

RETHINKING RETURN FROM THE 'LEFT AHEAD':

**THE CASE OF MIGRANT FILIPINO WORKERS IN
TRANSNATIONAL SPACES IN ROME ITALY**

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“Migrants are no longer caught in the trap between either assimilation or nostalgia, and the ‘myth of return’. Rather, it is argued, migrants are more and more able to construct their lives across borders, creating economic, social, political, and cultural activities , which allow them to maintain membership in both their immigration country and country of origin,” – Salih, 2002.



- I. Research problem and objectives**
- II. Methodology and Significance**
- III. Theoretical and conceptual framework**
- IV. Findings and analysis**
- V. Conclusion and recommendations**



Determine how return migration is framed **‘from above’** to identify how institutional actors define and address return decisions and preparedness of OFWs; and **‘from below’** to unpack the lived migration experiences, resource mobilization, and individual return intentions of OFWs in the context of a transnational space in a host country.

I. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES



- What are the OFWs' migration experiences in both pre-departure and existing overseas work? How does it relate to their return migration decisions?

- What are the determining factors of return preparedness (intentions and readiness)of OFWs in host countries?

- What are the current institutional frameworks, and policies of the Philippine state that addresses return migration of OFWs, specifically in dealing with pre-return conditions?

I. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

II. METHODOLOGY



• CASE STUDY RESEARCH

• RESEARCH LOCALE: Rome sits in the province of Lazio having the second largest population of Filipinos with over 42,000 OFWs.

• PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION in Filipino transnational spaces (e.g. *Fermata* in Ottaviano and Cipro areas, Pinoy restaurants, stores near the Embassy premises, Catholic churches, Termini Station), 21 June-21 July.

• Observation in a Filipino Community Meeting, 2 July.

• KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII)

• IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH OFWs

II. SIGNIFICANCE

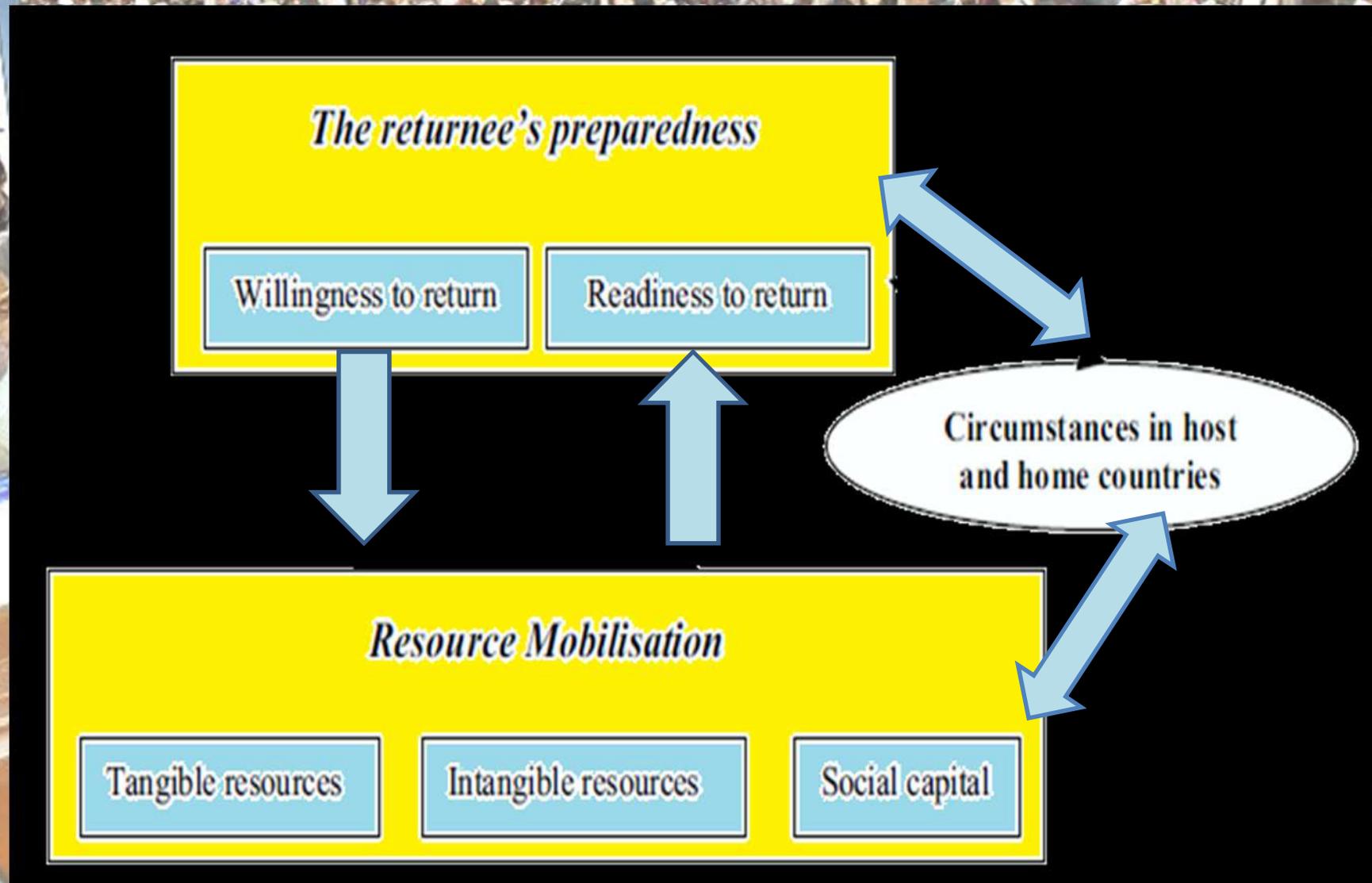


- Vitality of the onsite stage on the migratory process of OFWs; critically looking at how OFWs are able to mobilize their resources under the pre-return conditions in the host country;
- Inputs for a participatory review of the Philippine's existing overseas employment program, particularly on how onsite labor institutions could effectively serve as frontline posts in providing the needed assistance for OFWs; and
- Review of migration governance policies and data management onsite as imperative towards a more all-inclusive understanding of return under a transnational and deterritorialized context

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

RETURN PREPAREDNESS FRAMEWORK

(Cassarino, 2004)



RETURN PREPAREDNESS: THE BLACKBOX

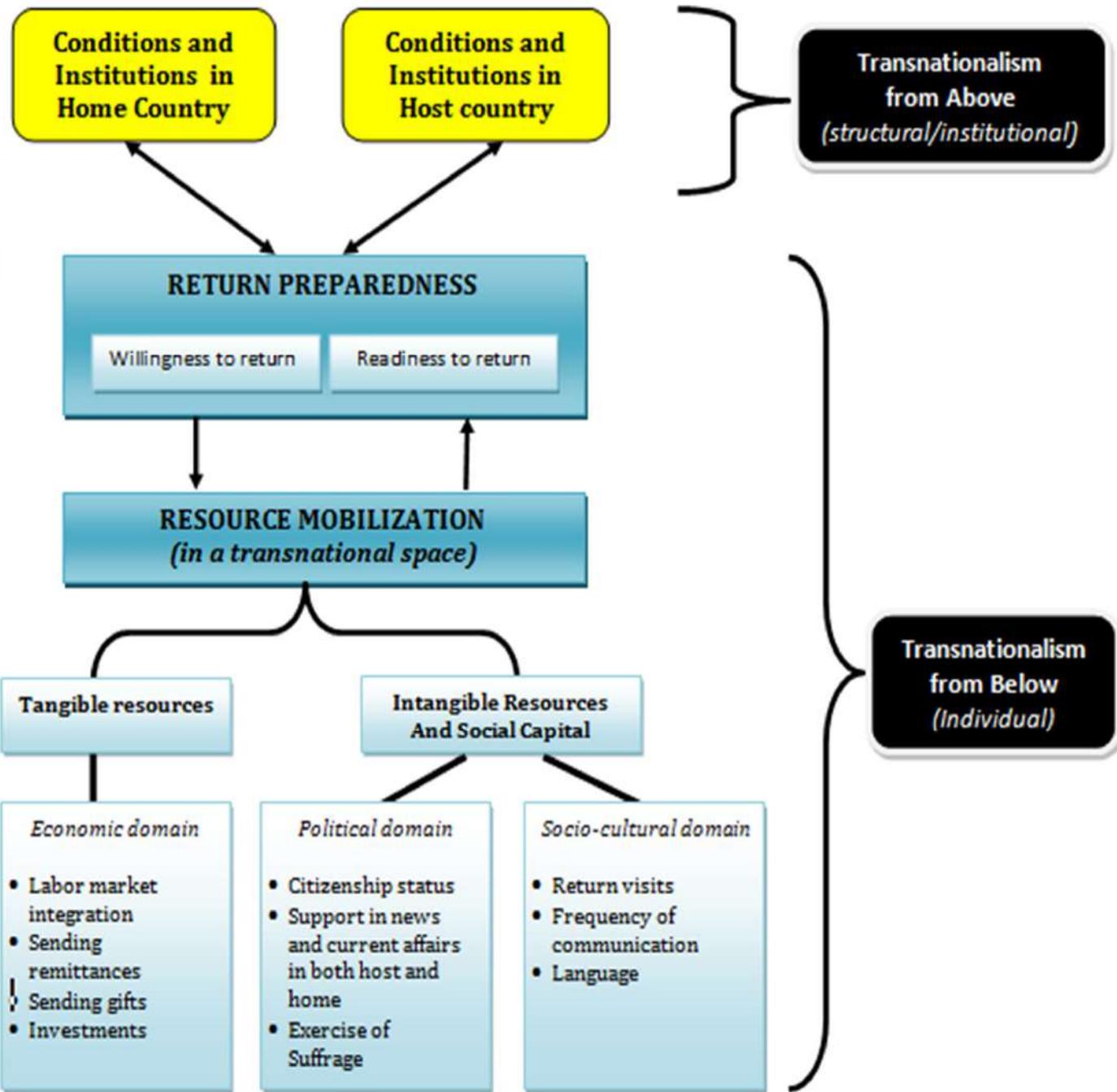
The capability of migrant returnees to become catalysts of change and actors of development depends on the extent of their preparation for their return (Cassarino, 2004).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Integrating **return preparedness** in a **transnationalism approach** looks at resource mobilization as part of the preparation process of migrants under a cross-border economic and social sphere and how conditions in both origin and destination countries are enabling enough to facilitate the mobilization of their resources.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK RETURN PREPAREDNESS IN A TRANSNATIONAL APPROACH



Source: Author's elaboration, adopted from Cassarino, 2004; and Snel et al., 2015.

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

TRANSNATIONALISM 'FROM ABOVE'

(Salient points)

- **Philippine Republic Act No. 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Act of 1995** - the State discourages the primacy and permanency of overseas employment;
- **PH overseas employment program** - posits a linear and binary understanding of return, wherein OFWs are expected to return to the country after the expiration of their contracts ;

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

TRANSNATIONALISM 'FROM ABOVE' *(Salient points)*

- Promotion of 'return of innovation' through in-country reintegration programs;
- The POLO has the perception that OFWs in Rome are already in a much better socio-economic position. However, the issues of segmented labor market and failed return is still evident.

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

TRANSNATIONALISM 'FROM BELOW'

Pre-migration experience:

- Reason: Economic-driven as financial needs prevail as the main push factor for the migration decision
- Decision: Strategy of the Household (family decision: accentuates the NELM approach)
- Means: Significance of the social network theory and the role of transnational ties

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

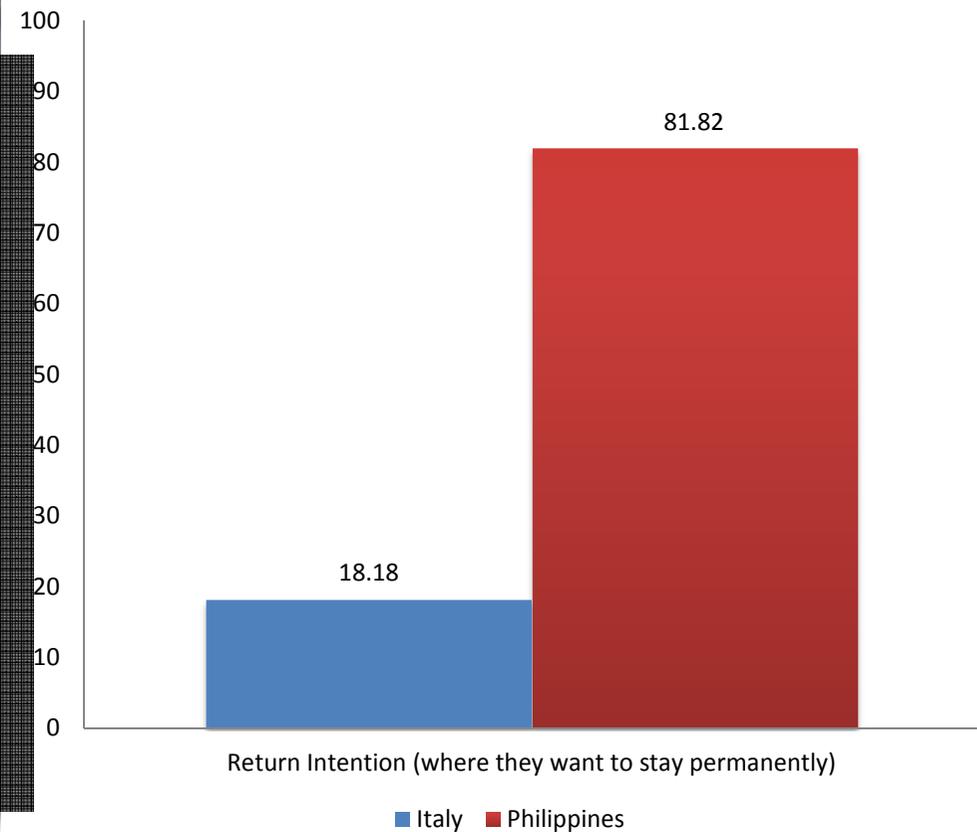
Migration experiences:

- Economic: Ethnic specialization in the tertiary sector; re-defined upgrading, but with positive perception on the impact of migration experience;
- Political: Strong preference for natural citizenship and local news at home; lower voting participation;
- Social: Back and forth transnational movement has been made easier by advances in both transportation and communication, with greater accessibility and affordability.

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

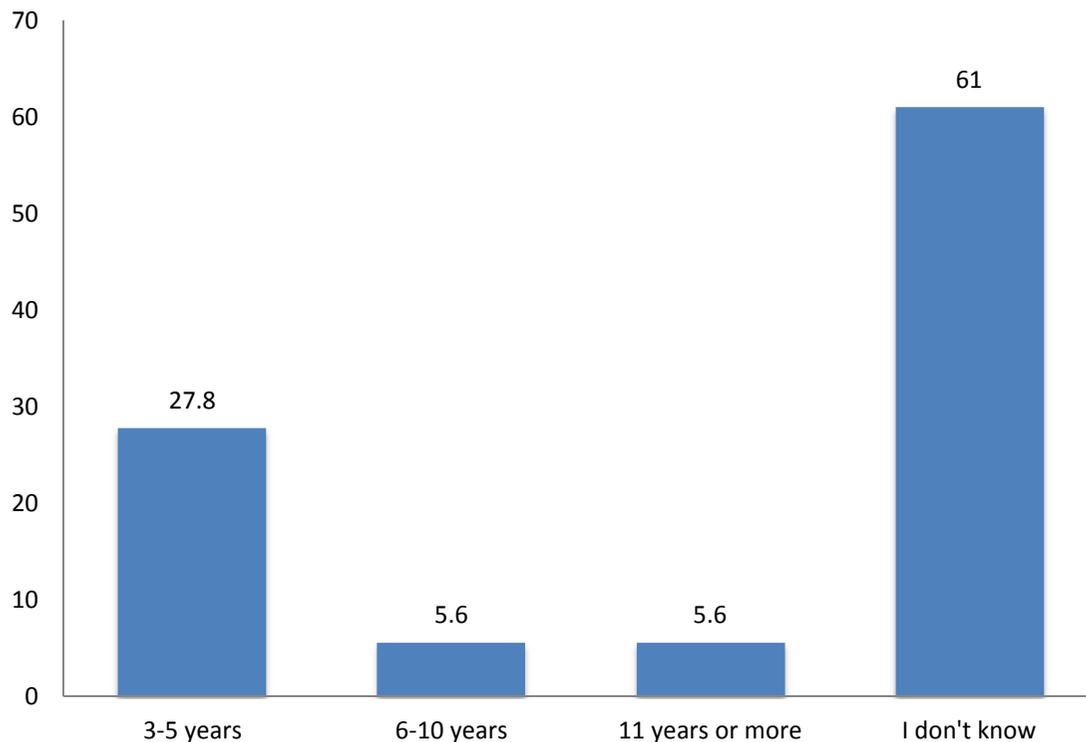
Return Intentions

Return intentions are stronger in OFWs with children left behind at home, and weaker in single OFWs.



IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Return Readiness



Majority of the respondents remain uncertain on when is the right time for them to return at the home country for good. There is no concrete plan yet on when they are ready to return to the Philippines

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

- **The structural conditions in host countries have been strong influencers in the indecisiveness of migrant workers, which accentuates the structural perspective of return wherein return decisions are being related to opportunities available at both host and home;**
- **Most respondents are unable to determine their level of readiness given their limited and weakening ability to mobilize their resources towards securing a better and more sustainable return in the future due to such conditions in Rome.**



- Return framings as a process of preparation, rather than an end to a linear binary flow of human mobility.
- Even if migrants are integrated in the host societies, they still continue to maintain their involvement in the economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of their home countries.
- The role of non-migrants in the household has been evident as key factors in the migration decisions of migrant workers, from pre-migration until return.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



•The vitality of onsite structures calls for **detritorializing development** for increased return preparedness and thus going beyond in-country approaches. It deems to bring development into the *unfixed spaces where migration and the lives of migrants takes place.*

- ✓ *Sound bilateral agreement, PH-Italy*
- ✓ *Onsite return policies and programs (economic and social)*
- ✓ *Strengthened linkage of onsite (POLO) and in-country (NRCO/DILG/DOLE) return and reintegration*
- ✓ *Capitalize on social capital (FilComs) for a more agency-structure framing of return*

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RETHINKING RETURN IN A TRANSNATIONAL AGE

*Bringing development beyond
borders where the lived
experiences of migrants
take place;
a balance between sovereignty
and hospitality,
and of state and society.*



A photograph of a city street at dusk. In the foreground, there are several clusters of light pink and white flowers with green leaves. In the background, a large, white, domed building, likely a state capitol, is visible. The street is lined with buildings and streetlights, and the overall atmosphere is warm and golden. The text "THE END THANK YOU!" is overlaid in the center of the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**THE END
THANK YOU!**