contributions back home (Carling, 2008). This understanding is relevant for reaching the complexity and meaning of the cultural expectations that Filipino migrants in Sweden are exposed to, which the analysis will show have a large impact on the migrants.

2.2 Ethical and Social Dimensions of Remittances

Understanding and managing the moral economy of their communities is important for migrants, as highlighted by Valerio Simoni and Jérémie Voirol. Their research shows that migrants must balance family obligations with personal goals and face moral pressures to

support their families (Simoni & Voirol, 2019). For Filipino migrants, this balancing act often involves a strong sense of duty and a desire to contribute positively to their home communities, as discussed by L. Joyce Zapanta Mariano. Mariano's study shows that many Filipino migrants view remittances as a means of "doing good" and supporting community development, which, while honourable, also creates significant stress and anxiety for the migrants, as will be presented in this study (Mariano, 2017).

Ina Zharkevich's study on transnational families in Nepal gives further insights into the cultural dimensions of remittances. Zharkevich shows that remittances are deeply rooted in cultural practices and help migrants keep their place within the family network. She argues that remittances are not just financial support but also act as an element of kinship, strengthening emotional connections and social unity within families. However, she also points out that remittances can change family relationships and traditional roles, both positively and negatively (Zharkevich, 2019, p. 894-895). This nuanced understanding is important to analyse how migrants feel pressured from the family as well as the broader culture.

2.3 Everyday Practices and Gendered Expectations

In exploring the everyday practices that shape remittance behaviours, Paolo Boccagni highlights that these financial transfers are part of routine activities to maintaining transnational ties. Boccagni's study shows that remittances are well rooted in ongoing relationships as they are influencing daily interactions and obligations (Boccagni, 2012). In line with this, Vietnamese marriage migrants in Singapore are shown to be expected to support both their natal and marital families, being driven by complex social expectations and obligations (Yeoh et al., 2013). As I will show in the analysis, this everyday practice of sending remittances, which helps maintain family ties, affects both the migrants' personal emotions and the dynamics of their family relationships constantly in different ways through time.

Furthermore, gendered expectations shape remittance practices as well, as traditional gender roles are shown to be strengthened across national borders (Baldassar et al., 2016). Lan Anh Hoang and Brenda S. A. Yeoh (2015) found that men are often viewed as primary breadwinners, whose remittances secure economic stability, while women are expected to

remit money for caregiving and thereby maintaining social and emotional bonds within the family (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015, p. 304-305). Cheryll Alipio (2015) similarly argues that daughters are often drawn into the emotional labour associated with remittance practices. While the gender aspect is highly relevant, this study will show that other familial roles also play a meaningful part, adding complexity to the expectations placed on migrants.

2.4 Cultural, Familial and Emotional Dimensions of Remittances

The emotional labour involved in remittances is another central dimension. Derrace Garfield McCallum (2021) studies the emotional aspects of remittances among Filipino migrants in Japan, where he highlights the burdens and conflicts developing from remittance expectations. McCallum finds that while remittances can help in economic difficulties, they also create emotional strains, showing the complex emotional labour experienced by both senders and receivers (McCallum, 2021, p. 76-79). Evangeline O. Katigbak (2018) discusses "emotional remittances," which involve expressions of love, care, and duty. Katigbak shows how these emotional remittances are rooted within a moral economy that controls familial relationships, highlighting the role of emotions in shaping remittance practices (Katigbak, 2018). Additionally, Alipio (2015) describes remittances as part of an emotional economy where acts of saving and being saved bring important emotional and relational meaning. The emotions connected to remittances are what makes the transactions much more than just financial. Therefore, the emotional aspect is central to understand the challenges the migrants face regarding this practice.

2.5 Summary of Literature Review

This literature review highlights the complex nature of remittances, showing that they are more than plain economic transactions. Key points include the interaction of altruistic and self-interested motivations, the cultural and moral pressures experienced by migrants, and the emotional and relational dynamics involved. The review highlights that remittances among Filipino migrants are influenced by deeply rooted cultural norms and expectations. The emotional labour and gendered expectations linked with remittances further affect and complicate migrants' experiences. Overall, the review shows that understanding remittances needs a broad view that includes economic, social, cultural, and emotional dimensions, as these elements together shape the practices and impacts of remittances among migrants.

3. Theoretical Frameworks

Migrants who send remittances are influenced by many factors which creates expectations for them. In other words, it is a personal act deeply influenced by social structures. The history of labour migration in the Philippines sets a context for Filipino migrants, as well as other factors such as how long they have lived in Sweden, what their relationships with family and friends look like, income, gender, and family roles. To understand this important context, it is necessary to look at the broader social environment migrants are parts of, since social factors strongly influence their behaviour and shape a culture with values, norms, and expectations. Connected to this, emotions are another important aspect, as they both influence and are influenced by how migrants fulfil their obligations.

To delve deeper into how Filipino migrants are affected and navigate the act of sending remittances, this study uses theories from Émile Durkheim and Arlie Russel Hochschild. Durkheim's ideas about altruistic and egoistic motivations, originally used to understand different types of suicide, are in this study used to analyse why migrants send money within their social context. Hochschild's theory of emotion work helps to explain how migrants handle their emotions while achieving family and social responsibilities through remittances.

By applying these theories, this study aims to better understand the complex relationship between social context, emotional effort, and the reasons behind remittance practices among Filipino migrants in Sweden. This framework will help explain how different factors affect migrants and how they navigate these influences.

3.1 Altruistic and Egoistic Motivations

Durkheim's concepts of altruistic and egoistic motivations originally come from his study of suicide, discussed in his book "Le Suicide" first published in 1897. In this work, Durkheim explains how social dynamics influence individual behaviours. Durkheim argues that these motivations are not just individual feelings, but they are deeply connected to the social contexts and structures individuals live in. He highlights the importance of studying the social environments where suicides occur, including factors like religious affiliations, family structures, political environments, and occupational groups (Durkheim, 2002, p. 104). Furthermore, his four identified types of suicide which are egoistic, altruistic, anomic, and

fatalistic, exemplifies how different grades of social integration and regulation affect individual actions (Durkheim, 2002).

Egoistic suicide happens when individuals feel disconnected from their community, by missing social integration. This disconnect is shown in societies that highlight individualism over communal ties, resulting in weakened social bonds and an increased sense of isolation (Durkheim, 2002). In contrast, altruistic suicide shows in closely-knit societies where individuals are so deeply integrated to the group that they may sacrifice their lives for its benefit, which reflects a strong collective consciousness (Durkheim, 2002).

It is important to note that the terms "egoistic" and "altruistic" in this study are used as theoretical concepts to explain motivations and should not be seen as judgments about the individuals themselves. These labels are analytical tools and not descriptions of the participants' character or intentions. As will be shown later in the analysis, the motivations for sending remittances are far more complex than simply categorizing individuals as egoistic or altruistic.

In the context of remittance behaviours among Filipino migrants in Sweden, these concepts help to understand how social integration and collective ties influence their motivations and experiences. Furthermore, in exploring the motivations and impacts of sending remittances among Filipino migrants in Sweden, it is important to clarify that this study does not parallel the act of sending remittances with the act of suicide, which is a very sensitive and complex issue. However, there is relevance in using Durkheim's analysis of how social structures influence deeply personal actions, such as sending remittances.

In previous research, Hasan Mahmud argues for a sociological approach in remittance studies that reflects these broader social dimensions and critiquing existing studies for their limited focus on individual motives like altruism and self-interest (Mahmud, 2020, p. 176-177). By using Durkheim's framework, this study aims to explore how social structures influence the remittance behaviours of Filipino migrants in Sweden, highlighting the interaction between individual motivations and broader social influences. Mahmud's perspective opens to a more nuanced understanding of remittance behaviours, seeing the connection between individual actions and social contexts.

Therefore, integrating Durkheim's concepts of altruistic and egoistic motivations gives a strong theoretical foundation to explore the difficulties of remittance behaviours among Filipino migrants in Sweden. By studying how these motivations are shaped by social integration, familial obligations, and expectations over time, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics influencing the act of remittances.

3.2 Emotion Work

Hochschild's theory of emotion work, as described in her book "The Managed Heart" first published in 1983, explores how individuals manage their emotions in line with social expectations, especially in the workplace. Hochschild introduces the concept of "emotional labour," which means the process of managing feelings and expressions to match the emotional obligations of a job. This often involves showing emotions that one may not genuinely feel or suppressing true emotions that are believed to be inappropriate for the situation. Furthermore, the concept of emotion work is described as the management of one's own emotions in personal and familial contexts, linked with social norms and expectations outside the workplace.

Emotion work can be seen as a way to maintain social order, making it relevant to understand how migrants perform emotion work to keep their transnational family ties. According to Hochschild, "Each offers up feeling as a momentary contribution to the collective good" (Hochschild, 2012, p. 18). This perspective highlights how migrants manage their emotions not only for their own well-being but also to contribute positively to their families' emotional and social stability across borders.

Hochschild believes that when individuals try to feel, they apply what she calls latent feeling rules. These feeling rules, described as thoughts of what one really should feel in a situation, guide emotion management, making it not a private act but a way to reflect between "what I do feel" and "what I should feel" (Hochschild, 2012, p. 57). Furthermore, feeling rules are also known through the way other people react to what they think we are feeling, showing that emotion work is connected to human interaction rather than being a private act (Hochschild, 2012, p. 58).

Feeling rules are standards used in emotional conversation to determine what is rightly owed and owing in the currency of feeling. Through them, we tell what is "due" in each relation, each role. We pay tribute to each other in the currency of the managing act. In interaction we pay, overpay, underpay, play with paying, acknowledge our dues, pretend to pay, or acknowledge what is emotionally due another person.

(Hochschild, 2012, p. 18)

This concept helps to present how remittances are not just a financial transaction but an act that involves emotion work to maintain family ties. Hochschild describes how the family is often considered a "relief zone" away from pressures at work. However, she argues that it quietly has its own emotional obligations which is suitable in the context of transnational families (Hochschild, 2012, p. 69). Furthermore, another relevant reflection in Hochschild's theory is that women generally do more emotion work. She argues that our culture invites women more than men to focus on feeling rather than action (Hochschild, 2012, p. 57). This is also relevant in studying how migrants due to gender navigate through remittance practice.

In his study on transnational families, Zlatko Skrbiš writes that Hochschild's concept of emotion work, which he terms emotional labour, in the context of transnational families play a central role in maintaining ties.

This direct relevance of the concept of emotional labour to the context of studies of transnationalism is interesting given that in *The Managed Heart*, a text that introduced this concept, the focus was on mostly face-to-face and voice-to-voice contact, rather than the relationships negotiated at a distance. Yet, there is almost a natural fit between the concept of emotional labour and the notion of transnational family because it is emotional labour that allows the generation and maintenance of kin connection to occur across space and time.

(Skrbiš, 2008, p. 237)

In other words, Skrbiš highlights that despite Hochschild originally discussing emotional labour in the context of direct personal interactions, the concept is also suitable to transnational relationships where family members are separated by geographical distance.

Emotional labour, or emotion work is the effort used to bond this distance, and making sure that family connections remain strong despite physical separation.

Skrbiš also highlights that emotion work is central in these situations because it compensates for the lack of physical presence (Skrbiš, 2008, p. 238). Migrants often do a lot to show their care and commitment to their families, using emotional labour or emotion work to support their loved ones and maintain emotional closeness. This emotional investment is often linked to financial remittances, as sending money home is not just an economic act but also a way to show love and responsibility. The dual aspect of remittances as both economic support and emotional labour underscores the complex nature of transnational family dynamics.

To clarify, in this thesis the term "emotion work" will be used to describe the emotional efforts made by migrants to maintain family ties across borders. While Hochschild separates between "emotional labour" and "emotion work" and Skrbiš uses them as connected concepts, the latter is more suitable for this study because it extends beyond the professional context to instead include the personal and familial contexts in which these migrants are involved in.

3.3 Summary and Discussion of Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter has summarised the theoretical frameworks used to analyse motivations and emotional dynamics connected to remittance practices among Filipino migrants in Sweden. By using Durkheim's concepts of altruistic and egoistic motivations and Hochschild's theory of emotion work, this study explores the social and emotional complexities that influence the act of sending remittances.

Durkheim's ideas on altruistic and egoistic motivations help to understand the social context and individual motivations behind migrants' actions. These motivations are not simply personal choices but are deeply connected to social structures that shape how migrants see their obligations and responsibilities towards their families and friends. Hochschild's theory of emotion work further complements this analysis by showing how migrants manage their emotions to meet social and familial expectations. Emotion work involves aligning personal feelings with social expectations, which is especially relevant in the context of transnational families where maintaining emotional bonds despite physical separation is important. By integrating these theories, they offer a broad understanding of the complex relationship

between social context, individual motivations, and emotional effort in the practice of remittances. This theoretical foundation will be helpful in the following analysis, showing how altruistic and egoistic motivations often intertwine in the motivations of the migrants and how emotion work helps sustain transnational family ties.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that other theories could also be relevant to the study of remittances. For example, theories by Robert E. B. Lucas and Oded Stark (1985) are often used in studies of remittances. However, they are often criticized for mainly focusing on economic motivations behind remittances. Lucas and Stark's models have been specifically criticized for their limited reflection of the emotional, social, and cultural factors that influence remittance practices (Mahmud, 2020). In contrast, Durkheim's and Hochschild's theories offer a broader view by involving these different dimensions and making them suitable for a more holistic analysis of remittances.

Additionally, the relevance of Durkheim's and Hochschild's theories are underscored by their use in related fields. For example, Durkheim's concepts of altruism and egoism are used in research on charitable giving and social networks. These concepts help explaining how individuals navigate the balance between self-interest and collective wellbeing. Hochschild's theories have been used in studying the impact of migration on caregiving including how migrant workers contribute to caregiving in their home and host countries, which highlights the emotional labour involved. By focusing on Durkheim's and Hochschild's frameworks, this study aims to offer a more nuanced and broad understanding of remittances by focusing on both social and emotional dimensions that go beyond purely economic models.

4. Method

In this chapter, I discuss several key elements of the research methodology. The chapter covers Sampling and Participant Recruitment (4.1), Data Collection Approach (4.2), Themes and Questions (4.3), Interview Experience (4.4), Data Analysis (4.5), Informed Consent (4.6), Confidentiality (4.7), and finally the Researcher's Role (4.8).

4.1 Sampling and Participant Recruitment

This study focuses on Filipino migrants in Sweden who have migrated for reasons other than labour migration, such as love/marriage or education. To find participants, I firstly wrote an information sheet with the purpose of the study and the criteria for participation. Participants needed to be Filipino migrants living in Sweden, regularly send remittances, and be at least 18 years old, aside from their specific reason for migration. During the first interviews, it became clear that some migrants had shifted from sending remittances regularly to sending them more sporadically. This change gave valuable information for the analysis, as it often related to changes in context or family relationships. Therefore, I later adjusted the criteria to include participants who did not send remittances regularly, as presented in table 1 below.

Furthermore, it was relevant to include migrants who have lived in Sweden for varying lengths of time, as this can impact their financial situations and transnational relationships. For instance, as shown in table 1, many migrants did not find employment until years after arriving which affected their economic situations over time and thereby their ability to send remittances. My ideal sample aimed to capture a wide range of time spent in Sweden. However, only 3 out of 14 participants have lived in Sweden for less than three years. Although the ideal sample was not fully achieved, the insights from migrants who have lived in Sweden for 10 to 30 years provided valuable information about the relationship between remittances and time, which I will discuss in the analysis. Moreover, all participants have stable incomes, although the amounts vary. Similarly, their families back home also differ in socioeconomic status. This was not a criterion and could affect the results, as none of the participants currently face severe economic struggles.

Besides sending remittances for necessities, all participants also send money during Christmas, birthdays, and emergencies. Additionally, each participant has contributed money to other individuals, such as friends or relatives, at least once. Two participants are single and live on their own, while the rest live with a partner and/or children.

Participants	Age	Reason for Migration	Length of Stay	Current Employment	Employment upon Arrival	Frequency of Remittances	Recipients of Remittances	Reasons for Remittances	Family Situation in Sweden
<i>Lorna</i>	40's	Husband's education	11 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 2 years	Monthly	Mother, father, parents in law	Daily expenses	Filipino husband
<i>Maria</i>	30's	Education	5 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 1 years	Monthly	Mother, father	Daily expenses	Single
<i>Karen</i>	40's	Love/Marriage	18 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 2 years	Monthly	Mother, father	Hospital visits, medication	Swedish husband, two children
<i>Eva</i>	30's	Love/Marriage	10 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 3 years	Monthly	Mother and father	Rent, food, transportation, medicine, other daily expenses	Swedish husband, one child
<i>Ailyn</i>	40's	Love/Marriage	10 years	Part-time job	Unemployed for 4 years	Sporadically	Mother	Daily expenses	Swedish husband
<i>Danielle</i>	40's	Love/Marriage	15 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 3 years	Couple of times per year	Mother, siblings	Education, in case of emergencies	Swedish husband, three children
<i>Leah</i>	30's	Love/Marriage	5 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 3 years	Monthly	Mother	Rent, medical expenses	Swedish husband, two children
<i>Myrna</i>	40's	Love/Marriage	10 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 3 years	Monthly	Mother, son, grandchild	Primarily rent and education	Swedish husband
<i>Raul</i>	30's	Education	1.5 years	Part-time job	Student/employed	Sporadically	Mother, siblings	Daily expenses	Single
<i>Evelyn</i>	50's	Education/career opportunity	Abroad 24 years, Sweden 3 years	Full-time job	Student/employed	Monthly	Sister	Rent, food, education, necessities for their animals	Single

<i>Mark</i>	50's	Love/Marriage	30 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 5 years	Sporadically	Mother, siblings, extended family members	Rent, electricity, food, water,	Swedish wife, two children
<i>Irene</i>	40's	Love/Marriage	11 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 2 years	Monthly	Mother and siblings	Medication and in case of emergencies	Swedish husband, one child
<i>Janelle</i>	40's	Love/Marriage	19 years	Full-time job	Unemployed for 1 year	Monthly	Parents and siblings	Rent, electricity, water, education, and other essentials	Swedish husband, two children
<i>Jovan</i>	30's	Education	3 years	Full-time job	Student/employed	Twice a month	Father and mother in law	Daily expenses	Filipina wife, two children

Table 1: Participants' Characteristics

To get in touch with relevant participants, I first tried to use a family member as a gatekeeper. However, this approach was unsuccessful due to potential participants' worries about their identities being exposed because of the close connection. Therefore, I decided to post in larger Filipino community groups on Facebook, which proved to be more effective. Through these Facebook groups, I connected with a woman who was a key figure in a Filipino community in a larger Swedish city. The woman acted as a gatekeeper, helping to spread the word about the study. This connection led to successful snowball sampling, where additional participants were found through recommendations from early contacts. In total, 14 individuals participated in the study. Data collection was concluded after these 14 interviews, despite continued interest from more participants, as involving more individuals would have been too time-consuming given the available timeframe.

The interviews were conducted via Zoom to involve participants who were located in different parts of Sweden. This method has its advantages, such as convenience and flexibility, but also some disadvantages, including potential technical difficulties and the lack of face-to-face interaction. Moreover, knowing that digital interviews can become formal, I prepared myself as an interviewer, practicing a few interviews on family members and friends

to avoid conversations from stalling in the real interviews later on (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015, p. 44).

All interviews were recorded to ensure reliability, with the participants' consent (Esaiasson, et al., 2012). The sample consisted of more women than men, which could reflect a higher number of women who migrate to Sweden. Including the three men who participated was however important to capture any gender-based differences or similarities in the data. This gender distribution could be linked to the gatekeeper being a woman herself and the strong community of Filipinas in Sweden who have married Swedish men. These women often form close-knit communities, making it easier to recruit participants with similar experiences.

Given the specific focus on Filipino migrants and the context of the study, this can be classified as a case study. This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of the unique experiences and dynamics within this particular group.

4.2 Data Collection Approach

The data collection for this study involved a qualitative approach, conducting semi-structured interviews collected in Spring of 2024. A qualitative research approach primarily aims to understand how processes operate within a specific context (Cardano, 2020, p. 30). With interviews, I could focus on the participants' perspectives and get rich and detailed data (Bryman, 2018, p. 561-562). By using an interview guide with open-ended questions, I allowed participants to freely interpret and share insights according to their own perspectives (Dencombe, 2010, p. 165). This flexible approach also allowed me to add questions spontaneously during the interviews while maintaining a clear line of study to help participants in elaborating their responses (Bryman, 2018, p. 565). The method's openness, which allows for unexpected information to be shared, allows more truthful representations of experiences (Cardano, 2020, p. 36).

Because of the sensitive aspects of the topic, which involved discussing financial situations and familial relationships, I tried to design the questions with care and empathy with the aim to make the participants feel comfortable and respected (Bryman, 2018, p. 173-174). Each recorded interview lasted between 30 to 60 minutes in both Swedish and English and was transcribed verbatim in English. The transcription and analysis of the interviews were conducted alongside, allowing for adjustments to the interview guide based on developing

themes and new findings from the interviews and existing literature. During this process, I ensured that the interview questions remained relevant.

4.3 Themes and Questions

The interview guide was structured after pre-identified themes and codes necessary to address the research questions. These themes included transnational relationships, cultural expectations, familial expectations, moral obligations, and motivations. These themes were brought from the review of existing literature on migration and remittances, making the interview process mostly top-down. However, the theme of how practices could change over time and lead to different emotions came from participants' narratives, and thereby including a bottom-up approach. Specifically, the concept of 'time' as a code came directly from the participants' narratives.

Based on the themes, specific questions were created to explore the participants' experiences and perceptions. For instance, under the theme of 'motivations,' I asked participants why they send remittances and how they would feel if they did not send any. These questions were designed to be open-ended, allowing participants to share their stories in their own words.

4.4 Interview Experience

During the interviews, it became clear that many participants had previously reflected on the topics discussed, which resulted in deep and insightful responses. This indicates that the questions asked were relevant and important to them. Additionally, I asked if these topics were commonly discussed among other Filipinos, which all participants responded yes to. Many who have lived in Sweden for over 10 years mentioned that they often support newly arrived migrants struggling with these issues, highlighting the relevance of these themes in their community.

Several participants spontaneously shared detailed explanations of their remittance patterns and relationships, even without direct questions on these topics during the semi-structured interviews. Many also shared their emotional experiences related to remittances, which allowed me to ask follow-up questions and added valuable depth to the data.

4.5 Data Analysis

The analysis was based on a combination of literature review and narrative interviews. By carefully studying previous research, I gained a theoretical foundation to build upon, which helped me formulate relevant questions and interpret participants' responses. The participants' narratives provided a rich and nuanced picture of their experiences, which contributed to a deeper understanding of the topic. The questions were based on coding/themes identified from both literature and the narratives shared during early interviews.

The goal of the thematic coding was to classify large amounts of information into a manageable number of categories that represented similar meanings (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). The empirical data were coded into broad categories, partly informed by previous literature, such as the impact of social structures, transnational family ties, emotional labour, and altruistic and egoistic motivations (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In the final stage of the analysis, these themes were discussed in the context of Hochschild's emotion work theory and Durkheim's concepts of altruistic and egoistic motives for personal actions. The analysis focused on the interplay between social structure and individual action and linked the findings to relevant sociological literature on remittances and transnationalism.

A narrative research design was chosen for this study because it effectively captures and analyses the rich, personal stories of Filipino migrants. This approach allows for a deep understanding of their experiences and the meanings they connect to them. Narrative research design aligns with the importance of social structure in shaping the experiences of Filipino migrants sending remittances. This approach typically mixes both micro- and macro-perspectives, allowing researchers to understand the perspectives of individuals within the broader context of the social and cultural meanings linked to their actions (Öberg, 2015, p. 55). It contextualizes these experiences by considering factors such as cultural norms and social expectations that influence migrants' behaviours and narratives. This method reflects social processes and highlights the connection between personal experiences and social structures, thus individualizing broader social stories (ibid, 58).

4.6 Informed Consent

Participants were first informed through the information sheet about their freedom to choose whether to participate in the study. This sheet clearly defined their rights and options and the confidentiality through the study. Before each interview, I verbally repeated this information, explaining the study's purpose and the general topics to be discussed. This ensured that participants were well-informed and could confirm their participation (Bryman, 2018, p. 484). Participants were informed that they could ask questions at any time during the interview, skip any questions they were uncomfortable with, pause the interview, or stop their participation at any point without needing to provide an explanation. Obtaining informed consent is a central requirement in ethical codes and legal regulations (Eldén, 2020, p. 84).

I also highlighted that I would handle the topic with the highest respect and sensitivity, knowing that it is deeply personal and potentially sensitive. I did this with the aim of making sure participants felt safe, respected, and in control throughout the research process. As a researcher, I aimed to take responsibility for the trust I was given from the participants (ibid, p. 101).

4.7 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was maintained by handling all data with care and discretion. Any data that could identify participants, such as specific locations or real names, were carefully managed to protect their privacy. All names used in the analysis are therefore pseudonyms, to ensure anonymity, which all participants were informed about (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The recordings and transcriptions of the interviews were stored securely in files saved on USB sticks and hard drives. After the data was analysed and considered no longer necessary, all recordings were permanently deleted.

4.8 Researcher's Role

The role of the researcher is important to reflect about throughout the analysis process due to potential interpretations and impacts during data gathering and analysis. In my role, as growing up with a Filipino father who regularly sent remittances to our family in the Philippines, I have a personal connection to the subject, which introduces a level of subjectivity. This personal background was clearly shared in the information sheet with the aim to build trust with potential participants. The aim was not to state any special right to the

subject but to make participants feel confident in me as a researcher, encouraging them to share their thoughts and experiences openly, since being familiar with the context can motivate individuals to offer more detailed and in-depth responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2004).

My insider knowledge allowed me to ask more nuanced questions and understand cultural references that others might miss. For instance, I knew the importance of certain family obligations and how they are perceived within the Filipino community, which allowed me to explore deeper into these areas during the interviews. This insider perspective is a strength, as it deepened the data collected and helped achieve deeper discussions with participants. However, I was also aware that my familiarity with the subject could create bias. During the research process, I continuously thought about my position and tried to reduce bias. For example, at one point, I realized I was interpreting a participant's hesitation as agreement because of my own cultural assumptions. When I noticed this, I asked follow-up questions to understand their true feelings, making sure I did not force my interpretations on their responses. This self-awareness and corrective action helped keep the data truthful.

Furthermore, as a researcher, it is important to be conscious of and reflect on your own positionality and situatedness in relation to interview participants (Haraway, 1988). This means being careful not to assert any form of authority, give advice, make moral advice, or engage in arguments with the participant. This was something I had in mind throughout the contact with the participants, since I did not know how they viewed me as both a researcher and an “insider” of the community.

Moreover, by sharing my personal information, I positioned myself as a gatekeeper, using my Filipino ethnicity and existing connections within the Filipino community in Sweden to access relevant participants for the study. Bryman (2018, 524) explains that gatekeepers facilitate researchers in finding appropriate participants while also helping to establish trust. Since the topic of this research can be perceived as sensitive as it involves money and family, trust was important for the participants to feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

In my case, my background as partly Filipina helped me to connect with other gatekeepers who were very willing to assist, resulting in successful snowball sampling. Despite my subjectivity, being aware of my social positioning allowed me to critically reflect on its influence throughout the analysis. I have aimed to let the data and previous research guide the

analysis, ensuring a balanced perspective. Moreover, I also believe my position helped achieving deeper discussions with participants, which can be considered a strength of this study, as it enriched the data collected. Participants want to feel that the researcher is trustworthy, and establishing a personal connection can help them feel more comfortable during the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2004).

5. Analysis

In this analysis, the aim is to uncover the complex motivations and influences behind the act of sending remittances among Filipino migrants in Sweden. By analysing the cultural, emotional, and individual dimensions of remittance practices, the aim is to highlight the complexity of this phenomenon. Each section will focus on different aspects, including cultural norms and emotional bonds, as well as gender dynamics and motivational nuances. This structure will give a broad understanding of how several factors intersect and shape the remittance behaviour of migrants, contributing to both social unity and potential conflicts within transnational families.

5.1 Cultural Norms and Expectations in Sending Remittances

The first theme explores how cultural aspects affect the act of sending remittances among the migrants. This section highlights the important influence of collective consciousness within Filipino culture, where strong family obligations and social expectations shape the decision to send money.

All 14 participants discuss the normative behaviour of sending remittances among Filipinos living abroad. Some of them describe it as an integrated part of the Filipino culture, highlighting that nearly every Filipino they know in Sweden engages in this practice. Moreover, several participants point out the longstanding tradition of overseas labour migration from the Philippines as an important factor within the context of sending remittances, where supporting family financially is a central motive. Some suggest that this historical context helps explain why the act of migrating is often associated with the expectation of sending remittances back home. Lorna and Ailyn both highlight the influence of broader cultural norms on these expectations. Lorna suggests that the expectation primarily comes from outside the family, whereas Ailyn believes that cultural expectations also help to shape her family's expectations:

Lorna: *“Especially also when you are working in abroad or away from Philippines, there is also that expectation, but it's in the culture. It's, there is that expectation. Also, as I said, my family doesn't really expect me to do that, but, yeah, in general, the culture expects it of you.”*

Ailyn: *“I think they have a very high expectation. And sometimes it's a bit unrealistic to expect so much, that when the moment you get out of the Philippines, it's, you know, money comes naturally. I know, it's important for them, I understand. But they have no idea how I get the money. They just think it's, you know, it's abroad, and there's money. And that's it. And I think it's very important for them that I give money, because that's the expectation from the culture. And that's the convention most Filipinos abroad do. I don't think the Filipinos know the difference between the OFW and other migrants. Because abroad is abroad. And money is money. You know what I mean? I'm not sure if they can distinguish, because the moment you go out you're already earning more. And I think this is the main checklist, they don't really care what you do, where you go, but the moment you go abroad you earn better and you have the money. For them, you're going abroad for the money, FOR the family.”*

Lorna and Ailyn's statements highlight how cultural and social norms shape migrants' decisions to send remittances. There is a deeply rooted cultural belief that creates high expectations linked with migration, making it a social norm. Lorna and Ailyn's feelings and reflections on the connection between remittance expectations and Filipino culture are further supported by existing research. Basa et al. (2012) describe that a concept, what they call the “Filipino modern-day hero”, or “Bayani”, fills the collective consciousness, placing added pressure on individual migrants to make each migratory project a success. Basa et al. (2012, p. 18) argue that the success of sending remittances to the family is often defined by meeting the demands of the families, not only for basic living expenses, healthcare, and education, but also as a symbol of status. This highlights a cultural aspect beyond purely economic concerns, which is in line with Lorna and Ailyn's perspective on the act of sending remittances as influenced partly by social expectations.

Moreover, Alipio (2015, p. 235) examines remittances as a social practice, suggesting that the emotions and symbolic value associated with remittances highlight the influence of cultural norms and reciprocity. Additionally, as discussed in previous research, overseas labour migration is clearly driven by a socioeconomic and moral landscape where Filipinos family's adult migrant children who fail to send to remit makes the family experience a sense of shame and embarrassment (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015, p. 235). In this context, Lorna and Ailyn share an expectation rooted in Filipino culture when someone migrates abroad, affecting them personally even if it does not directly affect their family's expectations, as seen in Lorna's situation. Therefore, the act of sending remittances does not only pressure migrants from a

financial and practical perspective but also from a symbolic one, where their status can be seen as heroic or not.

Furthermore, Ailyn mentions that Filipinos do not often distinguish between OFWs and other migrants. This is also discussed by others like Mark who shares his thoughts and frustrations on the matter:

Mark: "I'm not an OFW. Their money is fixed, like 60% for family and 40% for themselves. It's already decided. It's something different. My family thinks it's the same for me, but it's not. I moved because I met a Swedish woman, not for a job. Others, like me here in Sweden who have moved because of marriage and haven't been here for long, they take out loans to send money home because their families expect it. And then the problem comes when they're not honest about how difficult it is to work here. The mentality... They have to explain that it's not easy to work here so the family understands. My mom has been here and seen how hard I'm working, but then when she goes back home, she gets influenced by the rest of the family there who just want more money. It becomes like a poison. They think I'm selfish. They say it's great that you moved abroad, you're doing great. But they don't know what they're talking about. That's where the problem lies with this culture. Because they already say before you move that you have to help the family financially."

Mark's experience illustrates the challenges and misunderstandings that can follow from cultural and social expectations, even for migrants who have not move abroad primarily for economic reasons. He explains that this cultural norm puts a heavy burden on him and other migrants in similar situations, leading some to take out loans to meet their families' financial expectations. This highlights the intense pressure to fulfil cultural obligations, even when the migrant's financial reality does not align with these expectations.

This dynamic is in line with the stories of Cape Verdeans in Carling's study. In Carling's research, non-migrant family members often assume that migrants have unlimited access to easy money, a misunderstanding explained being driven by material resource inequalities between the countries of origin and destination. Carling (2008, p. 1468) explains that relations between migrants and non-migrants often are shaped by this inequality and the different perceptions of it. An important aspect here is therefore the fact that the Philippines is a developing country, which affects the culture and therefore the dynamics when a family

member moves to a developed country like Sweden. Several participants in this study express an understanding of this dynamic, sharing childhood experiences where they reflect on their economically poor upbringing compared to their current situations. However, alongside this understanding, some participants cannot deny their frustration with their families' expectations, as indicated by Mark's expression. These expectations affect both their personal lives and relationships with their families.

Moreover, several participants also connect the norm of remittances to a strong collective bond within the Filipino culture in general and not only regarding migration. Eva describes what she believes is a typical Filipino mentality and its impact on families:

Eva: *"We also have that crab mentality; I don't know if you've heard of that expression? Like the crabs, they climb on each other, they pull each other down. So Filipinos have that mentality unfortunately, like if the boat is sinking on the other side, you need to help them, even if it means that you are gonna sink too. So, that's the way we are. We function as a unit, it's all for one, one for all. Like, if you see a relative not doing well, it feels like you have to help them because we are a group. We need to help each other out. That's why it's very common with families living together, in the same house, because we function as a collective unit. Like one decision is based on another family member's thing. So that is also why we send money."*

Eva's explanation highlights the strong collective mindset, or what Durkheim (2002) would describe as the 'collective consciousness' that makes individuals act in the interest of the group. Durkheim's theory suggests that social norms and values shape individual behaviour, creating a moral obligation to follow. In this context, sending remittances is not only a personal choice but a social duty rooted in the collective consciousness of Filipino culture. Therefore, Eva's discussion of the group mentality and the social pressures to support family members highlights how deeply rooted cultural norms influence the decision to send remittances.

In line with this, Mahmud (2020, 179) explains that sending remittances is an individual choice rooted in social structures, where sending money can be seen as a way to avoid negative reactions from the environment and maintain strong family ties. This aligns with

Durkheim's view that social expectations influence individual actions, highlighting the importance of social cohesion and solidarity.

Furthermore, by stepping away from the traditional norm of living close to family, migrants, who are already physically separated from the collective group, may feel being under more inspection. Therefore, actions from a distance, such as sending remittances, may be perceived as particularly important in maintaining the sense of unity within the family. This will be explored in the next section.

5.2 Navigating Emotional Bonds and Transnational Family Dynamics

This section will look into how the migrants' remittance-sending actions affect their own feelings, emotional bonds, and perceptions of their family relationships. By building on the previous section's discussion of cultural and social expectations, this section includes a more detailed analysis of specific familial expectations and how migrants navigate through these challenges. The doubled pressures of remittance obligations and to maintain family bonds across distances are shown to create a complex interaction of emotions, responsibilities, and expectations.

Firstly, several of the participants explain how they often experience overwhelming feelings of guilt linked to remittance obligations. Maria expresses her struggles:

Maria: "Yeah, I get tired of that obligation. And I feel overwhelmed. I feel like I want to quit. I feel like sometimes I had bad thoughts like, oh, can they just like disappear? You know what I mean? I'm just human. I'm just being realistic. Can they just disappear that everything will be solved? But after that, I will get guilt. Guilty emotionally. I feel so guilty that I can't sleep. I can't like, I feel sad. Because I have such thoughts. I feel guilty I feel overwhelmed with I think anxiety. Yes, it came to that point that I don't want to do this anymore. But still, I used to send in money, but not a lot. Because I also feel guilty for not being there anymore. But yeah, I feel so overwhelmed. Like, you feel like every burden is on you. And then it's not about that. They're also relatives, friends who like message you for money. And so it's so overwhelming. Like, it feels like I need to solve all of their problems. You know what I mean? Yeah, it's too much for one person to handle."

Maria's experience illustrates the heavy emotional burden associated with remittance obligations. She explains overwhelming feelings of guilt and anxiety coming from her responsibility to support her family from a distance. Maria describes moments of frustration and some thoughts of wishing her obligations would disappear, only to be followed by deep guilt. Her emotional state highlights a complex emotional aspect of maintaining familial ties through financial support.

Scholars such as Katigbak, Skrbiš, and Carling confirm Maria's emotional journey in transnational families. They highlight how guilt often acts as a binding force, convincing migrants to continue their financial support despite personal struggles (Katigbak, 2015; Simoni & Voirol, 2021; Skrbiš, 2008; Carling, 2008). According to Katigbak (2015), the act of migration itself comes with a deep burden of guilt, align with Maria's own feelings of guilt for being physically separated from her family. Maria's feelings show the nuanced emotional complexities involved in sending remittances which mean decisions burdened with guilt and frustration, regardless of the chosen way of doing.

Moreover, Hoang and Yeoh (2015) discuss the dynamics between migrants and their relatives back home, describing it as ruled by "transnational moralities". They argue that individuals left behind in the migrant's home country hold a form of "moral capital," which give them authority to expect repayment from migrants for their indebtedness to the community. This repayment is often through remittances, as migrants are seen to owe a debt to their community simply by being members of it (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015, p. 17). Maria and other participants not only experience direct requests for money from relatives and friends, but they also bear the weight of social expectations to provide financial support as a consequence of their migration. This dual burden of emotional remittances and transnational moralities shapes the experiences of the migrants.

Furthermore, despite the emotional burden, participants like Danielle and Karen illustrate how remittances work as an important link to their families:

Danielle: *"They will never be forgotten. Somehow, I want because I'm not there. That's that. I cannot, I cannot like wash my mom's hair or something. So it's through money. So that I can still be present in their life. Yeah, I'm part of the group, family ties continue."*

Karen: *"For me, it's very, very important because we are not there around them. And we cannot really, even if we say that, we want to take care of our parents, or maybe they are not totally dependent to us, but we don't see them often. So for me, it's like, I feel like, I need to compensate for that time that we don't have for them."*

Danielle explains that for her, sending remittances is a way to stay present in the lives of her family members despite physical distance. Sending money allows her to contribute maintaining family ties and reduces feelings of isolation from her loved ones. Similarly, Karen views remittances as a way to compensate for the time she cannot physically spend with her parents because of the geographical separation.

To understand how sending remittances affects migrants' emotions, it is relevant to look at Boccagni's (2010, p. 196) observations on the emotional and social aspects of keeping family connections across distances. According to Boccagni, remittances represent more than just financial transactions as they are expressions of emotional connection and efforts to sustain familial care. By sending money and staying in touch, migrants like Danielle and Karen actively maintain their family bonds and strive to stay close despite being physically apart. This shows how sending remittances work as a way to manage emotional connections and shape migrants' views on familial responsibilities.

Within the framework of transnational families, Zharkevich argues that sending remittances can be linked to the function of blood, suggesting that money acts as a given substance that continuously creates and maintains kinship ties across time and space. This continuing flow of money strengthens social relationships and helps the process of social reproduction across generations (Zharkevich, 2019, p. 887-888).

In line with this, Myrna describes how she sees it as a given to send money to her family since they are connected by blood:

Myrna: *"It is really, really important for me. It's not because I have a lot, but the thing is because they are my blood. Something like, I cannot see them like, become something like, having some difficulties. And when I'm here, I can send something for them. So it's because they are my blood. They are... it's not my obligation but they are my blood, and I cannot stand that they are like struggling and then I'm here and need to help. But even if they were not*

struggling, I will give, because we share blood. And I'm not the same without them. As long as I'm here, I will send money, because they are my blood."

Similar to Zharkevich's comparison of money to blood, Myrna describes sending money as a natural and given act for her. She expresses her commitment to continue sending remittances as long as she lives far away, partly because of the shared familial bond. With all the participants in this study, who regularly send remittances, it becomes evident that money works as a central and vital role within transnational families. It works to maintain family ties over geographical distances and across generations. Like Myrna and other participants, who point out the important aspects of familial blood ties, one could argue that the metaphorical value of money in transnational family relationships is equally important. Just as shared blood symbolizes a lasting kinship and connection, the act of sending remittances gives an expression of familial unity and support across geographical distances. However, in line with what Zharkevich (2019) also highlights, money can also cut family ties, and just because there is a blood connection it does not guarantee strong family ties. Therefore, remittances can be viewed as a substance that both binds and divides (Zharkevich 2019). This will be explored further on in this section.

When it comes to the reasons for sending remittances, they are often complex, and as shown influenced by cultural norms and familial expectations. Janelle's reflections present a transactional aspect to this:

Janelle: "It costs money to keep the family ties. All the time. So through the vacation and before leaving, you should pay. It's also part of the culture to leave something before going home. You feel guilty if you don't leave them the money. It's been a good vacation when I've been with them and paid them (laughs). That's how it is. Then I can go home with a clear conscience, knowing that the relationship is good. But also continue to give after I get home of course. It's always on me. They can behave whatever they like, it's always on me."

Janelle's situation shows a transnational family dynamic where the migrant has the financial responsibility to maintain the relationship, while the family back home do not have similar expectations themselves. McCallum's analysis highlights the social expectation for migrants to financially support their loved ones left behind, to be shown as a gesture of gratitude and remembrance. Failure to fulfil this obligation can lead to dishonour for the migrant, while

family members back home who fail to appreciate these efforts are not criticized (McCallum, 2021, p. 83). Jenelle's experience highlights the pressure and sense of duty placed on migrants in these relationships. That sending remittances deeply affects her feelings, emotional bonds, and perceptions of family relationships. She feels a constant financial obligation which causes guilt if unmet and relief when fulfilled, binding her emotional well-being to her ability to meet these expectations.

However, mentioned earlier, the transactional aspect of remittances can also strain the relationships, showing a more nuanced perspective than what the scholar mentioned before do, who mostly sees it as a way to maintain the family ties. Irene and Ailyn share insights into the emotional complexities and tensions that come from sending remittances:

Irene: "Sometimes, I think if money is the only way to show love. To them in the Philippines and if that is the only way they understand love from migrants. I didn't know, in the beginning, I thought it's very important to give money to show that I still love them, and I'm still here, but sometimes it has become like a chore, like a task. And it's very transactional, not relational anymore. It's like, I need this, give me that, I need this, give me that. But the practice has become very transactional, they need something new again, somehow I felt that it affected the relationship, because they're just asking, and you're just giving. It's never ending."

Ailyn: "Yeah, I tried explaining to my mom. But I noticed that when I start to explain, they kind of distanced themselves and shut off. Like, they don't listen. Because they still have to believe. And if, yeah, and if I countered their belief, and sometimes I think they take it against me. Oh, you are not being thankful. Oh, you are not? Yeah. You're just saying this, because you don't want to give money. It's so hard for them to change their mind to open your mind. So it's already set. So it has affected the relationship. So now I try not to explain anymore and not really talk about all the challenges because I think it's the same they don't listen anyway. I just give a little as they expect me to do."

Both Irene and Ailyn point out how remittances can change from being expressions of love to feeling like transactional exchanges, causing emotional strain and tension in relationships. These experiences show that while remittances can maintain family connections, they may do so with less emotional depth, turning familial bonds into obligations and routine transactions. Irene feels that her relationship with her family has become purely transactional, while Ailyn experiences emotional distancing and conflict when she tries to discuss her financial struggles

with her family. These experiences align with Simoni and Voirol's (2021) discussion on how disruptions in remittance flows can lead to 'moral breakdowns' and self-reflection about family ties and obligations. Similarly, Yeoh (2015) notes that failing to send remittances can create significant tensions and even lead to family break-ups, challenging the idea that remittances always strengthen family bonds. Additionally, Katigbak (2015, 533) highlights that transnational families should be understood within a broader social context, influenced by cultural expectations and obligations. This broader context further complicates the emotional and financial work involved in sending remittances, showing that remittances can both unite and divide families.

An important aspect of this context is time. When analysing the migrants' stories, it becomes clear that how long they have been in Sweden affects their remittance behaviours and attitudes. There is a difference between those who have lived in Sweden for over a decade and those who have been here for a shorter period, such as six months to three years. The newer migrants, who came for education, are in a different initial financial situation compared to those who migrated for other reasons, like marriage or love. Migrants like Raul and Jovan who migrated for education 1,5 and 3 years ago have more structured environments with part-time employment or scholarships, giving them a more instant source of income and integration into the host society. As a result, their ability and perhaps obligation to remit money back home might not be as pressing initially.

Conversely, migrants who have lived in Sweden for over a decade generally reveal more established financial stability. However, their long-term remittance behaviour is deeply influenced by cultural expectations and familial obligations. Furthermore, many of them did not get an income for years in the beginning, making it difficult to send remittances. A repetitive pattern is the expectation to send money despite having spent many years abroad or having a good income or not, indicating that the obligation does not weaken over time but may become more complex.

Irene and Ailyn mentioned above, having been in Sweden for 11 and 10 years respectively, reflect on their long-term experiences of sending remittances, which include navigating through various familial conflicts and expectations. Their reflections suggest that the longer the length of stay, the more nuanced the relationships become, often evident by emotional strain and tension.

What is clear, regardless of the strains, is that all participants continue to send remittances. Danielle explains:

Danielle: *"It's impossible to reason about stopping sending money. Unfortunately, it's in the culture. It doesn't matter which Filipino you talk to, it's the culture, you think about family. We are Catholics. We don't want relatives to suffer because of poverty. There are times we have been fighting for longer periods, but it doesn't matter. I will always help them."*

Mark adds another layer of complexity with the purpose of maintaining good ties to eventually move back to the Philippines, which is also discussed by several participants.

Mark: *"That's the weak point here, that we have to support the family and send money, otherwise, you can't go back to the Philippines."*

This long-term obligation underscores the intersection of economic actions with deep social and cultural expectations, showing the complexity of remittance practices. The lasting type of these remittance behaviors, despite years of living abroad and few visits to the Philippines, reveals that familial bonds and cultural cohesion stay strong motivating factors.

5.3 The Emotion Work of Remittances

This section applies Hochschild's theory of emotion work to show how cultural norms and specific expectations, like those rooted in gender roles, influence their decisions, and thereby causing emotional pressure and obligations. The analysis shows that sending remittances is a form of emotion work that maintains family bonds while also causing stress and potential conflicts.

In Ailyn's case, shared in the previous section, she engages in emotion work from multiple angles. First, she chooses not to tell her mom about her problems because she knows her mom will not react well, reflecting cultural norms of maintaining family harmony and not showing weakness. Her mother adheres to what Hochschild (2012, p. 58) calls "feeling rules", where others gauge our emotions based on their perceptions. For Ailyn, this means her mom

believes she is ungrateful if she talks about her difficulties in Sweden. Therefore, Ailyn feels obliged to adapt to these feeling rules by stop sharing her struggles. This highlights how cultural and social norms influence migrants' decisions to manage their emotions and interactions. Ailyn's mother expresses certain rights and duties towards Ailyn, which Hochschild (2012, p. 56) links to social convention. This suggests that there is a form of social control embedded in Ailyn's mother's communication with her daughter. The control involving money affects their relationship dynamics, underscoring how remittances contribute to both social unity and potential conflict.

In Maria's case, her feelings of guilt come from her perception of what is expected or "due" in her relationship with her family, showing how social norms command emotional experiences. She struggles with the difference between her genuine feelings and the emotions she believes she is expected to feel, showing insight into what Hochschild (2012, p. 57) refers to as emotional convention and the norms commanding behaviours and sentiments. This emotional deviation indicates how sending remittances affects her personal emotional state and perception of family relationships. Similarly, Danielle's act of sending money is an emotional work practice to maintain family ties across distances, showing how remittances fulfil both material and emotional needs within the family.

While Maria and Danielle highlight personal emotional conflicts, Myrna's experience shows unspoken family expectations and emotions regarding those:

Myrna: "When I send money, they become very happy, but I feel like they want more. It's not enough. Even though they don't say much, they still show that they want more. If you don't send money, the relationship isn't the same as if you do, if you know what I mean. It's not as strong. You feel diminished if you don't send."

Myrna's experience highlights the emotion work involved in the act of sending remittances to her family. In Myrna's case, the unspoken expectation from her family for financial support creates a sense of obligation and emotional pressure. Although not being directly asked for money, Myrna feels the weight of this expectation, reflecting on that her failure to meet it may strain the familial relationships. This highlights the emotional aspect of sending remittances, where Myrna engages in emotion work to maintain harmony and closeness within her family. By sending money, she seeks to fulfil not only their material needs but also

their emotional expectations, and thereby contribute to the maintenance of strong family ties across geographical distances.

Another scenario mentioned by a few of the participants, such as Myrna, Leah, Ailyn, and Raul, is a phenomenon where old friends or relatives reach out to them on social media. Unlike Myrna's experience of indirect hints about needing more money from family members, these contacts are very direct in asking for financial help. Leah describes these messages as 'kumusta messages', which are greetings or questions about well-being, specifically asking 'how are you?' in Tagalog, the biggest language spoken in the Philippines:

*Leah: “So we usually joke, I don’t know if you’ve heard this from other Filipinos during your interviews, but it’s so dangerous when someone messages you “how are you?”, because when you respond “yeah I’m fine”, the next question is “Can I borrow money? So we usually joke around with “be careful with people checking how you are”. Usually, not all, but be careful with that question, it’s “kumusta”. Be careful with that kumusta. Something will follow... *laugh*. Yeah, I would say so, it has affected our relationship...”*

Leah’s experience shows how checking in can be connected with underlying requests for financial support, affecting her emotions and interactions with friends and relatives. In this, the friends and relatives are engaging in a form of emotion work by navigating the emotional sphere to increase their chances of getting what they need while maintaining the relationship. The migrants find themselves in a difficult situation where they must either make clear boundaries or choose to help financially if they wish to preserve the relationship. In most cases, if they want to maintain the relationship, they are likely to do some form of emotion work as well. Both Leah and others express how these messages and approaches have impacted their relationships over time.

On the other hand, relatives may also engage in emotion work towards the migrant in order to uphold a positive relationship and express gratitude for the remittances received. Evelyn observes certain behaviours from her relatives:

Evelyn: “The cons is the guilt that they might get. They might feel like oh we have to be good to her because she has helped us a lot. Maybe there is also a sense... I don't know if they are emotionally stressed, like they need to message

me “how are you ate”, show gratitude when they get something and things like that. I tell them just to take it and not feel guilty.”

Evelyn demonstrates an understanding that her family members may experience stress and engage in emotion work towards her because they are receiving financial support from her. This highlights the nuanced emotional dynamics within migrant families through remittances, where both the migrant and their relatives navigate feelings of obligation, gratitude, and exchange. By acknowledging her relatives' potential emotion work, Evelyn shows an awareness of the complex dynamics between financial support and emotional connection within transnational relationships.

Furthermore, Evelyn is one of few female participants expressing feelings of responsibility due to her gender as a woman in the family:

Evelyn: “First, it always depends on the parents. Second, first born girls are more responsible. We are more mature, motherly... We have some mother nature thing compared to boys. So it's different.”

As she reflects on her role as a first-born girl, she expresses a perception of bigger responsibility and maturity compared to boys. This gendered understanding of familial roles is in line with Hochschild's (2012, p. 20-21) theory of how factors such as gender influence emotion work, with women typically bearing more emotional management. Evelyn's awareness of her relatives' gratitude and for her to feel their guilt, reflect not only her understanding of her own position but also her devotion to social expectations on her as a woman within her family. To actively try to reduce any guilt her relatives may feel, Evelyn engages in a form of emotion work that could be influenced by her gendered understanding of family obligations. This highlights the complex interplay between gender roles, emotion work, and familial dynamics within migrant families, where women like Evelyn according to Hochschild often navigate many layers of responsibility and expectation.

When comparing the cases of women and men in this study, the gender aspect may not be the most prominent factor. It is important to consider additional perspectives to fully grasp the dynamics of sending remittances. These will be explored further in the next section.

5.4 Gender Dynamics and Family Roles

This section examines how cultural norms and gender roles influence migrants' decisions to send remittances and how these decisions affect their emotional bonds and family relationships. It integrates Hochschild's theory of emotion work to explain how cultural expectations command emotional investments in caregiving across borders.

Among the participants, 3 out of 14 are men. Of these, two have moved to Sweden due to education, while one has brought his Filipino family with him. Only one out of 11 women has moved to Sweden due to education, as the rest have moved to live with a Swedish partner. Jovan and Raul, who both moved because of education, generally discusses remittances in more practical terms, while most women and Mark reflect more on emotions and morality.

Whether this lack of emotional reflection depends on factors like gender structures or reasons for the move is hard to determine. However, Yeoh et al. (2013, p. 442) explain that research on migration and sending remittances shows that women are often seen as more dependable senders of remittances compared to men. This is argued because women tend to invest more emotionally and feel a greater responsibility for maintaining transnational family connections. Additionally, women are generally seen to put more effort into maintaining kinship ties (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015, p. 15), which aligns with Hochschild's observation that our culture encourages women to focus more on emotions rather than actions (Hochschild, 2012, p. 57).

This difference may be rooted in social norms that position women as primary caregivers, creating a deeper emotional investment in family ties. In contrast, men, who are often taught to prioritize financial support, may view remittances more practically. The fact that there are more women than men showing interest in participating in this study can be viewed through the lens of Yeoh et al. argument. Thus, it is difficult to know the true reasons for this. However, given that women are often considered primary caretakers within families and may have a deeper emotional investment in maintaining transnational ties, they may have been more interested in contributing their perspectives to the study.

Additionally, social norms and expectations about communication and expression of emotions may have influenced women to be more open to discussing their experiences and feelings about migration and sending remittances. However, more research would be needed to

explore these ideas and understand why men and women participated at different rates in this study.

What becomes clear from the interviews is that several factors together influence migrants regarding the purpose and motivation behind sending remittances, and not only the gender aspect. To further show the impact of specific familial roles and cultural expectations regarding these, Irene, Jenelle, and Mark all express their belief in having a particular obligation to their families, by discussing their roles within the family structure. This highlights the complexity of motivation regarding sending remittances, which goes beyond gender dynamics and involve familial responsibilities and personal values.

Irene: "It's in the Filipino culture, an old way in the Filipino culture that if you're the first born, you're obligated to help the parents. If you are finished with school, you help the parents to give support to the younger siblings. Since I was the first born, I am obliged, but like I said it's different from case to case. First, always depends on the parents. Second, first born girls are more responsible. They are more mature, motherly... they have some mother nature thing compared to boys. So it's different."

Jenelle: "For me as a mother, it's my obligation to give them. In Filipino culture, it's up to you on how you're taking care of your kids. It's up to them if they will have their own gratitude when they go and become old. You don't need to expect something because your kids is not your pension, you know? They have their own lives."

Mark: "I have to send money so that we can have a good relationship. As my mom told me - "You are the eldest son. Being able to help your siblings and your family is important." She also helps a lot, but she expects me to have responsibilities too. I also need to help my nieces and nephews."

Irene, Jenelle, and Mark feel a responsibility connected to their roles within the family. Irene as a first-born female child, Jenelle as a mother, and Mark as the eldest son. These roles come with specific expectations for transnational caregiving from their family members. In previous studies it is shown that factors such as gender and age influence migrants' experiences differently (Yea, 2015). However, all three individuals feel obligated due to their familial positions, indicating that family obligations impact both genders.

Irene and Jenelle highlight the importance of their expected roles within Filipino culture. This highlights how different individual factors such as biographies, gender, class, culture, and identity can intersect in remittance practices (ibid, 2015, p. 265). For example, Irene, as a first-born woman, experiences pressure from both her gender and birth order. In contrast, Mark's duty as the eldest son is combined with his role as a male provider, affecting his remittance behavior differently.

Furthermore, Baldassar et al. suggest that all family caregiving, both happening nearby and from a distance, is shaped by culturally influenced feelings of duty, as seen with Irene and Jenelle (Baldassar et al., 2016, p. 484-485). Both have specific expectations as a mother and daughter in Filipino culture, highlighting the complex nature of sending remittances.

5.5 Altruistic Motivations

This section explores the altruistic motivations behind migrants' remittance practices. It will discuss how sending remittances is often driven by a sense of moral duty and empathy, reflecting Durkheim's concept of altruism where family wellbeing is priority despite personal sacrifices. This analysis also shows how altruism strengthens familial bonds across borders while potentially harm the transnational family dynamics.

To get deeper insight of the participants' motivation for sending remittances and maintaining connections with family and friends, the following three sections will explore their personal perspectives. Initially, the focus will be on altruistic motives, followed by an exploration of egoistic motives, and finally, an analysis of how both motives interact to shape their decisions.

Firstly, all 14 participants express altruistic motivations for sending remittances, highlighting moral duty and empathy. Danielle's reflection on sending money aligns with others' views, showing the importance of these altruistic perspectives:

Danielle: *"It's more of it's important for me than them. They always tell me that I don't have to think about them. But it's hard because I was there too. I know the feeling of nothing. And I'm also a product of charity. So to me, it's, it's um, it's a blessing that we I'm Catholic. So it's a blessing. And then I think if I'm into religion, I think my God just made me as an*

inspiration to, to give it forward. So it's important on my end than on their end. But of course, practically, they are the one benefiting. So it's a sense of family culture that you you want the family ties stay like existing even though you're a distant, and then it's also a sense of fulfillment, because you did something good. And then yes, you work hard for it. During the pandemic, I sent all my salary for three months. Also during yolanda, I sent all my savings because I was thinking also, what should we do with this money if there are other people, especially my relatives, are dying?"

This perspective of sending remittances shows Danielle's altruistic tendencies, shaped by her own experiences of poverty and receiving charity. Danielle views sending remittances as a moral duty, driven by empathy and a sense of duty within her Catholic faith. Her willingness to sacrifice her own resources for the benefit of her family reflects Durkheim's concept of altruism, where individuals prioritize the wellbeing of the group over their own interests (Durkheim, 2002).

Despite her family members not directly asking for help, Danielle feels the need to provide financial support, being guided by social and religious norms, as well as her personal experiences. Her actions show a commitment to maintaining familial bonds and fulfilling her moral responsibilities, which are central to Durkheim's concept of altruism. Additionally, Danielle's background of growing up in poverty gives context for understanding her motivation and the deep-rooted sense of obligation she feels towards her family. A perspective also mentioned by many of the other participants.

5.6 Egoistic Motivations

In this section, egoistic motivations will be explored among the migrants for sending remittances and how these can secure membership within the family despite the geographical distance. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the participants have made the decision to leave their family and friends behind and move to Sweden, a country far away with a completely different and challenging culture and society compared to what they are familiar to. Most of the participants mention challenges regardless of their length of stay in Sweden as immigrants. Like discussed in the earlier section, remittances are a way to show the family care from distance, but also to secure your own membership of the family. Irene expresses her needs of staying in touch with her family, partly through remittances:

Irene: *“Well, here in Europe, it's a different culture. It's cold, and you're alone. You often contact your Filipino family because it's easy to stay in touch with phones and social media, and you also want to speak your own language. Right? I also want to know what's happening, how their situation is. But often, all I hear is how tough they have it and that they don't have any money at all. It's just about money all the time. Money, money, money. And if I give some, then they will talk to me. It costs money to keep your family relationship.”*

Similar to Durkheim's discussion on egoistic suicide, Irene's decision to send remittances to her family seems partly motivated by a desire to stay connected despite the geographical distance. Sending remittances is a way for her to participate in the family's collective unity. Durkheim shows how feelings of isolation can lead to negative outcomes, and in a similar way, sending money can help Irene manage those feelings. Durkheim's (2002, p. 168-169) study of individualism highlights how focusing on the self can lead to loneliness, fear, and a sense of meaninglessness, urging individuals to seek purpose beyond themselves. For Irene, sending remittances does not only support her family but also confirms her role within the familial collective, aligning with Durkheim's theory on the importance of social integration for personal well-being.

Many of the participants describe Swedish society as more individualistic compared to Filipino culture. This contrast, together with the geographical distance from their families, is shown to motivate them to bridge the gap by sending remittances. Lorna elaborates on the individualism experienced in Sweden:

Lorna: *“Here in Sweden, it's like, we have an individualistic society. In the Philippines, we have a collective society, like we function as a family. I appreciate what the Swedish society teach me, because I know I need to take care of myself. But I also miss feeling like a community, together. Maybe if I send money I can still feel that a little bit.”*

In an individualistic society like Sweden, Lorna experiences a shift from the collective norms of the Philippines, where family and community are central to social life. By sending remittances, Lorna is not only giving financial help but also strengthening her connection to the family and contributing to the collective cohesion that Durkheim highlights as important for social well-being (Durkheim, 2002).

Lorna's actions can be seen as a reaction to the individualism she experiences in Sweden. While living abroad might bring some sense of individualisation, Lorna's choice to send remittances shows her wish to stay connected to her family and keep the collective cultural values she was raised with. This supports Durkheim's (2002) idea that people, even when away from their communities, look for ways to stay socially connected.

Eva also discusses the collective aspect:

Eva: "Yeah, it's a better relationship, and otherwise they will stop protecting you. They will, like maybe badmouth you. And yeah, we will talk negatively about you and everybody in the town will know. So for us, it's like, I think Filipinos are. They're very conscious of what people think about them. Because we are a collective unit. Yeah, we are a collective unit. And we are careful of what others think of us. So we don't want to rock the boat. Like, we want it to be harmonious as much as possible. So we want to maintain that relationship that it should be harmonious as much as possible. So we don't want to rock the boat. So yeah, we are trying to like establish a good relationship with our relatives. Yeah, and even some friends, actually."

Eva's reflections highlight how the fear of social exclusion and the desire to maintain harmony drive the decision to send remittances. By sending remittances, Eva ensures she remains part of this collective unit, avoiding criticism and maintaining social bonds.

Durkheim's theory of egoism is once again present since Eva's actions are to reinforce her role within the family and community, and therefore maintaining her social integration. This need to follow social expectations and avoid exclusion shows the balance between individual actions and collective norms in keeping social harmony. Therefore, Eva's experience shows how remittances work both as a financial support and as a way to uphold social unity.

5.7 Nuanced Motivations of Altruism and Egoism in Balance

In this section, the analysis explores the complex balance between altruistic and egoistic motivations that drives remittance behaviour among Filipino migrants in Sweden. This section shows how complicated sending money home can be, explaining how various factors influence migrants' decisions and relationships when it comes to sending remittances.

The interviews show that most participants are driven by a combination of altruistic and egoistic motivations when sending remittances. This aligns with Alipio's (2015, p. 235) reflections, which challenge the view that remittances are purely altruistic gifts, as other previous research often argues for. Alipio highlights the influence of cultural norms, gender roles, and economic factors in shaping these decisions. For instance, Mark sends money both to maintain a good relationship and as a gift, and without expecting anything in return. This shows how remittance behaviour can be influenced by a complex combination of personal and social factors:

Mark: "When I send money, I don't expect anything in return except for the relationship to endure. We in Europe don't know what they spend the money on. As soon as I send the money, it's up to them to decide what to do with it. Maybe it goes to drugs or beer, we don't know. Of course that makes me a little frustrated, but what can I say, I just want to do my part and send money to maintain the relationship. Of course, I wish they become self-sufficient with this money, then I'll be happy. Happy days! Then you get something back for sending money. But I give you money as a gift, if they fail, I continue to send money. Even if it means that I have less here for myself."

Mark's statement shows the dual aspect of remittances, which combines both selfless and self-interested motives. He genuinely desires to support his family and maintain ties, but at the same time, he also feels frustration over not knowing how the money is used. Again, this aligns with Alipio's argument that remittances are not purely altruistic. Instead, they are rooted in cultural and social obligations. Mark's actions show a combination of altruism and egoism. His financial support helps to maintain familial relationships, implying an egoistic motive. However, his willingness to sacrifice personal finances shows his altruism. His lack of expectation for anything in return shows this further. At the same time, his hope for his family's self-sufficiency gives a nuanced perspective. This reflects McCallum's (2021, p. 79) findings where the lack of transparency in remittance use resulted in mistrust and conflict among Filipino migrants, even if their intentions from the beginning were altruistic.

The strong influence of family ties is clear in Mark's case, where emotional connections and a sense of obligation are prioritized over financial transactions. Zharkevich (2019) explores how parents share money with their children without expecting anything in return, presenting

a deep relation between money and familial bonds. “It is where ‘blood’ is thickest—that is, in kinship based on the principle of filiation or descent—that the substance of money is shared with the most ease, particularly from parents to children” (Zharkevich, 2019, p. 892).

Although Mark's situation is not exactly the same since he sends money to his mother, siblings and their children, it similarly shows the strong connection between money and family ties. This reflects the ongoing bonds within family networks.

Money becomes more than just a financial transaction in this context as it acts as the lifeblood that maintains familial relationships across distances. Moreover, Mariano's research shows that remittances sent by Filipino Americans are seen as valuable gifts given freely, showing their cultural significance. Mariano cites a columnist who writes, "There is a cliché which says the worth of a person is not what he owns, but what he gives" (Mariano, 2017, p. 230-231). This highlights the cultural value of generosity and support, suggesting that giving money is an altruistic move highly regarded by Filipinos. However, as seen in Mark's case, this act is often more complex than purely altruistic or egoistic.

Karen provides further understanding to this complexity:

Karen: “And it's the same with a family. It's also a way of showing that you care for them that case. And also that in the in the Filipino culture, it's, we have adapted sure if you're familiar with that, it's more like you keep your things to yourself. So we don't like that culture. So it's more like that's why you even no matter how small you can give us give because you want to be seen as someone that is generous.”

Karen links this behaviour to cultural expectations and a desire for social credit, which aligns with Durkheim's concept of altruistic suicide, where public opinion favours acts of self-sacrifice. Similarly, Eva discusses the moral obligation and social acceptance associated with sending remittances:

Eva: “The moral obligation like, ah yes I'm living this good life so I want you to experience this in a way, so it's your obligation to help them, to pay them in a way and yeah, it's more of like that. You have like checked that aspect and you are accepted by society. That makes you calm. It's more of an acceptance and fulfillment on your part. You're living up to the norm,

the expectations of what is expected from you. You're fulfilling a social and moral obligation."

Eva's reflections show how achieving this duty comes with a sense of calm and social acceptance, connecting to cultural norms and family expectations. While not always expected by their families, the sense of moral duty and altruistic desire to deliver support is strong. This support is encouraged and valued in their communities, turning it into an act of kindness and solidarity based on cultural and social norms. This shows a complex mix of altruism and egoism, where financial support strengthens not only family connections but also cultural and social bonds.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This final chapter presents a discussion and summary of the results of the study followed by concluding reflections and recommendations for future research.

In the analysis, Filipino migrants in Sweden share experiences that show how cultural norms, emotional bonds, and mixed motivations shape their practice of sending remittances. It is clear that remittances play a multifaceted role in maintaining family unity, creating emotional strains, and balancing altruistic and egoistic motivation. The deeply rooted expectation within Filipino culture, that migrants should financially support their families, create an obligation that goes beyond solely economic need. This norm is described to be strong and present from the moment migrants leave the country, and later on regardless of their situations in Sweden.

Furthermore, the pressure to send remittances is shown not to only be practical but also symbolic by carrying prestige and a form of social validation, which aligns with previous research (Basa et al., 2012; Alipio, 2015). It means great social weight for the migrants, where failing to send money can lead to feelings of shame and guilt, as well as potential criticism from the community, also this presented in previous studies (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015, p. 235). It is clear that many of the participants feel a strong sense of duty to fulfil these expectations, highlighting how cultural norms stay over time and create an ongoing sense of obligation.

Gender dynamics and familial roles also influence this sense of duty. Both male and female migrants experience expectations linked to their roles within the family, whether as mothers, daughters, or sons. This highlights a more nuanced view of the gender dynamics linked with remittances and transnational families. While this finding aligns with previous research that highlights cultural context and individual factors (Yea, 2015, p. 265) in understanding remittance practices, it also offers new perceptions into the characteristics of these norms over time and across different family roles.

The emotional impact of sending remittances is deeply influencing the migrant's emotional well-being and perception of their relationships. Cultural and familial expectations are intertwined with a sense of duty and obligation. Participants' stories show that while remittances can strengthen familial bonds and ensure a sense of belonging, they can also transform relationships into transactional exchange, leading to emotional strain and tension.

Migrants navigate through many different emotions and experience feelings of guilt, relief, responsibility, and frustration, which is also shown in previous research (Katigbak, 2015; Simoni & Voirol, 2021; Skrbiš, 2008; Carling, 2008). Through my own experiences of having a Filipino father who migrated and through the interviews with participants, it is clear that many migrants feel a deep sense of guilt associated with their migration. One must understand that in Filipino culture, it is common to live close to one's family throughout life. Remittances might work as a band-aid for the emotional wounds caused by physical separation, but no matter how much money is sent, many migrants cannot completely escape feelings of guilt.

In the study, long-term migrants reflect that the longer they stay abroad, the more nuanced and emotionally complex their relationships become. Despite these strains, all migrants continue to send remittances, being driven not only by cultural bonds but also by emotional bonds, connected to these feelings of guilt mentioned above. It is clear that remittances play a dual role in contributing to both social unity and potential conflicts within transnational families. On one hand, remittances strengthen family ties by meeting material and emotional needs, leading to social unity and unity, which aligns with previous research (Boccagni, 2012, p. 196). On the other hand, the lack of transparency in how remittances are used can lead to mistrust and conflicts. Frustration over noticed misuse of the money highlights the potential for remittances to cause tension within families. As Zharkevich (2019) and Katigbak (2015) highlight, sending remittances are a practice that can both bind and divide families.

The concept of emotion work by Hochschild (2012) is particularly relevant in understanding how cultural and social norms affect the migrants' decisions to send remittances. Migrants often experience many different emotions, from pride and satisfaction in fulfilling their familial duties to stress and anger over the constant financial burdens. The act of sending remittances involves a lot of emotion work, since migrants must balance their own needs and desires with the expectations of their families. This emotion work is deepened by the distance and the challenges of maintaining close relationships across borders.

The interaction of altruistic and egoistic motivations, described by Durkheim's (2002) theory, is clear in these dynamics. Altruistic motivations are driven by a genuine desire to support and care for family members, strengthening social unity and fulfilling cultural expectations of generosity and responsibility. Most of the migrants often even sacrifice their own financial well-being to maintain familial bonds and sustain cultural norms. Egoistic motivations,

however, show a need for social status, credit, and emotional fulfilment. In other words, migrants seek to maintain their own sense of belonging and avoid negative judgments from their community.

The theoretical frameworks of Hochschild's emotion work and Durkheim's concepts of egoistic and altruistic motivations are complementing each other and give a broad understanding of remittance practices. Hochschild's emotion work offers understanding into the emotion work migrants perform to fulfil familial and cultural expectations, while Durkheim's motivations help explain the dual nature of these practices. The theories are together explaining how migrants manage the emotional and cultural challenges of their transnational lives as they are balancing personal feelings of duty with social and family responsibilities.

The findings of this study highlight the complexity of remittance practices among Filipino migrants in Sweden. Cultural and social norms influence migrants' decisions to send remittances by creating strong obligations rooted in collective beliefs and social expectations. The emotion work in sending remittances shows the complex balance between maintaining familial bonds and navigating personal feelings of duty and responsibility. The interaction of altruistic and egoistic motivations shows the dual side of remittances as both a foundation of social unity and potential conflict within transnational families.

In conclusion, while the act of sending remittances among Filipino migrants is complex, this study has aimed to simplify that complexity to offer a clearer understanding of the underlying dynamics. By focusing on key influences and combining theoretical perspectives, this thesis highlights the need for a more holistic approach that reflects both economic and emotional dimensions when studying the practice of sending remittances.

6.1 Future Research

Working with this study opened up many new questions and considerations along the way. Remittances are an extraordinarily complex subject that is sociologically fascinating to investigate from macro to micro levels, stretching from politics and policies down to individual experiences, as this study has done. Noticing the complexity in sending remittances highlights the need to explore various aspects of this phenomenon.

For instance, it would provide a broader understanding to explore how the act of sending remittances affects relationships with partners and children in the host country. Understanding how these relationships influence remittance behaviors, and vice versa, can provide insights into the broader social dynamics of migrant families. Support and/or pressure from a partner will most likely affect migrants in their everyday lives, influencing their decisions and experiences related to the act of sending remittances. Additionally, another interesting and relevant take is to investigate the experiences of migrants who choose not to send money, which could offer a contrasting perspective to those who do. Understanding their reasons and how their relationships with their families back home differ from those who remit can uncover the diverse experiences and challenges within migrant communities.

Another important aspect that emerged during the interviews is the impact of natural disasters on remittance behavior, as Danielle for example shared that she sent her entire salary for three months after the super typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan. Given the Philippines' vulnerability to natural disasters, worsened by global warming, migrants may increasingly feel obliged to remit money not only to their families but also to help organizations and support the broader society. Studying this could reveal a more nuanced understanding of cultural expectations and the evolving nature of remittances.

By exploring these areas, future research can build upon the framework presented in this study and further deepen our understanding of transnational family dynamics. Such work has the potential to reveal additional insights into the complex experiences of migrants.

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