

THE RETURN OF LABOR MIGRANTS IN WONOSOBO, INDONESIA

THE EXPERIENCE OF REINTEGRATING IN THE INDONESIAN SOCIETY

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Master thesis International Development Studies

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Please note: Names of the respondents in this study have been changed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants

Abstract

Due to the current interconnected world, international migration has become a facet of everyday lives around the globe. Specifically, in Asia the labor migration experienced a big growth. The size of labor migration in Indonesia combined with the contract-based nature of this type of migration results in a big number of labor migrants. While return migration can act as an valuable agent of change when it comes to the contribution to local development, return migrants in Indonesia struggle to build a sustainable live in their home country. Therefore, this study aims to get an in-depth knowledge on the reintegration experience of these return labor migrants. Additionally, supporting and hindering factors of this their reintegration process were examined, divided under institutional, cultural, social and economic factors. The study conducted thirty-two in depth interviews and two focus groups with return migrants in the Wonosobo regency. Additionally, expert interviews have been held with different institutions in Jakarta.

The findings of this study illustrate the current challenging economic situation in Wonosobo. The salary is often too low to be able to provide for a living. Therefore, people migrate in order to earn money to seek for a better quality of life in Indonesia after return. Even though a part of the return migrants is able to use their earned money to build something sustainable in their home country, a big share of return migrants is unable to achieve this. Due to the many upcoming entrepreneurs among return migrants, rivalry has become a common facet. Therefore, return migrants are often incapable of earning enough income out of their businesses.

The findings suggest that the attachment of return migrants to their social network and the important role of their (religious) community influences their return phase positively. However, the economic situation is too challenging which often results in the decision to migrate more often.

Despite the support from organizations during their migration phase, there is a lack of official support in their post-migration phase. Return migrants argue they are in need of support in all phases of their migration experience. There has been some improvements already. However, more improvement is needed to provide return migrants with sufficient training and information on how to arrange their post-migration phase.

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Table of content

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
List of figures and tables	vii
List of abbreviations	viii
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Research question and objective	2
1.2 Relevance	3
1.2.1 Scientific relevance.....	3
1.2.2 Development relevance	3
2. Theoretical framework.....	5
2.1 Transnationalism and social networks	5
2.2 Financial capital.....	6
2.3 Motivations and preparations to return	7
2.4 Circular migration.....	8
2.5 Conceptual framework.....	9
3. Regional thematic framework	11
3.1 Geography and development of Indonesia.....	11
3.2 Out-migration patterns Indonesia.....	12
3.3 Return migration	13
3.4 Government institutions and programs.....	14
3.4.1 Laws on return migration.....	14
3.4.2 Return migration support programs	15
3.5 Wonosobo, Central Java.....	15
4. Methodology.....	17
4.1 Data collection.....	17
4.1.1 In-depth interviews	17
4.1.2 Focus groups.....	18
4.1.3 Other data	19
4.2 Strategies for participant recruitment	19
4.3 Data analysis.....	20
4.4 Limitations and risks of the research	20
4.5 Reflection on the positionality	21
4.6 Characteristics of the respondents	22

4.6.1 The characteristics of the interviewees	22
4.6.2 The characteristics of the focus group participants	23
5. Empirical chapter: Migration phase	24
5.1 Institutional factors	24
5.1.1 Facilitating policies	24
5.1.2 Hindering policies	24
5.2 Cultural factors	26
5.2.1 Going abroad	26
5.2.2 Cultural challenges abroad	26
5.3 Social factors	27
5.3.1 Social capital	27
5.3.2 Social challenges abroad	28
5.4 Economic factors	29
5.4.1 Financial capital	29
5.4.2 Economic challenges abroad	30
5.5 Available help	31
5.5.1 Most important actors	31
5.5.2 Reachability	32
5.6 Return motivations	32
6. Empirical chapter: Post-migration phase	33
6.1 Political factors	33
6.1.1 Facilitating and hindering policies	33
6.2 Cultural factors	34
6.2.1 Return in own culture	34
6.2.2 Cultural challenges back home	34
6.3 Social factors	35
6.3.1 Social capital	35
6.3.2 Social challenges back home	36
6.4 Economic factors	38
6.4.1 Financial capital	38
6.4.2 Economic challenges back home	41
6.5 Available help	42
6.5.1 Most important actors	42
6.5.2 Reachability	43
6.6 Remigration aspirations	44
Vicious circle	44

7. Discussion and conclusion	45
7.1 Discussion	45
7.2 Conclusion	50
7.3 Recommendations for further research.....	52
7.4 Policy recommendations	52
References	54
Appendix 1. Interview guide	57
Appendix 2. Focus group guide.....	59
Appendix 3. Table of characteristics interviewees	61

List of figures and tables

Figure 2.1:	Return preparation model	p. 8
Figure 2.2:	Conceptual framework for research on the experience of reintegrating	p. 9
Figure 3.1:	Map of Indonesia	p. 11
Figure 3.2:	Migration and return migration profile in Indonesia	p. 14
Figure 3.3:	Map of Indonesia, highlighting Jawa Tengah Province	p. 15
Figure 4.1:	Distribution of occupations abroad	p. 22
Figure 5.1:	Most important supporting actors abroad	p. 31
Figure 6.1:	Remittance usage frequency	p. 38
Figure 6.2:	Occupation after return	p. 41
Figure 6.3:	Most important actors after returning	p. 42
Table 2.1:	Definitions and operationalization of the used concepts	p. 10

List of abbreviations

- ASEAN** - Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- AEC** - ASEAN Economic Community
- P to P** - Private to Private
- BPS** - Badan Pusat Statistik
- G to G** - Government to Government
- GDP** - Grand Domestic Product
- HDI** - Human Development Index
- ILO** - International Labor Organization
- IOM** - International Organization for Migration
- NGO** - Non-Government Organizations
- SBMI** - Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia
- UN** - United Nations
- UNDP** - United Nations Development Department

K. Lesley: At the end of the rainbow

*After a terrible rainstorm
In the sky, I saw a rainbow.
All the bright, beautiful colors made me feel so warm
As they dipped down so low.*

*I thought back to that legend of old
Sitting on my grandfather's knee.
"At the end of the rainbow is a pot of gold,"
He would say to me.*

*Every time I would see a rainbow
In that big, beautiful sky so bold
I would cross my fingers and make a vow,
"I would be the one to find that pot of gold."*

*So, one day I bid my family and friends good-bye
As I started on my journey, following that rainbow.
I walked away quickly, knowing if I lingered I would cry.
I left to find that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.*

*But as I traveled so far and so long,
I could not find the end of that elusive rainbow.
Feeling very sad, I began to hear a song;
A song from my childhood so sweet and low.*

*By the song I was sold.
No more did I need to roam.
In all that time I was searching for that pot of gold,
It was with my family and friends, at home*

Lesley (2011)

1. Introduction

Due to globalization, the world becomes more interconnected. This interconnectedness of the world has increased the mobility of people to work and study abroad. A world market has emerged and international migration is currently a facet of everyday lives around the globe. (United Nations [UN], 2017; 1). This has resulted in 258 million people living abroad in 2017. This number is multiplied by three since the year 2000, when that number was 85 million people. Almost two third of these people have their country of origin in the South (UN, 2017). A big growth in international migration in the South is specifically seen in labor migration.

Due to the current optimistic view on migration, the demand for migrants is increasing and policies on the receiving country try to attract foreign workers. In line with this, policies of the sending country have been focusing on encouraging people to work abroad (Spaan & Naerssen, 2018; 681). From the 90's on, migration is seen as a potential development feature for developing countries (Haas, 2010; 228). The most discussed positive aspect of migration is found in remittances. Every year, a big amount of remittances is sent to the developing world. This is beneficial for the economic situation of the home country and can result in more local development and an improvement in quality of life (Lopez-Ekra et al., 2011; 69).

Even though the current view on migration is optimistic, there is a risk and downside to international migration as well. Reverse causality between poverty and migration can be found (Adams & Page, 2005; 1652). While international migration and remittances can decrease the poverty level of a household, the big amount of remittances also influences the share of migrants working abroad, hereby creating a remittances-dependent society (Adams & Page, 2005; 1652; Haas, 2007; 5). Despite the desire to earn money abroad, when labor migrants return to their home country with their new acquired knowledge, they have the opportunity to contribute to local development in their country of origin (Haas, 2010; 250).

Return migration is therefore seen as an important aspect of international migration. Return migrants act as a valuable agent of change when it comes to the outcomes of international migration, since they can come home with knowledge, skills and money which can contribute to an improved quality of life and local development (Haas, 2010; 231). Cassarino (2004; 164) speak of different motivations why labor migrants return to their home country: economic motivations or non-economic motivations such as social motivations or personal motivations.

When returning, these labor migrants have to reintegrate in their own country, community and labor market. This process is often seen as a challenge by returnees (Setrana & Tonah, 2014; 5). Due to the different influencing factors in the reintegration process, reintegration of return migrants should be

analyzed in the complete context (Anarfi & Jagare, 2004; 3). Governments and private institutions present various reintegration programs for return migrants (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008; 197). Additionally, Anarfi & Jagare (2004; 17) write about the importance of the social network during the reintegration process. These factors combined contribute to the return experience of return migrants. This research has a primary focus on Indonesia, where thousands of migrants leave to work abroad every year (Spaan & Naerssen, 2018; 681). Working abroad is seen as a way to improve the quality of life in the country of origin. This, in combination with the growing demand of migrants in low skilled jobs in Asian countries, has made Indonesia one of the major sending countries in Asia (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017; 1). Additionally, there is a growing number of return migrants in Indonesia every year. To make their return safe, stable and sustainable, there is a big demand for support in this process. Therefore, reintegration programs to support the return process of Indonesian labor migrants have been set up by the government, Non-governmental organizations (NGO) and private institutions (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017; 11). To search for a sustainable return, multiple factors have to be examined. Anarfi & Jagare (2004; pp 1) raise the following question on this matter: *“What are the options?”*.

1.1 Research question and objective

The aim of this study is to examine the return of labor migrants in Indonesia and to gain in depth knowledge on their reintegration experience. Additionally, this study seeks to investigate the different factors that support this reintegration and which factors made it easier for them. How did the migration period have an influence on their daily life after returning to their country of origin? If so, is this a negative or positive influence? This thesis aims to answer the following research question:

How do return labor migrants in Wonosobo, Indonesia, experience their reintegration process and what hinders and facilitates this process?

After conducting literature study, multiple subjects arose which are important to answer the main research question. Firstly, the challenges of labor migrants during their time abroad is seen as important. What challenges do return migrants have while being abroad and do these challenges still affects them after returning? And what factors supports or hinders them? A second focus is laid on the phase after working abroad, what challenges they face and what aspects made this return easier or more challenging for them. Thirdly, the focus is on the help of institutions and organizations, which should facilitate the whole migration period of labor migrants. In order to capture a comprehensive answer to this matter, the following sub-questions have been formed:

1. What effect do cultural factors have on the migration and reintegration experience?
2. What effect do social factors have on the migration and reintegration experience?
3. What effect do economic factors have on the migration and reintegration experience?
4. What effect do policies and support programs have on migrants, during and after migrating and who are the main actors?

1.2 Relevance

Below the relevance of this study is presented. A distinction is made between the scientific relevance of this study and the development relevance of this study.

1.2.1 Scientific relevance

Due to the growing mobility of people, new migration routes came into existence. People used to move from the south to north, as the north was seen as rich and full of working opportunities and better wages. The last decade there has been a shift within these routes. People are not restricted to these former routes anymore and increasingly tend to move from south to south and south to east as well (United Nations, 2017; 13). One of these routes lies within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This is a regional intergovernmental organization which supports the mobility of people within the member countries (Hugo, 2014; 43). Due to the short-term nature of the exchange of the migrants within the ASEAN countries, there are not only large numbers of migrants leaving, but also returning. As mentioned above, research shows that returning to the home country can be rather challenging (Setrana & Tonah, 2014; 5). This, in combination with the constant flow of return migrants that move to their home country, shapes the need for a profound understanding of the nature and experience of this return.

Within this study a more comprehensive understanding will be created through the concept of reintegration and its influencing factors. This research will focus explicitly on the case of Indonesia. Earlier research on the concept of reintegration has been done on several Asian and African countries, but thus far not on Indonesia and the Wonosobo regency (Niehof et al., 2016; 1480; Setrana & Tonah, 2014; 2).

1.2.2 Development relevance

The outcomes of migration have been studied for several decades. Until the 1970s there was a positive view on migration, as it was mostly studied in relation to capital transfers. In the 1970s and 1980s this changed and there was a dominant pessimistic view towards migration, since there were many concerns. Only from around the 1990s on, there has been a growing optimism among scientists on migration, currently studied through subjects such as remittances and return migration (Haas, 2010; 230). Migration and return migration were, and are still, a big subject on the development agenda. The question remains what returnees need in order to have a safe, stable and sustainable return and how

they can contribute to local development. Several studies show that returnees need social, but also practical help during their return (International Organization for Migration[IOM], 2010; 36). Thus, several support programs have been implemented in Indonesia the last decade (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017). But has this improved the return experience of labor migrants in Wonosobo, Indonesia? This study provides a comprehensive overview to gain knowledge on the return of labor migrants. This can be beneficial for institutions to construct their support programs for the returnees.

2. Theoretical framework

A large body of literature exists on return migration, of which this chapter will provide a short overview, starting with a definition. In this study, a return migrant is defined as follows: *“Any person returning to his/her country of origin, in the course of the last ten years, having been an international migrant (whether short-term or long-term) in another country. Return may be permanent or temporary. It may be independently decided by the migrant or forced by unexpected circumstances”* (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008; pp 164).

The given overview in this section serves as a framework for this research. The overview starts with explaining the transnational perspective of return migrants and their social network. This is followed by an outline of the concept of remittances. Then the motivation and preparations for return are described. This section will also mention the link of circular migration to the framework of labor migration in Indonesia. To conclude, a conceptual framework has been made for this research. A table of definitions on the used concepts will be shown as well.

2.1 Transnationalism and social networks

In the late 80s, migration scholars started to interpret the back-and-forth movement of migrants as transnational (Cassarino, 2004; 261). Presently, migrants are seen as transnational when they live in two countries simultaneously (Salih, 2013; 5). The first characteristic of a transnational migrant is that labor migrants can maintain the connection to their home country by staying in touch with their friends and family and organizing regular visits to their country of origin. This contributes to their transnational lives (Cassarino, 2004; 262). By attaining a transnational life, the migrants allow their reintegration process to be better arranged and facilitated. The social connections they had while staying abroad shape their return intentions and can help them with difficulties on an economic and social level while reintegrating (Carling & Vatne Pettersen, 2014; 15).

Another characteristic of a transnational migrant is that the migration period can develop new personal identities among the labor migrants. They acquire new skills via financial, social and human capital through norms and knowledge, which they transfer to and from the country of origin (Cassarino, 2004; 263). The outcomes of these transfers of a transnational migrant on the household back home, depends on what the migrant sends back during their stay and brings with them while returning. The outcomes are formed by their access to- and use of financial, human and social capital. Financial capital transfers can consist of remittances being send back home, while human capital transfers usually comprise knowledge acquired abroad. Social capital transfers are for example new social connections made abroad or the strengthening of the already existing social network (Anarfi & Jagare, 2004; 12).

Labor migrants are not only transnational while working abroad, during their returning phase their level of transnationalism can be high as well. While returning they can keep in contact with the country they worked in as well. *“A transnational life may be a strategy of survival or improvement of life where migration and return is neither definite nor permanent”* (Anarfi & Jagare, 2004; pp 12). Reintegration can thus be challenging, due to the fact that labor migrants can still be connected to the country in which they worked before and might have intentions to leave again. Hereby resulting in circular migration.

That the social network of a migrant is important in their reintegration process is described by Berkman & Glass (2000; 140), who argue that ties within and across social networks can have an influence on behavior of return migrants. This can be seen in the behavior while finding a job, within the household and even with the political activity of an individual (Fine & Lapavitsas, 2004 ; 19).

The link between transnationalism and the Social Network Theory is based on the hypothesis that a social network is not only shaped by its spatial structure, but also by its social structure (Berkman & Glass, 2000; 141). Spatial structure means that a social network is based in one specific place. Shaped by social structure therefore signifies that a social network can exist through borders and in different countries at the same time. This is connected to the transnational labor migrant, who maintains connections to its social network in the country of origin and sometimes creates a new social network abroad with who they sometimes keep in touch during their returning phase (Carling & Vatne Pettersen, 2014; 16). Where the social network can increase the access to the needed information and resources, it can be supportive for the reintegration process (Kuyper, 2008; 18).

2.2 Financial capital

An important factor that can influence the return of labor migrants positively, is the salary they earn abroad; also called financial capital. The financial capital of labor and return migrants stem from the salary usage abroad. Besides spending it directly, a large proportion remit their money to the country of origin. There are five major motives to remit as described by Anwar & Mughal (2012; 575): altruism, risk insurance, loan repayment exchange and inheritance. These five motives range between individualistic motives and familial motives. By sending a family member from a poor household abroad, this family member can support the family financially as their remittances can be used for daily costs and as an insurance for local economic shocks (Anwar & Mughal, 2012; 575).

These remittances can contribute to an increased quality of life and an improved economic situation of the household in the country of origin (Aghazarm et al., 2011; 70). The more remittances are sent, the more households live less poorly. This is visible in the increase of remittances over the last twenty years and the decrease of the poverty level simultaneously (Arshad & Nahar, 2017; 164). There is no question whether remittances can contribute to development, but studies question if remittances are

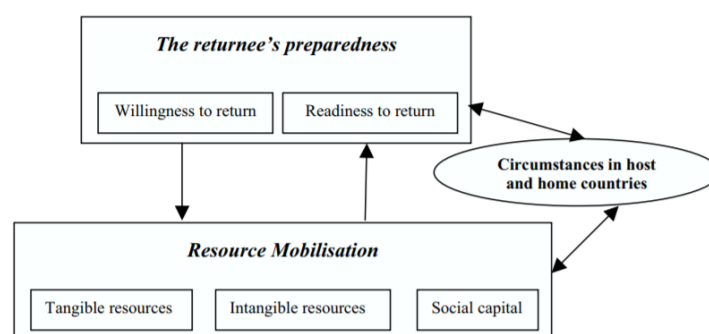
indeed contributing to development. De Haas (2007; 5) argues that the constant flow of remittances results in a remittance-dependent society. Additionally, the remittances would be spent mostly on consumptive investments, such as houses, instead of sustainable investments, such as enterprises. Therefore, remittances contribute to an improved quality of life, but not to poverty alleviation and a better economic situation of the households (Winkens, 2016; 52). Other studies have a more positive perspective on the remittance dependency. Migration and remittances enable more flexibility in the choices and livelihood options of the return migrant and their family (Adger et al., 2002). However, the outcome of remittances is closely linked to the usage of this money. De Haas (2007; 10) adds on this by explaining that the type and length of migration influences the ability of remittance to contribute to development. The longer one migrates, more remittances can be send. The type is linked to whether the occupation one has abroad is low- or high-skilled.

2.3 Motivations and preparations to return

When working abroad, different return motivations can rise among the labor migrants. These motivations are determined by economic and financial factors, as well as by social factors (Cassarino, 2004; 257). Additionally, these initial return motivations can change over time due to personal challenges or work-related problems such as mistreatment or a problem with their access to the labor market abroad. Return motivations can also be shaped by the achievement of the migration objective (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008; 178). Fihri et al. (2015; 416) adds on this by explaining that migrants will only return at the moment they have saved enough money or experiences to realize their migration goal. According to Carling & Vatne Pettersen (2014; 15) there are two main aspects that determine if migrants want to return: their level of integration in the host society and their level of transnationalism. Their research states that when migrants have a high level of transnationalism, they are more likely to return. Also, the more they feel integrated in the host society, the less likely they return.

Hence, return motivations can be forced or voluntarily. The nature of the return motive results in a different return experience. Migrants that had a forced return often return with social or economic problems (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017; 11). The development of social problems happens out of employer related or family related problems. The migrant can be mistreated by their employer or there could be marriage problems. Economic problems can be contract related. Either they are not paid enough or they have to pay a fine (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017; 12). Therefore, as these return migrants have more difficulty after return than people without any problems, it is important to examine return motivations. Besides the willingness to return, the preparedness to return is important as well. When labor migrants return, either voluntarily or forced, their level of readiness influences their return.

Figure 2.1 *Return preparation model*, Cassarino, 2004; 271



As can be seen in figure 2.1, the preparedness of a returnee is influenced by their resources. These resources are either tangible such as financial capital, or intangible such as contacts and skills. The usage of their social capital affects their level of preparedness. Additionally, it is stated that the impact a migrant can have on their development is dependent on their level of preparedness (Cassarino, 2004; 272). The more resources a returnee has built and has access to before and after return, the more opportunity the returnee has for a smooth and sustainable return. Bachtiar & Prasetyo (2017; 11) use different definitions for these resources; tangible resources are defined as financial capital and intangible resources as human capital. The ability to fully use these resources is determined by the circumstances and situation of the host country and the country of origin. Difficult social or economic circumstances can restrict the returnee in using their resources.

2.4 Circular migration

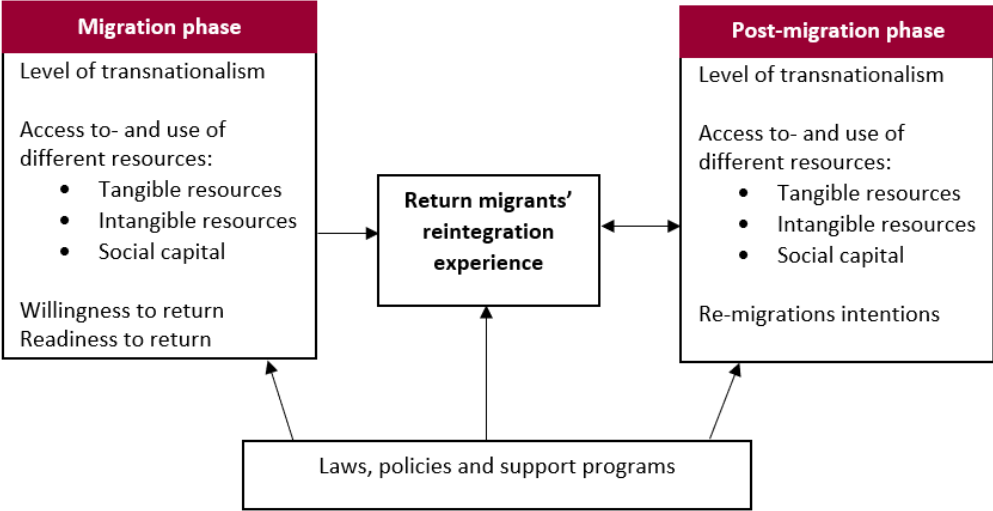
In line with the concept of transnationalism, return migration is not static, but a dynamic process where people migrate more than once. This process is called circular migration. Circular migration is seen as a possible triple win situation, in which the situation is beneficial for the country of origin, destination country and the migrants (Hugo, 2013; 5; International Labor Organization [ILO], 2011; 22). The destination country has the possibility to meet their labor demands by hiring labor migrants from abroad, the country of origin can benefit from the remittances and skills brought back home and the migrant benefits by earning more salary and the ability to invest this after returning (ILO, 2011; 24). However, some studies are more skeptical. These skeptical views stem from social studies. According to Vertovec (2007; 6) circular migration has a positive and a negative influence on the micro level. He summarizes that some studies state that the experience and savings open up opportunities, others state that the concept of circular migration results in the migrants remaining stuck in low level of employment and migration. Hugo (2013; 2) discusses that the migrant should attain a transnational life abroad and retain strong ties to their country of origin to be able to turn their migration experience into a possible development. These strong ties can help them to arrange their income and help them after return. Besides the mindset of the migrants, policies concerning this circular mobility needs to be carefully managed (Hugo, 2013; 7). Well organized and set up circular migration policies can address

challenges around economic development, illegal migration and labor shortages on meso and macro level.

2.5 Conceptual framework

To put the above-mentioned theories and concepts together, a conceptual framework has been made specifically for this study. This framework can be found in figure 2.2. The framework shows how the return or reintegration experience of return migrants is shaped by different factors.

Figure 2.2 *Conceptual framework for research on the experience of reintegrating*, based on Carling & Vatne Pettersen, 2014; Cassarino, 2004



These factors are either on individual, household or institutional level spread over two phases: the migration and post-migration phase. During their time abroad their return motivations shape how they experience returning, since voluntarily return results in a different reintegration experience than forced return. Also, their level of transnationalism is important, defined as their ties to the home country, as can be seen in table 2.1. Additionally, their access to- and use of their resources and capital influence their returning phase. These capitals are also important during their returning phase. Returnees can use their capitals to create opportunities to ease and strengthen their reintegration. During this phase a returnee can have a high level of transnationalism as well, which in this phase is defined as the ties they have to their former host country. Their intentions to re-migrate shape their reintegration as well. When return migrants have the intention to work abroad again, they might put less effort in a sustainable reintegration process. The last influencing factor is one of contextual nature. As was seen in the return preparation model, not only individual factors determine one's livelihood, also external factors play an important role (Serrat, 2008; 3). The circumstances of the host country and the country of origin can influence their livelihood as well. Policies, laws and support programs influence all concepts within this conceptual framework while working abroad and when returning. The discussed concepts are defined and operationalized in table 2.1.

Table 2.1 *Definitions and operationalization of the used concepts*

Concept	Definition	Operationalization
Willingness to return	The reason why migrants return to their country of origin (Cassarino, 2004; 258)	The return can be forced or decided voluntarily
Readiness to return	The returnee's readiness describes the preparedness of a migrant to return home (Cassarino, 2004; 271).	Gathering of tangible resources Gathering of intangible resources Support of social capital
Re-migration intentions	The voluntarily decision to work abroad again, linked to their needs and the labor needs abroad (Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2011; 19)	The intention to do so or not Short-term or long-term Study or work
Level of transnationalism	Ties to the country of origin or host country (Vatne & Pettersen, 2014; 13)	Long distance communication to host or home country Return visits
Tangible resources	Knowledge and skills of the return migrant (Serrat, 2008; 2)	Capacity to adapt Working knowledge and skills
Intangible resources	Financial possession of the return migrant (Serrat, 2008; 2)	Savings Remittances
Social capital	Social network in host and home country (Anarfi, 2005; 12)	Bonding social network Bridging social network
Policies, laws and return programs	Policies, laws and return programs in Indonesia around return migration (Bachtiar & Prastyo, 2017; 14)	Hindering laws and policies Facilitating laws and policies
Return migrant	An international migrant that returns to his or her country of origin for at least a year (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008; 164)	Temporary or permanent First time returning Second time returning
Reintegration experience	How return migrants experience reintegrating (Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2011; 82)	Return motivations Level of transnationalism Economic/social reintegration Access to different capitals Policy, laws, support programs

3. Regional thematic framework

This section provides an overview of the national and regional context of migration and returnees in Indonesia which can be placed in line with this research. At first the geography and background of Indonesia is described. Subsequently, the migration patterns of Indonesia are shown, followed by a particular focus on return migration, linked to the region of central Java and the Wonosobo regency. Concluding a context of laws and support programs is provided.

3.1 Geography and development of Indonesia

Indonesia, officially named 'Republic of Indonesia' is a country located in the Southeast of Asia, bordering Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Malaysia. As can be seen in figure 3.1, the country is an archipelago and consists of five main islands: Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Irian Jaya. On these islands, there is a total population of 264 million currently living in Indonesia, making it a high population density country (United Nations, 2018; 47). The country hosts over 300 ethnic groups and 500 different languages, with Indonesian as the most common and official language (Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS], 2014). The major urban regions are Jakarta, Surabaya, Bekasi and Bandung. Next to these cities, which contain over two million inhabitants, there are ten more cities in Indonesia which host over a million inhabitants (BPS, 2014).

Figure 3.1 *Map of Indonesia*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018



Indonesia has been a Dutch colony for over 350 years. From the beginning of the 17th century until mid-20th century, Indonesia was under Dutch control. Now Indonesia is an independent republic with a presidential system and all power is concentrated within the central government (Aspinall & Fealy, 2003; 3).

Since their independence, Indonesia has made a big economic and social growth continuously, as can be seen in their share in Grand Domestic Product(GDP) that has doubled the last ten years (World Bank, 2017). Before this decade, Indonesia faced the Asian financial crisis in 1997 where the GDP per capita

fell from \$1,079 to \$380 in just one year. Ever since, they have been growing in GDP every year (Hugo, 2002; 15).

Not only the economic situation of Indonesia has increased, also the general development of Indonesia has improved. This is visible in the Human Development Index, where Indonesia scores among the group that is associated with 'medium human development' (United Nations, 2018; 23). They have been steadily growing over the past few decades. As an example: the mean years of schooling have increased with five years between 1990-2017 (United Nations Development Department [UNDP], 2018; 2). Other components, such as life expectancy and Gross National Income are increasing as well.

Before, and also after the financial crisis of 1997, rapid changes were made in Indonesia on an economic and social level. Globalization started to link Indonesia with other countries by reducing the costs to move and developing communication systems. Subsequently, the country faced an internationalization of capital and big economic growth (Hugo, 2002; 14). This changed their labor market into a more developed distribution. After the crisis, structural changes had been implemented and around the millennium less than 50 percent worked in the agriculture sector (Hugo, 2002; 15). From that year on, the labor market, together with the educational system kept on developing. However, 13,8 percent of the population still lives below the poverty line (UNDP, 2014). Therefore, people are not always able to create the life that they want and working abroad for better wages became more popular to achieve the livelihood they wish for (Pratiwi Anwar, 2015; 226).

3.2 Out-migration patterns Indonesia

Therefore, there has been an exponential increase in international migration in Indonesia for the last decades. Currently Indonesia is the second largest migrant-sending country in Southeast Asia. In 2013, Indonesia had over six million people working abroad (Pratiwi Anwar, 2015; 225). The majority of the labor migrants stay within Asia. The most popular destinations countries for Indonesian labor migrants are Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, where Malaysia is assuredly the most popular destination (Winkens, 2016; 19). Firstly, they choose to work in these countries because it is relatively close to home and has a similar culture and language. This makes it easier for the labor migrants to work and live abroad (Winkens, 2016; 19). Secondly, the expected better wages are a reason they choose for these countries. The extra money that they earn can be send back home. With good management this money can be used to provide for a better quality of life for the migrants' family, but also for local development (Dustmann et al., 2009; 2). Thirdly, these migration routes have been developing because of the encouraging policies for labor migrants to work in these countries. In 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) was set up which increased the mobility of migrants within Southeast Asia. Indonesia is part of the ASEAN countries and this improved the possibility of Indonesians to work abroad enormously (Hugo, 2014; 44).

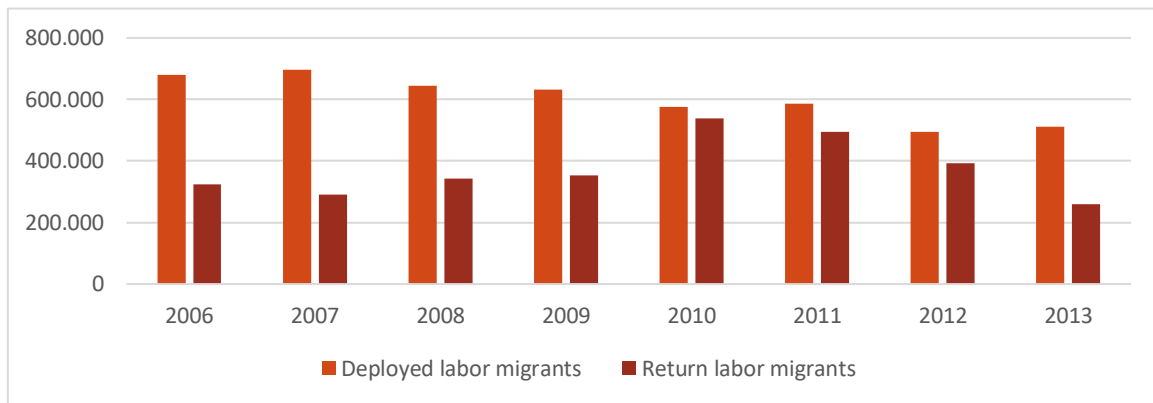
Most of the jobs that Indonesian labor migrants do are low-skilled. In Malaysia, Indonesian labor migrants work as domestic workers, in construction or in factories (IOM, 2010; 35). The contract that the labor migrants get are mostly short time, ranging from two up to five years (Pratiwi Anwar, 2015; 225). Indonesia is known for sending a big number of domestic workers, this is due to the feminization of labor migration in Asia, which is specifically visible in Indonesia (Fee & Rahman, 2009; 103). In Indonesia, women account for 60 up to 80 percent of all labor migrants seeking for work in another country. These women mostly work in gender-specific labor, such as domestic workers (Fee & Rahman, 2009; 103).

Currently, three types of migration routes are being recognized within this framework. The first is called private-to-private (P to P) and covers the informal sector. In this type the employer is an individual. The most common occupation under this type of migration is domestic worker. In all destination countries, except Hong Kong, domestic workers are not included in the labor laws (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2011; 11). The second type of migration is called government-to-government (G to G) and covers the formal sector. In this type the employer is a company, for example a factory. The third and last category is the group of irregular migrants. These migrants have overstayed their visa or ran away from their employers. Often, there is no protection or support for these irregular migrants. However, regular migrants are not necessarily defined under safe migration (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2011; 12). Ultimately, regardless the type of migration, the labor migrants are obligated to return to Indonesia or seek for other (legal) labor when their contract has ended.

3.3 Return migration

The return of these labor migrants is an important topic for the Indonesian government and therefore they implemented policies to encourage these labor migrants to return. Due to the new acquired skills and financial capital abroad, they can contribute to the economic development of Indonesia (Pratiwi Anwar, 2015; 226). In 2004 Indonesia already implemented law no. 39 '*Concerning the placement and protection of Indonesian overseas workers*'. This law focused on a safe departure for the labor migrants (IOM, 2010; 13). To focus more on the return of the labor migrants, law no. 18 '*The protection of Indonesian migrant workers*', was implemented in 2017 (Rahayu, 2018; 2). Even before the implementation of this law, a large number of labor migrants returned to Indonesia.

Figure 3.2 *Migration and return migration profile in Indonesia 2006-2013*. Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017



As can be seen in figure 3.2, in 2010 and 2011 the country faced almost as much labor migrants leaving as returning. When returning, the returnees require certain needs for a safe and stable return process. The IOM (2010; 36) describes different required services by Indonesian returnees: 1) training and assistance with business management 2) case handling and insurance affairs 3) assistance with family issues. Hence, the return migrants are in need of support on an economic and social level.

3.4 Government institutions and programs

Due to that need of support on multiple levels, return migrants are supported throughout whole Indonesia within a broad network of multiple actors that offer support programs in Indonesia. Therefore, this paragraph focusses on the laws involved around this return process and explains the different actors and programs available in Indonesia.

3.4.1 Laws on return migration

Throughout the years, migration has been on the governmental agenda of Indonesia. As been stated before, in 2004 law no. 39 '*Placement and protection of Indonesian overseas worker*' was implemented (Pratiwi Anwar, 2015; 226). This law was supposed to protect labor migrants in all stages of their migration period, but research showed that this law emphasizes on placement rather than the return and reintegration of labor migrants (IOM, 2010; 13). Additionally, this law does not recognize the group of irregular migrants. Therefore, they were not supported or protected during their time abroad (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2011; 12). Since 2010, the government of Indonesia started to encourage the Indonesian labor migrants to return to Indonesia to enhance the socio-economic development of their village of origin. Therefore, return migration was placed as a priority policy within the national midterm plan of 2010-2014 (Pratiwi Anwar, 2015; 226). This, in combination with the need for protection for the (irregular) labor migrants, resulted in the implementation of law no. 18 '*The protection of Indonesian migrant workers*' in 2017 (Rahaya, 2018; 1). This law contributes to an improved migration system and provides a framework in which the migration period can be safe and sustained for all types of migrants. In line with this law, multiple actors started to support irregular migrants as well and assist

return migrants in their reintegration process. This support is said to be needed and wanted for a safe, stable and sustainable return.

3.4.2 Return migration support programs

There are four main actors when looking at the available support programs for return migrants in Indonesia: government institutions, business communities, donor institutions and NGO's (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017; 20). These different actors look at the economic, social and psychological aspect of reintegration and seek to ease the whole returning phase.

Every program has a different focus on either the economic, social or psychological aspect, but also try to cover a broader range by including other components. Although most programs use a preventive approach, some of the programs use a more direct approach. The preventive approach seeks to empower and strengthen the migrant and its surroundings during all phases of migration and the direct approach provides practical assistance on economic and social level in the returning phase (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017; 20). With this program mechanism, not only the return migrant will be reached, but also their friends and family, the community and potential migrants.

3.5 Wonosobo, Central Java

Indonesia identifies 22 major migrant source areas. Institutions tend to focus on these areas for their support programs, since these areas have been selected as migrant source areas by the number of migrant workers being send from that area. The focus within this study is on one of these areas: Wonosobo in Central Java. Wonosobo is the second highest sending area of Indonesia (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017; 28). With this knowledge, an assumption is made that there are a high number of return migrants as well.

Figure 3.3 *Map of Indonesia, highlighting Jawa Tengah Province.* Encyclopedia Brittanica, 2018



Wonosobo lies within the Jawa Tengah province in Indonesia, visual in figure 3.3. In 2010 the population of the Jawa Tengah province is over 32 million with 54 percent of those people living in rural areas (BPS, 2014). For people up to fifteen years old, over 85 percent are enrolled in education.

For youth older than fifteen, this percentage drops to around 50 percent (BPS, 2014). This makes a big number of the inhabitants of this province low-skilled.

The regency of Wonosobo alone has around 700.000 inhabitants. Wonosobo is one of the focus areas for the support programs from various actors, such as the government and NGO's. These support programs seek to ensure the migrant workers' rights and to improve the economy in Wonosobo. This is done through securing the safety of migrant workers before, during and after migration (Rahayu, 2018; 2).

4. Methodology

This research seeks to acquire in-depth knowledge on the reintegration experience of return labor migrants in Indonesia. In this methodology chapter the data collection will be exemplified, followed by the participant recruitment and the main limitations and risks of this study. To conclude, a reflection on the positionality of the researcher is given. This research is done in alliance with Universitas Indonesia, who provided practical assistance, and SBMI Wonosobo, who introduced a part of the respondents.

4.1 Data collection

The data for this study was assembled through a mixed-method approach in qualitative research. The used methods are in-depth interviews and focus groups. The data is collected through these methods in a period of three months, from March until May of 2019. This section will discuss the construction of these methods as well as their contribution to this study.

4.1.1 In-depth interviews

Due to the qualitative character of this research, the primary method that is used is semi-structured interviews. The aim with these interviews is to gain in-depth information on the personal return experience of labor migrants. It allows a researcher to gain personal experiences through people's insights, motivations, ideas and thoughts (Hennink et al. 2010; 110). Additionally, it is used to understand the social and economic context in which the migrants live in. The conducted interviews were semi-structured, which means that topics and certain questions were formulated before the interviews were conducted, but not all questions were set and there was room to ask more questions on a subject if needed. Thus, the semi-structured interviews allowed the migrants to talk on their personal experiences and ideas. Due to the variety in cases, all interviews were different and focused on other themes. Therefore, different questions have been asked in the interviews to highlight a certain theme. These semi-structured interviews were fundamental for gaining in-depth knowledge on the dynamics of the migration and return process, the facilitating and hindering aspects during this process and how they experienced returning as well as how the migration period has influenced their daily life.

For this study, 32 return migrants from both genders have been interviewed. On location it turned out to be challenging to find the same amount of men as women. In total 25 women and seven men participated in the research. More characteristics of the respondents can be found in appendix 3. Despite this data bias, the point of saturation was found. After conducting approximately 30 interviews, it was evident that no new information came out of the interviews. Therefore, two more interviews

were conducted before finishing this research method. All respondents were interviewed once. The gender bias will be discussed more elaborate in the limitations and risks section.

The length of the interviews varied between 30 – 70 minutes. This difference can be explained by the openness of the respondent and the presence of a translator for two third of the interviews. More information about the risks of a translator can be found in the limitations and risks section. Before every interview the respondent was informed about the research purposes and the confidentiality. Even though some women in the research were somewhat shy, the majority was willing to share information. An important aspect was the ability to conduct an interview in English. Interviews conducted in English enabled the respondent to give more extensive answers. Additionally, the respondents could explain their feelings and experiences better.

During the research most interviews were conducted with only the respondent, the translator and the researcher. However, in some cases family or friends were present as well. For some women this encouraged them to speak more freely. Often they felt understood, as most friends went through similar situations during their migration period. The interviews conducted with men, were all conducted with just the interviewee, the researcher and the translator.

During the course of the research, some changes have been made to the interview guide. It turned out to be challenging to ensure that the understanding of the concepts was similar to the respondents and the researcher. Before going into the field, the research questions have been discussed with both Universitas Indonesia and SBMI Wonosobo. However, during the first few interviews some confusing arose concerning the concept of 'returning'. When asking the questions 'Who helped you during when you came back to Indonesia?' the interviewees understood this as the actual return process of flying back to Indonesia and driving back to their home. They would not talk about the period after that. Hence, the concept of returned was explained and the question was divided into several questions such as "How was it to live in your own village after you came back?" Additionally, the opening question 'Can you tell me something about the time you worked abroad' turned out to be too broad as well as jumping to their migration experience too fast. Therefore, the opening question was revised to 'Can you tell me something about how it is to live in Wonosobo?'. This motivated the respondents to talk about their lives and build up the conversation more effective. After this revision of the interview guide, no further changes were made as the concepts were understood as similar as possible. The full interview guide can be found in appendix 1.

4.1.2 Focus groups

Along with in-depth interviews, the method of focus groups was used as well. During the course of this study, two focus groups were held. One focus group was organized, the other one occurred spontaneously. Both focus groups consisted of exclusively female participants, because of the gender division among return migrants in Wonosobo. A focus group is a proper tool to create a conversation

where the participants can talk freely and discuss the content with each other (Hennink et al., 2010; 136). The focus groups in this study focused on return migration in the village and how this is perceived by its residents. Additionally, they discussed about opportunities and constrains concerning living in their village. The respondents of the focus groups were found through local contacts and snowballing. The full focus group guide can be found in appendix 2.

4.1.3 Other data

Besides the interview with the return migrants and the focus groups, institutions and NGO's were interviewed with the idea to provide a framework of the important actors within return migration. In total four experts have been interviewed. One government body, one donor institutions and two NGO's. The government body and one NGO were found through networking and the other NGO and the donor institution through phone calls. These interviews gave an insight in the current situation of return migrants and what in their opinion are the most challenging issues. Additionally, they discussed what is needed to improve the current situation. Three out of four interviews were conducted in English. One was conducted with a translator, as the expert did not have a sufficient level of English. All expert interviews were held in Jakarta.

4.2 Strategies for participant recruitment

According to Hennink et al. (2010; 75) there are two stages of participant recruitment. The first stage is for defining an appropriate study population. An explicit definition of the study population is needed to be able to know who to recruit. At first the idea was to reach out to return migrants in Wonosobo, who had worked abroad. There was no distinction in what period they returned. After speaking to experts about the laws and policies concerning return migration, it became evident the law of 2004 regulated the regulation and safety of the labor and return migrants. The experts argued that the experience of migrants who left before 2004 would be different than after. Therefore, the decision was made to solely include return migrants that left Indonesia after 2004.

The second stage for participant recruitment is to find strategies to recruit participants from this study population. For this study the strategies of using gatekeepers and snowball recruitment was used. Hennink et al. (2010; pp 78) described gatekeepers as *"people with a prominent and recognized role in the local community"*. Without the usage of gatekeepers, this study would not have been possible. During the time in the field, multiple gatekeepers were present. One of the gatekeepers was an Indonesian woman living in the Netherlands, who has been working with migrants for over ten years. She provided me with a full sheet of relevant phone numbers of experts. Another important gatekeeper is the host in the Wonosobo regency. This woman offered assistance by introducing me into the community and people outside the community she was acquainted with. The challenge with using the latter gatekeeper was the selection of participants that she introduced me to, as gatekeepers

tend to purposely select the respondents they think are suitable and are part of the same community. This results in a very biased group of respondents (Hennink et al., 2010; 124). Snowball recruitment was used to prevent this bias as much as possible. During the majority of the interviews, snowball technique was used to find more return migrants in the area. A possibly negative effect of this method is that using one particular network can cause a bias as people from the same social network have similar knowledge and usage of assistance or training during their stay abroad and after their return. Therefore, the usage of different gatekeepers in the field was used to prevent this bias. The first week of fieldwork in the Wonosobo regency the respondents were found in the northern part of the region through networking. The remaining weeks were mostly in the southern part, but often in the western part as well. Therefore, most respondents did not know each other and were part of another social network. The combination of using different gatekeepers and snowballing resulted in the variety of 32 respondents and two focus groups.

4.3 Data analysis

With the approval of the respondent, all 36 interviews were recorded. Both the experts and return migrants were informed about their anonymity. These recordings proved a wide range of data, which is not automatically positive. The risk of wanting to use all the collected data would eventually lead to irrelevant findings which would be too broad.

An effort has made to prevent this by developing codes after all the transcripts were finished. According to Hennink et al (2010; 218) there are two types of codes: deductive and inductive codes. Deductive codes originate from concepts from the theory or the conceptual model. Inductive codes are developed by reading the actual assembled data and originate from the themes raised by the respondents (Hennink et al., 2010; 219). First, the deductive codes were made out of the theory and conceptual model and were focused mostly on the used concepts such as migration and return motivations among the interviewees and the use of the social network. The inductive codes were developed by reading the data thoroughly. The returning patterns were eventually formed into codes and put into NVivo. NVivo was used to smoothen the coding process, as this software has an easy way of structuring the codes and therefore it is easy to find all the information under one code, hereby easing the process of analyzing.

4.4 Limitations and risks of the research

The phase of data collection for this study faced several limitations and risks concerning the language, data bias and culture which are described below:

Language: the biggest limitation and risk of this study is the language. Approximately one third of the respondents and four out of five experts had a decent level of English, therefore these interviews could be conducted in English. The level of English of the other two third of the respondents was not present

or sufficient enough to conduct the interview in English. Consequently, it was necessary to work with a translator during those interviews. Working with a translator has some risks. The translator could unaware transform the answers, due to the difference in language or context they live in. Therefore, some emotions or thoughts can be transformed when it got translated from Indonesian to English. Additionally, it can be challenging if the translator is familiar with the respondent. There is a risk that respondents would reply in a social desirably way. To limit this risk, a translator is used who is familiar with the area, but not with the respondents personally. Nonetheless, the translator was neither trained nor fluent in English. Therefore, some data could have gone lost in translation. This is similar to the interviews that were conducted in English. Neither the researcher nor the respondent has English as native language. Due to that reason some nuances could be misinterpreted.

Data bias: data bias appeared in multiple ways in this study. First, the gender division is uneven as the respondents in this study are predominantly female. After conducting around 15 to 20 interviews with women, more effort was put into finding males to participate. However, Wonosobo faced a feminization of labor migration. Consequently, less males could be found that left after 2004. Additionally, it could have been the presence of a female researcher that made women more willing to participate than men. Eventually, seven male participants were found. This gender bias resulted in an occupation bias as well. Due to the big number of female respondents, most respondents in this study were maid or caregiver when working abroad. This can have an effect on the return experience as maids and caregivers have a different working experience than for example factory workers. Hence, this study represents mostly female opinions and thoughts unintentionally.

Culture: the difference in culture could have been a limitation as well, since the researcher has a Dutch nationality. The Indonesian culture is excessively different from Dutch culture. Therefore, information on feelings, thoughts and other concepts could be unintentionally misinterpreted. To decrease this risk, the interview guide has been discussed with several Indonesian experts to see if the questions were asked clearly and appropriate. Additionally, multiple conversations have been held with locals from Wonosobo about their culture and ideas on migration. These informal conversations helped the researcher to create a better context and idea on their culture.

4.5 Reflection on the positionality

According to Hennink (2010; 122) your own characteristics and position in the field can influence the data collection. Therefore, it is important to be aware of one's own positionality. Next to culture and language, other limitations concerning the positionality require attention.

The first to mention is the visibility of the researcher in the field. Due to the western appearance of the researcher, the researcher was very visible in the village where all residents are of Indonesian nationality. Beforehand, it was expected this would create a gap between researcher and the target

group. This turned out to be incorrect as the difference created a huge interest. Almost all neighbors were interested in the researcher and the research. All these residents wanted to participate in the study. Even the residents that did not migrate or migrated too long ago. Additionally, so many residents wanted to participate that multiple interviews could be planned on one day. The risk in this was that residents who were less suitable would be interviewed or too many interviews would be held on one day, resulting in fatigue among the researcher and translator. Therefore, informal conversations were held around in the village to get to know the people more before interviewing them to build a relationship and to see if they are suitable. Additionally, a maximum of two interviews were scheduled on a day, to decrease the risk of fatigue.

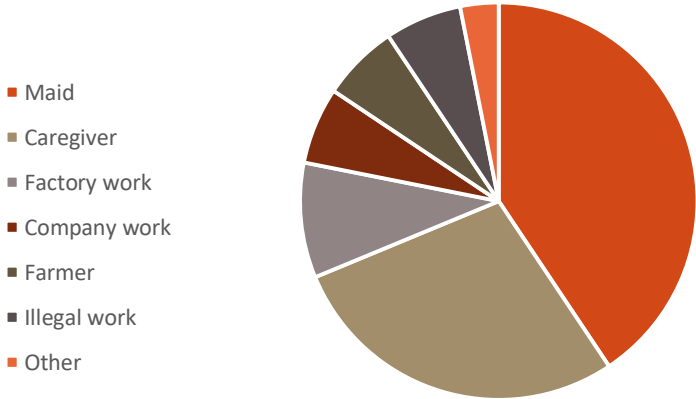
4.6 Characteristics of the respondents

Within this study, 32 semi-structured interviews have been conducted. In addition to these interviews two focus groups have been held to understand the broader context and opinion towards labor migration in Wonosobo. In this section, the characteristics of the interviewees will be described.

4.6.1 The characteristics of the interviewees

Among the interviewees 25 are female and 7 are male. As can be seen in the regional context chapter, this is representative for the Indonesian context, where women account for 60 up to 80 percent of the labor migrants. The youngest interviewee in this study is 23 years old and the oldest interviewee is 47 years old. The distribution of occupation abroad can be found in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Distribution of occupations abroad



To categorize the respondents: 26 of the respondents left under a private-to-private type of migration, four left under government-to-government and two were irregular migrants, as they had illegal work. The considerable share of maids and caregivers can be explained by the gender division, as these occupations are only filled by women.

Nineteen of the interviewees migrated only once, three migrated twice, six interviewees went abroad for three times and two interviewees migrated up to four times. All of the respondents returned within the last ten years. As the length of a contract is two years, that is the shortest one has been away. The

longest one interviewee has worked abroad is 22 years. The motivations to migrate are mostly to seek for a better future. This can either be economic or social, as they migrate to save for aspirations such as marriage, a business or a bigger house.

When the interviewees decided to migrate, they explain that they are compelled to sign up at an agency. This agency registers them and makes sure they receive training at their training center. All respondents received training. However, the period and content of the training differs between respondents. The range in duration of the training is from two weeks until one year. All respondents got training in the new language and the majority received training in their new occupation as well. The respondents mention that they also receive information about their new contract during their stay at the training center and that a meeting between them and their employer is arranged before signing the contract. After finishing this preparation, the respondents depart to work abroad.

An overview of the characteristics of the interviewees can be found in appendix 3.

4.6.2 The characteristics of the focus group participants

Both focus groups have been held with solely women. Due to the feminization of migration in Indonesia it was difficult to find men to interview. Thus, even more difficult to find men to participate in focus groups. The first focus group was with three women in the age between 28 and 49. One woman migrated once and the other two migrated twice. This focus group mostly discussed the support people experienced abroad and after returning. The second focus group was held with six women in the age between 21 and 52. Two migrated once, two migrated twice and the remaining two worked abroad three times. This focus group discussed the support as well, but also reviewed the former and current view on labor migration in their villages.

5. Empirical chapter: Migration phase

Migration experience and its effect on returning

In this section the labor migrants' experienced will be discussed in order to understand the impact that their migration period has on their return experience. Additionally, this section will attempt to answer the sub-questions. Firstly, the various policies will be mentioned to provide an elaborate overview of the context that the labor migrants venture into. Secondly an analysis is made in the cultural, social and economic factors. Within these factors the focus lies on their experience, supporting circumstances and concluding with the challenges they face within the different factors. Thirdly, the available help will be discussed according to the different actors and to what extent they are reached by the labor migrants. Following, this section the return motivations of the labor migrants. The content of this section has derived from the interviews with the return migrants in Wonosobo and partly from the focus groups in Wonosobo and the expert interviews conducted in Jakarta.

5.1 Institutional factors

When labor migrants leave Indonesia to work abroad, they start this experience within a regulated web of laws and policies. Although there are policy differences between the destinations countries of the labor migrants, some policies apply to all labor migrants that leave Indonesia. This section will make an emphasize on the most important facilitating and hindering policies that influence their migration experience.

5.1.1 Facilitating policies

When the respondents were asked about the facilitating policies concerning their stay abroad, some of them mentioned the help of the agency. Before departure, they already received training from an agency. This agency also buys their ticket and organizes their travel to the country of destination. This was seen as helpful and easy for the respondents, because it means they do not have to arrange anything before and during their travel.

Some other facilitating factors were different per destination country. For Hong Kong, a respondent explained that every employer should pay the return ticket for their employee, regardless the situation around their return to Indonesia. This is not the case in other Asian destination countries, where they base the decision whether to pay for the return ticket or not on the situation that the employee in returns. Therefore, the respondents that worked in Hong Kong, feel more taken care of than respondents that worked in other countries.

5.1.2 Hindering policies

Migrating under the authorization of an agency has its positive and negative effects on the migration and return experience of the labor migrants. The most negative effect of the involvement of an agency is the loan they build up with them during the preparation time before departure. This loan consists of

1) the training the migrants receive before departure 2) the plane ticket 3) the consultation between the employer and the migrant. This loan can be thousands of dollars and must be paid back by the migrant. The respondents mentioned this is done through cutting of the salary in the first period of their stay abroad. For every case this is different as some mention they only have their salary cut for four months and another group mention that it can be up to nine months. The policy is that the agency let the employer cut the salary until their loan is fully paid back. This has a negative influence on the migrant, because it prevents them to be able to earn money in their first period of their stay abroad. An expert argues that in the end the loan consists of 38 percent of their earnings abroad.

“It is the loan where most money goes, before becoming the migrant worker. And then the second for to pay the migration process, the travelling. And then, when it comes to productive investment, it is only around 2%.”

- Expert 1

When everything proceeds according to plan, the migrants can start earning money after they fully paid off their loan. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Labor migrants often run into a diverse range of problems in the duration of the contract. Therefore, a lot of the respondents argued they felt the need to quit their working activities sooner than expected and agreed upon. They explained that when they wanted to stop the contract before the loan has been paid off, they must pay the remaining amount of this loan themselves. This made them feel restricted to work until the loan has been paid back, even under difficult working conditions. Consequently, this can result in migrants coming home with a hurtful migration experience and without any money. Another hindering policy is that when migrants decide to stop the contract before finishing, they risk the disadvantage of having to pay their flight ticket themselves. As mentioned before, in Hong Kong the employer paid the return ticket no matter if the migrant returned before or after finishing the contract. Such policy does not exist in the other destination countries. Fortunately, the majority of the respondents that stopped their working activities before finishing the contract got their return ticket paid.

The last hindering policy concerning the payment of the loan is when the migrant works until the contract is finished and they decide to switch employer for a new contract, they get a new loan which they must pay back as well. Obviously, this loan is less extensive as this does not include the payment of a flight ticket. Consequently, they miss out on a big amount of salary by having to pay back the loan of the agency.

All these policies show the web of rules in which the migrants operate. This influences them for the better or the worse in their decision making and experience.

5.2 Cultural factors

This section will focus on the cultural factors which influence migration and return experience of the labor migrants. At first the experience of integrating in a new culture will be discussed. This section will conclude with a discussion around the cultural challenges the migrants face abroad.

5.2.1 Going abroad

Eleven of the respondents migrated more than once. However, there is a first migration experience for all respondents. A group within the respondents mentioned that they were very young when migrating for the first time. For all of them it was the first time ever to leave Indonesia as well. Apart from the fact that for all the respondents it was their first time to leave their country, it was also their first time to be away from family and actually do something alone. Some respondents felt nervous and insecure in the beginning, as they did not know what to expect abroad. When they were asked what helped them to get through this stress, respondents mentioned that migration is common in their surroundings and that they could talk to friends and family about it, since they had migration experiences already.

Whereas the first migration period can be quite overwhelming, this got better when they migrate more frequently. The more often they migrated, the better their capability of adaption became. Getting used to eating different food than Indonesian and living in another community were skills that were mentioned during the interviews.

5.2.2 Cultural challenges abroad

Despite the migration frequency, the respondents faced some cultural challenges on a daily basis. These challenges can be divided under challenges with religion and language.

The most mentioned problem was that of the language. Even though all respondents received language training before departure, this was considered not enough by six of the respondents. They felt unprepared and said that not being able to speak the language often resulted in problems with the employer. Some employers were patient, but not all of them were so understanding.

“It was very difficult. At first there was a problem, because I could not speak the language very good. They want a maid that can speak the language, that speaks English. Because I was already there two months, but still I cannot speak English. So that is why the employer bring me to the agency. From agency, they just send me back to the training center here. So actually, he wanted me to go back to Indonesia.”

- Ana (41)

Luckily, not all respondents had bad experiences with the language. Some of them speak about how their skill in the language improved and the communication with the employer got better.

Religion is the second theme within cultural challenges. All the respondents were Muslim when they left Indonesia. Therefore, they desire to pray five times a day and participate in the fasting month every year. Nevertheless, this was not always possible for them. Respondents talk about the challenge of

having a different religion than their employer. Domestic workers and nannies within this study argued they were often not allowed to do their prayer and just one of them engaged in the fasting month. The three factory workers were allowed to fast, but restricted in praying during working hours or in going to the Mosque.

“She says the first time her employer did not let her do her prayer, but after some time I think: if I am not praying, where am I earning money for? So then I start to do my prayer and don’t care about the employer. And after some time, when the employer saw me doing my prayer they just let me and keep quiet, but that took a while.”

- Dara (43)

Some of the respondents that faced challenges concerning religion were able to come to terms with the employer. They set up rules around praying, going to the Mosque and fasting. Additionally, three respondents joined a Muslim community abroad and felt more comfortable as a Muslim during their migration period. In contrast to the interviewees, the women in focus group two stated that there is now a freedom for religion and better communication with the employer and agencies. They did not experience the difficulty concerning their religion abroad.

5.3 Social factors

This section will focus on the social factors which influence the migration and return experience of the labor migrants. At first, the concepts of social capital and transnationalism are used to look at the contact with their social network abroad and back home. This section will conclude with a discussion around the social challenges the migrants face abroad.

5.3.1 Social capital

Contact with family

All, but one respondent, went abroad alone. The respondents were asked if and to what extent they had contact with their family and friends back home. The reactions to this question varied from having almost no contact at all, to daily calls and sometimes even visits to Indonesia during the contract. Most of the respondents called their family on a daily basis. They mentioned to feel close to their family when they called regularly. Some of them had to use the phone of their employer, but generally the migrants had their own phone which they could use.

For almost all of them it was not possible to travel back to Indonesia to visit their family, because contract or financial restrictions. For one of them it was possible to travel back, which he did every five months. This helped him to miss his family less while working abroad. All respondents argued the importance of having contact with family since this made them feel less lonely and reminded them to continue earning money for a better life for their family.

Social network abroad

During the focus groups, the social network abroad was extensively discussed. One participant mentioned the support she felt when her mother passed away during her migration period. The women in the first focus group were certain that it is the most important form of support abroad.

These themes were discussed in the interviews as well. While staying in touch with their loved ones back home, the majority of the respondents build up a social network abroad as well. A lot of the respondents argued they had to get used to living in a new community. Only some communities were very welcoming and helpful.

“People there were nice to me. They helped me to get used to Taiwan. If I walk outside people always talk to me and say hi to me. In Taiwan I was living in a village and they were really close to each other and they made me feel welcome.”

- Setia (39)

Not all respondents were as happy as the case of Setia. One of the biggest differences mentioned between Indonesia and their destination country, is the individualistic culture. They argue that people do not care for each other and that you should just do your own thing. This had its positive and negative sides, as described by the respondents. The negative side was that this sometimes made them feel lonely and not taken care off. The positive side to it, was that it did not matter what they did, because nobody paid attention to this. They explained that in Indonesia every step you take is being watched by the community.

To feel less lonely, the migrants looked for a place where they could share experiences. A lot of them found this with other migrants in their neighborhood.

“I know who is a worker in the neighborhood. When I have an off day, I just go out and then go to Indonesian workers and introduce myself and say hi. Then I ask if I can join so I won’t be alone on off day. We just sit in the park together and share together and eat together.”

- Surya (38)

This is seen as very positive and helpful for all the migrants that found such friends and/or community. It helped for them to talk about their experiences and they often asked each other for advice on what to do with a certain problem they counter at work. Also, they just meet for leisure activities such as eating, fishing and going to the park.

5.3.2 Social challenges abroad

While working abroad, the migrants often face some social challenges as well. The majority felt homesick and wished they could meet their family abroad. Even though their employer sometimes felt as a second family for them, they still longed for their family in Indonesia. The majority of the respondents in this study was a parent when they worked abroad. Women in the focus groups mention

similar challenges in the combination of parenthood and migrating. They argued it is very difficult to leave your children behind to work abroad. Furthermore, they mentioned that having children is also a motivation to earn money abroad. Being a parent made it sometimes hard to call to their family, as the children would often not understand why their parent is away. Respondents mentioned that often they would cry during conversations and that they think about their children every day.

At work, the migrants also faced some social challenges. Almost all respondent had at least one negative experience with an employer. They repeatedly faced difficult and hard working conditions. The working days were disproportionately long, and the migrants did not always have the chance to rest enough. This resulted in a lot of fatigue among the migrants.

"In Korea I do hard work in factory. I do all the things in Korea to earn money, even the dangerous things I do it all. For example, I work in factory and I work in steel factory which made spare parts like oil pipe. It was made from steel and it was very hot, because it had to be melted."

- Ari (31)

In addition to the long working days, the employer did not always treat their employees with respect. One expert state that maids and caregivers are the most vulnerable. Some maids and caregivers refer to being abuses, hit and poked. The problem that was most referred to among the maids was that their employer would always put the blame on them when something went wrong in the house, even if this was not true. This made them feel uncomfortable. In most cases, the migrants did not seek for help for two reasons. Firstly, they felt afraid and did not want to make their employer mad. Secondly, they did not want to lose their source of income and wanted to keep earning money for their family and their future. In addition, an expert explains that most labor migrants are not fully informed about what their rights are and what they can do in such situations.

5.4 Economic factors

This section will focus on the economic factors which influence their migration and return experience. At first, it will be discussed whether the respondents had a saving plan or not and how this is constructed. Secondly, a detailed description of their salary usage will be given. This section will conclude with a discussion around the economic challenges the migrants face abroad.

5.4.1 Financial capital

Saving plan

Despite the fact that some of the respondents leave Indonesia to find new experiences, the majority migrates to earn money. While a group is quite specific about their plans, the other group went abroad to earn money for 'a better future' in the broad sense. Six of the respondents were specific about their savings plans, they remembered directly where they wanted to save for before leaving Indonesia. They had specific goals in mind, such as education for their children or building a house. Other respondents

had aspirations about what to save for as well, but did not make a saving plan for it. A group of them made one while working abroad and the other group of them never made one.

When the women in focus group one were asked if there was a difference between the first time they migrated and the second or third one, most of them said there was no difference. Other respondents argued that they did make a saving plan when migrating for the second or third time, where they did not for the first migration experience.

Usage salary and remittances

The respondents were asked what they did with the salary they received abroad. The results in the usage of this salary can be put down into three categories: 1) they save it themselves 2) they remit to family 3) they directly spend their salary abroad. The whole group of respondents send (a part of) their salary back to Indonesia. Nineteen of the respondents saved some money themselves and five spend it directly while still living abroad.

The amount of money that is being send back to Indonesia differs between the respondents. Some women in the focus group added on this by explaining that they solely send money to their family when the family had asked for it. Even though the migrants could save it themselves as well, they sometimes chose to send it to their family so they could save it for them. Often their partner or parents would take care of the money. One respondent argued that every time she sends money back home, she would always give instructions to their family what should happen with the money: save it or spend it for something specific. She never just sends money, because she explained that she was afraid her money would end up at other places. Women in the focus group agreed and explained their money would be wasted. Others let their family decide on what they would happen with the money. Money was being spend abroad as well.

“There every month I have salary, salary and salary. I have a lot of money there, here sometimes money, sometimes no money. I think I am a shopaholic there.”

- Serina (26)

The respondents that mentioned to spend their money directly gave several reasons. Either they had to because the employer would not pay their food on the off days, or they wanted to enjoy life abroad and spend it on leisure activities and shopping.

5.4.2 Economic challenges abroad

Next to the social challenges of working abroad, economic challenges were not uncommon among the migrants. In many cases this had to do with their employer. As mentioned before, in the first period of the contract, the salary will be cut until their loan with the agency has been paid back fully. Challenging concerning the cutting was mentioned by one respondent, who argued that the employer would keep on cutting their salary even after the loan was paid back completely. Another challenge can be put

under exploitation. One of the respondents mentioned that when she arrived at her employer, her employer would tell her that she would only get half the salary, because she was an inexperienced maid. Policy wise, this is not legal, but as she was very young at the time she agreed and received half the salary she was supposed to get. Likewise, two experts clarify that this type of exploitation happens regularly.

Additionally, maids had some difficulties with changing jobs. When a maid decided to change employer because of mistreatment or other social challenges, they were told to work until a new maid was found. This period was unpaid, leaving them doing unpaid work.

5.5 Available help

When the migrants faced cultural, social or economic challenges, there were several places they could go to for help. This section will give an outline of the provided help and to what extent this help is known and reached by the migrants.

5.5.1 Most important actors

Figure 5.1 most important supporting actors abroad

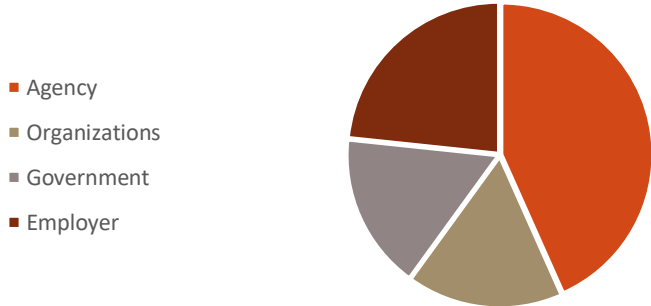


Figure 5.1 displays the different actors which have been mentioned by the respondents. 30 respondents mentioned to seek for help abroad. The agency abroad is the most mentioned actor as available help. The agency could help them with almost all work related economic and social problems. Also, when the migrants were confronted with health issues, the agency could give advice or take action to find a solution. When the agency could not help, or the migrant had the idea that the agency was corrupt, they could go to multiple migrant organizations. Three experts confirm this by explaining that agencies abroad are often still corrupt and exploit the migrants.

Five respondents mentioned several governmental organizations. These (governmental) organizations could help the migrants with corruption problems, contract related problems or other economic challenges. The employer was mentioned by seven respondents, as this actor was very close to the migrant and generally able to help during the challenges.

5.5.2 Reachability

Naturally, the employer was easy to reach for the migrants, as the majority of the respondents were maids or nannies that lived with their employer. There are two reasons for the migrants to search for other help: they either did not have a close relationship with their employer or the problem they faced was related to the employer. Because they already know their agency, it is a logical step to ask them for help. All of the migrants that faced problems and took action to solve this, explained that the (governmental) organizations were also very approachable. They knew through their friends where to go and it was found easy for them to get in contact with somebody that could help them. On the contrary, experts feel that the access to help abroad should be improved and more approachable.

5.6 Return motivations

The decision to return to Indonesia is based on different motivations. These motivations can be put into the categories forced and voluntarily. When the migrants are forced to return, this can be out of economic or social challenges. The respondents argued that they were forced to return due to problems with their contract. The second reason to return forcedly, is the pressure that some respondents felt. They felt pressured by their family to return. They argued they actually wanted to continue their working activities, however the family asked them to come back. In addition to pressure from family, some respondents experienced some social pressure related to their future.

“I tell before, I feel like I am getting old and then I have to go back and yeah. Ofcourse I have to stop working, but I also like to stay in another place. If I am getting old and I will not have a baby, I will not get a future. So that is why I came back.”

- Warsiti (33)

Three unmarried young adults felt the need to return to Indonesia to find someone to marry to and become a parent. Two respondents returned because of health issues. Due to these issues they were unable to continue working abroad. Two other respondents returned because of health issues in their family back home. Other reasons to return to Indonesia concerned the length of the contract. After two years the contract is finished. Women in focus group one explain that extending the contract is a mutual decision between the employer and them. Not extending the contract was for the majority of the respondents the reason to return to Indonesia, as they did not extend their contract.

6. Empirical chapter: Post-migration phase

Life after migration and the desire to re-migrate

This section focusses on the post-migration phase of the respondents. The structure of this chapter will be similar to the previous empirical chapter as this section will attempt to answer the sub-questions as well. Firstly, the hindering and facilitating policies concerning this phase of migration will be outlined. Secondly, the cultural, social and economic factors will be explained. In this chapter the focus lies on the migrants' experience and the supporting circumstances in this post-migration phase. Thirdly, the available help in this phase will be examined and to what extent they are reached by the respondents. To conclude, an overview of their circular migration aspirations will be discussed. The content of this section has derived from the interviews with the return migrants in Wonosobo and partly from the focus groups in Wonosobo and the expert interview conducted in Jakarta.

6.1 Political factors

After working abroad for a period of time, the labor migrants return to their home country Indonesia. Returning to Indonesia is experienced differently by all respondents. However, policies apply to all of them. Therefore, this section will look into the most important hindering and facilitating policies that influence their post-migration phase.

6.1.1 Facilitating and hindering policies

At the time of departure, the respondents and experts could explain a lot regarding policies and arrangements for the labor migrants. However, when they were asked about facilitating policies after returning, less answers were given. After the migrant travelled back to Indonesia they are not supervised by an agency. For the respondents that returned without any problems this was not considered negative, since they felt that their migration experience was over and they did not need any help from an agency to get them started in Indonesia.

The respondents did mention some hindering policies. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in some cases migrants returned before finishing their contract, leaving them with a fine. In those situations, the training center works with certain policies to keep the return migrant in the center until the fine has been paid. Consequently, people that are not able to pay the fine stay within the center for up to several months. Two respondents in this study faced this sort of challenge. One was hold for just a few days and the second respondents was hold in the training center for over a month. Moreover, there is no policy concerning the help of the return migrants in those cases. Experts argue they are working together to increase the safety of these people, but have not been able to reduce the risk due to the size of return migration in Indonesia. Additionally, one expert explains that every training center in Indonesia works with different rules and regulations. Therefore, it depends on the head of that training

center to what extent they act on keeping the return migrants safe, as not all directors have the same priority.

6.2 Cultural factors

This section will focus on the cultural factors which influence the post-migration phase of the respondents. First, the return to their own culture will be described. The focus will be on the positive aspects. To conclude, this section will look into the cultural challenges they faced after returning home.

6.2.1 Return in own culture

The respondents were asked if they struggled with returning into their own culture after living abroad. For the majority the answer was 'no'. These respondents explained that Indonesia is the country where they grew up and know the country and the culture off. Additionally, while living in the village people would check on each other more often. Thus, the respondents felt more taken care of than when they worked abroad.

Two respondents mentioned the influence of joining a Muslim community after returning. These two respondents joined a group of Muslim women. Both groups would meet up on a weekly basis. During these meetings they shared experiences. It also felt as a safe place to talk about problems and at the same time they would try to help each other.

"It is very positive for me, because we share religion and also social aspect is very nice. They made it easier for me to pick up my life here."

- Nanda (38)

This community made the two respondents feel at home immediately. Nanda joined this community the first week after she returned and the other respondent a few weeks after her return.

2.2.2 Cultural challenges back home

Regardless of the general positive view on returning to the Indonesian culture, not all respondents were positive. Cultural challenges were mentioned as well and were not uncommon. In Wonosobo, mostly women migrate to work abroad. After they return four respondents mentioned that they felt bored very quickly due to the gender roles in their village. They were bound to take care of the children and the house only.

"The hardest thing for me, because I am now not working. Now every time I need the money, I can only ask it from my husband. So it is very different than in Singapore. I am now more dependent."

-Sarah (27)

In the case of Sarah, she had to work long days in Singapore. As she perceived this as something difficult, it was also a way for her to feel independent and that she had something to work for. Back in Indonesia she fell into the same patterns as before her migration experience, but she explained that she now knows how it is to work and that she finds it difficult to be dependent now. The four respondents

explained they would like to work and have something to do on their own, but they felt restricted by their husband. This resulted in boredom among the migrants and they did feel useless on a daily basis. Focus group participants agreed on this issue and mention it is important to keep busy.

“This community is important for sharing and spreading joy. Because if we don’t join community, life is so boring, only doing cooking and cleaning house. No joking in time.”

- Participant focus group one

They tried to keep themselves busy by working in the house a lot. One of the respondents came to terms with her husband and she was trying to set up a small baking business. Three other respondents mentioned the same situation where they would not work because of the marriage. However, they did not experience this as something negative as they were happy to be a housewife. The men in this study did not speak (negatively) about the gender roles, as they all started to work again after returning.

6.3 Social factors

This section will focus on the social factors that influence the post-migration phase of the respondents. First, the return into their social network will be described and to what extent they felt supported by their social network. Second, to show whether they have a connection to this former host country or not is discussed through their contact with the former employer. This section will conclude with an overview of the social challenges the respondents faced after returning home.

6.3.1 Social capital

Social network

While they work abroad, the respondents keep a close connection to their family and speak very positive about the reunification with their loved ones. The second focus group discussed that the community made them feel safe and comfortable.

“As long as together with family, all the hardship of life is just forgotten [...] People always have the door open here. We usually do not lock the door here and it is very safe.”

- Participant focus group two

All respondents lived within a close, usually walking distance of their family. Often they are direct neighbors of their own family or the family of their partner. Hence, it is easy for them to reach out to each other. Although the majority of the respondents agree it is easy to live close to their family, they also like to be independent. One respondent mentioned that she likes to provide for her own family.

“Because I don’t want to ask my family to help me, that is why I want to go work in another country. I want to take care of it myself and I must find money. I just want to take my life by my own and do not bother anyone. I mean my brother has children that go to school himself.”

- Shinta (35)

She does not want to ask too much help from her family around her, even though they are her direct neighbors.

The social network of the respondents was mentioned frequently when they were asked about their life in Wonosobo. The respondents mentioned their family and friends in the village. Additionally, they also keep a close connection to their neighbors. These connections are perceived as very important in their returning process and it makes the respondents feel comfortable in their village.

“To me, the people are welcoming and also help each other and ofcourse I am happy to be here as well. And you know what, what I really like, more than being in other places, is the people here. They are a big community and feel like a big family here.”

- Dewi (35)

Additionally, Dewi explained that the people made her feel at home and eased the returning process for her. Others agree with this and add that people around the village will always reach out for each other when somebody is having problems. Due to this they felt assisted and comforted, in contrast to several migration experiences, where respondents felt alone for a number of times.

Contact with former host country

For most of the respondents, the contact with their former employer slowly faded after their return to Indonesia. However, for four of the respondents this is not the case. They kept in touch with their former employer. For all four of the respondents this contact is seen as something positive, even though the contact is not that intensive.

“We are still talking to each other and say happy birthday and remember everything. They always say, come back to Hong Kong and visit us.”

- Vivian (47)

Additionally, Vivian mentioned that talking to her employer and thinking about her time abroad results in feelings of nostalgia, since she remembers the good times and the good employers there. Other respondents who are still in touch agree with Vivian and add that they still think about the friends they made there. Even though they feel free in Indonesia, they sometimes still long for their time and experience abroad. None of the respondents has gone abroad to visit their former employer, nor did the former employer visit Indonesia. Aside from the age, financial reasons were discussed. They argued they simply did not have enough financial resources to travel abroad again.

6.3.2 Social challenges back home

Despite the support and comfort that the respondents feel from their family, friends and close neighbors, some social challenges are present as well after they return back home. Two respondents argued they felt difficulties with integrating into their Indonesian community again as they felt as if

they left the community for too long. They did not feel that connection immediately and struggled with feeling at home again.

“At first it was not so easy because I felt shy when I came back. Maybe I was away too long and now people look at me. Maybe when I live in the village a lot of people are watching each other. So that is why I get shy, I think they might think I was away too long. But after a while it was normal. Maybe it was just my own feeling and no need to be shy.”

- Surya (38)

Further, Surya explains that it is probably her own idea that people would think negatively. One other respondent agrees on this and explains she has been shy her whole life. After she returned this had grown even more and she often stayed home by herself. Eventually, she had made a few good friends, but not more.

Other social challenges were mostly present within the close family of the respondents. As mentioned before, most respondents in this study were a mother or father when leaving Indonesia. Being away for a period of time during their childhood can be challenging. The difficulty differs between respondents. One father mentions that he kept a close relationship with his son by calling daily. After he returned from working abroad the son was shy at first, but this improved after some weeks. He explains it changed to normal after some time and he does not notice any difference at the time of the interview. Other respondents had more difficulty with the relationship with their child.

“He was 3 years and then I go back one year and go again and go back one year and again. And then 6 years. Now, when I came back he was in secondary school. I missed him too, it is not because I don’t love my son I go there. It is all for him. [...] When I came back he was happy but not like, he don’t say; I love you mommy, no he did not say that. Or I miss you. But yes I hope it grows again.”

- Nadya (32)

Nadya has returned to Indonesia in 2011. After the past eight years she still feels that the relationship with her son is not how it is supposed to be. She later explains that it feels as if her son criticized her for leaving him when he was younger. This makes her feel sad, because saving money for her son was the main motivation for her to work abroad. She is sad that he will never understand it completely. This feeling was shared by most mothers and fathers in this study. They struggled in the relationship with their children, because the children would often ask them to come home and they felt distance between themselves and the child after returning. They argue it is especially hard, because children are mostly the main reason to migrate. Respondents that have returned for a longer period of time already, explained that their relationship eventually healed and returned to a healthy relationship. Unfortunately, as in the case of Nadya, this was not the same for all respondents.

An important supporting, but also challenging aspect of living in a community was discussed by the women in focus group two. They argue that everybody looks out for each other and is expected to donate money if somebody in the community marries or has a funeral. The women explain that can be very expensive. On the other hand, they perceive this collective interest as something positive and supporting.

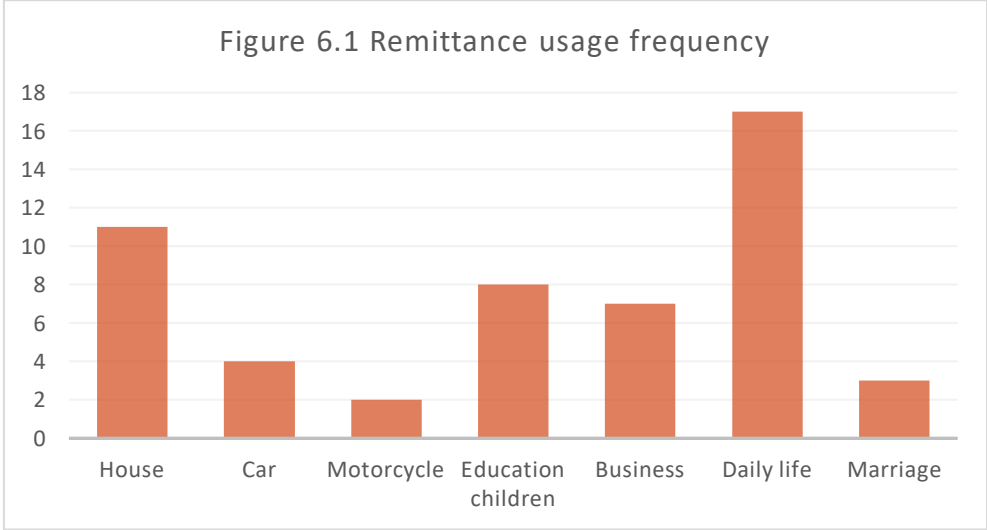
6.4 Economic factors

This section will focus on the economic factors that influence the post-migration phase of the respondents. First, the usage of the remittances will be examined and if there is a difference how often the respondent had migrated. Second, the impact of this usage will be examined to see if there is a difference before and after migrating. This section will conclude with an overview of the economic challenges the respondents faced after returning home.

6.4.1 Financial capital

Remittances usage

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the majority of the respondents send money back home during their stay abroad. This money was either saved or spend directly by family. Additionally, the respondents had some own savings. The usage of the remittances and savings brought back home are illustrated in figure 6.1. The figure shows how often certain answers were given.



More than half of the respondents mentioned to use their earnings for daily life, such as food for the family or the parents.

“He used it for the food for the children. Because last time I was in another country, my husband was not working and then he was alone with 4 children. So he needed the money.”

- Surya (38)

The majority of the respondents that used it for daily life explained it felt as if there was no other choice to have enough money for daily living than working abroad. In addition to daily life, the saved

money was also used to build a house or renovate the house they already possessed. Eleven of the respondents mentioned they build or renovated their house from their earnings. Most of these eleven respondents finished all their savings after spending it on their house. Eight respondents mentioned to save for the education of their children. This is either for the current education or an education in the future. Seven respondents mentioned to save specifically for a business. These seven respondents started their business after they returned to Indonesia. These businesses range from baking businesses to a photo copy shop. Four respondents bought a car and two bought a motorcycle from their earnings. The last mentioned is that of marriage. This is not only for themselves. Parents were thinking about marriage of their children as well.

"I am scared for the children, because the oldest is 20 and I am scared my child will marry, because that will cost a lot of money. Therefore I feel like I need to work abroad to save money for this or else I can't pay. If I am in another country and suddenly someone is sick or get married, that is a big money and when I am there I can spend the money and its easy, but when I am here I would not be able to pay it."

- Rendy (38)

As mentioned before, not only in their own family there is pressure to pay for marriage or important situations such as funerals. Therefore, they feel pressured to have enough savings.

Remittances impact

It is clear where the remittances and savings were used for, but not yet what the impact of these expenditures were. The question was asked to what extent their life had changed after returning. Most answers were about money and their remittances usage. The majority was happy with what their migration experiences had brought them; a bigger house, education for their children or a business. Despite their satisfaction with these new changes, not all succeeded in this. They mention that their happiness was mostly short-term and that they were not able to provide for themselves for the long-term.

"The first time I worked abroad, every money was already finished. It was just used for daily life and maybe little bit house. But not many money. But that time I did not think about the future, I don't think about me doing business when I get old. I was not making a future plan at the time. Only I think about today, but not future. If I can go back to that time, I would do different."

- Sari (43)

Sari argued she would make a saving plan for the future if she could go back in time. Now she thinks she is too old to work abroad again and feels as if her migration period did not change her life that much. At first, they felt happy that they could build a bigger house or buy a motorcycle. However, after a short while they noticed that this did not help them to build something sustainable and that migrating again was the only solution to their shortage on money. More respondents in this study answer the

question similar. They argue that their life did not change that much and that a plan is needed to be able to change your life for the better.

“There was no planning, I was still young. I just finished the money. I was in Indonesia for a few months after I came back, maybe two months. Then I go to Hong Kong. Before that all my money was finished, that is why I needed to go to Hong Kong.”

- Novi (43)

Most respondents were very young when they migrated for the first time. This is given as a reason to why they did not make a saving plan or why they did not save for a future income in Indonesia. Others argue it is not the age, but the economic situation in Indonesia that makes it hard for them to save. They argue that despite making a saving plan, the money ends up being used for daily life. Ten respondents argued they did make a saving plan, but because their family in Indonesia had not enough income to provide for all members of the family, they had to remit for daily costs. Contrary, eight respondents did make a successful saving plan. They discuss the importance of planning by illustrating their current plan. Five of them saved for a house, car or motorcycle and three of them for a business. These eight respondents succeeded in saving the money specifically for these goals.

“The change is that after I came back I have more money. And the goal is reached. I can do anything I want. But I need to make a planning and make sure the money is fast gone and gone to useless things. So I need to make a planning on how to run a business.”

- Ansel (42)

Ansel added it is crucial to stick to this plan. Another respondent agreed and added she had been saving specifically for the business. However, she did not set up the business right after she returned. She argues it is tempting and easy to use her savings for something else, but that she needs to be persistent and keep the money separate for her business.

For some respondents the situation changed the more they migrated. The second or third time they did migrate with a plan, contrary to their first migration experience. Nevertheless, the utility and effectiveness of this saving plan is questioned by the respondents and opinions are divided. Additionally, the experts are critical as well.

“But when we talk how the remittances really contribute to their more long-term incomes in the country of origin, it is not really there. And there are many cases that former migrant workers, that he or she has to re-migrate again. Not only for the second or the third, but in some cases also until their six experience.”

- Expert 1

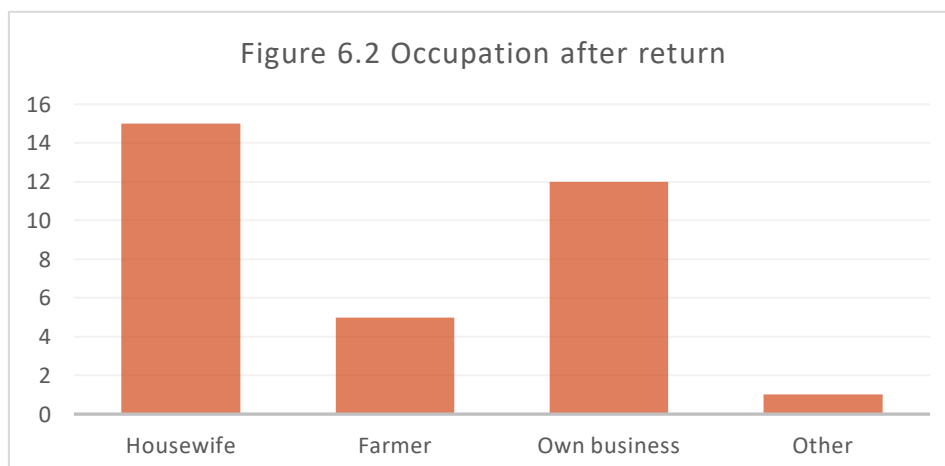
6.4.2 Economic challenges back home

After the respondents returned, life in their village is perceived as rather challenging. This challenge is mostly concerning their economic situation. Their return into the Indonesian labor market is difficult and for the majority not possible. Different causes are mentioned by the respondents and the experts. First, all respondents mentioned the bad economic situation in their village. They mention that finding work is not always the most challenging, but making enough money out of it is the hardest challenge. The salary is simply not high enough to provide for a living.

"I think it was still that I don't have enough money to take care of my child. Because you know, working here is very little money. The income is so little, so it is not enough."

- Vina (42)

The majority of the respondents agrees with Vina. One respondent adds by explaining she does not know when she wakes up, if she will be able to earn enough money to eat that day. The low salary can be explained by the occupations the respondents have. The occupations of the respondent after return can be found in figure 6.2.



Most women in this study are housewife and dependent on the earning of their husband. This leaves a family dependent on one income. Five respondents are farmer and try to sell their crops and vegetables on the market. Twelve respondents have an own business, mostly in making snacks or clothes. These occupations are all low-skilled. This can be explained by the education that the respondents finished. Two only finished lower school and the rest had high school as highest education. One respondent mentioned it feels like she cannot do anything, because she does not have proper education. Together with other respondents they think they do not have enough skills to get a job with enough salary. Three experts advocate for a better skill enhancement.

"It is also to push the government to provide more budget and training program to enhance the capacities of migrant workers [...] To improve the economic situation of the migrant families as well, because the route of migration is from poverty."

- Expert 2

They believe that return migrants have more opportunities when they have more skills. Therefore, the experts argue, they will not migrate again and find work in Indonesia.

Twelve of the respondents have an own business. The majority makes snacks, clothes or accessories. For some this is not the first business they set up. These respondents did an attempt before, but did not succeed to maintain their business or to earn enough money from it. Five respondents mention the problem of rivalry.

“The first time it was easier than when I came back. Because then there were not so many people that run the business. Now there are many other people. In one street you have many of the same shops. This makes it harder, because there is a lot of rivalry. We all try to earn money, but it makes it more difficult.”

- Rendy (38)

To have more income, the people try to set up own businesses. Because of the size of this market, more rivalry comes up. This makes it harder for people to maintain their business and have enough customers. The rivalry is seen as one of the biggest problems while setting up an own business. The women in focus group two state that having a business is not enough; you should have knowledge on running a business before you can earn enough money from it.

6.5 Available help

After returning home, multiple actors are available for help. This section will give an outline of the provided help and to what extent this help is known and reached by the migrants.

6.5.1 Most important actors

Three actors were mentioned as most important. These are: the agency, organizations and governmental organizations. Figure 6.3 illustrates the division of the used help.

Figure 6.3 Most important actors after returning



When the migrants were asked about the available help abroad, visible in figure 1.2, 30 respondents had asked for help and were able to mention at least one actor. When the same question was asked about the available help after return, only nine respondents could mention one actor.

The respondents that did receive help can be divided into two categories: 1) they had to receive help due to problems 2) they received help by providing skill training to smoothen the return process. The first category was mentioned by four respondents. Two respondents returned early, because they

were mistreated by her employer abroad. The agency informed them they had to pay a fine, because their loan was not paid back fully. Both were not able to pay this fine, due to the size of it. Considering their unpaid fine, they contacted an organization separate from each other.

“The problem was that I did not finish my contract. So then I asked an organization to help me. After I find them, she helps me with the problem. But until now I haven’t paid the money. It is too much money, how can I get it? But she is helping me on how to not pay the money. She is settling it.”

- Shinta (35)

The help they received from organizations is support in their communication towards the actor that demands the money. Additionally, they give information on where to go and what to do. The other respondent added that the organization would also give advice on where to go and what she should do if their information did not work.

Five respondents got support in the second category. They received training from (governmental) organizations. The training focused mostly on setting up a business and how to maintain it. Some training focused on making one product such as snacks. Other trainings offered more skills.

“Because when you come back from another country, it is good if you have something to do. If you have nothing to do, it can be hard. So they teach us how to make the banana chip and now we can make. Making clothes and cooking and make a bag and accessories. They also teach me how to make a business and then it helped me to get a business. So how to make a product, how to sell the product and how to make money out of it.”

- Novi (43)

These trainings were seen as something positive by the five respondents. They mention it is good for the mind to have something to do. Additionally, it teaches them how to make your own product and how to get an income from it. 23 respondents did not receive any help after returning. Eight of them argued they would have preferred to have some help, because they felt left alone and as if there is no chance for them to earn enough income. Out of those eight, respondents also mentioned the need of support when setting up a business, because some of their business failed and they did not know how to cope with this. The other fifteen were not in need of any support or training after return.

6.5.2 Reachability

The eight respondents who did not obtain any support from (governmental) organizations were eager to receive information and training, but did not get in contact with any actor. They argued that organizations did not reach out to them and that they did not know where to go. People in their surroundings did not have any information about it as well. Fifteen respondents who were not in need of any support had a similar situation, where organizations did not reach out to them. The five respondents who did receive training, explained they knew the training from their social network. They received the organization its contact information and could sign up for a training. This emphasizes the

importance of the social network after return. As this can help them to get in touch with a provided training. The women in focus group one and two also state that the social network is the only long-term support return migrants have. Other actors are not reachable or providing enough support.

6.6 Remigration aspirations

What the interviews made clear, is the fact that labor migration in Indonesia is not static and something of a dynamic nature. Thirteen of the respondents migrated more than once. From the nineteen that migrated just once, ten are considering working abroad again.

Vicious circle

The respondents give similar answers, in which they emphasize the difficult economic situation in Indonesia. They explain that it is almost impossible to earn enough money to be able to provide for the family. Especially when they become parents, it is experienced even more difficult.

“Normally in Indonesia it is not easy to get money, that’s why I have to go to another country every time.

It’s good for me because I earn money. It is better there than it is here.”

- Novi (43)

Even Novi, who is one of the respondents that received training, is not able to build a sustainable life and income in Indonesia. She struggles to maintain a business and earn enough for a living. They feel like they are stuck in the circle of migration and coming back into a bad economic situation, where the only option to earn enough money is to migrate again. Due to this, eight respondents migrated up to three or four times.

Nine respondents mention the importance of staying in Indonesia and seek for opportunities to earn money. They explain the mindset should be changed:

“If we say we learned not so much from working abroad, we will never be satisfied and go back. But if we say, yes this is enough, then nobody would go abroad anymore. This is about myself. Because a lot of my friends came back and said I want to be like you; never going abroad again, but then after a few months they feel bored and cannot do anything, so they go abroad again.”

- Sari (43)

Some respondents add on by explaining that they always keep hope for a better future. They hope that with their savings, their children can have better education and life opportunities than what they have been given.

“Well I am a mother. I don’t want my children to follow my steps and do what I did. I don’t want them to be a helper abroad. I always pray and hope my children have a better future and a good job.”

- Nabila (47)

But for now, it feels like a vicious circle for the respondents. A circle that is difficult to get out from, even though the majority keeps on trying to build something sustainable for their future in Indonesia.

7. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study was to get an in-depth knowledge on the reintegration experience of return labor migrants in Wonosobo. This research is qualitative; therefore the used methods were qualitative in nature as well. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups have been conducted to be able to answer the main question *“How do return labor migrants in Wonosobo, Indonesia, experience their reintegration process and what hinders and facilitates this process?”*. In order to answer this main research question, four sub-questions have been set up. These sub-questions have been answered through the empirical chapters. The presented data in empirical chapter five and six focused on migration and the post-migration phase and the factors that influence their return experience. It provided an overview of the experiences and perspectives of the respondents. In this section the presented data will be linked to the used concepts and theories of this study, following the theoretical framework of this study. By linking the two, a more elaborate discussion and analysis can be made. Lastly, the main research question will be answered followed by recommendations for further research and policy recommendations.

7.1 Discussion

Institutional influences

As derived from expert interviews and literature on support and protection for labor migrants in Indonesia, it becomes evident that a lot of effort is made to include these themes more into the system. Since the implementation law no. 18 *‘The protection of Indonesian migrant workers’* in 2017, more support has been set up for regular and irregular migrants in their migration and post-migration phase. This study shows that this support is decisive in the outcome of their migration and return experience for labor migrants. Especially for the migrants that face different challenges. Support and protection give the migrant an opportunity to prepare their migration and post-migration phase and to solve several economic problems. However, another outcome of this study is that this support is not complete and integral, because several problems and shortcomings have been mentioned. The agency abroad is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the labor migrants. Unfortunately, according to several experts and respondents exploitation is still a daily facet. Another problem is the divergence in the support between the migration phase and the post-migration phase. When the respondents were asked about the support during their migration phase, all respondents knew where to seek for support abroad. Also, many respondents were in need of support and protection during their migration phase and received it as well. The case of their post-migration phase is somewhat different. Despite the literature and assured answers from experts concerning support after return, this was not visible when the respondents were asked about support in their post-migration phase. In this case the majority

could not mention any actor to go to for support and these return migrants were not supported in any way. An explanation for this lack of support in their post-migration phase can be found from both sides. The respondents explained they were not contacted or reached by any organization. Conversely, they did not reach out or look for an organization as well. Additionally, this study shows that participating in a support program in the post-migration phase does not guarantee a sustainable future in Indonesia, since some respondents still had the need to work abroad after participating in a support program. This was due to two reasons: 1) they were not able to earn enough money out of their businesses 2) they wanted to get more abroad experience. Therefore, support programs cannot always ensure that the return migrant does not re-migrate. The support for returnees with contract-based problems was seen as helpful and did help them successfully.

Thus, support in the post-migration phase is perceived as an important aspect and does have an influence on the lives of returnees and their return experience. However, not yet on a regular basis due to ignorance or a shortage in offered support. Alternatively, the support and protection abroad does have an influence on a regular basis in their lives. Therefore, most problems were solved before the labor migrant returned to Indonesia.

Transnationalism and social capital

This study shows that Indonesian labor migrants created and maintained a transnational life in their migration and post-migration phase. All migrants kept in touch with their family during their time abroad on a regular basis and perceived this as highly important. In addition to their social network in Indonesia, some migrants created a new social network abroad and used this network for social and sometimes economic assistance. They felt supported by these new social contacts, because they understood their challenges and often had relevant tips for them. Without these contacts, multiple migrants would not have known which organization to contact with their problems abroad.

Despite the importance of their social network abroad, this social network abroad never grew to be more important than their social network at home. Deriving from the literature it becomes clear that a social network is not shaped by its spatial structure, but by its social structure (Berkman & Glass, 2000; 141). That is also visible in this study, where the initial social network of the migrants does not change. Nonetheless, relationships in their network were not lost, but often changed during the migrants' absence. Therefore, the longer a migrant worked abroad, the more challenging certain relationships could become, mostly visible in the relationship with their children. Notwithstanding, this study illustrates that most of these relations eventually develop and heal into a healthy relationship. Thus, it does not have a long-term impact in all cases.

Despite this challenge, the social network kept close connections and was perceived as a reliable source for support. Therefore, the access to- and use of their social capital has a big influence on the return experience. To increase this influence, their level of transnationalism in their migration phase

is an important aspect. This study notes that the higher the level of transnationalism, the better their return experience will be. According to Cassarino (2004; 262) the returning process can be better arranged if migrants maintain their transnational life throughout their migration phase. Additionally, they can access and use their social capital by making them feel at home again. As described, the village culture in Wonosobo is about the collective interest. In consequence, the return migrants can be supported economically as well as socially by their social network and community. For most, it is the only support they have after returning and therefore of big value. Additionally, the migrants that did know about any support program or organization, knew this from their social network. Thus, with these factors this study highlights the importance of an extensive social network for their return experience.

Indonesian labor migrants attain a transnational life not only by staying in contact with their social network, but by staying committed to their religion as well. Due to the problems with the employer, most migrants were not comfortable and free to express their religion in its full potential. However, religion is an important aspect in the lives of Indonesian people. Therefore, returning into the Indonesian Muslim dominant community was a relief for most of them. This contributed to a smooth return as most felt comfortable immediately. Consequently, this study suggests that being part of religion and maintaining this link with the home country, makes labor migrants want to return more likely and makes them feel more at home in Indonesia than abroad.

Their transnational lives are mostly visible in their migration phase, since they often do not feel connected to their former host country in the post-migration phase. They sometimes still have contact with their employer or former social network, but this is not on a regular basis nor in-depth. Some respondents describe it more as something nostalgic than as something they would like to go back to. Therefore, their level of transnationalism is not as high in their post-migration phase as during their migration phase. This is contradicting with Cassarino (2004; 264), who states that return migrants attain their transnational lives after returning. This transnational life would make it difficult for the returnee to reintegrate in the Indonesian society. Alternatively, this study suggests that the return migrants do build up a transnational life in which they live in their home and host country simultaneously, but do not maintain this transnational life as such after their return. Thus, their high level of transnationalism in their migration phase does influence their return experience. Additionally, it becomes clear that the low level of transnationalism in their post-migration phase does not influence their return experience remarkably.

Motivations and preparations to return

What becomes evident in this research is that labor migrants can return because of economic, social or personal reasons. This study shows some contradictions with the current literature on return

motivations and the return experience of labor migrants. First, the concept of transnationalism is described by Carling & Vatne Pettersen (2014; 15) as one of the most important motivations to return home. As mentioned above, the respondents did attain a high level of transnationalism while they worked abroad. However, keeping close connections to their family was never a motivation for them to return home. Contrarily, the more they connected to their family, the more they felt motivated to earn money for their loved ones. Second, Fihri et al. (2015; 416) states that motivations to return derive from reaching enough savings or experiences. Nevertheless, this study presents the view of the respondents on returning from another perspective. Instead of being bound to internal motivations only, mostly external factors determine when they actually return home. This is due to the contract-based labor migration in Asia in which the migrants actually have to finish their contract before returning. Therefore, the majority accepts the situation to complete their contract before returning. A small group decides to return before completing their contract, but this can result in several problems. Despite the nature of the return, their preparation to return is of big influence for their return experience. For this preparation they can use different resources, as can be seen in the 'Return preparation model' in figure 2.1. Concerning the intangible resources such as their social capital, the respondents had access to their social network through their transnational lives. Concerning the tangible resources such as financial capital, this study shows the importance of a plan. Most importantly, this study illustrates that the more resources one has, the more opportunity to prepare for a sustainable and smooth return.

Financial capital

The financial capital of the respondents is undoubtedly the most important aspect in all phases of their migration experiences. According to this study, the lack of financial capital creates their motivation to migrate and to possibly extend the contract. The access to- and use of the financial capital in the post-migration phase is decisive for their return experience and their possibility to reintegrate or decision to re-migrate. All respondents explained to migrate to earn money and most called this as saving for "a better life". This study illustrates that the majority is able to save (a part of) their salary and returns with savings. However, what becomes evident is that the returnees struggle to use these savings for sustainable purposes.

This inability derives from several personal and contextual reasons. First, it is not the result of the absence of saving plans, but due to the nature of these plans. The majority of the respondents saved for consumptive investments, rather than sustainable investments as can be seen in figure 6.1. From the respondents that had no saving plan, the salary and remittances was more likely to be spend on consumptive investments as well. This is in line with de Haas (2007; 5), who states that return migrants spend more money on consumptive investments. This study adds on the concept of de Haas by illustrating the reintegration challenge when less salary goes to sustainable investments. The

acknowledgement of this challenge is already present among the experts, but difficult to acknowledge for the respondents. This is due to the ability of these consumptive investments to improve their quality of life. Therefore, the respondents feel as if their aspirations for “a better life” are achieved. Unfortunately, this satisfaction is only short-term, since the majority becomes aware that a bigger or renewed house does not improve their overall economic situation or accounts for poverty alleviation. Second, the circumstances in their home and host country influence the access- and use of their financial capital. The mandatory cutting of the salary abroad accounts for approximately 38 percent of the total salary. Thus, labor migrants miss out on more than one third of their salary. If this policy would not be present or would account for less than the current 38 percent, return migrants would have more salary they could use for their consumptive or sustainable investments. Additionally, the ongoing challenging economic situation in Indonesia obliges the respondents to remit a big share of their salary to their family for daily expenditures, hereby creating a remittance-dependent society as de Haas (2007;5) already assumed.

Alternatively, this study illustrates that salary and remittances can be used for sustainable investments and does help returnees to create a better quality of life for the long-term. The group of respondents that saved specifically for their business were able to set up an own business after returning to Indonesia. However, the outcome of these business differs between the respondents. Support programs and the mindset of returnees is mostly focused on setting up businesses to build a sustainable future in Indonesia. Nevertheless, this study presents the rivalry among the returnees as well. They recognize everybody wants to earn money, but due to the amount of businesses that is being set up by returnees and non-returnees it is almost impossible for some to earn enough money out of it. Consequently, the respondents mention they try several ideas until one succeeds or until there are no other options than to migrate again. Hereby, this study adds on the literature that saving for a sustainable investment is not enough to build something sustainable per se. Creativity is also a necessity to function and to find a way in the challenging economic situation in Wonosobo.

Circular migration

This study illustrates that the challenging economic situation in Wonosobo results in a difficult position for its inhabitants and return migrants. As the empirical chapters have shown it is not the possibility to find work, but the low salary that makes them struggle. The low salary in combination with the rivalry among businesses results in a situation in which it is almost impossible to build something sustainable. Therefore, for the majority of the respondents feels as if there is no other option than to migrate again. In addition, the knowledge of people about migration and the mindset to migrate adds on this feeling; they feel migrating is the best solution for a better life. Consequently, migration in Indonesia can be perceived as circular migration.

Comparing this study to previous literature on circular migration shows some similarities and differences. The literature discusses the negative and positive influences on micro level (Haas, 2013; Vertovec, 2007). These influences are visible in this study as well. As this study illustrates, migrating multiple times creates more income and remittances and enhances the experience of these labor migrants. However, some risks have come up as well. Because the contracts are mostly two years, they have to deal with a lot of contact and support from the agency. The constant mandatory regulations from the agency makes Indonesian labor migrants vulnerable for exploitation as the agency is involved in all stages of their migration experience. Additionally, this vulnerability is evident in the cutting of their salary, which results in a reduced income and thus, remittances for their families which is in line with the previous literature. This study illustrates some differences as well. Even though both this study and the literature states that circular migrants struggle to build a sustainable life after return, the literature presents this as the result of the inability to find work (Hugo, 2013). However, this study presents this as a result of the low incomes in Indonesia. Therefore, this study adds on the literature by giving an overview of the specific situation of return migrants in Wonosobo in which respondents experience a vicious circle when it comes to migration. They see it as the only possibility to earn enough money.

Ultimately, the literature suggests that circular migration per se is not something negative, but that it needs to be managed carefully. As mentioned before, the (local) government in Indonesia is working hard to improve their policies and support, but there is still a long way to go.

7.2 Conclusion

With a thorough research in the field this study sought to answer the research question: *“How do return labor migrants in Wonosobo, Indonesia, experience their reintegration process and what hinders and facilitates this process?”* To be able to give an answer to this question, a theoretical framework has been made and configured into a conceptual framework. This framework provided the main themes in this study, divided under the sub-questions that can be found in the introduction of this thesis. This conclusion will specifically focus on answering the main research question

The reintegration experience of return migrants in Wonosobo is influenced through different factors divided into institutional, cultural, social and economic factors. The institutional factors have an indirect influence, since organizations and programs are mostly available during their pre-migration and migration phase. Additionally, the help of an agency is obligated in these phases, but in their post-migration phase this is not the case anymore when they return without any problems. These migrants do not get information about any support after return. Therefore, the majority of the return migrants experience no professional support and feel left alone. For the other return migrants this is not

experienced as something negative, since they did not need any support. Thus, migrants are able to solve their problems abroad, but experience a lack of support during their post-migration phase.

Because of the importance of religion in Wonosobo, cultural factors influence their reintegration experience tremendously. The majority struggled with their employer on practicing their religion abroad. Therefore, returning into a like-minded community made them feel comfortable and at home. This study illustrates that religion solely had a positive influence on their reintegration experience. Other cultural factors such as gender roles had a less positive influence, since this resulted in boredom among the return migrants.

Indonesian labor migrants attain a high level of transnationalism which influences their reintegration experience directly. Their social network is for most the only support they experience after returning. Therefore, an extensive and close social network can account for a positive experience, since this network can provide social support such as emotional help and information provision and economic support. Alternatively, social factors can have a negative influence as well. The possible challenging relationships made return migrants feel mournful. They sometimes experienced a distance between them and their children. Even though this would heal for most eventually, this made reintegration in the family role quite difficult for parents.

Ultimately, economic factors were the most important influencing factors. The reintegration experience was mostly shaped by the ability or inability of people to use their migration experience to build something sustainable. The inability of benefitting from their financial capital was the main reason for return migrants to migrate again. To refer back to the poem at the beginning of this thesis: migrating is seen as the end of the rainbow, but the pot of gold is difficult to find for them.

Therefore, the ability of benefitting from their financial capital is seen as something highly important, but also remarkable difficult.

Limitations

Even though the presented findings in this study are valuable in understanding the experience of reintegrating and the influencing factors in this process, some limitations have been discussed in the methodology chapter. The most important limitation in this research concerns the gender bias, resulting in the occupation bias. Twenty five out of thirty two respondents in this study identify as female. Therefore, maids and caregivers are the most represented occupations in this study. The occupation division has an influence on the results when looking at the experience in their migration and post-migration phase. The second biggest limitation in this study is the language. Due to the usage of a translator some information may have gotten lost in translation. Additionally, some perceptions and ideas could be misinterpreted. These limitations in combination with the previous mentioned risks and limitations in the methodology chapter, results in recommendation for further research.

7.3 Recommendations for further research

Further research would be beneficial to gain a wider knowledge concerning the return experience of Indonesian return migrants. The following recommendations have been set up:

First, to get a better understanding of the influence of the reintegration programs a comparative study should be held to compare a group of return migrants who received a training and a group who did not receive any training. This allows the researcher to get a better understanding of the actual impact these programs make. In this study the research sample is too small to legitimately compare the two groups. Hence, the recommendation for further research is to conduct a research that is focused on the support in the post-migration specifically. Second, another recommendation for further research derives out of the current small research sample is the recommendation for quantitative research among the target group. Currently, only 32 return migrants have been reached. With quantitative research more return migrants can be reached. With a bigger research sample, it is easier and more effective to look into themes such as remittances usage in their migration and post-migration phase and the reachability of support in these two phases.

Lastly, this study had a time limit to collect data through interviews and focus groups. Therefore, it can be beneficial to conduct a longer research on this topic. By examining not only the migration and post-migration phase, but also their pre-migration phase it is more apparent to understand the decisions and perceptions of the labor migrants more clearly in all phases of their migration experience.

7.4 Policy recommendations

Policy recommendation within the context of return migration in Indonesia derive from the presented results and the discussion and conclusion of these results.

First, most respondents in this study argue to have problems with their employer abroad concerning their language level. Additionally, they state that the language training they receive before leaving is too short. Due to their inability to speak their language they face challenges with their work and employer abroad. In some cases they take these problems home, hereby influencing their return experience. Therefore, the first policy recommendation is to improve the language training and to include a language test before leaving Indonesia. This way, less problems concerning language will arise taken home after return.

Second, the improvement of the policies and support programs for regular and irregular migrants is being lauded by the experts in this study. They advocate for more support in the post-migration phase even though the system improved already. However, the return migrants do not experience the amount of support as the experts claim there is. Thus, the theory differs from practice. Therefore, the (governmental) organizations that provide the support in the post-migration phase should advocate their programs more, because now only a small percentage of the return migrants is reached. This it

not only important for these support programs, but also for information provision for the return migrant and their families.

Lastly, not only support in the form of language or business is needed to smoothen their migration and post-migration phase. Before, during and after their migration period the labor migrants should be informed and trained on how to save and manage their money, since the majority is not well informed. This study presents the different ideas and plans concerning the usage of the salary abroad. However, financial capital is the most important factor in building a sustainable future for the labor migrants. Hence, a better provision of information about their financial capital is needed to improve their capability of using their salary in their interest.

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Appendix 1. Interview guide

Introduction

First I want to thank you for making time to meet me. My name is Manouk Sinnema and I am currently in Indonesia to conduct research for my Master International Development Studies at Utrecht University. I am curious about how return migrants experience working abroad and returning back to their home country afterwards. Therefore I will ask questions about the period abroad and the period after. I will not use your name or photo, so this interview will be anonymous. Do you still want to co-operate with this interview? I would also like to ask you if you are okay with me recording this interview. I will not publish the recording as it is only for my own usage. Do you still have any questions?

Background information

No. of interview:

Gender:

Age:

Opening question

Can you tell me something about how living in Wonosobo is like?

Questions about economic/social situation

How does your social network looks like in Wonosobo?

Probes: Friends/family?

How important is family/friends to you?

Probes: How does it show? Support? Visit often?

What kind of work do you do in Wonosobo?

Probes: Satisfied with it?

Have you been living in Wonosobo since you returned to Indonesia?

Questions about period abroad

When did you work abroad?

Probes: How long? What work? What country?

How was this migration period organized?

Probes: Help from organizations? What kind of help? Enough help?

What was your reason to work abroad?

Probes: Financial/social? More people in social network that migrated? Why did they migrate?

How did you feel before/during working abroad?

Probes:

To what extent did you have contact with your family/friends in Indonesia?

Probes: In what way, phone/visit? Often? With whom?

What did you do with the money that you earned?

Probes: Spend/saved, and what for? Goals? Successful?

What was in your opinion the most difficult about working abroad?

Probes: Why? What did you do with it?

What was in your opinion the most positive about working abroad?

Probes: Why?

Questions about returning phase

Why did you migrate back to Indonesia?

Probes: Voluntarily/forced? Planned? Received training?

Did you get support during your return?

Probes: Abroad/at home? What help? From who? How? Fulfilled your needs?

How was it for you to return to Wonosobo?

Probes: Social/financial situation?

What was for you the biggest challenge in returning to Indonesia?

Probes: Why? Who helped you in this? What needs?

What was for you the most positive about returning to Indonesia?

Probes: Why?

Were there aspects that made returning easier for you?

Probes: What aspects? What influence? How?

How did your migration period changed your daily life?

Probes: Why positive/negative? Remittances saved? Biggest change?

Are you still in contact with people/organizations from abroad?

Probes: In what way? How? How often?

Did you ever consider to work abroad again?

Probes: Why (not)?

Ending question: Would you like to add something I have not yet asked?

Appendix 2. Focus group guide

First I want to thank you for making time to meet me. My name is Manouk Sinnema and I am currently in Indonesia to conduct research for my Master International Development Studies at Utrecht University. I am curious about how return migrants experience working abroad and returning back to their home country afterwards. Therefore I organized this group discussion to get a better understanding of the experiences and point of view on labor migration and returning.

This group discussion is voluntarily, this means you are free to stop at any given moment. Second, I want to encourage you to speak up freely as there are no bad answers or opinions. Thirdly, in this discussion everybody should get the chance to speak and finish a comment, therefore I would like to ask you to no interrupt each other.

I will not use your name or photo, so this group discussion will be anonymous. I would like to ask you if you are okay with me recording this group discussion. I will not publish the recording as it is only for my own usage. After hearing all this, do you agree to cooperate in this group discussion? Are there still any questions before we begin?

Opening question

- To start we can do a round of introduction. Maybe everybody can tell their name and age?

Transition questions

- To what countries did you migrated to?
- For how long have you all been returned to Indonesia?
- Do others in this village also work in other countries?

Key questions

Topic 1. Working abroad

- Much of the discussion today will focus on labor migration. What reasons do Indonesian people have to work in another country?
- To what countries do labor migrants go to?
- What kind of work do labor migrants do abroad?
- What is the most positive for Indonesian people about working abroad?
- What do people do with their earned salary?
- What kind of challenges do labor migrants face while working abroad?
 - Work/economic/social/cultural
- What kind of help can labor migrants get while working abroad?

- Do you think the given help is sufficient enough?
 - To what extent? To what extent is it not?
 - Do you all agree?
- Do you think there is more help than 15 years ago?
 - What kind of differences/similarities

Topic 2. Reintegration

Now that we discussed the different working abroad, I would like to talk about the phase of returning from working abroad.

- What are reasons for people to migrate back to Indonesia?
- Who can help labor migrants to come back to Indonesia?
- What challenges do return migrants face while reintegrating?
- What kind of help can return migrants get while reintegrating?
- Do you think the given help is sufficient enough?
 - To what extent? To what extent is it not?
 - Do you all agree?
- Do you think there is more help than 15 years ago?
 - What kind of differences/similarities

Closing questions

- Considering the different types of help that we discussed today, which do you feel are the most effective?

We have come to the end of our group discussion. Does anybody feel like there is something missing that I have not asked about? Then I would like to thank you for coming today. Your opinions and ideas are very valuable to my research and I appreciate your contribution today.

Appendix 3. Table of characteristics interviewees

#	Name*	Gender	Age	Country of destination	Time Abroad	Migration frequency	Occupation	Year last return
1	Putri	Female	32	Singapore	5 years	1 time	Maid	2010
2	Irene	Female	35	Taiwan	2 years	1 time	Factory work	2009
3	Intan	Female	40	Malaysia	3 years	1 time	Hair dresser	2009
4	Dewi	Female	35	Malaysia	4 years	1 time	Maid	2010
5	Hana	Female	31	Malaysia	2 years	1 time	Maid	2012
6	Dina	Female	35	Taiwan	7 years	1 time	Maid	2018
7	Bella	Female	34	Malaysia	2 years	1 time	Maid	2009
8	Warsiti	Female	33	Singapore Macau Hong Kong	2 years 8 years	3 times	Maid Casino worker	2016
9	Nadya	Female	32	Singapore	2 years 2 years 2 years	3 times	Maid	2011
10	Amala	Female	24	Singapore	1 year 9 years	2 times	Caregiver	2018
11	Sarah	Female	27	Singapore	2 years 2 years	2 times	Maid	2018
12	Dara	Female	43	Singapore	2 years	1 time	Caregiver	2012
13	Ana	Female	41	Singapore Malaysia	4 years 2 months	2 times	Maid	2019
14	Shinta	Female	35	Hong Kong Taiwan Singapore Malaysia	1 month 2 years 2 years 1 year	4 times	Maid	2018
15	Surya	Female	38	Singapore Hong Kong Taiwan	4 months 2 years 3 years 2 years	4 times	Caregiver	2018
16	Nabila	Female	47	Hong Kong Malaysia Singapore	17 years 1 year 1 year	3 times	Maid	2017
17	Vivian	Female	47	Taiwan	7 years	1 time	Caregiver	2017
18	Vina	Female	42	Taiwan Singapore	17 years 2 years 3 years	3 times	Maid	2018
19	Inda	Female	34	Taiwan	3 years	1 time	Caregiver	2018
20	Sari	Female	43	Hong Kong	4 years 3 years	2 times	Caregiver Illegal work	2011
21	Sonia	Female	39	Hong Kong	2 years	1 time	Maid	2018
22	Novi	Female	43	Singapore Hong Kong	4 years 2 years 2 years	3 times	Caregiver	2013
23	Nanda	Female	38	Taiwan	3 years	1 time	Caregiver	2016
24	Ferren	Female	36	Hong Kong	2 years	1 time	Caregiver	2017
25	Rendy	Male	38	Central Africa	2 years	1 time	Farmer	2018
26	Ansel	Male	42	Brunei	15 years	1 time	Farmer	2018

27	Ari	Male	31	South Korea	4 years	1 time	Factory work	2018
28	Bagus	Male	30	Taiwan	2,5 years	1 time	Factory work	2018
29	Dimas	Male	29	South Korea	5,5 years	1 time	Illegal work	2017
30	Setia	Female	39	Hong Kong Malaysia	8 years 2 years 1 year	3 times	Maid	2017
31	Farhan	Male	23	Malaysia	3 years	1 time	Company work	2019
32	Rahmat	Male	31	Malaysia	6 years	1 time	Company work	2018

* These names are pseudonyms