

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Brianna O'Steen for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy presented on May 26, 2021.

Title: A Mixed Methods Analysis of Philippine Labor Export Policies and Impacts on Overseas Filipino Workers.

Abstract approved:

Brent. S. Steel

The Philippines' labor export system is a complex web of policy instruments that have been amended, repealed, and refined over the last four decades. The laws along with the hortatory tools used to promote them have shaped the lives of millions of Filipinos, separating families across oceans. Temporary labor migration, heralded as a duty to country and family, often increases one's vulnerability to problems of abuse, human trafficking, sexual assault, injury, and illness. This research analyzes bilateral labor agreements (BLA) and migration protection policies to evaluate the effectiveness of policy objectives. Article 1 uses an instrumental variable approach and an original dataset of land-based and sea-based Filipino BLAs and migrant flows into 213 unique areas from 1960 to 2018. I do not find any empirical evidence that these treaties drive migration and recommend further research to investigate other agreement goals. Article 2 uses novel machine learning methods to analyze content automatically from 2,503 media articles across a 25-year span, and finds migrant workers to be positively socially constructed, have low-to-moderate levels of power, endure a multitude of problems, and are offered (sometimes ineffective) solutions. I recommend establishing a public database populated by existing sources to promote accountability, transparency, and data-driven decision making. Article 3 conducts sentiment analysis on 12,351 sentences to explore the Philippines' COVID-19 response, across four phases, as it relates to Overseas Filipino Workers. The media sentiment on government-led efforts is largely neutral, yet over a quarter of sentences pertaining to repatriation, testing and quarantine, and redeployment were negative

while less than ten percent were positive. Migrant workers are positively socially constructed but are experiencing reduced levels of power under these conditions, causing me to recommend increased focus on reintegration efforts and development on the home front to expand employment opportunities characterized by dignity and security.

©Copyright by Brianna O'Steen
May 26, 2021
All Rights Reserved

A Mixed Methods Analysis of Philippine Labor Export Policies and Impacts on
Overseas Filipino Workers

by
Brianna O'Steen

A DISSERTATION

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Presented May 26, 2021
Commencement June 2021

Doctor of Philosophy dissertation of Brianna O'Steen presented on May 26, 2021

APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing Public Policy

Director of the School of Public Policy

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Brianna O'Steen, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely appreciate the support of my committee members from Oregon State University's School of Public Policy, the Graduate School, and San Francisco State University's Department of Sociology. My chair, Brent S. Steel, diligently reviewed every proposal and draft in this process. Elizabeth Schroeder patiently answered all my questions and supported me in mastering new methodologies. Chunhuei Chi and Stephanie Grutzmacher offered their public health expertise and encouraged me to sharpen my arguments. Valerie Francisco-Menchavez emboldened me to think critically about labor export policies, its impact on transnational families, and demonstrated that academic research can be a tool for advocacy and political change. I am very grateful for their time, attention, and investment in my professional development.

This completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my family and friends. I earned this Ph.D. because my mother, Laura Goodson, laid the foundation by making education a priority in my childhood. Spencer Andrus, my incredible partner, has spent countless hours reading, critiquing, and celebrating my work. He and Kristy Hollingshead urged me to adopt automation into my work, giving me the chance to learn another new skill, and never lost enthusiasm during my arduous learning curve. Thank you to all those who have mentored me and contributed to my growth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. General Introduction	1
2. Article 1—Bilateral Labor Agreements and the Migration of Filipinos: An Instrumental Variable Approach	4
2.1. Introduction	5
2.2. Literature Review	7
2.2.1. Labor Export Policies of the Philippines	7
2.2.2. Theory	8
2.2.3. Empirical Findings on BLAs	11
2.3. Methods	13
2.3.1. OLS and Endogeneity	13
2.3.2. Identification Strategy	15
2.3.2.1. Instrument Relevance	15
2.3.2.2. Instrument Validity	15
2.3.2.2.1. Bilateral Investment Treaties	16
2.3.2.2.2. Formal Alliance	18
2.3.3. Empirical Model	19
2.4. Data	22
2.5. Results	25
2.5.1. Robustness Checks	28
2.6. Conclusion	29
2.7. References	31
2.8. Appendix A: Bilateral Agreements	34
2.9. Appendix B: Robustness Checks	37
3. Article 2—Social Constructions of Overseas Filipino Workers Facing Exploitation: An Automated Content Analysis	39
3.1. Introduction	41
3.2. Social Construction and Policy Design	42
3.2.1. Context: Philippines	44
3.2.2. Target Groups: Overseas Filipino Workers	45
3.3. Automated Content Analysis	46
3.3.1. Training the Model	48
3.4. Data	49
3.5. Graphing the Target Group	50
3.6. Findings	53
3.6.1. Problems	53

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

3.6.2. Solutions	55
3.7. Recommendations.....	58
3.8. Discussion & Conclusion	59
3.9. References	61
3.10. Appendix A: Measure of Democracy & Development.....	63
3.11. Appendix B: Ordinal Scales	68
4. Article 3—Bringing ‘Bagong Bayani’ Home: Aspect-based Sentiment Analysis of the Philippine COVID-19 Response for Overseas Filipino Workers	71
4.1. Introduction	73
4.2. Social Construction and Policy Design.....	74
4.2.1. Goals & Problems to Be Solved	74
4.2.2. Target Populations	76
4.2.3. Agents & Implementation Structures.....	78
4.2.4. Policy Tools.....	80
4.2.4.1. Hortatory Tools.....	80
4.2.5. Rules	81
4.2.6. Rationales & Assumptions.....	82
4.3. Automated Content Analysis	82
4.3.1. Step One: tagtog	83
4.3.2. Step Two: MonkeyLearn	83
4.3.3. Automation in Policy Studies	84
4.4. Data.....	85
4.5. COVID-19 as an External Shock.....	86
4.5.1. Power	86
4.5.2. Deservedness	87
4.6. Sentiment Analysis Findings	91
4.6.1. Repatriation	92
4.6.2. Testing & Quarantine	94
4.6.3. Reintegration	95
4.6.4. Redeployment.....	97
4.7. Discussion & Recommendations	99
4.8. Conclusion	101
4.9. References	103
5. General Conclusion.....	108

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
3.1. Target Group Matrix.....	43
3.2. OFWs Socially Constructed in Media.....	52
4.1. Presidents of the Philippines 1965-2021.....	75
4.2. Target Group Matrix (3.1. reprinted)	77
4.3. Response Phase Sentence Distribution.....	85
4.4. OFWs Socially Constructed in Media (3.2. reprinted)	89
4.5. OFWs Socially Constructed During COVID-19	90
4.6. COVID Response Sentiment Analysis	91

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
Table 2. 1. Summary Statistics	25
Table 2. 2. Effect of BLAs on Migrant Stock of Filipinos in Host Countries	28
Table 3.1. Problems OFWs Experience Abroad.....	54
Table 3.2. Policy Solutions and Benefits Distributed by Government.....	56
Table A.1. Philippines Bilateral Labor Agreements Chronologically	34
Table A.2. Bilateral Investment Treaties with the Philippines	34
Table A.3. Formal Alliances with the Philippines.....	35
Table A.4. Variables	35
Table B.1. Effect of BLA-Onset on Migrant Stock of Filipinos in Host Countries	37
Table B.2. Single Instrument Checks for Effect of BLA on Migrant Stock.....	38
Table C.1. Developed Economies Comparison	63
Table C.2. Economies in Transition Comparison.....	64
Table C.3. Developing Economies Comparison.....	64
Table D.1. Deservedness Operationalization.....	68
Table D.2. Power Operationalization.....	70

LIST OF APPENDICES

<u>Appendix</u>	<u>Page</u>
A. Bilateral Agreements	34
B. Robustness Checks.....	37
C. Measure of Democracy & Development.....	63
D. Ordinal Scales.....	68

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Page</u>
AI	Artificial Intelligence.....85
APPAM	Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management.....112
ATN	Assistance to Nationals fund.....56
BIT	Bilateral Investment Treaty.....1
BLA	Bilateral Labor Agreement.....4
BOC	Bureau of Customs.....94
BOQ	Bureau of Quarantine.....94
BRIDGE	Bridging Recruitment to Reintegration Migration Governance.....98
CEO	Chief Executive Officer.....80
COVID-19	2019 novel coronavirus.....1
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs.....53
DGBAS	Directorate General of Budget, Accounting, and Statistics of Taiwan..23
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology.....97
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government.....94
DND	Department of National Defense.....94
DOFW	Department of Overseas Filipino Workers.....101
DOH	Department of Health.....94
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment.....6
DOLE-AKAP	Department of Labor and Employment-Abot Kamay ang Pagtulong...99
DOTr	Department of Transportation.....94
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry.....102
ECQ	Enhanced Community Quarantine.....96
EO	Executive Order.....76
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment.....15
GABRIELA	General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action.....59
GCQ	General Community Quarantine.....96
GDP	Gross Domestic Product.....4
GNI	Gross National Income.....44
IAA	Inter Agency Agreement.....8
ILO	International Labour Organization.....8
IOM	International Organization for Migration.....23
IV	Instrumental Variable.....13
JPEPA	Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement.....14
LGU	Local Government Unit.....89
MECQ	Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine.....96
MIAA	Manila International Airport Authority.....94
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement.....8
NLP	Natural Language Processing.....46

NRCO	National Reintegration Center for OFWs.....	98
OASIS	OFW Assistance Information System.....	97
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.....	16
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker.....	1
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares.....	13
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.....	56
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.....	13
RA	Republic Act.....	45
RISE	Reintegration through Skills and Entrepreneurship program.....	98
RTA	Regional Trade Agreements.....	17
SCPD	Social Construction and Policy Design.....	41
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.....	79
TLRC	Technology Livelihood Resource Center.....	98
UAE	United Arab Emirates.....	54
UN	United Nations.....	16
UNCITRAL	United Nations Commission on International Trade Laws.....	16
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.....	44
WESP	World Economic Situation and Prospects.....	44

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Evelyn. May she grow up in a world believing anything is possible, equipped with the skills to create the change she wants to see.

1. General Introduction

This dissertation is the culmination of my professional inquiry, experiences, and growth over the last four years. When I joined Oregon State’s School of Public Policy in 2017, the U.S. was eight months into a new administration that appeared hostile towards empiricism, the scientific community, critical thought, and evidence-based policymaking. Across the Pacific, the Philippines was also experiencing drastic changes under a new administration that took the “tough on crime” campaign promise quite literally. Uncertainty loomed for both countries and geopolitics at large, but it fueled my motivation to expand my methodological and theoretical repertoire. I used the opportunity in a doctoral program to ask troublesome questions on unpopular topics and explore fresh ways of examining old information. In the process, I developed skills, became a subject matter expert, and contributed to gaps in the literature on Philippine migration policy.

The Philippines has a well-established labor export system wherein the state, private employment agencies, foreign governments, workers, their families, and advocacy groups engage with one another in an efficient process that facilitates the out-migration of temporary workers and remits portions of their salaries to support loved ones, and indirectly the nation, at home. Since the “development diplomacy” practices of the 1970s, each administration has honed and expanded the system using rhetoric and policy tools. As I write this introduction, the Commission on Overseas Filipinos, an executive agency, is conducting a global survey to gather opinions on the proposed creation of a Department of Overseas Filipinos, which would further institutionalize labor export. This three-article dissertation explores the impacts of bilateral labor agreements (Article 1) and migrant protection policies (Article 2) on Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) with special attention to their vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Article 3) and offers data-driven recommendations.

Article 1, “Bilateral Labor Agreements and the Migration of Filipinos: An Instrumental Variable Approach” is an econometric piece that answers the question, ‘Do bilateral labor agreements affect the migration out-flows of Filipinos?’ using plausibly exogenous variation to isolate a causal effect. I test for effects of BLAs using two instrumental variables, Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) and Formal Alliances, using an original dataset of land-based and sea-based Filipino BLAs and migrant flows into 213 unique areas from 1960 to 2018. Empirical

research on BLAs as policy instruments is sparse, but my work builds on global (Chilton & Posner, 2018; Peters, 2019) and country specific (Chilton & Woda, forthcoming) studies.

Article 2, “Social Constructions of Overseas Filipino Workers Facing Exploitation: An Automated Content Analysis” applies the social construction and policy design framework (Schneider & Ingram, 2019) to the Philippines’ first migrant workers’ protection policy to understand the government’s distribution of benefits to overseas Filipinos in distress. Using novel machine learning methods to analyze content automatically from 2,503 media articles across a 25-year span, I graphically represent how policymakers and the media socially construct OFWs. Besides the empirical findings and interdisciplinary methods employed, this article offers two theoretical contributions. First, I argue for global expansion of applications based on a nation’s level of democracy, urging researchers who may be cautious of the ‘developing world’ to explore the contributions non-Euro-American analysis can make to theoretical tenets. Second, I present a transparent, empirical operationalization of power and deservedness. This study became the baseline for my final dissertation article.

My third proposed piece, “Unintended Benefits: How Labor Migration and Remittances Impact Technological Literacy and the Digital Divide in the Philippines” was to be a qualitative case study in the city of Los Baños, Laguna province. In 2018, I was awarded a competitive grant to conduct fieldwork beginning in March 2020. The Philippines declared a national state of emergency and went into a lockdown the week of my departure. As many grounded researchers did, I shifted my focus to a COVID-19 topic to better understand how the pandemic was affecting Filipinos across the diaspora.

Article 3, “Bringing ‘Bagong Bayani’ Home: Aspect-based Sentiment Analysis of the Philippine COVID-19 Response for Overseas Filipino Workers” also applies the social construction and policy design framework to critically analyze The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 and subsequent protection policies for symbolic—and even deceptive—design elements (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). I use four natural language processing algorithms to analyze 598 media articles across four phases of pandemic response. I graph the constructions of OFWs and discuss their reduced power during the pandemic compared to the 25 years of data from Article 2. Additionally, I describe the sentiment analysis of the government’s handling of response efforts for OFWs, connecting the shortcomings back to symbolic policy designs (Guevarra, 2010; Rodriguez, 2010).

This dissertation emerges at a time of increased precarity for temporary migrant workers around the globe. A litany of institutional and policy structures which exacerbate their vulnerabilities are conspicuous in our ongoing pandemic. How we respond as citizens, researchers, and policy entrepreneurs in this moment has the potential to increase equity and opportunity, disrupting the status quo. Empirical research can strengthen the legitimacy of social movements' calls-to-action. It is my aim that the scholarly findings in the following chapters will bolster the advocacy work already being done to protect OFWs and similar populations.

2. Article 1—Bilateral Labor Agreements and the Migration of Filipinos: An Instrumental Variable Approach

Abstract

Bilateral labor agreements (BLAs) are a preferred policy model for regulating migration by many governments around the globe. The Philippines has been a leader in both agreement conclusion and exporting labor. A recent Congressional evocation is pushing bureaucrats and academics alike to investigate this policy strategy for outcomes and effectiveness. The following analysis answers the question, ‘Do BLAs affect the migration outflows of Filipinos?’ using plausibly exogenous variation to isolate a causal effect. I test for effects of BLAs using two instrumental variables, Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) and Formal Alliances, and an original dataset of land-based and sea-based Filipino BLAs and migrant stock in 213 unique areas from 1960 to 2018. I do not find any empirical evidence that these treaties drive migration. However, BLAs have statistically significant effects on GDP per capita and exports, suggesting other important channels through which these agreements affect economic outcomes. These null results are critically important for policymakers and diplomats because the resources spent on negotiation are wasted if the primary goal is to increase migration.

Keywords: bilateral labor agreement (BLA), migration, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), labor export, labor policy, Philippines

2.1. Introduction

Migration for securing employment and increasing wages is no longer an obscure personal choice; today it is a global phenomenon. Approximately two percent of the global population engages in some form of labor migration, be it temporary or permanent. Of the world's 258 million international migrants, nearly 64 percent emigrate explicitly for work (International Labour Organization, 2020). National policies institutionalize and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) further reify this practice rendering it commonplace (United Nations Foundation, n.d.). A recent UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs study finds that 68 percent of countries identify 'meeting labor market demands' as the primary reason for their current immigration policies (United Nations, 2019), indicative of congruence between labor-sending and receiving countries. Despite the mutual response to market needs, sometimes further steps are necessary to bring nations into concordance. This paper focuses on one form of accord, bilateral labor agreement (BLA), growing in popularity since the 1940s.

International organizations define BLAs as agreements between two countries that outline needs and expectations for migration and employment. In most instances, there are clear labor-sending countries and labor-receiving countries. While the agreement is mutual, the motivations and benefits to sending and receiving countries vary. Labor-receiving countries wish to address manpower needs of various industries, manage regular and irregular migration, and promote cultural and political ties with their cosignatories (Blank, 2011; Go, 2007). Labor-sending countries have different social and economic priorities. They wish to maintain access to labor markets, ease unemployment pressures at home, increase capital flows in the form of remittances (Blank, 2011; Go, 2007), and encourage repatriation of migrants, mitigating brain drain effects (Oh, 1977; Özden & Schiff, 2005). The social reasons for entering BLAs include improving working conditions, negotiating fair contracts, and reducing exploitation of migrants. Both labor-sending and -receiving countries benefit from negotiating visa and work permit stipulations.

Other developing nations tout the Philippines as a model for global migration and cash remittance sending. It ranks third (behind China and India) in deploying migrants and amasses capital from these workers exceeding 13 percent of the national GDP annually (Bangko Sentral Ng Pilipinas, 2020). The nation is path-dependent on these remittances, making labor migration a

permanent feature of the economy of the Philippines. To sustain the high volume of cash flow into the country, the government must maintain existing migration avenues while simultaneously seeking fresh opportunities. Mangulabnan and Daquio (2019), in their review of BLAs, find a resurgence of labor agreements over the last two decades to regulate existing flows, but more importantly, open new channels for labor migration flows. In his 2011 review of Philippine BLAs, Blank also finds maximizing efficiency of sending and receiving workers to be a common theme, demonstrating the government's priority through policy design.

Having a competitive advantage does not necessarily translate to expansion of human resource development or negotiation of high-paying jobs. This is when the oversight of policymakers is vital. In early 2018, Congress made several inquiries into the motivations for and ways in which the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) concludes BLAs. The Philippine government wants to know if BLAs as a policy instrument are helping to achieve the nation's development goals, via remittance capital, while also upholding its obligations to protect migrant workers under Republic Act No. 10022 (2009).

The fields of international relations, economics, and political science pay little academic attention to BLAs in comparison to research on trade agreements. Though there has been some content analysis on the makeup of these agreements (Mangulabnan & Daquio, 2019; Wickramasekara, 2015), there is only one other empirical study that addresses the question of the impact of labor agreements on migration in the Philippines (Chilton & Woda, forthcoming). There appears to be enthusiasm for BLAs among labor-sending governments (Chilton & Posner, 2018; Gordon, 2010; Peters, 2019). To better understand the uptake of this policy model around the globe, we need more comprehensive, verifiable research.

This study makes methodological and empirical contributions to the body of research and to real-world policy issues. In this paper, I use a unique dataset to determine the impact of BLAs on migrant stock of Filipino workers in 213 destination countries and regions using an instrumental variable approach. This is an important question from a policy perspective because governments continue to name increasing the flow of migrants as a reason for signing BLAs. If there is a statistically significant positive relationship between BLAs and migrant stock, I can conclude that these agreements are fulfilling at least one objective. However, this study does not test whether BLAs impact unemployment pressures, perceived security in cosignatory countries, or transfer of remittance capital.

I proceed with the following sections. Section 2 provides a historical snapshot of Philippine labor export policy, situates BLAs and migration in theoretical contexts, explores why countries enter these agreements, and reviews empirical BLA literature. Section 3 describes my research design, model specification, and accompanying methods. In Section 4, I introduce the dataset for this study. Section 5 presents the eventual results and discusses robustness checks. Section 6 concludes with limitations and calls for further research.

2.2. Literature Review

2.2.1. Labor Export Policies of the Philippines

Though Philippine labor migration dates to the 16th century, the modern era of overseas employment was ushered in by the debt crisis under the Marcos regime (1965 to 1986). To ease surplus labor supply and calm civil unrest under martial law, Ferdinand Marcos devised his foreign policy strategy, referred to as “development diplomacy” (Punongbayan & Mandrilla, 2016). The administration predicated this plan on finding, establishing, and formalizing international labor markets for Filipinos to travel to (Santos, 2014). The Philippines began negotiating bilateral agreements with other nations for the expressed purpose of regulating migration. By 1974, the Overseas Employment Program was adopted into the Philippine Labor Code, formalizing national labor export policy for the first time. Male migrants found work in construction in many Middle Eastern countries that were booming with oil money and investing in infrastructure. Filipinas began migrating in the 1970s to fill the need for English-speaking teachers (James, 1997). However, the demand for female migrants spiked in the late 1980s when health, sales, and domestic service sectors opened in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan (Center for Migrant Advocacy, 2011). This system flourished when fresh markets were introduced, allowing Filipinos to dominate certain labor markets.

The Philippines has been a consistent source of labor throughout all phases of migration and BLA ratification (Chilton & Posner, 2018). The state has a history of using diplomatic tools for development gains. Though there is variation in the type, depth, and clarity of their BLAs, the treaties appear to be a desired form of official policy. The government continues to prioritize labor agreements for deploying migrant workers. Due to this capital-producing system, widespread desire to replicate the Philippines’ export model in other source states is growing (Mendoza, 2015). The following section situates BLAs and migration in theoretical contexts and explores the competing and commingling explanations as to why people move.

2.2.2. Theory

Bilateral Labor Agreements, much like other international treaties, are best understood through the international relations lens of liberalism. This is the belief that states achieve economic and social power through international cooperation rather than direct force. Though liberalists are not against military action, they prefer to utilize international diplomacy and bi- or multilateral agreements to achieve their national interests.

Countries use BLAs as diplomatic tools to regulate labor migration. These instruments take several forms with varying degrees of enforceability including: Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs), Protocols, Annexes, Inter-Agency Agreements (IAA), framework agreements, statements of mutual labor cooperation, and cross-border worker agreements (Wickramasekara, 2015). Though growing in popularity,¹ countries conclude BLAs less frequently than international investment agreements (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2019; Wickramasekara, 2015). In 1949, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the revised Migration for Employment Recommendation (No. 86); for decades, an accompanying annex has served as a template for drafting BLAs.

States enter BLAs for a variety of economic and social reasons. Reducing exploitation is a common social goal for labor-sending countries when entering BLAs. They wish to protect the rights of their nationals abroad, improve working conditions, and negotiate fair contracts with minimum standards (Blank, 2011; Chilton & Posner, 2018; Moraga, 2008). Labor-sending countries may wish to strengthen economic relations with certain states. Entering a BLA could establish other positive avenues for trade and investment down the road. Additional economic drivers for source countries include relieving a labor surplus, facilitating the return of remittances (Chilton & Posner, 2018), and preventing brain drain by negotiating repatriation (Moraga, 2008).

Host or labor-receiving countries may wish to attract migrants to respond to a labor market need, as with the oil industry in the 1970s or the need for healthcare workers to assist with aging populations in Japan, Canada, and the United States. Greater ability to control regular and irregular migration motivates hosts (Blank, 2011; Moraga, 2008). States can accomplish this

¹ See Chilton and Posner (2018) and Wickramasekara (2015) for more information on global trends of BLA conclusion.

by establishing specific types of visas and setting quotas relative to the labor shortage. Labor-receiving nations may also wish to secure a benefit unrelated to migration from a source country (Sykes, 2013), promote cultural ties, or gain symbolic political benefits (Chilton & Posner, 2018).

Migration scholars hypothesize a myriad of contributing factors and frameworks to explain why people move, however there are three dominant theories. Researchers conceptualize the first as push and pull factors. The push-pull theory extrapolates key tenets from Ravenstein's 1885 work, *The Laws of Migration*. Determinants that push migrants to leave their home localities are war, violence, poor working conditions, meager wages, famine, and natural hazards. Services, food security, better job opportunities, and political asylum may also pull migrants to a new location. The applications of this push-pull theory of migration are vast and vary, but the central assumption is that migration is a function of sending and receiving countries' economic performance (Cuamea Velázquez, 2000). Some scholars assume a symmetry hypothesis, stating that the push and pull factors between source and host countries impose approximately equal, "but opposite effects (elasticities)" (Schultz, 1982, p. 573). In her empirical study on the determinants of Filipino migration, Carlos finds evidence for asymmetry resulting from uneven information, natural barriers, and restrictive policies in host states leading her to conclude that "factors in the Philippines exert greater influence on the probability to migrate" (2002, p. 100). There is significant overlap between push-pull migration determinants and the reasons for BLA conclusion. BLAs are inherently flexible and versatile tools that account for asymmetry.

The second migration theory growing in popularity, labor recruitment approach, builds on Piore's Dual Labor Market theory (1971). This theory depends on bilateral agreements to formalize or private companies to orchestrate direct recruitment to fill what Piore (1971) calls the 'secondary sector.' This approach to explaining migration sets itself apart from push-pull theory by intentionally excluding income and wage gaps and focuses on employers' recruitment strategies (Cuamea Velázquez, 2000). Piore develops the constructs of the Dual Labor Market to explain why Black Americans in urban areas occupy second sector jobs with poorer working conditions, lower wages, and less upward mobility. His core tenets challenge the push-pull supposition that migrants enter better living and working conditions inherent to their movement. Piore and others expand this theory to explain international migration patterns besides rural to

urban in-country movement. When subscribing to the assumption that BLAs increase international migration flows, this is an apropos theoretical lens through which to view these agreements; unfortunately, it yields limited empirical results (Ashton & Maguire, 1984).

To address the shortcomings of the aforementioned theories, some migration scholars describe this phenomenon as a social process.

“This view holds that sending and receiving areas should be analyzed as two components of the migration system, and [are] interrelated by a complex set of linkages: state to state relations (trade and financial flows, immigration and emigration policies, complementary of labor supply and demand); family and personal networks (remittance flows, family obligations, community solidarity, information); migrant agency activities (job recruitment, regulations governing the migration process, contracts with migrant workers); and mass culture connections (international media dissemination, social acceptance of migrants, cultural similarity, assimilation)” (Cuamea Velázquez, 2000, p.147).

Conceptualizing migration as a social process creates space for analyzing the interaction between flows and structural features of host and source states. This perspective accounts for the macroeconomic factors that influence migration systems and considers a variety of incentives—beyond financial enticements—to motivate individuals. Accounting for the interconnectedness of decision making is more comprehensive than other frameworks, however, it is only useful for ex post facto studies.

These three theories each provide an additional layer of explanation as to why people migrate. Unfortunately, they lack predictive power. This is a problem for states wanting to plan evidence-based immigration policy. It is possible to find case studies that prove or disprove each of these migration theories. Disney, Wiśniowski, Forster, Smith, and Bijak (2015) find no reliable theory for predicting migration. Both deterministic forecasts (often called ‘projections’) and probabilistic (stochastic) forecasts have very high levels of error. Migration is difficult to forecast due to the myriad of political, social, economic, meteorological, and climatological drivers. Despite constraints in migration forecasting, policymaking must go on.

Varying theories and commingling reasons for seeking work abroad lead us to question BLAs’ ability to fulfill their objectives. If states are successful in achieving economic and social power through this diplomatic tool, it offers further evidence for continuing BLA use in international diplomacy and obliges researchers to expand their investigations. The following section reviews relevant empirical literature on global BLA conclusion and impacts in the Philippines.

2.2.3. Empirical Findings on BLAs

Although academic attention to BLAs is increasing (Go, 2004, 2007; Gordon, 2010; Panizzon, 2010; Sáez, 2013), very few empirical studies test their strengths and weaknesses as a policy instrument. To my knowledge, there are three published articles on the topic that use econometric models. Chilton and Posner (2018) and Peters (2019) posit why countries sign BLAs and use unique global datasets to test several hypotheses. Chilton and Woda (forthcoming) use administrative data from the Philippines to test the impact of BLAs on the flows of migrants to and remittances from cosignatory countries.

Chilton and Posner (2018) assemble an original dataset of 582 BLAs between 1945 and 2015 and test several assumptions using state-state dyads. The primary focus of their study is to test hypotheses around why states conclude labor agreements with one another. One such argument is that agreements draw countries with sizeable differences in level of democracy and strength of economy into concordance on migration policy. The authors use logit regressions to examine patterns of ratification and find evidence against the belief that countries with dissimilar political regimes and relative levels of wealth are more likely to sign BLAs, unless the host state is Middle Eastern. The researchers also conduct some exploratory analysis on their country dyads to determine the effect of BLAs on migration. They find that across their global dataset, countries with BLAs experience higher levels of migration; however, these trends appear to begin slightly before the BLAs ratification. Thus, Chilton and Posner (2018) do not claim a causal relationship between BLAs and migration.

In another global study, Peters (2019) uses a rare events logit model to test the hypothesis that hosts, or labor recipient states, enter BLAs only when they cannot fulfill their labor needs unilaterally. She argues that host states have all the negotiating power, hence it will not benefit them to give up some control over immigration if the country meets its own labor needs. Using BLAs to serve as recruitment tools, instead of third-party middlemen, solves the ‘matching problem’ Peters presents. By signing treaties, hosts can reduce screening costs and vacancy costs associated with filling positions. Here she assumes that “costs of screening tend to rise when the economy needs more skilled labor” (Peters, 2019, p. 290). Peters uses labor productivity to support the hypothesis for reducing screening costs, and remoteness and an increase in labor force participation to measure vacancy costs.

Peters' most notable finding in relation to this study, is that a BLA is more likely when the dyad signs another treaty (trade or aid) in the same year. She does not attribute this to linkage, because none of the BLAs she examines include links to other treaties, but to the existing relationship between the two countries. This finding supports the instrumental variable identification strategy I discuss in the next section. Additionally, Peters (2019) finds that hosts are less likely to sign labor agreements with source states from which they already have a large stock of migrants, supporting her hypothesis that receiving states do not enter BLAs when they can fulfill their labor needs independently. This result explains the holdout by Saudi Arabia from signing a BLA with the Philippines (2005) despite the source country's decades-long effort.

Finally, her analysis reveals a negative and statistically significant relationship between BLA conclusion and distance, showing that a remote host country is nearly three times more likely to sign an agreement than a non-remote host. The logic behind this finding is that distance is a barrier to migration; clauses requiring recruitment agencies or employers to cover the associated travel costs can mitigate that barrier. This may be relevant to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) because many of their destinations are island nations.

Chilton and Woda (forthcoming) attempt to mitigate past criticism of empirical evaluations of international treaties by employing an event study research design. This method allows them to model control and treatment groups to test the impact of Philippine BLAs on emigration and remittance flows. Event studies must satisfy three fundamental assumptions: 1) parallel trends which are independently and identically distributed through time, 2) events are unexpected, 3) no other events can occur during the event window. Unlike the two studies above, these authors use labor migration data specifically rather than general migration variables. Their dataset includes the 68 land-based BLAs originally from Mangulabnan and Daquio's report (2019).

Their findings indicate that BLAs between the Philippines and cosignatories do not increase deployment of migrant workers, nor the return of capital in the form of remittances. Chilton and Woda (forthcoming, p. 20) argue that their "results suggest that signing more BLAs may not be an easy solution for countries wishing to increase their labor migration, and the financial benefits of that labor migration." The authors recognize four limitations of their study: non-random BLA conclusion, imperfect data, inability to test other reasons the Philippines signs such treaties (namely, worker protections), and lack of generalizability to other countries' BLAs.

Like Chilton and Woda (forthcoming), this study uses specific labor migration data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and has the same limitations. However, an instrumental variables research design has different identifying assumptions than an event study design and allows other events (e.g. bilateral treaties) to be instrumented in place of the endogenous BLA. It is promising that by using different estimation techniques with similar data, we reach the same conclusions.

These studies are all critically important pieces to the BLA-migration puzzle. The following analysis uses the first instrumental variable (IV) approach to test whether BLAs truly impact migration. The paper proceeds with a thorough explanation of the methodological contribution and details my identification strategy, including two suitable instruments.

2.3. Methods

2.3.1. OLS and Endogeneity

The theoretical model is macroeconomic in nature and allows migrant stock of Filipinos to be a function of a bilateral labor agreement with a host country, in addition to a set of control variables,

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BLA_{it} + \beta_2' x_{it} + \alpha_i + \delta_t + u_{it} \quad (1)$$

where subscript it denotes the country i in time t . BLA_{it} is the independent variable of interest, a dummy variable for the years a bilateral labor agreement is in effect between the Philippines and country i . For example, BLA for Saudi Arabia is 0 from 1960 to 2004 and 1 from 2005 to 2018. β_1 is the coefficient of interest, x_{it} is a vector of country characteristics, α_i is an unobserved time-invariant country fixed effect, δ_t is a time trend, and u_{it} is the error term. The dependent variable, denoted by y_{it} , is the number of Filipino migrant workers in country i at time t .

OLS produces bias results since the independent variable, BLA, suffers from two types of endogeneity. First, it is plausible that reverse causality affects the model. One situation where this may occur is between the Philippines and Saudi Arabia. Filipino migration to Saudi Arabia increased by 560 percent from 1960 to 1970 and rose another five-fold between 1970 and 1980 due to the oil boom. To expedite deployment the Philippines proposed a BLA in 1988 but the Kingdom declined to take part in negotiations. Migration continued to rise, and the Philippines remained consistent in its efforts to formalize the labor relations between the two countries. The

parties eventually signed a BLA in 2005 when migration peaked around one million. Though Saudi Arabia remains a top destination for OFWs, there has been a decline in the number of migrants since the BLA. In this dyad it seems that migration was the driver for the BLAs conclusion and is consistent with reverse causality.

Similarly, reverse causality may also be present with Japan, a top destination country for OFWs, especially seafarers (Go, 2004). The Philippines proposed a MOA on Mobilisation of Manpower in 1988. Japan did not outright decline the BLA, instead they chose the course of inaction. Deployment increased year after year from the late-1980s to mid-2000s until Japan tightened its entertainer visa restrictions to address human trafficking. Deployment of newly hired OFWs dropped by 81.7 percent from 2005 to 2006. Negotiations of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA), a unique bilateral agreement concerning investment, trade, and labor, were ongoing. According to Amante, “the employment of Filipino nurses and caregivers in Japan was the main item requested by the Philippine side” (2007, p. 26). This indicates an effort to increase deployment, dominate a new sector, and relieve a nursing surplus. JPEPA includes language for seafarers and nurses and ultimately led to the conclusion of two specific MOUs with Japan in 2009 for these industries.

Besides reverse causality, OLS likely suffers from omitted variable bias caused by other unobserved factors driving the migration patterns of Filipinos that are also correlated with the adoption of BLAs. Arguments exist in qualitative literature on the strength of social networks and imitation of kin migration patterns, also known as *stepwise migration* (Francisco-Menchavez, 2020), which is unaccounted for in the data. The Philippines tends to conclude agreements where its citizens are already working hoping to expand protections, encourage remittance transfer, and maintain the migration stream. If OFWs are migrating to countries where their family members work and there are systematically more BLAs with those destinations, that omitted variable would cause positive bias in the BLA coefficient. The unmeasured migration would over-inflate the effect of the agreement on migration.

Exploitation of migrant workers is an issue the Philippine government contends with regularly. Scholars cite increasing protections for OFWs as a reason for BLA conclusion (Blank, 2011; Chilton & Woda, forthcoming; Go, 2004). It is also an issue that I expect to bias the OLS model. Exploitation is likely to have a negative effect on the dependent variable and positively impact the independent variable. To my knowledge there are no empirical studies that analyze

this issue, nor does the Philippines distribute quantitative data on violation of migrant workers' rights.

2.3.2. Identification Strategy

To overcome endogeneity concerns, I use an instrumental variables estimator. The impact of BLAs on migration of Filipinos is identified by two instruments, bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and formal alliances. Instrumental variables regressions are a well-tested approach in econometrics that allow researchers to identify causal effects in the presence of endogeneity. The scarcity of empirical literature on the impact of BLAs on migration is due in part to the difficulty of finding a suitable instrument which must satisfy two assumptions, instrument relevance and instrument validity.

2.3.2.1. Instrument Relevance

The relevance assumption states that the instrument, Z_i , is correlated with the endogenous variable, X_i , $Cov(Z_i, X_i) \neq 0$. If the correlation is weak, the instrument does not explain much of the variation in the endogenous variable, which can bias results. An instrument is considered strong if its F statistic is above 10. The manual first-stage regression of the endogenous variable (*BLA*) on the instruments (*BIT*, *Alliance*), expressed by equation 1, returned very high t-statistics for the instruments, 20.71 for BIT and 21.33 for Alliance, both significant at a 99 percent confidence level. Both instruments passed the relevance check and were jointly significant with an F statistic of 21.83.

$$BLA_{it} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 BIT_{it} + \gamma_2 Alliance_{it} + \gamma_3' \mathbf{x}_{it} + \alpha_i + \delta_t + \nu \quad (2)$$

2.3.2.2. Instrument Validity

The validity assumption of the IV method is not testable, rather it requires institutional knowledge and a sound argument. For BIT and formal alliance to be valid, they must not be correlated with the dependent variable, migration, conditional on the other control variables. On the surface it may appear that BITs have nothing to do with migration, but the relationship is more complex. BITs are associated with foreign direct investment (FDI) and FDI is both contemporaneously substitutable and dynamically complementary with migration (Kugler & Rapoport, 2007). Thus, if BITs cause an increase in FDI one might expect an impact on migration via this channel. The following subsection clarifies why this is not the case.

2.3.2.2.1. Bilateral Investment Treaties

BIT \rightarrow FDI \leftrightarrow Migration

BITs are international agreements that set rules and regulations on private investment between nationals or companies of one country in a second recipient country. Like BLAs, investors and recipient states enter BITs for diverse reasons. Investors wish to protect their investments from expropriation while developing countries hope to gain a competitive advantage to increase their FDI. The capital flows unilaterally but typically both parties have equal recourse to arbitration through the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, or under the United Nations Commission on International Trade Laws (UNCITRAL) Arbitration Rules, if either party violates treaty terms.

Conclusion of BITs has seen exponential growth over the last several decades. In response, legal scholars, economists, and political scientists took an interest in why nations are so eager to sign them and what effects they realize. The existing evidence is contradictory, but overwhelmingly concludes that, while BITs and FDI are strongly correlated, the former has no causal impact on the latter.

Hallward-Driemeier (2003) analyzes the bilateral flow of FDI from 1980 to 2000 between 20 OECD countries and 31 developing countries. She finds that BITs have an insignificant effect on FDI flows. Further, she argues that the liberalization and stability of the investment climate are more influential on FDI than BITs are. Neumayer and Spess (2005) critique her sample for being too limited and argue that her research design does not permit investigation into signaling and spillover effects of BITs. Aisbett (2007) also points out that Hallward-Driemeier's use of levels (highly skewed) rather than log FDI could bias her results.

Rather than country dyads, Tobin and Rose-Ackerman (2004) use 5-year averages for FDI inflows in their panel of 63 countries from 1980 to 2000. They conclude that the relationship between BITs and FDI is weak and that the treaties are not fulfilling their purpose of attracting more investment capital. Where there is a relationship, it appears to be weakly negative. The authors do not completely discount BITs as ineffectual; they find that agreements in countries considered 'relatively risky' from 1980 to 2000 more FDI than their stable counterparts (Tobin and Rose-Ackerman, 2004). Neumayer and Spess (2005) critique Tobin and Rose-Ackerman's

specification for measuring political risk, but a greater limitation is that the latter pair focus solely on United States-administered FDI.

Two studies are often cited as evidence for the positive impact of BITs on FDI, Salacuse and Sullivan (2004) and Neumayer and Spess (2005). The former uses a cross-sectional design for up to 99 developing countries in 1998, 1999, and 2000 as well as a fixed-effects model for only 31 U.S.-FDI recipient countries from 1991 to 2000. Salacuse and Sullivan (2004) argue that the increased FDI does not immediately follow signing of the BIT. Neumayer and Spess' findings are far less conservative and claim BITs cause massive increases in FDI. Aisbett (2007, p. 34) replicates both studies demonstrating that these large effects "are almost certainly due to misspecification and insufficient attention paid to the endogeneity of BIT participation." Furthermore, Yackee (2009) reproduces Neumayer and Spess' (2005) study and finds "no evidence that BITs and FDI share the kind of conditional relationship theorized (and identified) by [the authors]" (p. 391).

In his 2010 study, Yackee revisits Tobin and Rose-Ackerman's (2004) interest in political risk. He finds no meaningful correlation between BITs and political risk using regression analysis. Tobin and Rose-Ackerman's (2011) study confirms Yackee's conclusion since the authors find that FDI is more dependent on political risk than a BIT. Yackee also uses survey evidence to "show that providers of political risk insurance do not reliably take BITs into account when deciding the terms of insurance" (Yackee, 2010, p. 397). He asserts that past positive findings between BITs and FDI may be spurious and remains quite skeptical of treaties' impact on investment.

Academics and practitioners now widely accept that BITs and FDI are strongly correlated economic phenomena, but lack a causal relationship, the literature is shifting to focus on the contents of the investment treaties (including their trade brethren) as well as governance of the international investment regime (Simmons, 2014). Some scholars criticize the simplicity of treating the agreements as homogenous "black boxes;" to overcome this limitation, empirical research has pivoted towards the direction of content analysis. Berger, Busse, Nunnenkamp, and Roy (2013) use Yackee's (2008a, 2008b) codes for dispute, national treatment, and most favored nations clauses in BITs and extend them to regional trade agreements (RTA). They find evidence that when RTAs lack these clauses would-be investor-nations may export goods to the developing country instead of capital. They also find foreign investors respond to BITs rather

indiscriminately, and the authors attribute this to the technical and low-profile nature of BIT negotiations (Berger et al., 2013).

Allee and Peinhardt (2014) offer a more comprehensive coding scheme for investment treaties to test theoretical explanations of their variation. Their findings impart skepticism on the “rational design of international institutions” and highlight the power politics at play in the investment regime (Allee & Peinhardt, 2014, p. 81). Neumayer, Nunnenkamp, and Roy (2016) fill a previous gap in the literature by considering spatial dependence when examining BIT conclusion. The authors find that developing countries are more likely to sign strict agreements to “avoid diversion of FDI to competing developing host countries which agreed to similar binding commitments before” (Neumayer et al., 2016, p. 204). Arguably, the new directions of BIT and trade agreement research are richer and more substantive than the BIT → FDI causal inquiries of the past. I expect to see a profundity of ideas as this body of work grows.

Policymakers around the world are busy drafting, negotiating, and voting on trade, investment, and migration policy. Unfortunately, these concurrent processes are often done in isolation from each other. This causes incompatible legal frameworks where normative regulations can contradict one another. More importantly, migration networks develop without due regard to investment and trade mechanisms (Cottier & Sieber-Gasser, 2015).

Since the literature overwhelmingly rejects a causal link between BITs and FDI, I maintain that such agreements do not directly affect the migration choices of Filipinos. Nevertheless, if two parties enter a BIT, regardless of ratification and investment status, they have the functional relations necessary to use diplomatic tools (BLAs, BITs, formal alliances, other trade agreements). This relationship is correlated with the two parties’ likelihood of entering a BLA, since it requires the same productive relationship irrespective of migration history between the parties.

2.3.2.2.2. Formal Alliance

States enter formal alliances to maintain peace and neutrality, to prevent conflict, or deter hostility. The Correlates of War Project (Gibler, 2009) classifies formal alliances as mutual defense pacts, non-aggression treaties, or entente agreements between at least two states. The Philippines signed all its formal alliances during the Cold War era. All have expired apart from the Mutual Defense Treaty with the United States (1951) and a recent agreement with Jordan (2018). These alliances are conditional upon large-scale conflict, which the Philippines has not

engaged to date. The Philippines has a weaker military than its alliance cosigners, rendering them more likely to receive manpower into their country to fight an insurgency rather than deploying Filipinos elsewhere. If they mobilize troops to fight or aid in war efforts, it would be temporary and not captured in the OFW data reported by POEA. This was the case during the Vietnam War; nearly 2,000 Filipinos deployed to South Vietnam to support the U.S. military and medical efforts (Lockwood, 1999). However, the migrant stock data in this analysis reports 45 Filipinos working in Vietnam in 1970 and 292 by 1980.

A careful review of the migration literature reveals that formal alliances likely have no direct impact on migration and are thus plausibly exogenous in the migration equation. While civil war is a push factor widely noted as a cause of migration, a formal alliance is not considered a pull factor. Migration studies do not consider military agreements to be a determinant of migration because civilians are typically unaware of these agreements. Since the Philippines is not involved in any conflict and the migrant stock data do not account for servicemembers, there is no reason for the formal alliances to be correlated with the migration of OFWs conditional on the presence of a BLA. Most of the alliances ended before Philippine migration saw exponential growth. However, these agreements signal diplomatic and defense cooperation and would be correlated with the likelihood of the same country pairs entering a BLA (Peters, 2019). In fact, there are four overlapping country dyads, that have both a BLA and a formal alliance with the Philippines, including United States of America (BLA 1968), Jordan (BLA 1988), United Kingdom (BLAs 2002 and 2003), and New Zealand (BLAs 2008 and 2015).

2.3.3. Empirical Model

Equation (1) estimates *BIT* and *Alliance* as instruments for *BLA*. The country characteristics included in x_{it} are GDP ratio, unemployment rates, government spending, population, imports, exports, and Polity22 scores. The dependent variable is the Filipino migrant stock in a host country, territory, or autonomous region, hereafter referred to as country. This variable, recorded as number of persons, has 1685 intermittent observations across the sample

2 “Revised Combined Polity Score: This variable is a modified version of the POLITY variable added in order to facilitate the use of the POLITY regime measure in time-series analyses. It modifies the combined annual POLITY score by applying a simple treatment, or “fix,” to convert instances of “standardized authority scores” (i.e., -66, -77, and -88) to conventional polity scores (i.e., within the range, -10 to +10)” (Center for Systemic Peace, 2020).

period, from the 213 unique countries. Despite the sporadic nature of the observations, there is at least one year of migrant data for every country in the sample. The sample period is 1960 to 2018.

The independent variable of interest is an indicator for the presence of a labor agreement with the Philippines in country i at time t . The variable includes all forms of diplomatic instruments used to reach an agreement for the Philippines to supply labor to a host country, such as MOAs, their annexes and protocols, and less-binding forms such as MOUs. Seventy-one BLAs have been identified between the Philippines and other states or provinces, 69 concern land-based labor and the remaining two are sea-based. Of these, there are 29 unique country pairs, and the remaining 42 are updated protocols, renewals, or brand-new agreements with previous partners. As a robustness check I test two forms of this variable, BLA-onset and BLA-real, both dichotomous. BLA-onset assumes that once an agreement is in place for a country dyad it remains in effect until the end of the sample period. The benefit of using the onset form is to test for lasting effects of a BLA on migration; this captures the persisting impact on migration, even if the agreement has expired.

BLA-real refers to the actual years that the agreements are in effect. This variable measures the impact of the agreement on migration during the window the agreement is valid and does not consider persisting effects. Unfortunately, some information is missing for Liberia (33 obs.), Norway (16 obs.), and Qatar (15 obs.). The text of the Liberian BLA concerning seafarers is publicly available but does not specify the length of the terms. Texts for the BLAs with Norway and Qatar (1981) are not publicly available, and I could not identify if the agreements remain in force or expired. These data are considered missing at random, there is no indication that agreement texts or status details are not available systematically, thus the missing values are not likely to bias results. Using the ‘real’ form identifies 461 observations as having a BLA in effect while using the ‘onset’ form increases this figure to 556 observations. This difference results from missing observations (64) and expired agreements (31 obs.) (see Appendix A Table A1).

The following control variables, denoted by X , measure wealth, trade relationships, and governance schemes. I divide GDP per capita of the host countries by GDP per capita of the Philippines to calculate a ratio for each country dyad. The natural log of host-to-Philippines GDP ratio is in the model to capture the relative wealth between the host and source countries. There

is evidence that workers migrate to countries with growing economies (Ghosh, 2013; Rass, 2012; Wickramasekara, 2015). A simple glance at the World Bank's GDP per capita indicator graph demonstrates the upward trend of global growth across the sample period. Overall, this does not provide much information. The ratio, however, gives some insight into how economies of host countries are growing relative to the Philippines.

The model contains national estimates of unemployment because this variable has a negative relationship with migration, according to Geis, Uebelmesser, and Werding (2008). Host countries with high levels of unemployment may be less likely to sign BLAs and may be less desirable destinations for OFWs. The model controls for population because it is correlated with both x and y . Population growth of developed countries is slowing because of aging and decreasing fertility while populations of developing nations are booming. This is the precise reason that countries like Canada, Germany, and Japan are recruiting Filipino nurses and careworkers via bilateral agreements. According to Brush and Sochalski, "[o]ver the past 60 years, the Philippines has led the world in preparing nurses explicitly for export to meet the demand for nurses in the United States and other developed nations" (2007, pp. 37-38).

To avoid omitted variable bias and improve the precision of the estimates, I include direction of trade statistics. Peters' study (2019) finds that country pairs are more likely to sign a BLA when they sign another economic or aid treaty in the same year. Furthermore, trade is correlated with migration (Campaniello, 2014; Uprety, 2019). Bilateral trading between all possible country dyads has increased from 13 percent in 1950 to 58 percent in 2014 (Ortiz-Ospina & Beltekian, 2018). Though there is still one-quarter of country pairs in a non-trade relationship and nearly 17 percent unilaterally trading, the effects of globalization on mutual export partnerships has been positive. Eaton and Kortum (2002) document a negative relationship between trade and distance, speaking to the strength of the Philippines' ability to trade with every country in the sample.

The regression includes a variable for the absolute value of the difference between the Polity2 score of the Philippines and the Polity2 score of the host country. Center for Systemic Peace (2020) rates countries on their level of democracy and then assigns an annual Polity score. The scores range from -10 (total autocracy) to 10 (consolidated democracy). The absolute value of the difference captures the governance scheme similarity of the country dyads across the sample period. The coefficient on the variable estimates the effect of the relative level of

democracy on migration flows of Filipinos and provides a test of whether OFWs migrate to host countries with political systems like their own in a given year.³ Polity affects both BLA conclusion and migration, thus it is critically important to the model to avoid omitted variable bias.

To proxy for a variety of country characteristics likely to attract migrants, such as strong health care systems, wages, education systems, and other goods and services which have a positive effect on migration, the model includes government spending (Böheim & Mayr, 2005; Dinbabo & Nyasulu, 2015; Geis et al., 2008). Migrants' preferences may differ based on their skill level and length of employment contract. Filipinos respond to labor market needs in both high- and low-skilled categories. The 2018 Survey of Overseas Filipinos reports nearly 75 percent of all OFWs holding low-skilled occupations (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019).

The model includes a set of region dummies to further control for variation and regional shocks across time. For consistency and replicability, I group countries using the World Bank's region classifications: East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, Middle East and Northern Africa, North America, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Model 3 interacts these region dummies with a time trend (Table 2).

2.4. Data

Table 2.1 presents summary statistics. The panel incorporates data from several publicly available databases and archival research of various treaties and diplomatic instruments, which I cross-reference with news sources when possible. The data begin in 1960, the first year of recorded migrant stock counts, and end in 2018, the most recent year for which data are available. The unit of analysis is a country and/or autonomous region, in which Filipinos are working (country i in time t), with a total sample size of 213 countries.

Despite the sporadic nature of the migrant stock data, there is still at least one observation for every country in the sample. Earlier estimates are from the Global Bilateral Migration Database which relies on states to report their own figures to the World Bank (Özden, Parsons, Schiff, & Walmsley, 2011). Migrant stock counts from 1997 to 2018 come directly from the POEA. Since implementing the Survey of Overseas Filipinos, the Philippine Statistics Authority

³ The difference in Polity2 scores without taking the absolute value is substituted for this variable as a robustness check discussed in section 5.1.

in collaboration with other government agencies collects and publishes more thorough and reliable data, resulting in consistent counts beginning in 1997. The Philippines does a remarkable job of ensuring that its migrant flow data contains only persons deployed for labor. The migrant stock variable does not contain permanent migrants who resettle in a new country nor does it contain refugees or asylum seekers.

Wealth and demographic related controls for this study—GDP per capita, unemployment rates,⁴ government spending, and population data, for both the Philippines and host countries—come from the World Bank’s Development Indicators database (World Bank Group, 2017). The World Bank does not report figures for Taiwan, so these data are from the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting, and Statistics (DGBAS) (Executive Yuan, 2020a, 2020b). Direction-of-Trade statistics are from the International Monetary Fund (2019).⁵ The Center for Systemic Peace maintains and updates The Polity Project annually; Polity2 scores are from the 2019 version. Region dummies use the World Bank’s region classifications.

Labor agreement data comes primarily from a recent review and content analysis for the Institute of Labor Studies, a division of DOLE, which identified 68 agreements (Mangulabnan & Daquio, 2019). I also chose to include an expired land-based agreement with Qatar and two sea-based BLAs because they all contain migrant worker language (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2013; POEA, 2016a; 2016b). Although some agreements may be missing, I offer the most comprehensive list for Philippine BLAs to date (see Table A1 of Appendix A). To cross-reference and get more information on the end dates for expired agreements, I conduct archival research using the Philippine Treaties Online database and sources hosted by ILO and the Center for Migration Advocacy. Data for BITs and trade treaties come from the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (World Bank Group, 2019) and the Investment Policy Hub of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2019).

⁴The World Bank’s source notes indicate that unemployment figures are national estimates reported to ILO. Definitions of labor force and unemployment differ by country.

⁵Three quarters of observations are missing one or more of the control variables. To maximize the sample size and prevent observations of the dependent variable from being dropped, the controls were extrapolated using *ipolate* and *epolate* commands in STATA. The extrapolated versions and their accompanying dummy variables were used for all regressions in this study. Dummy variable means can be found at the bottom of Table 1. Specific commands for replication are available in the supplementary .do file.

BIT is an indicator variable for the presence of an agreement. I identify 41 BITs between the Philippines and other countries, available in appendix Table A2. France and Germany each have two treaties, resulting in 39 unique country pairs. Thirty-four agreements are currently in force.⁶ Fifteen BIT country pairs overlap with BLA dyads.

The Correlates of War Project, in collaboration with Douglas Gibler from the University of Alabama, hosts a dataset for formal alliances that include mutual defense pacts, non-aggression treaties, and ententes between 1816 and 2012 (Gibler, 2009). This dataset serves as the primary source for the formal alliance instrumental variable, along with other archival, news, and government sources. The Philippines has far fewer formal alliances than BITs and BLAs. I located information for nine agreements, two of which are with the United States, resulting in eight unique dyads. Of those eight pairs, four also share BLAs. Seven agreements have been terminated leaving only two valid by the end of the sample period (United States, 1951; Jordan, 2018). The complete list is given in Appendix A Table A3.

⁶ The 1976 treaty with France was superseded by another in 1994. Five BITs have been signed, but are not in force (Cambodia, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, and Sweden), and the agreement with Lao has been signed but I was unable to verify if it is in force, not in force, or terminated. For the abovementioned six agreements, the onset version of the variable is used for consistency with the rest of the treaties for this variable which are valid through the end of the sample period.

Table 2. 1. Summary Statistics

	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Primary Variables</i>					
Migrants	1,685	33,649.47	188,752	0	2,700,000
BLA-real	12,862	0.036	0.186	0	1
BLA-onset	12,862	0.043	0.203	0	1
BIT	12,921	0.072	0.258	0	1
Alliance	12,921	0.012	0.111	0	1
<i>Controls</i>					
GDP Per Capita Phil.	59	1000.579	850.895	156.704	3102.713
GDP Per Capita Host	9,773	8167.732	16035.06	34.791	189170.9
GDP Per Capita Ratio	9,733	7.072	11.571	0.088	117.737
GDP pc Ratio Ex. ¹ (ln)	12,921	0.946	1.471	-2.432	4.768
Unemployment	3,804	8.105	6.231	0.05	57
Unemployment Ex. ²	12,921	8.639	6.312	0.05	57
Government Spending	7,901	15.951	7.251	0	135.809
Government Spending Ex. ³	12,921	17.142	8.039	0	135.809
Population	12,807	24,050,417	100,978,845	3893	1,392,730,000
Population Ex. ⁴ (ln)	12,921	14.763	2.434	8.267	21.055
Imports	6,096	244.712	1014.366	0.000019	21394.27
Imports Ex. ⁵ (ln)	12,921	-0.489	3.563	-10.871	9.971
Exports	6,977	169.576	866.987	2.001	13918.86
Exports Ex. ⁶ (ln)	12,921	-0.531	3.182	-13.122	9.541
Polity Scores Phil.	58	3.207	6.722	-9	8
Polity Scores Host	8,306	0.998	7.409	-10	10
Polity Scores Absolute Dif.	8,306	6.964	2.715	0	10
Polity Scores Dif. Ex. ⁷	12,921	6.873	2.441	0	10
<i>Regional Dummies</i>					
East Asia & Pacific	12,921	0.174	0.379	0	1
Europe & Central Asia	12,921	0.265	0.441	0	1
Latin America & Caribbean	12,921	0.196	0.397	0	1
Mid. East & Northern Africa	12,921	0.096	0.294	0	1
North America	12,921	0.014	0.116	0	1
South Asia	12,921	0.037	0.188	0	1
Sub Saharan Africa	12,921	0.219	0.414	0	1

¹ GDP per capita ratio extrapolate dummy mean = 0.244

² Unemployment extrapolated dummy mean = 0.711

³ Government Spending extrapolated dummy mean = 0.389

⁴ Population (ln) extrapolated dummy mean = 0.009

⁵ Imports (ln) extrapolated dummy mean = 0.528

⁶ Exports (ln) extrapolated dummy mean = 0.460

⁷ Policy Score Absolute Difference extrapolated dummy mean = 0.357

2.5. Results

The results of estimating equation (1) are presented in Table 2.2. The first column shows the OLS estimates, while columns 2 and 3 give the results of the instrumental variables estimation. All three models include a time trend, country fixed effects to control for unobserved heterogeneity between countries, and country clustered standard errors to adjust for serial correlation. Column 3 includes interaction terms between the region dummies and the time trend

which further control for region-specific time shocks that may impact migration. Examples include the Middle Eastern oil boom of the 1970s and the Asian financial crisis of 1997.

The coefficient on the variable of interest, *BLA*, maintains the expected positive sign in all three models, but the magnitude increases by 140 thousand migrants between models 1 and 3, after controlling for endogeneity. Reverse causality and omitted variable bias drive the underestimation in OLS, demonstrating the need for the IV approach. The coefficient on *BLA* is not statistically significant in any specification, indicating no evidence of a causal impact of BLAs on migration of Filipinos.

When I include regional time trend interactions unemployment and government spending experience a change in sign from negative in Model 2 to positive in Model 3. These variables are likely affected by unmeasured differences across regions and time such as natural hazards, conflict, policy agendas, and party control. All other signs remain consistent across the models.

The coefficients on GDP per capita ratio and exports are positive and significant at ten and five percent, respectively. These two explanatory variables are jointly significant at five percent ($p = 0.02$) demonstrating that economic conditions and relationship with the host countries matter to Filipino migrants. The coefficient on the GDP per capita ratio indicates that more OFWs are working in states with economies growing at a faster rate than the Philippines. In 2018 the Philippines GDP per capita fell in the bottom third of the global distribution with a value of \$3,103. Switzerland (\$82,839), Iraq (\$5,878), and Madagascar (\$461) represent high, medium, and low GDP per capita levels for the 2018 distribution. Dividing these countries' GDP per capita by that of the Philippines gives ratio values of 26.699 for Switzerland, 1.894 for Iraq, and 0.148 for Madagascar. Going from a poor economy like Madagascar to a medium-size economy like Iraq only increases the predicted number of OFWs by 1,779 which is 10 percent of the mean. Similarly, if a country moved to a Switzerland-level from a medium-size economy, the model suggests an 11.4 percent increase of OFWs. The GDP per capita ratio variable has an effect that is rather small in magnitude and is weakly significant.

The statistical significance of exports shows that migrants are likely to work in countries that receive Philippine goods. The lack of significance on imports suggests that a host country sending their goods to the Philippines does not have a causal link to migration. The coefficient suggests a one percent increase in exports corresponds to an increase of 41 migrants. For a tiny trading partner such as Palau, a one percent increase in exports is less than 20 thousand dollars.

A one percent increase for Singapore is 42 million dollars and 105 million dollars for the United States. All else equal, if a host country went from a Singapore-level to U.S.-level they would experience a 250 percent increase in exports from the Philippines corresponding with 10,338 more OFWs. If a small nation like Palau increases its Philippine exports to a Singapore-level, this change represents an approximate increase of 214 thousand percent or nearly 9 million more migrant workers. Considering there are currently 2.2 million OFWs around the globe, the shift in exports is massive for small trading partners but less impactful for larger host countries.

Table 2. 2. Effect of BLAs on Migrant Stock of Filipinos in Host Countries

Variables	(1) OLS	(2) IV	(3) IV
BLA (real)	12,310 (29,626)	208,470 (249,204)	152,194 (261,107)
GDP Per Capita Ratio	13,079* (7,819)	14,242* (7,340)	13,917* (8,287)
Unemployment	51.45 (1,020)	-30.94 (1,151)	618.8 (927.9)
Government Spending	-397.4 (915.5)	-438.3 (921.2)	24.88 (527.5)
Population (ln)	32,548 (19,992)	17,479 (17,182)	30,315 (18,487)
Imports (ln)	4,299* (2,268)	3,189 (2,532)	3,007 (1,852)
Exports (ln)	5,823** (2,646)	5,568* (3,015)	4,135** (1,999)
Polity Scores Difference	956.8 (1,654)	182.4 (2,377)	804.6 (2,645)
Year (time trend)	120.9 (593.3)	-191.5 (964.9)	-675.8 (1,432)
Euro Cen Asia*year			-11.40 (854.6)
Latin Am & Carib*year			-296.6 (1,214)
Mid East North Af*year			349.3 (800.5)
North America*year			15,662 (10,059)
South Asia*year			-235.7 (1,211)
Sub-Sah Africa*year			48.55 (1,331)
Observations	1,685	1,685	1,685
R-squared	0.041		
Countries	213	213	213

Robust (country clustered) standard errors in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects and dummies for extrapolated variables.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

2.5.1. Robustness Checks

Results from a series of robustness checks are available in Appendix B. Using the *onset* version of the BLA indicator variable instead of the *real* version produces qualitatively similar results. The results are also robust to redefining the instruments for the IV estimation. The first model in Table B2 uses BIT as the only instrument for BLA. This specification is nearly

identical to the main model (Table 2, Model 3), GDP per capita ratio and exports are still significant at ten percent and five percent, respectively. The second model in Table B2 presents estimates when formal alliance is the only instrument for BLA. There are no significant variables in this model and all the standard errors, except for unemployment, are inflated compared to the main model. For Model 3 of Table B2, the instrument is a single dummy variable for either a BIT or a formal alliance. The coefficients and standard errors are relatively similar to the main model. GDP ratio and exports keep their significance and population becomes significant at ten percent.

Allowing the difference in Polity2 scores to take on positive or negative values, rather than using the absolute value of this difference, changes the sign of the coefficient from negative to positive. The coefficient indicates that as the Polity score increases by one (becomes more democratic) there is an expected reduction of approximately 253 migrants. Labor demand, which is high in Middle Eastern countries that have low polity scores, likely drive this negative relationship rather than migrants seeking less democratic conditions. Redefining the polity variable leads to unremarkable change in other coefficients. Finally, since government spending is part of GDP and unemployment is a percentage of population, I conduct checks that remove the controls. Dropping them from the model independently or together leads to no change to signs or significance of the coefficients.

2.6. Conclusion

The BLA literature to date finds no effect of the agreements on migration (Chilton & Posner, 2018; Chilton & Woda, forthcoming; Peters, 2019). My identification strategy is novel and builds on the OLS, rare events logistic regressions, and event study analyses that precede it. I, too, find that there is not enough evidence to claim a causal effect of BLAs on migration of Filipino workers. These methodological and empirical contributions further strengthen the grounds for this conclusion.

Readers should interpret these results keeping data limitations in mind. Despite techniques such as extrapolation, sparse migrant stock counts between 1960 and 1996 reduce statistical power. POEA in partnership with the Philippine Statistics Authority publish the most consistent and reliable migrant stock counts beginning in 1997. Similarly, Chilton and Woda (forthcoming) use newly hired deployment data as an alternative to capture this effect, but it is only available from 1992 to 2016 which suggests nothing about the agreements from 1968 to

1991. Furthermore, The Philippine government does not sign these treaties at random which prevents researchers from creating experimental or fully randomized study designs.

Despite the null results, one should not assume that BLAs are purely symbolic policies. Many scholars document that agreements are signed for various reasons not modeled here. More empirical research is needed to test other potential effects of these labor agreements such as improving working conditions, streamlining screening and predeparture training, encouraging repatriation and remittance sending, and receiving non-migration related benefits. Efforts in these areas would constitute vital contributions to a scarce literature on BLAs. Until more quantitative and qualitative assessment is conducted, policymakers should remain skeptical that BLAs increase migration and call for further evaluation of these unique diplomatic tools.

2.7. References

- Aisbett, E. (2007). Bilateral Investment Treaties and Foreign Direct Investment: Correlation versus Causation. *UC Berkeley: Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics*.
- Allee, T., & Peinhardt, C. (2014). Evaluating three explanations for the design of bilateral investment treaties. *World Politics, 66*(1), 47-87.
- Amante, M. S. V. (2007). *Labor Dimension of the Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA)*: Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization.
- Ashton, D. N., & Maguire, M. J. (1984). Dual Labour Market Theory and the Organisation of Local Labour Markets. *International Journal of Social Economics, 11*(7), 106-120. doi:10.1108/eb013980
- Bangko Sentral Ng Pilipinas. (2020). *Overseas Filipinos' Cash Remittances By Country, By Source*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/statsearch0.asp?descmeta=remittance&descfield=All&submit=Search&do=yes>
- Berger, A., Busse, M., Nunnenkamp, P., & Roy, M. (2013). Do trade and investment agreements lead to more FDI? Accounting of key provisions inside the "black box". *International Economics and Economic Policy, 10*(2), 247-275.
- Blank, N. R. (2011). Making Migration Policy: Reflections on the Philippines' Bilateral Labor Agreements. *Asian Politics & Policy, 3*(2), 185-205.
- Böheim, R., & Mayr, K. (2005). Immigration and Public Spending. *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*.
- Brush, B. L., & Sochalski, J. (2007). International Nurse Migration: Lessons From the Philippines. *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice, 8*(1), 37-46. doi:10.1177/1527154407301393
- Campaniello, N. (2014). The Causal Effect of Trade on Migration: Evidence from Countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. *Labour Economics, 30*(C), 223-233.
- Carlos, M. R. D. (2002). On the Determinants of International Migration in the Philippines: An Empirical Analysis. *The International Migration Review, 36*(1), 81-102.
- Center for Migrant Advocacy. (2011). *Survey research on the effectiveness of the Household Service Workers (HSW) Policy Reform Package*. Retrieved from Manila:
- Center for Systemic Peace. (2020). The Polity Project. Retrieved from <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>
- Chilton, A., & Posner, E. (2018). Why Countries Sign Bilateral Labor Agreements. *Journal of Legal Studies, 47*(S1), 45-88.
- Chilton, A., & Woda, B. (forthcoming). The Effect of Bilateral Labor Agreements on Migration and Remittances: Evidence from the Philippines. *forthcoming*.
- Cottier, T., & Sieber-Gasser, C. (2015). Labour Migration, Trade and Investment: From Fragmentation to Coherence. In P. M., Z. G., & F. E. (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of International Labour Migration*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cuamea Velázquez, F. (2000). Approaches to the study of international migration: A review. *Estudios fronterizos, 1*(1), 137-168.
- Dinbabo, M. F., & Nyasulu, T. (2015). Macroeconomic immigration determinants: an analysis of 'Pull' factors of International migration to South Africa. *African Human Mobility Review Journal, 1*(1), 27-53.
- Disney, G., Wiśniowski, A., Forster, J. J., Smith, P. W. F., & Bijak, J. (2015). *Evaluation of existing migration forecasting methods and models*. Retrieved from Southampton, United Kingdom: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/467405/Migration_Forecasting_report.pdf
- Eaton, J., & Kortum, S. (2002). Technology, geography, and trade. *Econometrica, 70*(5), 1741-1779.
- Executive Yuan. (2020a). *A-1 Expenditures*. Taipei, Taiwan: Directorate General of Budget, Accounting, and Statistics (DGBAS).
- Executive Yuan. (2020b). *E-1 Labor Force & Employed*. Taipei, Taiwan: Directorate General of Budget, Accounting, and Statistics (DGBAS).
- Francisco-Menchavez, V. (2020). All in the Family: Transnational Families and Stepwise Migration Strategies. *Geographical Research*. doi:10.1111/1745-5871.12416
- Geis, W., Uebelmesser, S., & Werding, M. (2008). How do Migrants Choose their Destination Country? An Analysis of Institutional Determinants. *CESifo Working Paper, 2506*.
- Ghosh, B. (2013). The Global Economic Crisis and the Future of Migration: Issues and Prospects. *What Will Migration Look Like in 2045?* Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK.: Palgrave Macmillian.

- Gibler, D. M. (2009). *International military alliances, 1648-2008*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- Go, S. (2004). Fighting for the Rights of Migrant Workers: The Case of the Philippines. In OECD (Ed.), *Migration for Employment : Bilateral Agreements at a Crossroads* (pp. 187-202). Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD).
- Go, S. (2007). *Asian labor migration: The role of bilateral labor and similar agreements*. . Paper presented at the Regional Informal Workshop on Labor Migration in Southeast Asia: What Role for Parliaments, Manila, Philippines.
- Gordon, J. (2010). People are not bananas: How immigration differs from trade. *Northwestern University Law Review*, 104(3), 1109-1145.
- Hallward-Driemeier, M. (2003). Do bilateral investment treaties attract FDI? Only a bit and they could bite. . *World Bank Policy Research Paper*, WPS 3121.
- International Labour Organization. (1949). *R086 - Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised)*. Geneva: ILO Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R086.
- International Labour Organization. (2020). Labour Migration Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm>
- International Monetary Fund. (2019). *Direction of Trade Statistics*. Retrieved from: <http://data.imf.org/?sk=9D6028D4-F14A-464C-A2F2-59B2CD424B85>
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2013). *Country Migration Report: The Philippines 2013*. Retrieved from Makati City:
- James, S. B. (1997). The Social Adjustment and Coping Mechanisms of Filipino Migrant Workers in Nigeria. *Asian Migrant*, 10, 104-109.
- Kugler, M., & Rapoport, H. (2007). International labor and capital flows: Complements or substitutes? *Economics Letters*, 94, 155-162.
- Lockwood, K. (1999). The Philippines: Allies During the Vietnam War. *Vietnam Magazine*, June.
- Mangulabnan, B. P. M., & Daquio, C. R. O. (2019). A Review of Bilateral Labor Agreements Concluded by the Philippines with Countries of Destination: Toward a Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. *Philippines Journal of Labor Studies*, 1(1), 1-39.
- Mendoza, D. R. (2015). Human Capital: The Philippines' Labor Export Model. Retrieved from <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/insights/15998/human-capital-the-philippines-labor-export-model>
- Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (amended 2009), Republic Act No. 8042 (as amended by Republic Act No. 10022), Fourteenth Congress of the Philippines (Philippines 2009).
- Moraga, J. F.-H. (2008). *A General Model of Bilateral Migration Agreements*. Working Paper: 360. Barcelona Graduate School of Economics.
- Neumayer, E., Nunnenkamp, P., & Roy, M. (2016). Are stricter investment rules contagious? Host country competition for foreign direct investment through international agreements. *Review of World Economics*, 152, 177–213. doi:DOI 10.1007/s10290-015-0231-z
- Neumayer, E., & Spess, L. (2005). Do bilateral investment treaties increase foreign direct investment to developing countries? *World Development*, 33(10), 1567-1585.
- Oh, T. K. (1977). *The Asian brain drain : A factual and causal analysis*. San Francisco: R & E Research Associates.
- Ortiz-Ospina, E., & Beltekian, D. (2018). Trade and Globalization. Retrieved from <https://ourworldindata.org/trade-and-globalization>
- Özden, Ç., Parsons, C. R., Schiff, M., & Walmsley, T. L. (2011). Where on Earth is Everybody? The Evolution of Global Bilateral Migration 1960 to 2000. *World Bank Economic Review*, 25(1), 12-56.
- Özden, Ç., & Schiff, M. W. (2005). *International Migration, Remittances, and the Brain Drain* (Ç. Özden & M. W. Schiff Eds.). Washington D.C., Basingstoke: World Bank & Palgrave Macmillan
- Panizzon, M. (2010). International Law of Economic Migration: A Menage a Trois? GATS Mode 4, EPAs, and Bilateral Migration Agreements. *Journal of World Trade (Law-Economics-Public Policy)*, 44(6), 1207-1252.
- Peters, M. E. (2019). Immigration and International Law. *International Studies Quarterly*, 63, 281-295.
- Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). (2016a). Bilateral Labor Agreements (Landbased). Retrieved from <http://www.poea.gov.ph/laborinfo/BLB.html>
- Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). (2016b). Bilateral Labor Agreements (Seabased). Retrieved from <http://www.poea.gov.ph/laborinfo/BSB.html>
- Philippine Statistics Authority. (2019). Table 1.4 Distribution of Overseas Filipino Workers by Major Occupation Group, Sex and Area. Manila: Philippines Statistics Authority.

- Piore, M. J. (1971). The dual labor market: theory and implications. *na.*, 93-97.
- Punongbayan, J., & Mandrilla, K. (2016, March 5, 2016). Marcos years marked 'golden age' of PH economy? Look at the data. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/views/imho/124682-marcos-economy-golden-age-philippines>
- Rass, C. (2012). Temporary Labour Migration and State-Run Recruitment of Foreign Workers in Europe, 1919-1975: A New Migration Regime? *International Review of Social History*, 57(S20), 191-224.
- Ravenstein, E. G. (1885). The Laws of Migration. *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 48(2), 167-235. doi:doi:10.2307/2979181
- Sáez, S. (Ed.) (2013). *Let Workers Move : Using Bilateral Labor Agreements to Increase Trade in Services*. Washington D.C.: World Bank.
- Salacuse, J., & Sullivan, N. (2004). Do BITs really work? an evaluation of bilateral investment treaties and their grand bargain. *Harvard International Law Journal*, 46(1), 67-129.
- Santos, A. P. (2014). Philippines: A History of Migration. Retrieved from <https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/philippines-history-migration>
- Schultz, T. P. (1982). Lifetime Migration with Educational Strata in Venezuela: Estimates of a Logistic Model." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (pp. 559-593). Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Simmons, B. A. (2014). Bargaining over BITs, arbitrating awards: The regime for protection and promotion of international investment. *World Politics*, 66(1), 12-46.
- Sykes, A. O. (2013). International cooperation on migration: Theory and practice. *University of Chicago Law Review*, 80(1), 315-340.
- Tobin, J., & Rose-Ackerman, S. (2004). Foreign direct investment and the business environment in developing countries: The impact of bilateral investment treaties. . *Yale Law School Center for Law, Economics and Public Policy Research Paper*, 293.
- United Nations. (2019). *International Migration 2019 Report*. Retrieved from New York: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/InternationalMigration2019_Report.pdf
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2019). *Investment Policy Hub*. Retrieved from: <https://investmentpolicy.unctad.org/international-investment-agreements/countries/166/philippines>
- United Nations Foundation. (n.d.). Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from https://unfoundation.org/what-we-do/issues/sustainable-development-goals/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwhZr1BRCLARIsALjRVQPjY0SnC82ks5z_n-6V1puMNzyACg3HDWOn1188zwSNbYV9wkAE9oaAtM3EALw_wcB
- Uprety, D. (2019). The Impact of International Trade on Migration by Skill Levels and Gender in Developing Countries. *International Migration*. doi:10.1111/imig.12666
- Wickramasekara, P. (2015). *Bilateral Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding on Migration of Low Skilled Workers: A Review*. Retrieved from Geneva: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_385582.pdf
- World Bank Group. (2017). *World Development Indicators Database*. Retrieved from: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Philippines>
- World Bank Group. (2019). *Database of Bilateral Investment Treaties*. Retrieved from: <https://icsid.worldbank.org/en/Pages/resources/Bilateral-Investment-Treaties-Database.aspx#a5>
- Yackee, J. W. (2008a). Bilateral Investment Treaties, Credible Commitment, and the Rule of (International) Law: Do BITs Promote Foreign Direct Investment? *Law & Society Review*, 42(4), 805-832.
- Yackee, J. W. (2008b). Conceptual problems in the empirical study of bilateral investment treaties. *Brooklyn Journal of International Law*, 33(2), 405-462.
- Yackee, J. W. (2009). Do BITs Really Work? Revisiting the Empirical Link Between Investment Treaties and Foreign Direct Investment. In K. P. Sauvant & L. E. Sachs (Eds.), *The Effect of Treaties on Foreign Direct Investment: Bilateral Investment Treaties, Double Taxation Treaties, and Investment Flows* (pp. 379-394). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yackee, J. W. (2010). Do Bilateral Investment Treaties Promote Foreign Direct Investment? Some Hints from Alternative Evidence. *Virginia Journal of International Law*[Vol. 51:397, 51(2), 396-441.

2.8. Appendix A: Bilateral Agreements

Table A.1. Philippines Bilateral Labor Agreements Chronologically

Country	Date Signed	Country	Date Signed
United States*	12/28/1968	New Zealand*	11/04/2008
Papua New Guinea	03/14/1979	Qatar*	10/18/2008
Libya	10/18/1979	Japan*	01/12/2009
Qatar	05/05/1981	South Korea	05/30/2009
Jordan	11/05/1981	South Korea	05/20/2009
Iraq*	11/25/1982	Canada*	09/21/2010
Liberia	08/10/1985	Jordan	05/27/2010
Jordan	11/03/1988	Taiwan*	07/26/2011
Northern Marianna Islands	09/19/1994	Canada*	05/19/2012
Kuwait	09/14/1997	Jordan	01/29/2012
Qatar*	05/10/1997	Kuwait*	03/23/2012
Taiwan*	09/03/1999	Lebanon*	02/01/2012
Northern Mariana Islands*	12/18/2000	Lebanon*	02/01/2012
Norway	06/26/2001	Canada*	10/07/2013
Taiwan	01/12/2001	Germany*	03/19/2013
Switzerland*	07/09/2002	Papua New Guinea*	11/26/2013
United Kingdom	01/08/2002	Saudi Arabia*	05/19/2013
Bahrain*	12/15/2003	South Korea	04/08/2014
Indonesia*	01/18/2003	Switzerland	11/14/2014
Taiwan	03/20/2003	Canada*	05/08/2015
United Kingdom*	07/30/2003	Canada*	05/09/2015
South Korea	04/23/2004	Italy*	05/09/2015
Lao*	07/27/2005	Taiwan	08/03/2015
Saudi Arabia*	10/21/2005	New Zealand*	09/19/2015
South Korea	12/15/2005	Cambodia*	12/14/2016
Canada	12/18/2006	Japan*	11/21/2017
Libya*	07/17/2006	South Korea*	2017
Japan	09/09/2006	Saudi Arabia*	04/11/2017
South Korea	10/20/2006	United Arab Emirates*	09/12/2017
Spain*	06/25/2006	United Arab Emirates*	09/12/2017
Bahrain*	04/04/2007	China*	04/10/2018
United Arab Emirates	04/09/2007	Israel*	09/03/2018
Canada	01/29/2008	Israel*	09/03/2018
Canada	02/08/2008	Jordan*	09/06/2018
Canada	10/01/2008	Jordan*	09/06/2018
		Kuwait*	05/11/2018

* BLA is still valid

Table A.2. Bilateral Investment Treaties with the Philippines

Country	Date Signed	Country	Date Signed
Argentina	09/20/1999	Lao*	06/08/2007
Australia	01/25/1995	Mongolia	09/01/2000
Austria	04/11/2002	Myanmar	02/17/1998
Bahrain*	11/07/2001	Netherlands	02/27/1985

Bangladesh	09/08/1997	Pakistan	05/11/1999
Belgium-Luxembourg	01/14/1998	Portugal	11/08/2002
Cambodia*	08/16/2000	Romania	05/18/1994
Canada*	11/09/1995	Russia	09/12/1997
Chile	11/20/1995	Saudi Arabia*	10/18/1994
China*	07/20/1992	South Korea*	04/07/1994
Czech Republic	04/05/1995	Spain*	10/19/1993
Denmark	09/26/1997	Sweden	08/17/1999
Finland	03/25/1998	Switzerland*	03/31/1997
France	06/14/1976	Syria	11/25/2009
	09/13/1994		
Germany*	03/03/1964	Taiwan*	02/28/1992
	04/18/1997		
India	01/28/2000	Thailand	09/30/1995
Indonesia*	11/12/2001	Turkey	02/22/1999
Iran	10/08/1995	United Kingdom*	12/03/1980
Italy*	06/17/1988	Vietnam	02/27/1992
Kuwait*	12/03/2000		

* BLA with this country

Table A.3. Formal Alliances with the Philippines

Country	Start Year	End Year
Australia	1954	1977
France	1954	1974
Jordan*	2018	Still valid
New Zealand*	1954	1977
Pakistan	1954	1972
Thailand	1954	1977
United Kingdom*	1954	1977
United States of America*	1951	Still valid
United States of America	1954	1977

* BLA with this country

Table A.4. Variables

Variables	Form	Source
<i>Independent</i>		
BLA	Dummy	Mangulabnan & Daquio (2019)
<i>Dependent</i>		
Migrant Stock	# of persons	Philippine Overseas Employment Agency
<i>Instruments</i>		
BIT	Dummy	ICSID & UNCTAD databases
Formal Alliance	Dummy	Correlates of War Project database
<i>Controls</i>		
GDP pc Host	Current USD, ln	World Development Indicators
GDP pc Phil.	Current USD, ln	World Development Indicators
GDP pc ratio	Natural log ratio ln(host/Ph)	

Unemployment	% of total labor force (national ests.)	World Development Indicators
Gov. Spending	% of GDP	World Development Indicators
Population Host	# of persons, ln	World Development Indicators
Population Phil.	# of persons, ln	World Development Indicators
Imports	USD millions, ln	International Monetary Fund
Exports	USD millions, ln	International Monetary Fund
Polity2 Host	Polity 2 score	Center for Systemic Peace
Polity2 Source	Polity 2 score	Center for Systemic Peace
Polity2 Difference	Absolute difference	

2.9. Appendix B: Robustness Checks

Table B.1. Effect of BLA-Onset on Migrant Stock of Filipinos in Host Countries

Variables	(1) OLS	(2) IV	(3) IV
BLA (onset)	13,671 (30,270)	225,161 (270,067)	174,313 (302,610)
GDP Per Capita Ratio	13,216 (8,064)	16,480** (7,097)	15,976* (8,251)
Unemployment	55.63 (1,013)	40.25 (1,169)	665.4 (915.9)
Government Spending	-379.9 (884.7)	-148.9 (1,182)	244.9 (826.7)
Population (ln)	32,137 (20,422)	11,162 (19,903)	26,298 (22,172)
Imports (ln)	4,303* (2,281)	3,291 (2,508)	3,179 (1,958)
Exports (ln)	5,841** (2,673)	5,864** (2,903)	4,458** (2,048)
Polity Scores Difference	987.7 (1,712)	713.8 (2,193)	1,076 (2,427)
Year (time trend)	110.3 (577.6)	-356.1 (1,140)	-880.7 (1,782)
Euro Cen Asia*year			-58.25 (814.8)
Latin Am & Carib*year			-153.1 (1,462)
Mid East North Af*year			62.91 (923.5)
North America*year			15,644 (10,044)
South Asia*year			-39.98 (1,546)
Sub-Sah Africa*year			170.9 (1,558)
Observations	1,685	1,685	1,685
R-squared	0.04		
Countries	213	213	213

Robust (country clustered) standard errors in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects and dummies for extrapolated variables. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table B.2. Single Instrument Checks for Effect of BLA on Migrant Stock

Variables	(1) BIT	(2) Alliance	(3) BIT & Alliance
BLA (real)	152,011 (279,322)	154,929 (462,103)	152,229 (257,964)
GDP Per Capita Ratio	13,915* (8,121)	13,949 (12,286)	13,917* (8,322)
Unemployment	618.9 (935.3)	616.7 (903.1)	618.7 (926.5)
Government Spending	25.02 (518.4)	22.65 (783.9)	24.85 (529.4)
Population (ln)	30,322 (18,958)	30,215 (21,685)	30,314* (18,404)
Imports (ln)	3,007 (1,875)	3,000 (1,941)	3,007 (1,847)
Exports (ln)	4,134** (1,976)	4,144 (2,935)	4,135** (2,004)
Polity Scores Difference	805.6 (2,733)	789.4 (2,971)	804.4 (2,629)
Year (time trend)	-674.9 (1,515)	-689.7 (2,440)	-676.0 (1,418)
Euro Cen Asia*year	-11.92 (904.8)	-3.602 (1,334)	-11.30 (845.8)
Latin Am & Carib*year	-297.4 (1,301)	-284.2 (2,037)	-296.5 (1,198)
Mid East North Af*year	349.7 (802.2)	343.4 (1,400)	349.2 (800.9)
North America*year	15,663 (10,098)	15,653 (9,595)	15,662 (10,051)
South Asia*year	-236.5 (1,295)	-223.3 (2,069)	-235.5 (1,196)
Sub-Sah Africa*year	47.64 (1,421)	62.25 (2,323)	48.73 (1,316)
Observations	1,685	1,685	1,685
Countries	213	213	213

Robust (country clustered) standard errors in parentheses. All models include country fixed effects and dummies for extrapolated variables. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

3. Article 2—Social Constructions of Overseas Filipino Workers Facing Exploitation: An Automated Content Analysis

Abstract

This research applies the social construction and policy design framework to the Philippines' first migrant workers' protection policy to understand the government's distribution of benefits to overseas Filipinos in distress. By using novel machine learning methods to analyze content automatically from 2,503 media articles across a 25-year span, the findings suggest migrant workers are positively socially constructed, have low-to-moderate levels of power, endure a multitude of problems, and are offered solutions, albeit sometimes ineffective ones. Besides the empirical findings and interdisciplinary methods employed, this essay offers two theoretical contributions. First, I argue for global expansion of applications based on a nation's level of democracy, urging researchers who may be cautious of the 'developing world' to explore the contributions non-Euro-American analysis can make to theoretical tenets. Second, I present a transparent, empirical operationalization of power and deservedness. Wider adoption of such a strategy will continue to improve the framework's explanatory capability.

Keywords: Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), distress, abuse, social constructions, natural language processing (NLP), policy benefits

Acknowledgments

This research is dedicated to Agnes Mancilla, Agnes Tenorio, Angelo de la Cruz, Aurora Gormante, Billy Joseph Enriquez, Carlito Lana, Constanca Lago Dayag, Dondon Lanuza, Edward Anthony de Guzman, Elda Longakit Yoneda, Elizabeth Batain, Estrella Paala, Eugenia Baja, Evelyn Milo, Freddie Yoro, Hazel Puebles, Honiefaith Ratilla Kamiosawa, Irma Martinez, Jakatia Pawa, Jeanelyn Villavende, Jeffery Alberto So, Jenelyn Padayao, Jhias Gumapac, Joanna Demafelis, Jocelyn Dulnuan, Joven Esteva, Joy Parafina, Mariane David, Maricel (alias), Marilyn Restor, Marina Sarno, Marivic Badenas, Mary Jane Veloso, Merriner Bartoces, Michelle Obedencio, Milagros Sumaculob, Mitos Vergara, Myrna Baylosis, Norayda Ayuman, Procopio de la Cruz, Ramon Credo, Realyn Orio, Remedios Waayan, Rochelle Masubay, Roderick Miranda, Rose Dacanay Policarpio, Rosita Santiago, Ruben Valenzuela, Sally Ordinario-Villanueva, Sar Balabagan, Sarah Balabagan, Saunar Loyola, Sharon Baltao, Willy Catian and all other Filipinos not named here, who cross oceans, leaving behind loved ones, to provide a better tomorrow.

The data analyzed in these pages are their stories. The arguments within are only possible because of their lived experiences. While the atrocities committed against them will never define who they are/were, this essay bears witness to their toil, hardships, and exploitation. I hope that this academic research can be of service to the political struggle, so their sacrifices were never in vain.

3.1. Introduction

This paper uses Social Construction and Policy Design (SCPD) to analyze the distribution of benefits and burdens to Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) since the implementation of the first migrant workers' protection policy. Specifically, I focus on the feed-forward effects and map the ways OFWs, as a target group, express power and are socially constructed by the media. This a priori automated content analysis offers insights into the problems faced by migrant workers and their government's response to their needs.

As the first national law to outline the rights and protections of OFWs, the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 was truly a landmark piece of legislation. Though, its arrival was quite delayed in the eyes of the migrant workers. The Philippines has been a source of migrant labor for centuries. The government formalized the practice of commercial emigration through the 1974 Labor Code to ease domestic unemployment pressure. Since then, the government has honed its practice of exporting citizens and importing remittances. Today the process is efficient and lucrative with remittance capital reaching an all-time high of 13 percent of the nation's GDP in 2017 (Bangko Sentral Ng Pilipinas, 2020). Unfortunately, the lived realities and working conditions of these laborers are not always ideal, sometimes less than humane.

In 1995, Flor Contemplacion, a Filipina domestic worker, was tried, convicted, and executed in Singapore on charges of murdering her employer's son and another Filipina worker. Her capital punishment spurred international protests. Filipinos across the diaspora accused their government of failing to intervene to spare her life or provide her adequate legal counsel. In response, the Ninth Congress of the Philippines passed Republic Act No. 8042, better known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995. This piece of legislation lays out all the protections for and "promotes the welfare of migrant workers, their families and overseas Filipinos in distress, and for other purposes" ("*Republic Act No. 8042*," 1995).

As a result of decades of misappropriation, economic stagnation, and band-aid solutions, OFWs and the State are in a codependent relationship. Migrant workers need the government to continue brokering foreign labor markets, facilitating visas, and covering certain costs. The State depends on OFWs sending remittances back to the Philippines, which it uses as part of its development strategy. Rodriguez (2010, p. 79) observes, "The promise of 'rights' in particular is a strategy by which the state tries to normalize emigration. It is a means by which the state attempts to

reassure would-be migrants that though they may face uncertain futures in unfamiliar places, they can enjoy the entitlements of an expanded Philippine citizenship encoded in laws like RA 8042.”

SCPD is well suited to analyze the OFW-government relationship because the theory recognizes that policy is not an objective and rational decision-making process, rather it is imbued with perceptions of a group's deservedness. Beginning with the assumption of OFWs positive construction in the policy text, I graph media presentations of the groups' merit and their political power expressions to solicit government aid during times of distress. By using novel methods to distill 25 years of content published in 2,503 articles and arrive at empirical findings, this essay argues for the adoption of automation in policy studies. There are two theoretical contributions offered as well. I call for an expansion of global applications of SCPD based on a nation's level of democracy, measured by Polity scores, rather than maintaining the assumption that developing economies are unsuitable research sites incapable of theoretical refinement. And I propose an operationalization of social constructions and power that is empirically measured and ranked. This tool, I hope, will be taken up by the scholarly community and further sharpened.

I proceed with the following sections. Section 2 summarizes the theoretical framework, the context in which I apply it, and the target group and subgroups analyzed. Section 3 describes my research design, introduces automated content analysis assisted by natural language processing and machine learning, and argues for its use in policy studies. In section 4, I introduce the dataset for this study. Section 5 presents graphical results of my power and deservedness operationalization, plotting the representations of the target group from 2,503 media articles. Section 6 discusses major findings and provides context to the problems and solutions. In section 7, I offer recommendations geared towards data-driven decision making and increased accountability. Finally, section 8 discusses the major arguments, presents limitations, calls for further research, and concludes.

3.2. Social Construction and Policy Design

Social construction and policy design extends the Lasswellian notions of who benefits and who loses from policy (Ingram, et al. 2007; Smith and Larimer 2016). Schneider and Ingram (1997) posit that public policy benefits certain groups while simultaneously marginalizing others. Social construction challenges the reductionist tradition of the social sciences and provides alternatives to the view that all social and political conditions are objective and empirical (Ingram, et al. 2007). Moreover, it extends conceptions of policy design beyond 'rational' and 'efficient' (Howlett 2014). The theory has eight assumptions divided into three categories—the

model of the individual, power, and political environment—and two major propositions, target group and feed-forward (Pierce, et al. 2014). Target group is further divided into four groups that Schneider and Ingram (1997) have termed advantaged, contenders, dependents, and deviants. These four categories make up a two-by-two matrix with political power (high and low) represented on the y-axis and social constructions or perceived deservedness (positive or negative) on the x-axis.

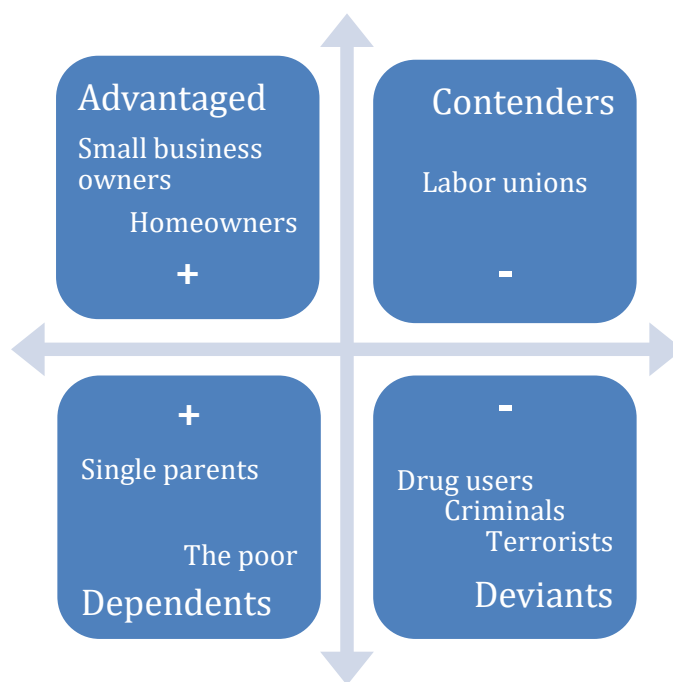


Fig. 3.1. Target Group Matrix (Adapted from Ingram et al., 2007)

This framework also contains notions of policy design and its impact on target groups. The feed-forward proposition acknowledges that there are nine observable design elements and “these elements have underlying patterns of logic that cause tangible consequences along instrumental or interpretive dimensions that may lead to the distribution of benefits to some and burdens to others” (Pierce et al., 2014, p. 6). Schneider and Ingram (1997) argue that policy influences politics, which in turn shapes policy, and so on in a cyclical nature.

SCPD was developed in the U.S. by American scholars and has largely been applied to American policy issues such as urban housing (Sidney, 2001), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Fording, et al., 2011), and federal assistance for small businesses (Anglund, 1998). Pierce et al. (2014) identified 111 applications and 12 theory-building publications for social

construction published between 1993 and 2013, with the sharpest increase since 2008. However, only 15 percent of the identified SCPD publications considered international policy issues (Pierce et al., 2014). The theory's non-U.S. applications include Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (Pierce et al., 2014). These articles span 80 academic journals and 25 books or book chapters. The aforementioned meta-review proves that there is growing interest in SCPD among public policy and interdisciplinary researchers. The next section argues why the Philippines is a suitable context for SCPD and calls for global expansion of the framework's applications based on a nation's level of democracy, not development.

3.2.1. Context: Philippines

The context for this study is the Philippines. As a result of historic occupation, the Philippine government is modeled after the U.S. government and has a President, Vice President, and a bicameral Congress. The nation is a democratic republic, making it suitable for SCPD since a strong democracy is a keystone of the theory. The shortage of applications in the *developing world* or *Global South* may suggest that developing nations lack strong democracies, and subsequently, are not appropriate study sites for SCPD. This is not the case.

Polity scores are well-regarded measures of "authority characteristics of states in the world system" (Center for Systemic Peace, 2020) and are widely used in comparative research in political science, policy studies, and international relations. Polity scores range from -10 (strongly autocratic) to +10 (strongly democratic). In 2017, the United States received a Polity score of eight. Since SCPD is a U.S.-centric theory, a score of eight seems to be a reasonable baseline to argue a nation's democracy is strong enough to apply all assumptions, categories, and propositions of the theory.

Development status, on the other hand, is determined by the strength of a state's economy. The United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) report classifies states into three categories (developed economies, economies in transition, and developing economies) based on their per capita gross national income (GNI) (UN/DESA, 2017). The World Bank uses income groupings (low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high) also calculated by per capita GNI in U.S. dollars. Despite using the same measure to create a baseline, there are 16

“high income” countries⁷ (World Bank Group, 2019) classified as “developing economies” by WESP (Appendix C, Table C3).

There are 32 “developing economies” as classified by WESP, with a 2017 Polity score of eight or higher (Appendix C, Table C3). Notably, the Philippines earned the same score as the U.S. (Center for Systemic Peace, 2020). All 34 of the WESP “developed economies” scores range from eight-ten (Appendix C, Table C1). However, 60 percent of the “economies in transition” miss the mark, many even earning scores for strong autocracies (Appendix C, Table C2). This not only signals that they would not be ideal locations for SCPD studies, but that measures of development are less useful for this theory since their classification systems use arbitrary cutoff points and fail to account for states’ form of government in any way. Policy studies, as a discipline, needs more SCPD applications outside of North America and Europe to expand and refine the theory’s explanatory power.

3.2.2. Target Groups: Overseas Filipino Workers

OFWs are the primary target group for RA 8042. They are constructed as “deserving migrant workers,” “highly-skilled,” “professionals,” and are recognized for their “significant contributions” to the national economy. Women as a subgroup in the policy are positively recognized for their role in “nation-building” and considered in need of special protections due to their “particular vulnerabilities.” Section 2(d) reads, “The State shall apply gender sensitive criteria in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs affecting migrant workers” (RA 8042, 1995). Since the target and subgroups are positively constructed, a SCPD lens suggests they will receive benefits rather than burdens. The framework also suggests that their level of power will determine whether they receive actual or symbolic policy benefits. To predict and test benefit distribution by the state, I must first figure out where OFWs are represented on the matrix.

SCPD has been critiqued for lacking a “detailed conceptualization of what constitutes power and how it can be empirically tested” (Sievers and Jones, 2020, p. 99). Some recent contributions are offered by Weible, Siddiki, and Pierce (2011), Valcore (2018), and Schneider and Ingram (2019). The first used a questionnaire to solicit power and construction evaluations from respondents then plotted target groups at three points in time, demonstrating their

⁷ WESP rankings from 2017 were compared to fiscal year 2017-2018 World Bank income groups.

movement (Weible, et al., 2011). Valcore (2018) operationalized the political power of gays and lesbians as a target group by counting front-page mentions in state and local newspapers. In their analysis of the bills passed by the 2016 Arizona Legislature, Schneider and Ingram (2019, p. 214) divide power into five levels and consider expressions to be, “size of the group, voting potential, mobilization potential, legal rights, strength and size of advocacy groups, allies who are likely to take up their cause, compatibility with their own belief systems, connections to national advocacy groups, ability to raise money, and general absence of organized opposition.”

This article seeks to both operationalize power and deservedness in a way that is transparent, can be applied to other target groups, and can be refined through future use. This contribution is critical for theoretical development because it permits researchers to pinpoint a target group’s location on the matrix at a given point, track temporal movement, and predict the future of policy stasis or change for that group. The following sections present the steps, manual and automated, required to arrive at an empirical graphical representation of OFWs on the matrix.

3.3. Automated Content Analysis

Textual content analysis is a common research method used in combination with SCPD theory (Pierce et al., 2014). Written and oral texts provide rich sources to extract target group conceptualizations. However, the method is resource intensive, often demanding large budgets or long timelines; otherwise, the results are limited in scope. Another weakness of manual textual analysis is the infusion of researcher bias. Humans are imprecise beings who filter data through our brains using heuristics that rely on our cultural contexts and lived experiences. Even the most experienced researchers will have inconsistencies in their coding schemes. The traditional workaround has been the use of inter-coder reliability scores where several researchers code the same content and compare findings to ensure reliable results (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991). Improved guidelines and research standards have reduced bias, but coder agreement issues and time and intensity burdens remain.

To overcome these weaknesses, I use automated content analysis facilitated by Natural Language Processing (NLP) and machine learning. Specifically, I use an NLP text annotation tool, tagtog (Cejuela and Campos, 2021), to train a supervised learning model and run it on the corpus. Machine learning harnesses a computer’s ability to process, retrieve, and make decisions about vast amounts of data. NLP, a subdiscipline of computer science and linguistics, gives

machines the ability to understand human languages that do not follow the same rules as a programmer's code (Clark, et al., 2013).

NLP offers researchers the opportunity to analyze vast amounts of data (e.g., thousands of documents)⁸ in a fraction of the time it would take a human coder to review. Automated content analysis also reduces researcher bias and inconsistencies by using algorithms to achieve higher accuracy (Brill and Mooney, 1997). Though there are significant resource-freeing advantages to automation, the method comes with tradeoffs between accuracy, precision, and recall, considered below.

Accuracy is the number of correct predictions divided by the total number of predictions. High accuracy is often preferable, but it is problem dependent. A model may be 99 percent accurate, but a type II error could mean a grave error, such as failing to identify cancer. Data scientists prefer to weigh precision and recall in their models depending on the task.

$$Accuracy = \frac{True\ Positive + True\ Negative}{True\ Positive + False\ Positive + False\ Negative + True\ Negative}$$

Precision is calculated as the number of true positives divided by true positives plus false positives. This is a good measure when the cost of a false positive is high. Examples of systems that call for high precision are search engines and spam filter algorithms. These applications depend on high precision so valuable information is not overlooked. Recall equals the number of true positives divided by true positives plus false negatives, or total actual positives. Recall is a preferred model metric when the cost of a false negative is high. Legal discoveries and virus testing are two examples of applications that require high recall rates to operate effectively.

$$Precision = \frac{True\ Positive}{True\ Positive + False\ Positive}$$

$$Recall = \frac{True\ Positive}{True\ Positive + False\ Negative}$$

Adjusting models to achieve desired outcomes is a balancing act. When precision or recall increases, the other measure will decrease. Researchers have the option to apply weights to

⁸ The scale is only limited by the resources available to the machine.

precision and/or recall prioritizing one over the other. However, it is more common to achieve a balanced harmonic mean measured by the F_1 Score. An F measure ranges from 0 to 1 and cannot be very high if either precision or recall is low. Calculating the F_1 gives researchers insight into how to better train their model. For content analysis, this process will indicate words or phrases (i.e., entities) of which the model needs more examples.

$$F_1 = 2 * \frac{PR}{(P + R)}$$

3.3.1. Training the Model

I began by importing the raw text of RA 8042 into tagtog and preceded with open-and-closed rounds of coding to determine the entities of interest. From this process, I established 12 entity types which include: *government, problems, solutions/benefits, policy, labor, women, remittances, OFW positive, OFW neutral, OFW negative, power embassy, and power democracy*.⁹ The positive, neutral, and negative codes are derived from SCPD while the power categories, informed by the theoretical notions of political power, ultimately emerged from the policy text itself (Palmer and Xue, 2013).

Next, I assembled a purposive sample of 75 articles from 29 unique media outlets that featured reporting on OFWs and the abuse or exploitation they experience while working abroad. These articles served as my training set for the model but are not included in the analysis since I collected them with different sampling techniques from the corpus. Four additional power codes emerged from the training set and are tagged as *individual action, collective action, legal, and digital activism*.

tagtog is designed for users who do not know computer languages and would not otherwise be able to run their NLP models in Python or R. Its machine learning is a stepwise process wherein each article uploaded to the program is automatically annotated. I reviewed all automatic codes, corrected type I and type II errors, and confirmed the documents, which retrained the model using a supervised machine learning reinforcement. After completing these steps for all 75 articles in my training set, the model was performing with 90 percent precision and 65 percent recall giving me an F_1 score of 0.75. These scores are appropriate for the

⁹ More details can be found in the codebook in Appendix B.

application of SCPD to the dataset. I desired higher precision and could accept a lower amount of recall because the corpus contained some redundant information the model would still capture.

3.4. Data

Perceived deservedness and political power are distilled from media articles. Mass media content is an excellent source of data for applying SCPD because media shapes both individual and collective identities Schram 2005, Gauntlett 2008, Dunn 2018. I use digital newspaper articles from 1995 to 2020 to analyze the feed-forward proposition of the theory. Beginning with the assumption that OFWs are positively constructed and deserving of protections at the time the legislation was passed, I use the media articles to measure shifting constructions, political power, and the government's response to citizens in distress (i.e., distribution of benefits).

The search parameters for sourcing media articles were determined from the policy text. I generated a word count list for RA 8042. Since the policy focus is migrant workers' protection, it is not surprising that terms related to benefits appear more frequently in the text than terms describing problems. For example, *legal* is in the policy 31 times and *assistance* appears 24 times, while *distress* and *abuse* occur six and two times, respectively. Other notable word frequencies include recruitment (25), fund (24), rights (19), welfare (18), repatriation (13), protection (12).

I used the Gale OneFile News database with the following search terms to pull articles for analysis. All results were in English with occasional Tagalog quotations.

1. "overseas filipino workers" AND "abuse" (entire document) = 979
2. "overseas filipino workers" AND "distress" (entire document) = 394
3. "overseas filipino workers" AND "assistance" (both as keywords)¹⁰ = 1,299
4. "overseas filipino workers" AND "legal" (both as keywords) = 216

The files were downloaded and saved in folders separated by search term. This process facilitated the removal of duplicates, leaving 2,686 articles.

1. "overseas filipino workers" AND "abuse" (entire document) = 919
2. "overseas filipino workers" AND "distress" (entire document) = 368
3. "overseas filipino workers" AND "assistance" (both as keywords) = 1,193
4. "overseas filipino workers" AND "legal" (both as keywords) = 206

I then uploaded these files into tagtog to establish a corpus. The software automatically detects duplications, prompting the user to remove them, which further reduced the corpus from

¹⁰ Legal and assistance return over 7,000 results when I selected entire document. Results were likely to be more relevant when the terms were keywords.

2,686 articles to 2,655 unique texts. The files were uploaded in batches, giving the machine learning an opportunity to run the model on each batch. After all the articles were uploaded, I needed to determine inclusion and exclusion criteria for the study.

I used a count of the total number of codes per article in the training set to create upper and lower bounds of what should be expected in my corpus. The maximum was 205, the minimum was 10, and the average was 49. Though most media articles are short, ten codes seemed quite low for a cutoff point, so I considered the second lowest from the training set, 18. I then sorted the corpus into groups, >205, <10, and 10-17 codes for human review. There were six articles with greater than 205 codes, of which only two mentioned OFWs in distress and were kept. There were 42 articles with less than 10 codes, 10 of which met the criteria. Of the largest group for human review consisting of 237 articles with a number of codes between 10 and 17, 121 were relevant to the study and remained in the corpus. This process allowed me to review 285 articles, approximately ten percent of the total files, and finalize the complete corpus with 2,503 unique media articles from 1995 to 2020.

3.5. Graphing the Target Group

Once the corpus was annotated, I had 2,532 instances of neutral constructions, 1,050 positive constructions, and 246 negative constructions. Since *OFW negative* was a small group, I manually reviewed all the text the model coded with this entity. Ten categories emerged from this review and I assigned negative values on an ordinal scale (Appendix B Table B1). I repeated the same process with a representative sample of *OFW positive* codes, and 17 categories surfaced from the data. These categories were ranked and assigned positive values on the ordinal scale. *OFW neutral* codes were assigned a zero value. The x-axis, deservedness, measures the social constructions of OFWs in media articles from murderer (-10) to national hero (+17).

The six power codes were ranked (value 6 to 1) by their frequency in the corpus (Appendix B Table B2). From greatest to least, they are *collective action* (965), *legal* (676), *embassy* (456), *digital activism* (146), *individual action* (138), and *democracy* (111). Following Schneider and Ingram (2019, p. 214) I consider these strategies to be “additive and reinforcing;” in many cases, more than one power expression appears within an article (e.g., collective action and legal, $5 + 6 = 11$). When this occurred, the respective values were added together to plot them, resulting in a y-axis from 0 to 21.

With the ordinal scales in place, I manually reviewed each of the 2,503 articles to assign them coordinates and plot them on the matrix (Figure 3.2). Since social construction codes are not additive and reinforcing like power, I selected the highest value present in each article when there was more than one. Articles at the origin contain neutral constructions of deservedness and no power expressions are present in the text. However, problems and solutions are still likely to be annotated.

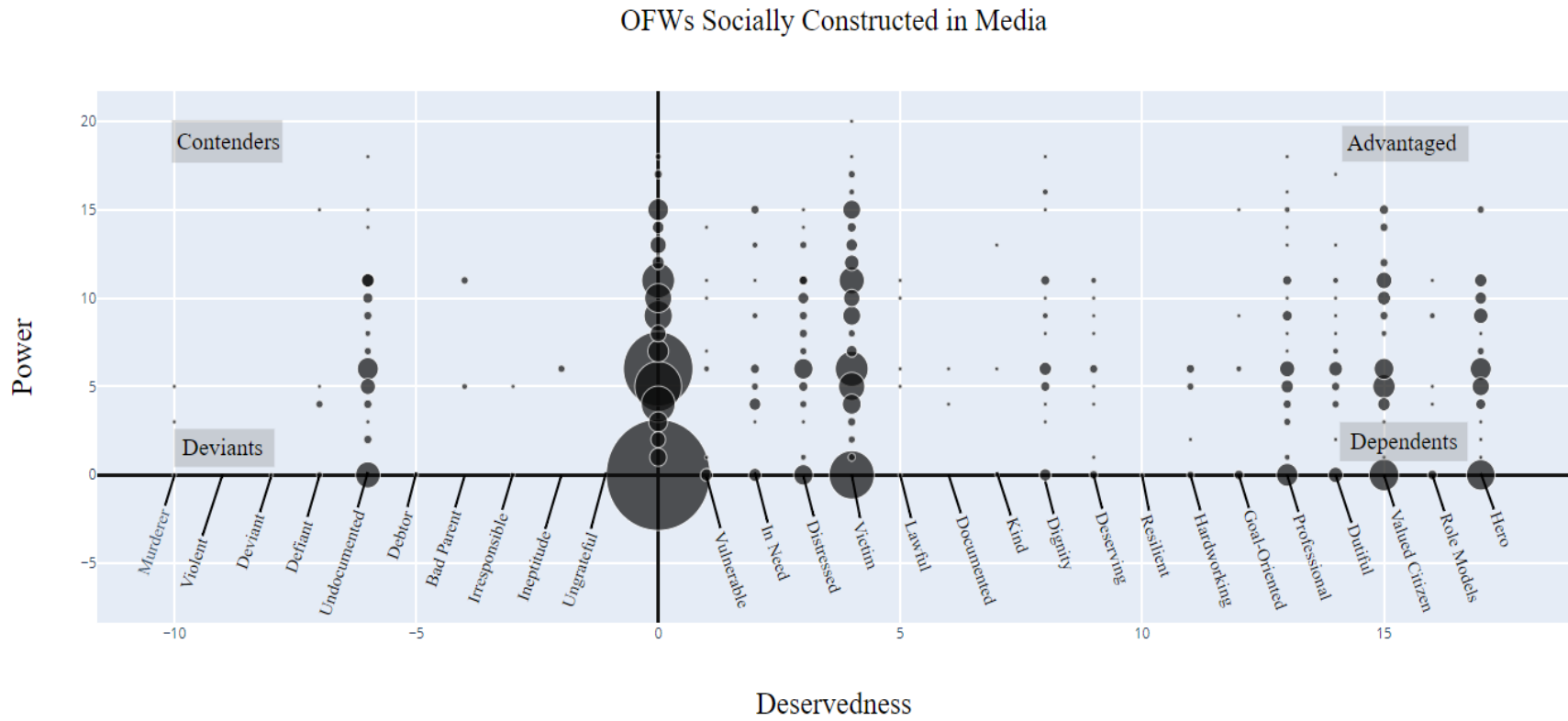


Fig. 3.2. Graphical representation of power and deservedness expressions from 2,503 media articles published between 1995 and 2020.

3.6. Findings

In the past 25 years, OFWs have been overwhelmingly constructed in a positive way by the media. They exercise low-to-moderate levels of political power. SCPD suggests they would receive symbolic benefits, as opposed to real, based on their “dependent” status. I found evidence of both types in the texts, but realized benefits (e.g., repatriation, economic support, and legal services) occur most often.

It is critical to keep in mind that the findings in this study may not accurately represent reality. The data are derived from media articles. Mass media is known to sensationalize content to attract traffic. This may distort the frequencies of problems and solutions reported relative to actual lived cases (Schram, 2005; Vista, 2015). Philippine embassies and consulates do report issues to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA); however, it is unclear if the information is collected systematically. Further, there is no publicly available repository for the data. While that would be superior, media perceptions should not be discounted as illegitimate. Citizens and politicians alike internalize media messages, which shape our constructed realities and impact our engagement with institutions (Dunn, 2018; Gauntlett, 2008).

3.6.1. Problems

The model coded 7,968 instances of problems, which I grouped into 19 categories (Table 1). The most frequently mentioned problem is abuse. OFWs have been subjected to physical beatings, starvation, sleep deprivation, and unsafe working conditions, often at the hands of their employers. In 2018, DFA filed a torture case on behalf of Agnes Mancilla whose Saudi employer forced her to drink household bleach (Esmaguél, 2018). Stories like hers are incredibly common (Table 1). In October 2020, Philippine Ambassador to Brazil, Marichu Mauro, was caught on video assaulting her domestic helper, a fellow Filipina. This is not the only case of a diplomat abusing a compatriot.

Table 3.1. Problems OFWs Experience Abroad

Problems	All	Women	Other
abuse	1946	1234	712
criminal justice	1340	617	723
distress	915	343	572
death	894	540	354
pandemic	568	75	493
human trafficking	514	290	224
stranded	487	108	379
sexual assault	434	340	94
financial - personal	248	83	165
financial	125	42	83
civil conflict	115	39	76
injury - illness	114	41	73
mental health	69	31	38
discrimination	63	32	31
documents withheld	50	28	22
suicide	31	23	8
kidnapped	27	9	18
misappropriation	21	9	12
natural disaster	7	0	7
Total	7968	3884	4084

Note. Emphasis added to highlight problems disproportionately higher for women relative to men and mixed groups.

OFWs' second most frequent problems are brushes with their host country's criminal justice systems. The model coded criminal justice issues 1,340 times across the corpus. This is not surprising considering that a 2017 article reported nearly 4,000 Filipinos were being held in jail cells in 52 countries, some 130 of them on death row (Merez, 2017). Death is the fourth most frequent issue written about in the corpus. The demise of migrant workers has been the result of natural causes (at sea); terrorist bombings (Iraq, Yemen); accidental explosions and workplace mishaps (Lebanon, UAE); and at the hands of a partner (Japan, Kuwait), an employer (Canada, Kuwait), or another state's judicial system (China, Singapore, Saudi Arabia). Elda Longakit Yoneda and Honiefait Ratilla Kamiosa were killed by the same Japanese man nine years apart. Only parts of Honiefait's dismembered body were found scattered around Tokyo in suitcases (Santos, 2009).

Since RA 8042 considers women to have a special status, I measured their subgroup variation. Articles pertaining to women comprise approximately 30 percent of the corpus.

However, 49 percent of problem codes appear in these documents, indicating that women experience a disproportionate share of the problems presented in the media. According to the 2,503 articles analyzed, women are more likely to endure abuse, discrimination, have their documents withheld, die, or be trafficked. The news reports female suicides approximately three times more frequently than that of men or mixed groups. Similarly, sexual assault appears in the articles written about female OFWs 3.6 times more than the mixed group. It is well documented that men also suffer sexual assault but are less likely to report it. Gender notwithstanding, this is a serious concern.

Male migrants are kidnapped more frequently than women. Angelo de la Cruz was taken hostage by Iraqi militants in 2004 (Tuazon 2004). Similarly, 34 OFWs taken hostage by militants in a gas field in Algeria were quickly rescued by Nigerian security forces (Manila Bulletin, 2013). Nine Filipino sailors were taken in 2007 and another five along with 24 mixed Asian crew members in 2012 by Somali pirates (Cueto 2007; Santos, 2020). “At the height of the piracy, the Philippine government said a Filipino seafarer is kidnapped every 6 hours” (Santos, 2020). All these men made it home, though not unscathed.

Mental health concerns were only explicitly coded 69 times across the corpus. It seems unreasonable to consider these issues mutually exclusive from every other problem category, as all 19 types can produce varying degrees of trauma. Wage theft, discrimination, civil conflict, and natural disasters can all affect one’s mental health. Moreover, trauma endures after repatriation. It is discouraging that mental health services are the least common government solutions to the exploitation of its citizens.¹¹

3.6.2. Solutions

I conducted a final manual review to remove noise (i.e., unintelligible codes)¹² wherein I also deleted all mentions of “should,” “will,” and “pledge to” from the entity type, leaving only realized benefits. This rids the analysis of pandering and calls-to-action, which are tricky to disaggregate from actual responses across 25 years. In total, the model captured 8,126 solutions and benefits, from which 12 categories emerged (Table 2).

¹¹ Pre-COVID, Philippines health expenditure was approximately 4.5 percent of its GDP. Precise figures are not available, but the World Health Organization estimates mental health expenditures as approximately 5 percent of the overall health budget. The majority of those funds are spent on maintenance and operation costs of mental health facilities (World Health Organization, 2011).

¹² This is another area where automation can replace manual review. More training material can be added to assist in removing the noise.

Table 3.2. Policy Solutions and Benefits Distributed by Government

Solutions & Benefits	All	Women	Other
repatriation	2531	965	1566
economic	1602	308	1294
protection	1412	754	658
legal	532	177	355
reintegration	517	141	376
export	408	157	251
travel advisories	252	143	109
medical	234	68	166
policy	222	77	145
shelter	162	85	77
dependent benefits	154	17	137
mental health services	100	28	72
Total	8126	2920	5206

Note. Emphasis added to highlight benefits disproportionately higher for women relative to men and mixed groups.

It is not surprising that repatriation is the most frequent benefit code. Section 15 of RA 8042 outlines the funding scheme for bringing workers home. It states that the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) is responsible for repatriation logistics and costs “in cases of war, epidemic, disasters or calamities, natural or man-made,” but that the recruitment/employment agency must manage repatriation for all other reasons. The State has indeed managed large-scale repatriations due to conflict (Yemen, Libya, Syria),¹³ tsunamis (Japan), Ebola (Guinea, Sierra Leon, Liberia), and most recently COVID-19, which has been the most sizable in the nation’s history. At the time of this writing, DFA has repatriated more than 300,000 OFWs, 70 percent land-based and 30 percent sea-based, since February 2020 (Baclig, 2020).

Economic support is the second-largest solution category to appear across the corpus. Providing cash assistance is faster and easier for governments than programming and service delivery. Distribution appears to come primarily from the Livelihood Support Fund and the Assistance to Nationals (ATN) Fund. Payments related to legal services and dependent benefits (scholarships, death insurance) fall into their own categories. Legal services appeared 532 times in the articles. This is particularly concerning since there are 2.5 times as many criminal justice

¹³ 20 to 30 thousand OFWs were repatriated from Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia during the First Gulf War but that predates RA 8042 (Aning, 2020).

problem codes, suggesting an imbalance. Export solutions include services that help to expedite deployment, workforce trainings, and predeparture orientations aimed at informing OFWs about cultural and legal differences between their home and host nations.

Despite the high rate of problems inflicted upon women, they receive only 36 percent of the total solutions and benefit entity codes. Articles written about women contain more mentions of protection and shelter relative to the mixed-gender and male-only articles. Travel advisories appeared in more articles about women, but I suspect that is due to voluminous reporting on bans to Jordan and Kuwait after incidences of domestic worker physical abuse and maltreatment. Travel advisories benefit all genders if workers heed the threat level recommendations. Typically, the Philippines disallows new contracts during a travel ban but does not prohibit the deployment of workers with existing contracts.

Travel advisories are two-fold, as they address the immediate needs during a crisis and are a tool to open dialogue with host countries. In 2018, Joanna Demafelis's body was found in her employers' freezer 16 months after she went missing. Though they lived and worked in Kuwait, Joanna's Lebanese and Yemeni employers fled the country after the murder. The Philippines immediately issued a travel ban, initiated repatriation efforts, and cut ties with Kuwait. President Duterte ordered the Ambassador to help domestic workers flee the abusive households of their employers. After a video of Ambassador Villa directly aiding workers went viral, he was declared *persona non grata* by the Kuwaitis and expelled along with the rest of the envoy. Soon thereafter, Duterte issued a public apology and talks began between the nations.

By late spring, a bilateral agreement was signed that allowed domestic workers to keep their passports and bolstered their contract terms. Though this brought relief to the 250,000 OFWs employed in the Gulf state, unfortunately, it was short-lived. Duterte implemented another ban to Kuwait in January 2020 after Jeanelyn Villavende's autopsy indicated prolonged physical and sexual abuse and declared beating as her cause of death. This ban only lasted one month and was lifted after Jeanelyn's female employer was in custody.

Policy benefits offered by the State are largely real, though sometimes symbolic, but they are reactive, costly, and not evenly distributed. The following section offers recommendations that increase transparency, accountability, and data-informed decision making.

3.7. Recommendations

The Philippine government is responding to the needs of its citizens abroad and upholding some of its obligations codified in RA 8042. However, the solutions are often reactionary. For example, once a migrant worker is arrested, the state may spend thousands of dollars on legal counsel. If a worker is on death row in a host country, the cost reaches into the hundreds of thousands and requires a special delegation. A 2017 article highlighted the stark increases in the DFA budget allocations for the ATN and legal funds, increasing them to P1 billion and P200 million, respectively (Merez, 2017). Senate President Recto expressed concern that the doubled budgets still would not be enough to meet the needs of incarcerated OFWs (Merez, 2017).

To reduce costs and labor burdens, the State should invest in preventative measures. By front-loading resources into diplomacy to secure concrete protections for workers, the Philippines can facilitate employment opportunities characterized by dignity, not abuse. In recent years, the focus of bilateral labor agreement conclusion has shifted from expanding labor markets to protecting workers, as discussed above. There is still much work to be done in this area, and a recent Congressional evocation demonstrates there is political appetite to progress (Mangulabnan and Daquio, 2019).

Another concern unearthed in this analysis is that administered solutions are not necessarily an appropriate match for the problem endured. Throwing money at issues, without proper support, rarely solves them. The Philippines could make better decisions if they were data informed. To that end, I recommend DFA host a publicly available database that publishes anonymized information on OFW problems, responses, and costs. The ability to aggregate these data into one place that can be filtered by host country, issue type, etc. offers the government a chance to observe trends. Public availability increases accountability to taxpayers. Furthermore, this system can empower OFWs and offer them an additional consideration when deciding where to work.

There are existing streams of information that can be used to populate a database. Embassies already report claims and service provision to DFA. The installation of a repository will require systematic data collection and reduce labor attaché bias. The result would be better cross-country comparisons. A second data collection opportunity would be to add questions to the well-established Survey of Overseas Filipinos, which currently collects demographic and

financial information from 40,000 nonoverlapping households annually. Advocacy groups like Migrante International and GABRIELA are a third potential data source (Francisco-Menchavez, 2018). With improved relationships, the government could enter data-sharing agreements with these NGOs, which would benefit workers. Collectively, these recommendations support the safety and well-being of OFWs, uphold the human rights promises in RA 8042, increase accountability, and reduce government waste.

3.8. Discussion & Conclusion

The normative nature of SCPD has earned the framework much attention. It offers an explanation of politicians' agenda setting and policy designs rooted in the reflection of preexisting social constructions of a group's deservedness. Schneider and Ingram (2019) posit that decision-makers are dependent upon feedback to maintain their offices; thus, they anticipate the reception of their choices and distribute policy benefits and burdens accordingly.

The future of SCPD in policy studies and other disciplines is bright. Schneider and Ingram's social construction framework has been applied over one hundred times (Pierce et al., 2014). This demonstrates a serious interest in the framework as well as its generalizability. Continued use of the theory applied to multiple policy topics in more geographical areas will advance theoretical refinement and expand its explanatory power. This U.S. centric theory has seen marginal international applications with little use in middle- and low-income countries. There remains copious potential for future studies, though it is democracy, not development, with which researchers should be concerned.

In addition to applying the framework in a new geographical context, I have offered an operationalization of power and deservedness. My ordinal scales will not perfectly transfer to every target group, but they suggest a way to empirically measure formerly elusive concepts, addressing a particular critique of SCPD (Sievers and Jones, 2020). I invite policy researchers to improve upon what I have proposed herein.

In the same vein, I hope this study excites people about the possibilities of adopting automation into their work. Policy studies as a discipline seeks to understand the policymaking process, analyze the contents of public policy, and improve modeling effectiveness. We live in a modern era of big data. More information is created each day than one can read in their entire

lifetime.¹⁴ Achieving representativeness can require tremendous effort by a human investigator. Computers, on the other hand, are only stified by the resources available to them. Using machine learning techniques, analysts can review larger datasets in less time, reduce researcher and coder biases, and make more accurate predictions and recommendations.

As a result of these methods, I can say with confidence that over the last 25 years, the government of the Philippines has provided services to OFWs and their dependents. The distribution of policy benefits has certainly not been flawless. Responses are typically reactionary and improperly matched to the issue. As many sit on death rows and in prison cells around the world, there is much work left to do. Better diplomacy, stronger policy instruments, and data-informed decision making will give OFWs more power and reduce costs for the State.

¹⁴ Highly active social media platforms are contributors to big data. Automation allows researchers to extract meaning-making from the populace at a scale unparalleled by surveys and interviews.

3.9. References

- Anglund, Sandra M. 1998. "How American Core Values Influence Public Policy: Lessons from Federal Aid to Small Business, 1953–1993." *Governance* 11: 23-50.
- Aning, Jerome. 2020. "Repatriation Biggest Ever in Ph History." *Inquirer*. <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/189972/repatriation-biggest-ever-in-ph-history>.
- Baclig, Cristina Eloisa. 2020. "Over 300,000 Ofws Repatriated since Start of the Covid-19 Pandemic." *Inquirer*. <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/192685/over-300000-ofws-repatriated-since-start-of-the-covid-19-pandemic#ixzz6l7xhXAij>.
- Banko Sentral Ng Pilipinas. 2020. "Overseas Filipinos' Cash Remittances by Country, by Source." ed. Banko Sentral Pilipinos. Philippines.
- Brill, Eric, and Raymond J Mooney. 1997. "An Overview of Empirical Natural Language Processing." *AI magazine* 18: 13-13.
- Center for Systemic Peace. "The Polity Project." Center for Systemic Peace, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>.
- Clark, Alexander, Chris Fox, and Shalom Lappin, eds. 2013. *The Handbook of Computational Linguistics and Natural Language Processing*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.
- Cueto, Francis Earl A. 2007. "Nine Filipino Sailors in Highjacking Ok?, Says Dfa." *The Manila Times*.
- Dunn, Tasha R. 2018. *Talking White Trash: Mediated Representations and Lived Experiences of White Working-Class People*. Philadelphia: Routledge.
- Esmaque, P. R. II. . 2018. "20 Saudi Ofws Protest Unpaid Wages, Get Ejected from Home." *Rappler*. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/saudi-arabia-overseas-filipino-workers-ejected-accommodations>.
- Fording, Richard C, Joe Soss, and Sanford F Schram. 2011. "Race and the Local Politics of Punishment in the New World of Welfare." *American Journal of Sociology* 116: 1610-57.
- Francisco-Menchavez, Valerie. 2018. "Save Mary Jane Veloso: Solidarity and Global Migrant Activism in the Filipino Labor Diaspora." *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 17: 202-19.
- Gauntlett, David. 2008. *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*. Philadelphia: Routledge.
- Howlett, Michael. 2014. "From the 'Old' to the 'New' Policy Design: Design Thinking Beyond Markets and Collaborative Governance." *Policy Sciences* 47: 187-207.
- Ingram, Helen. M., Anne. L. Schneider, and Paul deLeon. 2007. "Social Construction and Policy Design." In *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. P. Sabatier, second ed. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Kolbe, Richard H, and Melissa S Burnett. 1991. "Content-Analysis Research: An Examination of Applications with Directives for Improving Research Reliability and Objectivity." *Journal of Consumer Research* 18: 243-50.
- Mangulabnan, Bernard Paul M., and Carl Rookie O. Daquio. 2019. "A Review of Bilateral Labor Agreements Concluded by the Philippines with Countries of Destination: Toward a Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation." *Philippines Journal of Labor Studies* 1: 1-39.
- Manila Bulletin. 2013. "Dole Vows Aid to Ofws Returning from Algeria." *Manila Bulletin*.
- Merez, Arianne. 2017. "130 Filipinos in Death Row Overseas, Nearly 4,000 in Jail - Recto." *ABS-CBN News*. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/09/19/17/130-filipinos-in-death-row-overseas-nearly-4000-in-jail-recto>.

- Palmer, Martha, and Nianwen Xue. 2013. "Linguistic Annotation." In *The Handbook of Computational Linguistics and Natural Language Processing*, eds. Alexander Clark, Chris Fox and Shalom Lappin. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. 238-70.
- Pierce, Jonathan J., Saba Siddiki, Michael D. Jones, Kristin Schumacher, Andrew Pattison, and Holly Peterson. 2014. "Social Construction and Policy Design: A Review of Past Applications." *Policy Studies Journal* 42: 1-29.
- Republic Act No. 8042. 1995. *Ninth Congress of the Philippines*.
- Santos, A. P. 2020. "After Freedom, Filipino Seafarers Captured by Pirates Battle Trauma." *Rappler*. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/after-freedom-filipino-seafarers-fishermen-captured-pirates-battle-trauma>.
- Santos, Stephanie. 2009. "The Death of Eugenia Baja: Femicide and Transnational Feminist Organizing among Filipina Migrant Workers." *Amerasia Journal* 35: 65-75.
- Schneider, Anne L. , and Helen M. Ingram. 1997. *Policy Design for Democracy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Schneider, Anne L, and Helen M Ingram. 2019. "Social Constructions, Anticipatory Feedback Strategies, and Deceptive Public Policy." *Policy Studies Journal* 47: 206-36.
- Schram, Sanford F. 2005. *Putting a Black Face on Welfare: The Good and the Bad*: Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Sidney, Mara S. 2001. "Images of Race, Class, and Markets: Rethinking the Origin of Us Fair Housing Policy." *Journal of Policy History* 13: 181-214.
- Sievers, Tjorven, and Michael D Jones. 2020. "Can Power Be Made an Empirically Viable Concept in Policy Process Theory? Exploring the Power Potential of the Narrative Policy Framework." *International Review of Public Policy* 2(1): 90-114.
- Smith, Kevin B, and Christopher W Larimer. 2016. *The Public Policy Theory Primer*: Boulder: Westview Press.
- Tagtog: The Text Annotation Tool to Train Ai. tagtog. <https://www.tagtog.net/>
- Tuazon, Brenda Piquero. 2004. "Estrada Welcomes Gov't Decision to Recall Troops." *Manila Bulletin*.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA). 2017. "World Economic Situation and Prospects (Wesp)." In *Secondary World Economic Situation and Prospects (Wesp)*, ed Secondary. New York. Reprint.
- Valcore, Jace L. 2018. "Sexual Orientation in State Hate Crime Laws: Exploring Social Construction and Criminal Law." *Journal of Homosexuality* 65: 1607-30.
- Vista, Alvin. 2015. "Mass Media, the 'Sensational Message', and Metamorphic Truths." *Telematics and Informatics* 32: 416-23.
- Weible, Christopher M, Saba N Siddiki, and Jonathan J Pierce. 2011. "Foes to Friends: Changing Contexts and Changing Intergroup Perceptions." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 13: 499-525.
- World Bank Group. 2019. "The World by Income and Region."
- World Health Organization. 2011. "Mental Health Atlas 2011: Philippines." In *Secondary Mental Health Atlas 2011: Philippines*, ed Secondary. Reprint.

3.10. Appendix C: Measure of Democracy & Development

Table C.1. Developed Economies Comparison

WESP Developed Economies	World Bank	Polity IV
Canada	High income	10
Switzerland	High income	10
Australia	High income	10
Japan	High income	10
New Zealand	High income	10
Austria	High income	10
Norway	High income	10
Denmark	High income	10
Finland	High income	10
Germany	High income	10
Greece	High income	10
Ireland	High income	10
Italy	High income	10
Luxembourg	High income	10
Netherlands	High income	10
Portugal	High income	10
Spain	High income	10
Sweden	High income	10
United Kingdom	High income	10
Slovak Republic	High income	10
Poland	High income	10
Cyprus	High income	10
Lithuania	High income	10
Hungary	High income	10
Slovenia	High income	10
France	High income	9
Czech Republic	High income	9
Estonia	High income	9
Romania	Upper middle income	9
Croatia	High income	9
Bulgaria	Upper middle income	9
Latvia	High income	8
Belgium	High income	8
United States	High income	8

Table C.2. Economies in Transition Comparison

WESP Economies In-transition	World Bank	Polity IV
Albania	Upper middle income	9
Montenegro	Upper middle income	9
Macedonia	Upper middle income	9
Moldova	Lower middle income	9
Kyrgyzstan	Lower middle income	8
Serbia	Upper middle income	8
Armenia	Upper middle income	5
Ukraine	Lower middle income	4
Russia	Upper middle income	4
Tajikistan	Low income	-3
Belarus	Upper middle income	-7
Kazakhstan	Upper middle income	-6
Azerbaijan	Upper middle income	-7
Turkmenistan	Upper middle income	-8
Uzbekistan	Lower middle income	-9

Table C.3. Developing Economies Comparison

WESP Developing Economies	World Bank	Polity IV
Chile	High income	10
Trinidad and Tobago	High income	10
Costa Rica	Upper middle income	10
Uruguay	High income	10
Cabo Verde	Lower middle income	10
Mauritius	Upper middle income	10
Mongolia	Lower middle income	10
Taiwan	High income	10
Argentina	High income	9
Montenegro	Upper middle income	9
Jamaica	Upper middle income	9
Panama	High income	9
Paraguay	Upper middle income	9
Peru	Upper middle income	9
Kenya	Lower middle income	9
South Africa	Upper middle income	9
Comoros	Low income	9
India	Lower middle income	9
Indonesia	Lower middle income	9
Philippines	Lower middle income	8
Mexico	Upper middle income	8
Guatemala	Upper middle income	8

Brazil	Upper middle income	8
Kosovo	Lower middle income	8
Ghana	Lower middle income	8
Lesotho	Lower middle income	8
Botswana	Upper middle income	8
El Salvador	Lower middle income	8
Myanmar	Lower middles income	8
South Korea	High income	8
Timor-Leste	Lower middle income	8
Solomon Islands	Lower middle income	8
Colombia	Upper middle income	7
Bolivia	Lower middle income	7
Georgia	Lower middle income	7
Tunisia	Lower middle income	7
Dominican Republic	Upper middle income	7
Guyana	Upper middle income	7
Senegal	Low income	7
Benin	Low income	7
Sierra Leone	Low income	7
Nigeria	Lower middle income	7
Pakistan	Lower middle income	7
Nicaragua	Lower middle income	6
Guinea-Bissau	Low income	6
Burkina Faso	Low income	6
Iraq	Upper middle income	6
Liberia	Low income	6
Zambia	Lower middle income	6
Malawi	Low income	6
Namibia	Upper middle income	6
Central African Republic	Low income	6
Madagascar	Low income	6
Lebanon	Upper middle income	6
Sri Lanka	Lower middle income	6
Nepal	Low income	6
Israel	High income	6
Suriname	Upper middle income	5
Ecuador	Upper middle income	5
Haiti	Low income	5
Honduras	Lower middle income	5
Mali	Low income	5
Niger	Low income	5

Mozambique	Low income	5
Somalia	Low income	5
Papua New Guinea	Lower middle income	5
Malaysia	Upper middle income	5
Bhutan	Lower middle income	5
Côte d'Ivoire	Lower middle income	4
Guinea	Low income	4
Zimbabwe	Low income	4
Sudan (North)	Lower middle income	4
Gambia	Low income	4
Gabon	Upper middle income	3
Tanzania	Low income	3
Djibouti	Lower middle income	3
Algeria	Upper middle income	2
Fiji	Upper middle income	2
Bangladesh	Lower middle income	1
Uganda	Low income	-1
Burundi	Low income	-1
Afghanistan	Low income	-1
Singapore	High income	-2
Angola	Lower middle income	-2
Mauritania	Lower middle income	-2
Chad	Low income	-2
Jordan	Upper middle income	-3
Dem. Rep. of Congo	Low income	-3
Venezuela	Upper middle income	-3
Ethiopia	Low income	-3
Rwanda	Low income	-3
Thailand	Upper middle income	-3
Cambodia	Lower middle income	-4
Morocco	Lower middle income	-4
Republic Congo	Lower middle income	-4
Cameroon	Lower middle income	-4
Turkey	Upper middle income	-4
Egypt	Lower middle income	-4
Equatorial Guinea	Upper middle income	-6
Cuba	Upper middle income	-7
Eritrea	Low income	-7
Iran	Upper middle income	-7
Kuwait	High income	-7
China	High income	-7

Lao	Lower middle income	-7
Vietnam	Lower middle income	-7
United Arab Emirates	High income	-8
Oman	High income	-8
Swaziland	Lower middle income	-9
Syria	Low income	-9
North Korea	Low income	-10
Bahrain	High income	-10
Qatar	High income	-10
Saudi Arabia	High income	-10

3.11. Appendix D: Ordinal Scales

Table D.1. Deservedness Operationalization

Ordinal Value	Category	Codes
17	Hero	modern day heroes
17	Hero	what they do is beyond heroic
16	Role models	Model OFW Family of the Year Awards
16	Role models	the qualities and Filipino values of these model OFW families should be seen as ‘shining examples’
15	Valued citizen	protect our migrant workers
15	Valued citizen	you heard our president and his strong words for our OFWs
14	Dutiful (to country)	significant contributions of OFWs
14	Dutiful (to family)	creating a better life for themselves and their families back home
13	Professional	skilled Filipino workers
13	Professional	Filipinos stand out as they seem to do extremely well in every line of work
12	Goal-oriented	seek better opportunities
12	Goal-oriented	seeking greener pastures abroad
11	Hardworking	despite the hardships and risks overseas, she is willing to give it another chance
11	Hardworking	hardworking OFW
10	Resilient	safe and without traces of abuse from the traumatic and exploitative experience she went through
9	Deserving	the right to seek help from the government if they experience abuse and maltreatment abroad
9	Deserving	our overseas Filipinos deserve the full attention of the Philippine government
8	Dignity	appealed to host countries to treat migrant workers “as human beings with dignity.”
8	Dignity	you give us the dignity of a human being, you treat us humanely, be tolerant of our cultural differences
7	Kind	kind-hearted Filipinos
7	Kind	she was a kind, loving, and sweet person
6	Documented	legal workers
6	Documented	most of our fellow Filipinos go abroad for a legitimate purpose
5	Lawful	very obedient
5	Lawful	full pardon for her good behavior
4	Victim	victims were unaware of their rights

4	Victim	victims are martyrs
3	Distressed	distressed OFW
3	Distressed	help suffering compatriots
2	In need	all of them said that poverty pushes OFWs abroad
2	In need	OFWs and families that are here with us now represent the sorry plight of our OFWs
1	Vulnerable	We are exposing our women to dangerous and deplorable working conditions abroad
1	Vulnerable	reminds us of our plight as migrant Filipinos and how vulnerable we are to various forms of violence
0	Neutral	OFW
0	Neutral	migrant worker
-1	Ungrateful	He said I'm the one already receiving the assistance yet I won't accept it
-2	Ineptitude	a worker's inability
-2	Ineptitude	undocumented subordinate workers
-3	Irresponsible	she failed to immediately report
-3	Irresponsible	she did not report any sexual abuse against her
-4	Bad parent	Marriages and families are broken and children grow up without parents
-4	Bad parent	family dysfunction and disunity
-5	Debtor	a worker who does not pay for his loan
-6	Undocumented status	illegal workers who violated
-6	Undocumented status	precarious legal status
-7	Defiant	who were caught falsifying their birthdates in their passports
-7	Defiant	defied the total deployment ban
-8	Deviant (drugs)	Filipino drug mules
-8	Deviant (sexual)	commercial sex workers
-9	Violent	injuring his employer's son
-9	Violent	nearly killed
-10	Murderer	killing her employer's daughter
-10	Murderer	killing his Saudi employer

Table D.2. Power Operationalization

Ordinal Value	Category	Codes
6	Collective action	we are appealing for help
6	Collective action	migrant workers advocacy group
5	Legal	torture case was filed
5	Legal	OFW labor cases
4	Embassy	filed with the Philippine embassy
4	Embassy	run to Philippine consulates for help
3	Digital activism	Videos of chaos and ceaseless gun firing were also sent
3	Digital activism	through the media
2	Individual action	she fled
2	Individual action	ran away from abusive employer
1	Democracy	a protest action
1	Democracy	I'll vote and exercise my right to elect our leaders

4. Article 3—Bringing ‘Bagong Bayani’ Home: Aspect-based Sentiment Analysis of the Philippine COVID-19 Response for Overseas Filipino Workers

Abstract

This research applies the social construction and policy design framework to the Philippines’ migrant workers’ protection policies to understand the government’s distribution of benefits and burdens to overseas Filipinos as a target group during the COVID-19 pandemic. By using novel machine learning methods to analyze content automatically from 598 media articles across four phases of pandemic response, the findings suggest migrant workers are positively socially constructed, but are experiencing reduced levels of power under these conditions. The media sentiment on government-led efforts is largely neutral, yet over a quarter of sentences pertaining to repatriation, testing and quarantine, and redeployment were negative while less than ten percent were positive. Besides the empirical findings and interdisciplinary methods employed, this essay offers theoretical contributions. I test a previously designed operationalization of power and deservedness, addressing past critiques of the framework’s rigor, and further refining a tool to measure empirically and rank a single target group in any democracy. By applying social construction and policy design in the Philippines, I expand the framework’s explanatory power to democracies outside of the U.S., particularly in the Global South where applications are scarce. Lastly, I offer a unique view of migrant workers from their own country’s perspective, a lesser explored area in the policy process literature that usually presents host nations’ constructions.

Keywords: Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), social constructions, policy design, natural language processing (NLP), sentiment analysis, COVID-19

Acknowledgements

This research is dedicated to the 1,115 overseas Filipinos who have lost their lives to COVID-19, the 18,134 who have contracted the virus, and the 2.2 million around the world whose lives have been affected by this pandemic. The data analyzed in these pages are their stories. They live/d their lives with purpose and dedication to the loved ones they left behind. As the nation moves forward in its recovery and future disaster planning, may the decisionmakers remember the sacrifices of their *kababayan*. I hope this academic research can be of service to improve policymaking that expands opportunities, restores agency, and truly protects migrant workers should they wish to work abroad.

4.1. Introduction

This paper uses Social Construction and Policy Design (SCPD) to examine the rhetoric around Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as a target group and how their constructions influence the benefits (and burdens) they are receiving from their government during the ongoing COVID-19 response. This framework is well suited to analyze the OFW-government relationship because incorporating target group social constructions into the understanding of intentional policy designs “helps to explain why public policy, which can have a positive effect on society, sometimes—and often deliberately—fails in its nominal purposes, fails to solve important public problems, perpetuates injustice, fails to support democratic institutions, and produces unequal citizenship” (Ingram, Schneider, & deLeon, 2007, p. 93). I argue that the Philippines’ government has failed to respond adequately to the needs of OFWs during the pandemic because The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 and subsequent protection policies comprise symbolic—and even deceptive—design elements that cannot safeguard the nation’s “modern-day heroes” during a global economic, social, and political disaster like the one we are in. Rather, it is a progressively written façade to conceal the cycle of dependency that traps workers, and their families, in a loop that renders them both objects and subjects of the state (Guevarra, 2010).

Beginning with the assumption of OFWs’ positive constructions in the policy text, presidential speeches, and empirical evidence from the last 25 years (O’Steen, 2021), I graph media presentations of the group’s deservedness and their political power expressions to solicit government aid during the COVID-19 pandemic published in 598 articles. This procedure tests a previously designed operationalization of these concepts, addressing past critiques of the framework’s rigor, and further refining a tool to empirically measure and rank a single target group in any democracy.

Then I use several machine learning models to automatically analyze four phases of the Philippines’ COVID-19 response (repatriation, testing and quarantine, reintegration, and redeployment). This a priori content analysis offers insights into the pandemic-induced issues experienced by OFWs, allocation patterns in response phases, and media sentiment of these efforts. By using novel methods to distill aspect-based sentiment of response-related content from 12,351 sentences and arrive at empirical findings, this essay argues for the adoption of automation in policy studies.

I proceed with the following sections. Section 2 summarizes the theoretical framework, with special attention to design elements of Philippine labor migration policy. Section 3 describes my research design, introduces automated content analysis assisted by natural language processing and machine learning, and argues for its use in policy studies. In Section 4, I introduce the dataset for this study. Section 5 presents graphical results of my power and deservedness operationalization, plotting the representations of the target group from 598 media articles and discussing target group shifts under pandemic conditions. Section 6 discusses major findings and provides context to the sentiment analysis of the state's COVID-19 response. In Section 7, I discuss the debate on establishing a new government department and offer recommendations geared towards increased accountability and a modern workforce. Finally, Section 8 discusses the major arguments, presents limitations, calls for further research, and concludes.

4.2. Social Construction and Policy Design

Social construction and policy design is an encompassing policy process framework growing in popularity since 2008 (Pierce et al., 2014). It seeks to explain the intentional, though not necessarily transparent, elements of public policy designs and their subsequent impacts on democracy. The theory is based on eight assumptions but is most widely known for its two propositions on target populations and the feed-forward effects of policy. SCPD recognizes that policy is not an objective and rational decision-making process, rather it is imbued with perceptions of a group's deservedness. Deservedness intersected with a target population's political power result in the group's socially constructed identity projected and internalized by politicians, the media, and the groups themselves. Feed-forward supposes that policy creates politics, which in turn shapes policy in a cyclical nature. The following subsections address Schneider and Ingram's (1997) proposed design elements, with special attention to their symbolic nature, and offer examples of these elements in the Philippine migrant worker policy arena.

4.2.1. Goals & Problems to Be Solved

Goals are a straightforward element of policy designs. They are intentional components that address what is to be achieved through public policy. Sometimes designs are oriented around a single goal while other designs have multiple, tiered goals. In democracies, policy goals contain linkages to broadly held public values such as protecting public welfare, security, liberty,

and prosperity (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). While the notion of goals is unambiguous, not all policy goals are explicit. They are more likely to be obscured when politicians are “merely responding to political or ideological pressures without much interest in solving problems” (Schneider & Ingram, 1997, p. 83). The theorists note that policy objectives may be “mainly hortatory and symbolic” and contain language that was never meant to be taken literally (Schneider & Ingram, 1997, p. 84).

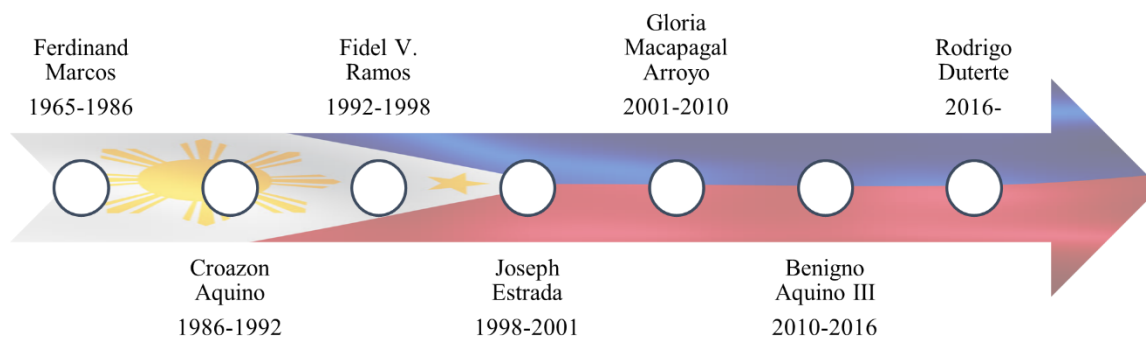


Fig. 4.1. Presidents of The Philippines 1965-2021

To address the economic stagnation and ease unemployment pressures caused by the misappropriation that characterized the Marcos regime, the Philippines formalized the practice of commercial emigration through the 1974 Labor Code. Under his dictatorship, mandatory remittance policies were put into place through Executive Orders (EO 857, 1982; McKay, 2015). These were later repealed by successive administrations who considered a government mandate to send 70 percent of one’s salary home to be misaligned with the nation’s cultural and institutional values.

The Philippines passed its first migrant workers' protection legislation in 1995 in response to international protests. Filipinos across the diaspora accused their government of failing to intervene on behalf of Flor Contemplacion, a Filipina domestic worker, who was tried, convicted, and executed in Singapore on charges of murdering her employer’s son and another Filipina worker. The explicit goals of Republic Act No. 8042, better known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, are to promote “the welfare of migrant workers, their families and overseas Filipinos in distress, and for other purposes.” The inconspicuous goals of the policy, I argue, are to bolster the long-standing system of exporting labor and

importing remittances. Rodriguez (2010, p. 79) contends, “The promise of ‘rights’ in particular is a strategy by which the state tries to normalize emigration. It is a means by which the state attempts to reassure would-be migrants that though they may face uncertain futures in unfamiliar places, they can enjoy the entitlements of an expanded Philippine citizenship encoded in laws like RA 8042.”

The Ramos administration, in power during this time, sent mixed messages when addressing labor migration. The president referred to OFWs and open labor markets as “major pillars” of the nation’s economic growth (Serquiña, 2016, p. 213). However, Congress expressly stated that “the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development” in RA 8042 (1995, Sec. 2(c)). The unscrupulous goals of this reactionary legislation are achieved through policy tools (4.2.4) and assumptions (4.2.6) which I discuss later. Meanwhile, the declared goals of RA 8042 appear to align with values such as public welfare and security from illegal recruiters, but contain stronger implementation structures (4.2.3) for the deviant target population (4.2.2) than for protecting OFWs. This is yet another argument for the symbolic and inadequate nature of this policy when it comes to solving problems for migrant workers and overseas Filipinos.

4.2.2. Target Populations

Target populations are the intended recipients of the policy and are crucial to the success of its goals since they co-produce (Schneider, 1987; Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Public policy as a form of governance is intended to coerce or enable behavior change on behalf of its target groups. Change can be more or less of an activity. For example, environmental policy may desire businesses to pollute less, and public health policy may encourage an increase in exercise. Policy designs are considered ineffective when they fail to elicit the desired behavior change. Schneider and Ingram (1997) postulate that a target population’s relationship with its government impacts the likelihood of adherence to the policy.

SCPD’s proposition of target populations is one of the framework’s major contributions to the policy design literature (Ingram et al., 2007; Schneider & Ingram, 1997; 2019). The theorists posit that groups are socially constructed by politicians, interest groups, the media, and the public, rendering them deserving (or not) of public goods and services. The level of benefits or burdens distributed by the policy design can be determined by the target population’s deservedness intersected by their political power. Schneider and Ingram (2019, p. 214) suggest

political power manifests as “size of the group, voting potential, mobilization potential, legal rights, strength and size of advocacy groups, allies who are likely to take up their cause, compatibility with their own belief systems, connections to national advocacy groups, ability to raise money, and general absence of organized opposition.” Both deservedness and power exist on scales, presented by the matrix below (Figure 4.2), and may change over time.

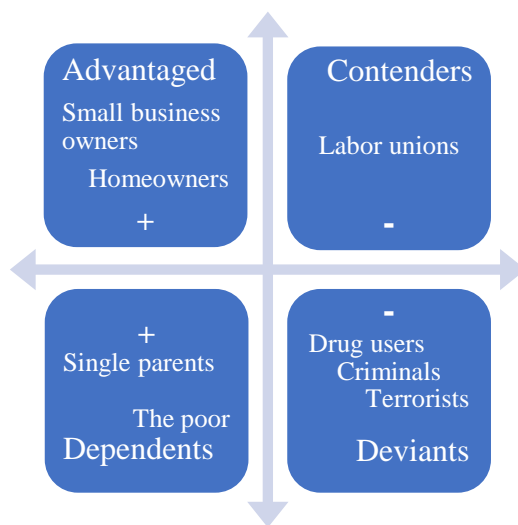


Fig. 4.2. Target Group Matrix (Adapted from Ingram et al., 2007)

Policy targets may be chosen based on need, merit, equity, power, status, among other factors. The selection of groups sends messages to society about leaders' values. Based on the title, it seems migrant workers are the primary target population of RA 8042. However, part II. Illegal Recruitment comes before III. Services, and makes up 26.5 percent of the Act's total word count, two percent greater than explanation of benefits OFWs and their dependents are entitled to. The target populations of the eight illegal recruitment sections are unlicensed individuals or syndicates promising, contracting, or transporting workers for employment (RA 8042, 1995). These groups fall into the “deviant” category and receive the policy's penalties. The placement and thoroughness of illegal recruitment in RA 8042 signal the government is tough on crime and willing to protect OFWs via punitive measures.

Marcos and his development diplomacy foreign policy position characterized migrants as dutiful diplomats willing to “commit self-sacrifice for the nation” (Serquiña, 2016, p. 213). To set herself apart from her predecessor, Aquino shifted the narrative to “modern-day heroes” when she addressed an audience of domestic workers in Hong Kong as *bagong bayani*

(Guevarra, 2010, p.211; Rodriguez, 2010; Serquiña, 2016). This implied an even greater sense of agency where migration was completely voluntary unlike the forced sacrifice promoted under the former dictatorial regime (Rodriguez, 2010). Social constructions of target populations explain how this new nationalism uses democracy, freedom, and choice to increase labor exportation, a profitable scheme for the country, while disregarding structural causes of poverty, unemployment, and devalued currency.

RA 8042 constructs OFWs as “deserving migrant workers,” “highly-skilled,” “professionals,” and recognizes their “significant contributions” to the national economy. Women as a subgroup in the policy are positively recognized for their role in “nation-building” and considered in need of special protections due to their “particular vulnerabilities.” Section 2(d) reads, “The State shall apply gender sensitive criteria in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs affecting migrant workers” (RA 8042, 1995).

Designs may create group identities where none existed before and can subdivide targets into smaller and smaller groups over time (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). OFWs have been segmented by their land-based versus sea-based employment or their documented versus undocumented status. RA 8042 denotes reintegration priorities to domestic helpers and entertainers, signaling they are predominantly female subgroups in need of reskilling. This made way for the Household Service Workers Policy Reform Package of 2007. The package is intended to professionalize domestic work through training and certification from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), extending the reintegration benefits provided in RA 8042. It also increased the marketability of a specialized workforce in high demand in Gulf countries. Schneider and Ingram assert, “[t]argets receive very different symbolic messages about their worth and deservedness according to the specifics of the policy design” (1997, p.88), which may become more apparent to the groups via the interaction with agents and implementation structures discussed below.

4.2.3. Agents & Implementation Structures

Agents deliver policy to target populations using tools, rules, and rationales developed by higher points in the policy chain (e.g., Congress, Department Secretaries) but may also have the discretion to create new ones for themselves (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Complex policy designs, such as RA 8042, have agents at multiple levels of government. Sections 23 to 30 cover the roles of various departments and agencies, establish new positions, and even overview the

deregulation and phase-out of certain government management from the labor export system (RA 8042, 1995). The latter exemplifies what Schneider and Ingram (1997) refer to as a privatized implementation structure, quite common since the late-1980s. Interestingly, the phase-out provisions were rescinded when the Act was amended by RA 10022 in 2009 during Macapagal Arroyo's presidency.

In an attempt to shake the "sick man of Asia" label (Punongbayan & Mandrilla, 2016) and prove to the rest of the world that the Philippines was a truly modern country, Macapagal Arroyo overhauled the nation's labor export system. At an institutional level, the administration expanded the roles and responsibilities of various agencies including the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). This helped to fuel the systematic processes resulting in efficient exportation of migrant workers. Macapagal Arroyo considered herself to be more than just a head of state, she believed herself to be "the CEO of a global Philippine enterprise of 8 million Filipinos who live and work abroad and generate billions of dollars a year in revenue for our country" (Rodriguez, 2010, p. ix).

Such a "global enterprise" would not have been possible if left up to the individual agency of the now 10 million Filipinos in the diaspora. It is critical to unpack the simultaneous and paradoxical narratives professed by the Philippine state. To motivate emigration and a false sense of choice, the government tells OFWs they are hardworking, dutiful, and model citizens. Meanwhile, the POEA's Marketing Division is abreast of the world's labor demands since its entire function rests on brokering fellow *kababayan* (countrymen/compatriots) to host countries (Guevarra, 2010). Labor receiving nations do not want "heroes" tending fields, cooking meals, and operating machinery. They want obedient, cooperative, loyal, and compliant help (Guevarra, 2010, p. 137). That is why the POEA advertises Filipino workers as "Able minds, Able hands" (Rodriguez, 2010, p. xi) fulfilling its obligations under RAs 8042 and 10022 to recruit and place workers. Guevarra (2010) summarizes these dueling constructions perfectly,

On the one hand, as the country's resources, they are commodified as objects of the state that are offered to the globe as its comparative advantage in exchange for national economic survival. On the other hand, as the country's modern-day heroes, they are integral subjects of the state, as they are symbolically and ideologically touted and molded to save not only their families but also their nation through their remittances. (p. 49)

Treating this system of labor migration and development-through-remittances as a multinational corporation is a form of neoliberal globalization, one that depends on strong policy tools.

4.2.4. Policy Tools

Schneider and Ingram (1997) present five types of policy tools: authority, learning, capacity-building, inducements and sanctions, and hortatory. Authority tools signal those at the top are wiser than the masses, which can undermine democratic participation, fail to induce the desired behavior change, and render the policy unsuccessful. Learning tools create space for experimental problem solving by agents and targets. Capacity-building tools provide education, training, technical assistance, and other information required to produce policy objectives. Inducements and sanctions assume agents and target populations are rational actors motivated by self-interest. Sanctions are used against potential illegal recruiters, the deviant target group of RA 8042, but these tools are antithetical to the hortatory tools that motivate OFWs to migrate.

4.2.4.1. Hortatory Tools

Schneider and Ingram (1997, p. 95) describe hortatory tools as consisting of mainly “proclamations, speeches, or public relations campaigns through which government exhorts people to take actions needed by the policy.” OFWs are frequently the recipients of persuasive policy tools communicated by their government officials, signaling the primary objective is remittance sending as a means of nation-building rather than the explicit goal of protection. Guevarra argues, “[t]he Philippine state has imbued its overseas employment program with social value by recognizing Filipinos’ participation in it as a form of social heroism” (2010, p. ix). The construction of migrant workers as *bagong bayani* is a prime example of what the theorists describe as a hortatory tool. The heroism bestowed upon OFWs is likened to that of military servicemembers.

The most notable and diverse hortatory tools were used by Macapagal Arroyo. To convince more Filipinos to buy into the global enterprise, she used carefully constructed messages which promoted national pride, opportunity, agency, and sacrifice. Rather than referring to migrants as overseas workers as they had come to be known, she labeled them overseas Filipino investors (OFIs). This new nomenclature symbolically elevated migrant workers, making them partners to the state in national development (Serquiña, 2016).

Schneider and Ingram (1997, p. 96) suggest “hortatory tools often legitimate altruistic behavior as people are urged to take certain actions for the common good rather than for

themselves.” Macapagal Arroyo treated overseas Filipinos as philanthropists and urged them to send just 20 more dollars a month to help their relatives in need during a 2004 speech (Serquiña, 2016). She appealed to their values when she asked them to “go beyond the call of duty...to carry on a legacy of love for family, love for country, love for life” (Serquiña, 2016, p. 217). The theorists highlight that this tool is frequently used when the policy’s desired behavior change is congruent with previously held values of the target population (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Guevarra (2010) contends that Filipinos’ submission to the state is a legacy of Spanish colonization and the introduction of Catholicism. She further argues, “the state’s construction of Filipino migrant workers as God-fearing, self-sacrificing, highly productive workers and citizens echoes these ideals and is represented by the iconic figure of *bagong bayani* (modern-day heroes)” (Guevarra, 2010, p. 25). Such frequent and pervasive use of this expression reveals it as an enduring policy tool, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2.5. Rules

The SCPD framework presents rules as a procedural element for who does what, when, and where. RA 8042 contains several rules that designate what actions should be taken within 24 hours to five years of the signing of the Act, known as timing rules (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). In other critical sections, the policy covers *what* and *whom* but lacks crucial time elements. For example, the repatriation section focuses on who bares the costs of bringing workers home under what conditions, but such rules are insufficiently written to manage large-scale repatriations. A government lack of foresight argument here is unsatisfactory considering RA 8042 was written after the Philippines repatriated 40,000 workers during the Gulf War, its largest ever effort pre-coronavirus.

Eligibility rules are a common design type that sequester target populations and regulate their benefit distribution through means-testing and other bureaucratically imposed requirements. Targets with low levels of power are expected to encounter such eligibility rules designed to ration unstable benefits, most vulnerable to budget cuts (Moon, 2020). OFWs confronted several rules during the pandemic response. There were (in)appropriate ways to avail of repatriation, strict testing and seemingly endless quarantine regulations, specific application procedures, and opaque qualifying requirements for the one-time \$200 cash assistance.

A third category of rules is referred to as boundary or participation rules. This design element declares who is to be included in decision making. RA 8042 uses participation rules to

expand worker representation in government. Section 32 reads, “[b]oards of the POEA and the OWWA shall, in addition to their present composition, have three (3) members each who shall come from the women, sea-based and land-based sectors” (RA 8042, 1995). Board members are appointed by the President along with two sectoral representatives in the House. These Congressional representatives must be migrant workers with a minimum of two years of overseas work experience and one must be a woman (RA 8042, 1995, Sec. 34). This is the most positive and democratically tangible element of the policy’s design.

4.2.6. Rationales & Assumptions

The theorists claim policy rationales are overt, while assumptions are often unstated. Rationales link policy components to problems and justify their need by assuring citizens of the forthcoming positive impacts. RA 8042 contains whiffs of justice, deservedness, and equality rationales. Assumptions indicate information about contexts, institutional culture, social constructions of target populations, power dynamics, and social construction of knowledge (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). The theorists conclude that it is analysts who uncover the furtive assumptions of policymakers. That is precisely the purpose of the original research presented in the remaining sections.

4.3. Automated Content Analysis

This descriptive essay uses Natural Language Processing (NLP) facilitated by machine learning to accomplish several tasks. SCPD is typically paired with content analysis research methods since the framework was crafted to help analysts uncover information about contexts, social constructions, and policymakers from texts. Textual analysis comprises half of the NLP subdiscipline and the other half focuses on speech which helps to improve the algorithms underpinning applications like Google’s Assistant, Apple’s Siri, and Amazon’s Alexa. NLP can process text in several ways including entity recognition, part of speech tagging, sentiment analysis, and auto summarization.

NLP uses unsupervised and supervised models to accomplish its tasks. Unsupervised models help make sense of unlabeled data. This is an inductive approach that offers automatic summarization of documents, can describe discourses, or be visualized through word clouds. Supervised models use annotated data and get their name from the human reinforcement required to train the algorithms. To accomplish tasks such as entity recognition or sentiment analysis, supervised models use a deductive approach, wherein a human analyst has several opportunities

to introduce context. The following sections explore the stepwise and distinct ways I applied supervised machine learning in this study, using two programs designed for users nonproficient in computer languages.

4.3.1. Step One: tagtog

I utilized the same model from a previous study that I trained to identify the social constructions of OFWs and their expressions of power. The model was trained using the complete text of RA 8042 and 75 hand-selected media articles detailing the abuses endured by workers abroad and the government's subsequent responses (i.e., policy benefits). These articles were chosen as training material to offer the model the context of how exploitation cases concerning migrant workers may be discussed in the media. After supervised machine learning reinforcement on the training set, the model was performing with 90 percent precision and 65 percent recall giving me an F_1 score of 0.75.¹⁵

The tagtog model identifies 16 entity types which include: *government, problems, solutions/benefits, policy, labor, women, remittances, OFW positive, OFW neutral, OFW negative, power embassy, power democracy, power individual action, power collective action, power legal, and power digital activism*. For the purposes of this essay, I isolated the power and deservedness codes that appeared in the dataset to graph the target group on the SCPD matrix (see Section 5). This allowed me to interpret the model's findings and compare the social constructions of OFWs during the COVID-19 pandemic to the target group constructions from the last 25 years.

4.3.2. Step Two: MonkeyLearn

In this step, I used three separate machine learning models to accomplish my tasks. The first was a sentence extractor that split the media articles into single sentences. Then I ran the sentences through a custom topic classifier I trained to recognize four pandemic response phases: *repatriation, testing and quarantine, reintegration, and redeployment*. To train the model, I uploaded sentences from purposively sampled media articles, tagging each with one (or more) of the topics of interest. I continued this process until I reached an F_1 score of 0.82 and an accuracy of 74 percent. It took 211 sentences to achieve these acceptable measures. Similarly to step one, the articles containing the training sentences were chosen specifically to introduce context of

¹⁵ For a detailed discussion on the tradeoffs and calculation of precision, recall, accuracy, and F_1 scores see (O'Steen, 2021).

how migrant workers and their pandemic related issues would be discussed across the phases in the media. To avoid overfitting or introducing bias, the model is never tested on training material, therefore the 211 sentences are not part of the analysis.

MonkeyLearn generated an output file containing topic codes and corresponding confidence levels based on my custom classifier. Next, I reviewed a sample, found the results to be acceptable, and manually separated the sentences into their own files based on topic identification. When a sentence contained multiple topics, I allowed for duplication across the files. Finally, I ran the topic-segregated sentences through a sentiment analysis model which labeled them as positive, neutral, or negative along with the model's corresponding confidence level.¹⁶ The results that I interpreted, from these automated procedures, illuminated the media's perceptions of the Philippine government's handling of the COVID-19 response as it relates to OFWs.

4.3.3. Automation in Policy Studies

Over the last 20 years, NLP as a subdiscipline of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Linguistics has made incredible strides. Automation is both the present and the future of data science. Academics regularly use programs assisted by these algorithms in our professional lives. We rely on NLP to detect plagiarism in our students' papers, run grammar checking on our writing, and autofill the salutations of our emails. Policy studies researchers should embrace these methodologies in their inquiries to offer the field and practitioners the most robust and accurate findings. NLP offers researchers the opportunity to analyze vast amounts of data, only limited by the machine's ability to process documents, in a fraction of the time it would take a human coder to review. Automated content analysis also reduces researcher bias and inconsistencies by using algorithms to achieve higher accuracy (Brill & Mooney, 1997). Machines have demonstrated their consistent superiority in tasks that require pattern detection in speech and text (Roark, Mitchell, Hosom, Hollingshead, & Kaye, 2011; Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). Though not free from error, there are significant resource-freeing advantages to automation. It is time to give data science a seat at the proverbial public policy table.

¹⁶ Though I did not personally train the sentiment analysis model, computer scientists conducted the training giving the model thousands of examples of context and nuance from which to discern sentiment. Once MonkeyLearn staff reached acceptable metrics, the company put the model on the market for businesses and academics to use.

4.4. Data

Perceived deservedness, political power, COVID-19 response phases, and phase sentiment are distilled from media articles. Mass media content is an excellent source of data for applying SCPD because media shapes both individual and collective identities (Dunn, 2018; Gauntlett, 2008; Schram, 2005). During the pandemic the world was paying close attention to media sources, both written and televised, to stay informed on number of cases, virus transmission, testing information, safety protocols, etc. The corpus analyzed herein contains digital newspaper articles from February 2, 2020 to February 25, 2021. I retrieved them from the Gale OneFile News database in two batches with the following search terms. All results were in English with occasional Tagalog quotations.

1. “overseas filipino workers” AND “covid-19” AND “repatriation” (entire document) between January 1, 2020 and November 10, 2020 = 561 results
2. “overseas filipino workers” AND “covid-19” (both as keywords) between November 11, 2020 and February 25, 2021 = 128 results

During the process of downloading the files, I systematically removed duplicates, which left 490 from the first batch and 108 from the second for a total of 598 articles. Power and deservedness codes were distilled at the article level, whereas COVID-19 phases and sentiment were analyzed at the sentence level. For the tagtog analysis, I uploaded the files directly into the program. To prepare the data for MonkeyLearn’s sentence extractor, I concatenated all 598 articles into one spreadsheet. The algorithm output 12,351 sentences. Due to the duplication caused by multiple topics per sentence, the graph below represents the distribution of 12,781 sentences.

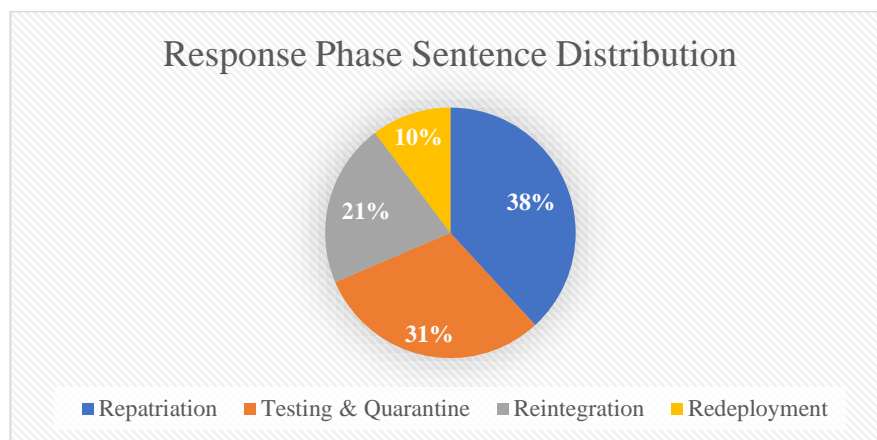


Fig. 4.3. Distribution of COVID-19 Response Phases by Sentence

4.5. COVID-19 as an External Shock

SCPD suggests that four main causal drivers move target populations from one quadrant in the matrix to another. They are “(i) changes in perception of target population from being deserving to undeserving or vice versa, (ii) external dramatic events, (iii) opportunities, and/or (iv) skillful manipulation by entrepreneurs” (Pierce et al., 2014, p. 17). I consider COVID-19 to be an external dramatic event that is likely to have an impact on OFWs placement on the matrix. This section discusses their construction as a target population since RA 8042 was passed in 1995 through 2020 and then compares that to their construction during the coronavirus pandemic.

In a previous study, I analyzed 2,503 media articles across a 25-year span to create a baseline for expressions of deservedness and power (O’Steen, 2021). The ordinal scales I created addressed a critique that SCPD struggles to operationalize and empirically measure these concepts (Sievers & Jones, 2020). The x-axis ranges from murderer (-10) to modern-day hero (+17) while the y-axis is additive and reinforcing (Schneider & Ingram, 2019) and includes expressions of democracy (1), individual action (2), digital activism (3), embassy involvement (4), legal action (5), collective action (6), and combinations thereof. This study is concerned with the same target group but takes place in a different time period under unique circumstances, allowing me the opportunity to test the scales for validity and replicability.

tagtog automatically annotated the 598 media articles using the same model I trained for the baseline study (O’Steen, 2021). The algorithm coded OFW expressions of deservedness as positive, neutral, or negative. The COVID-19 corpus primarily depicted OFWs in a positive way (312) and rarely in a negative light (13). Two hundred and seventy-three articles contained neutral constructions. I then manually reviewed each text to interpret and disaggregate the model’s deservedness codes, assigned them coordinates, and plotted them on the matrix (Figure 5). Since deservedness codes are not additive and reinforcing like power, I selected the highest value present in each article when there was more than one. Articles at the origin contain neutral constructions of deservedness and no power expressions are present in the text.

4.5.1. Power

“Last month, a group of 134 Filipinos sent the government a petition via the Philippine Consulate General in Macau requesting a chartered flight back to Manila. Among them were elderly people, pregnant women and people with infants.” – Macau Daily Times, March 9, 2020

This quote illustrates the two most common forms of power expressions in the data. OFWs use collective action and advocate for themselves via their consulates and embassies. There are 27 articles that only contain *power embassy* codes, 21 with only *collective action*, and another six with both. Sixteen texts referenced *individual action*, six mentioned *digital activism*, and only a single article contained a *democracy* code.

A June 2020 piece from the Manila Bulletin mentions Senator Villanueva’s office “receiving mail from Filipino nationals abroad who report their plight after being displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic” (Terrazola, 2020). This is in addition to the social media posts OFWs have been using to attract the attention of their representatives. They are not only self-advocating, but their families and migrant advocacy groups are joining in the call-to-action. Relatives of deceased OFWs in Saudi Arabia asked for the bodies of their loved ones to be repatriated back to the Philippines (Torregoza, 2020a). This was particularly challenging since international health protocols require cremation when the death is caused by an infectious disease. In most cases, cremation is against Muslim tradition, so this situation required more diplomatic negotiation.

Compared to the baseline study, there were far fewer expressions of power in the COVID-19 articles. In fact, 515 articles or 86 percent of the corpus have no OFW power codes at all. The findings suggest two possible explanations for this phenomenon. First, OFWs may be less able to exert power via individual action, collective action, and contact with the embassy due to the weak and symbolic design elements of RA 8042 and other migration protocols, leaving them at the mercy of their government’s directives. Or perhaps media reporting is more focused on presenting fact-based as opposed to narrative-based information, as the sentiment analysis in Section 6 indicates.

4.5.2. Deservedness

“After all they are our modern-day heroes,” –Silvestre Bello III, Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment, July 8, 2020

OFWs are still largely positively constructed by the media during the pandemic. Fifty-five articles refer to OFWs as “modern-day heroes,” the highest construction on the deservedness scale. This accolade typically appears in articles that reference remittances or OFWs who died abroad from COVID-19, details that continue to highlight the state’s use of hortatory tools to achieve its unscrupulous goals. Sometimes the expressions are explanatory such as, “Overseas

Filipino workers (OFWs) are considered modern-day heroes because they save the economy more than once by sending hard-earned cash back to the Philippines, boosting liquidity and consumption” (Medenilla, Ordinario, & Piad, 2020). Other times they are honorific, especially when expressed by Labor and Employment Secretary Bello, “[w]e will accord our fallen modern-day heroes the same grand welcome and memorial ceremonies due [to] them upon their arrival,” (Philippines News Agency Staff, 2020a).

There are unique negative constructions that appeared in the COVID-19 corpus. Many Local Government Units (LGUs) in the Philippines did not want OFWs to return to their home provinces due to the fear of local spread of the virus (Asis, 2020). This conception of migrant workers as disease carriers created real consequences for them. LGUs refusal of OFW reentry created a group of locally stranded individuals in Manila. This meant that the migrant workers had made half the repatriation journey, underwent testing and mandatory quarantine, but still could not return to their families around the archipelago. This prompted Duterte to demand labor and health authorities return 24,000 OFWs who were waiting within one week (Aben, 2020), although the consequences of failing to meet this directive were unclear.

Based on the comparative analysis, it appears that COVID-19 as an external shock reduced OFWs political power but did not change their social construction category. If anything, they have sunk deeper into the “dependent” target group. This is particularly concerning because SCPD highlights that dependents are the most likely to receive symbolic, or deceptive, policy benefits (Moon, 2020; Schneider & Ingram, 2019). It does not matter how often they are referred to as *bagong bayani* if structures to empower them do not exist. The coronavirus pandemic challenged the government to respond in a way that shucked the façade of agency and migrant protection, revealing the cracks in the labor export system. The following section explores the media’s sentiment of the state’s response to the pandemic as it relates to OFWs. The choices between reintegration and redeployment hint at the future social constructions and policy designs for this target population.

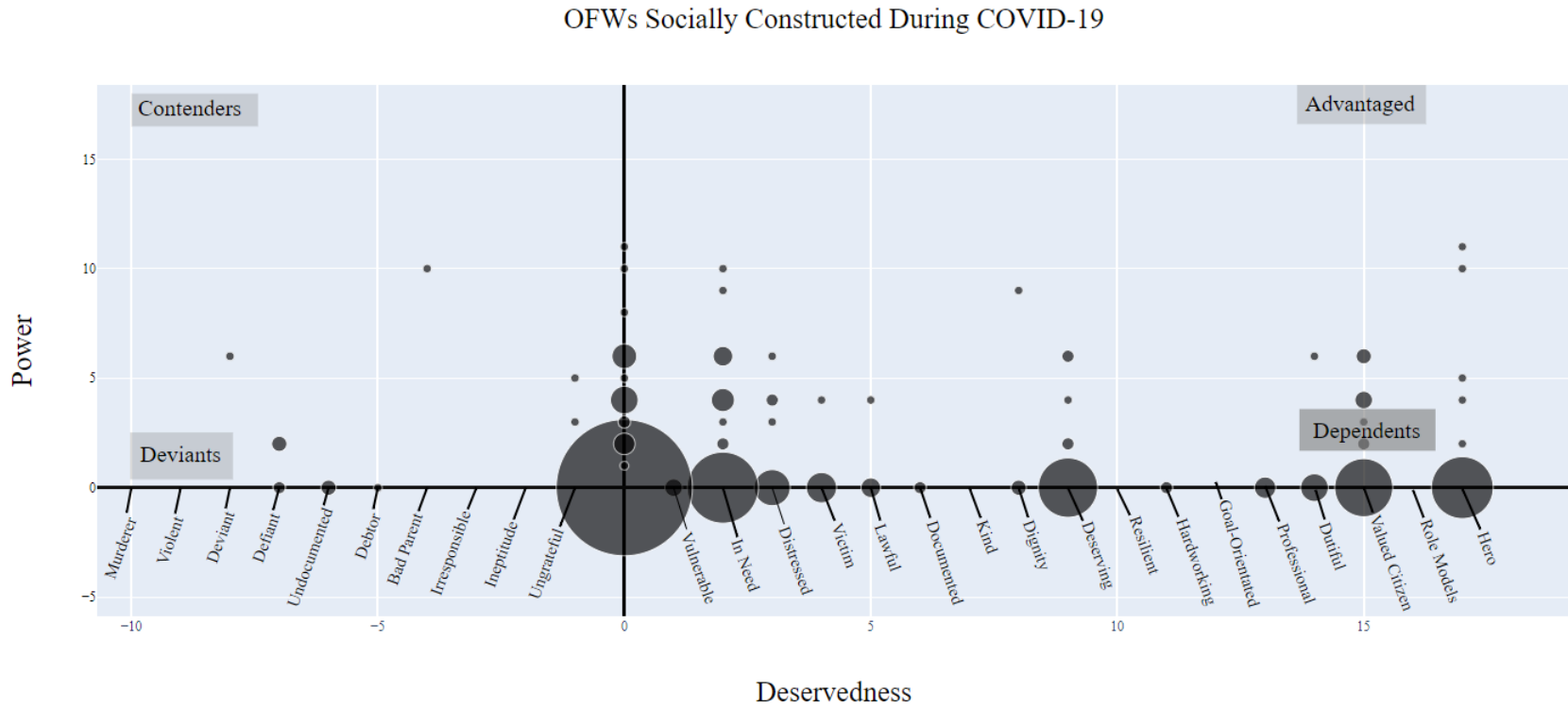


Fig. 4.5. Graphical representation of power and deservedness expressions from 598 media articles published during the 2020-2021 pandemic.

4.6. Sentiment Analysis Findings

Sentiment analysis is the NLP task of identifying positive, neutral, and negative opinions, emotions, and evaluations from text (Wilson, Wiebe, Hoffman, 2005). In the early days of the method, analysis was conducted at the document level. Over the years, computational linguists have improved the capabilities to analyze product reviews, multi-perspective question answering, and opinion-oriented information extraction at the sentence or phrase levels (Poria, Hazarika, Majumder, & Mihalcea, 2020; Wilson, Wiebe, & Hoffmann, 2005). Aspect-based sentiment analysis is a more nuanced method that allows researchers to discern the emotion connected to a specific topic rather than looking at the whole piece. Articles may discuss several topics and contain content from multiple speakers. Analyzing at the sentence level leads to more precise findings for the topics of interest.

I employed aspect-based sentiment analysis to understand the opinions around each phase of the Philippines' COVID-19 response for OFWs. From vast content filled with expert projections (Asis, 2020; Fakhruddin, Blanchard, & Ragupathy, 2020; Wickramasekara, 2019), I distilled four phases of pandemic response. Phases occur in somewhat of a sequential order beginning with repatriation, then testing and quarantine, then reintegration and/or redeployment. This explains the share of sentences that comprise each phase (see Figure 3). These phases are loosely bound by the activities that exist within them, not by time periods, resulting in temporal overlap.

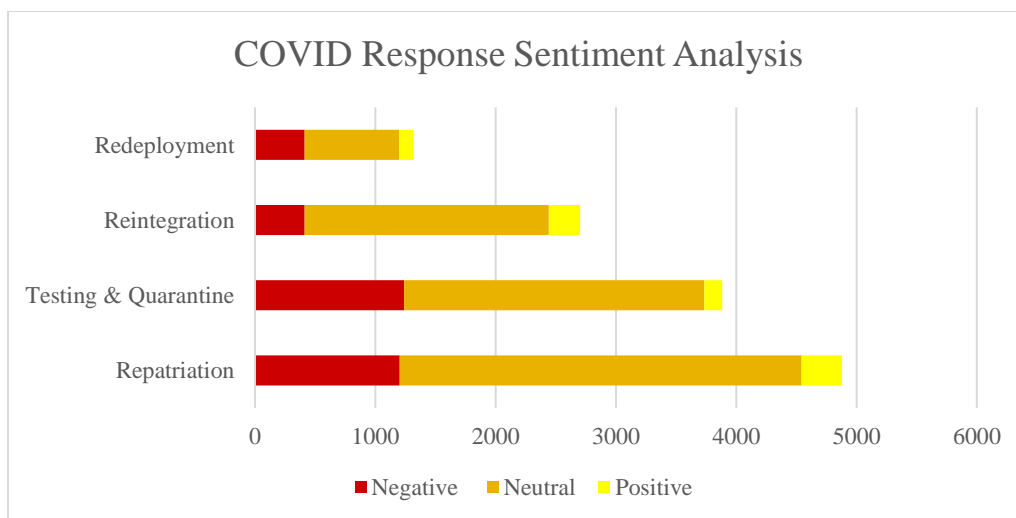


Fig. 4.6. Media sentiment from 12,781 sentences on the Philippines COVID-19 response phases.

4.6.1. Repatriation

Repatriation was the first phase of the COVID-19 response. The Philippines organized the initial extraction of 30 migrant workers from Wuhan, China on February 9, 2020. As of March 15, 2021, the nation has repatriated 387,606 migrant workers, nearly three quarters were land-based and the other quarter sea-based (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2020). This is the largest repatriation effort in Philippine history to date, exceeding that during the Gulf War nearly 10 times over. The topic classifier identified 4,879 sentences related to repatriation efforts. Of those, 68 percent contained neutral sentiment, 25 percent were negative, and only seven percent were coded as positive.

This endeavor demanded coordination from the following agencies: Department of Health (DOH) and the Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), the Bureau of Customs (BOC), DFA, the POEA, and the OWWA. Repatriation at this scale was an incredible undertaking but many Filipinos found the process to be lengthy, incoherent, and difficult to navigate.

To be brought home, OFWs had to signal their desire for repatriation by contacting their embassy or consulate. Then they would be instructed on how to receive an exit visa and fulfill any other requirements of the host nation's immigration system. Chaos ensued when mission personnel contracted the virus, limiting staff to process the requests. The lockdowns presented another diplomatic and logistic barrier; some OFWs with complete paperwork were "unable to come home because repatriation flights are subject to restrictions both in the host countries and the Philippines" according to former Labor and Employment Undersecretary Ople (Business Mirror Staff, 2020a). Though not all OFWs wished to return. Many migrants work in medical and other essential fields. Others, in Canada and some European countries, were able and encouraged by the Philippine state, to avail of host nations' unemployment assistance.

Another factor contributing to the negative sentiment of the repatriation phase is cost. RA 8042 maintains government responsibility in cases of "war, epidemic, disasters or calamities, natural or man-made, and other similar events" (1995, Sec. 15), rendering recruitment or employment agencies responsible in all other cases. Workers are only supposed to assume the costs when they are at fault for termination of employment. DFA reported a single chartered flight ranges from P12 to 13 million. OWWA chief Hans Cacdac sparred with Senators in a June

2020 hearing over his hesitance to “provide the fullest assistance to the OFWs” (Business Mirror Staff, 2020) for fear of bankrupting the agency. It appears that the government is covering the costs of the flights, food, and accommodation during the repatriation and quarantine phases, recouping funds from various sources if possible. It is the private sector that has acted nefariously in this case. A policy brief from Ateneo De Manila University states, “[p]rior to going overseas, OFWs are compelled to pay accredited private insurance companies insurance premiums so as to cover repatriation expenses” (Ang & Opiniano, 2020, p. 2). The authors urge the government to compel the insurance companies to issue payments as part of the pandemic response. By shifting the financial burden of repatriation to migrant workers, recruiters are in direct violation of RA 8042 and the U.N. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration “which prohibits recruiters and employers from charging or shifting recruitment fees or related costs to migrant workers,” a compact the Philippines enthusiastically endorsed in 2018 (Business Mirror Staff, 2020d; United Nations, 2018).

“We thank those involved in this nonstop, heroic-but risk- fraught-repatriation effort, in particular Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. and his people in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), who pulled out all the stops to overcome difficulties posed by lockdowns, travel bans and airport closures.” –Business Mirror Editorial, April 14, 2020.

Despite the repatriation challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, there were some good practices. The government utilized social media platforms to communicate information to OFWs in real time and respond to workers directly. In April 2020, DFA began hosting Facebook live broadcasts called OFW Help Live to offer updates on repatriation efforts (Gulf News Staff, 2020). Officials encouraged OFWs to contact their embassies via email or WhatsApp messages if they could not travel. OWWA launched its Quarantine Operations Facebook page to prepare returnees for what to expect upon their arrival in Manila and to answer queries related to psychosocial support and health care (Asis, 2020). “OFWs also use social media to report problems and concerns, which are then disseminated further by other netizens or are picked up by traditional media. These platforms have therefore also become a grievance mechanism for OFWs” (Asis, 2020, p. 6). Digital literacy is high among OFWs since they rely on technology to maintain their transnational familial relationships (Francisco-Menchavez, 2018), but it is worth noting that not all migrants have equal access to the internet.

4.6.2. Testing & Quarantine

“Last month, it was reported that around 24,000 OFWs were stuck in various quarantine centers in Metro Manila due to the slow release of their medical clearance certificates after undergoing COVID-19 testing.” –Sadongdong, Manila Bulletin, June 7, 2020.

Testing and quarantine are grouped together because they occurred simultaneously upon OFWs arrival in Manila. The topic classifier tagged 3,884 sentences with this phase, the second largest group of sentences after repatriation. Based on the aspect sentiment analysis, this phase of the response was the worst for OFWs. In fact, 32 percent of the sentences contain negative sentiment and only four percent were positive. Several major trends were contributing to the failures in this phase, but the common thread was *delay*. The words “wait,” “delay,” and “stuck” appeared 137, 50, and 13 times respectively in the data.

President Duterte signed Proclamation 922 on March 8, 2020 placing the entire nation under a state of public health emergency. This was soon followed by a series of Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ), and General Community Quarantine (GCQ) restrictions for the National Capital Region and other provinces. The BOQ mandated a 14-day quarantine for all incoming nationals at approved hotels. Hotels filled with repatriated OFWs faster than the formal inspection and approval process could manage which created a backlog. Ships full of Filipino workers were forced to anchor in Manila Bay for weeks at a time because there was nowhere to quarantine them. They became floating testing facilities for their 8,000 passengers but struggled to separate the ill from the healthy.

When OFWs were lucky enough to get a quarantine space ashore, they awaited COVID-19 testing and waited even longer for their results. After completing the two-week quarantine and obtaining a negative test result, the BOQ issued citizens paper certificates stating they had been cleared to travel onward. Hundreds of workers were stuck waiting for these pieces of paper. All these points of congestion created such a bottleneck effect it delayed other workers from boarding planes in their host countries. For example, “[t]hey have been stranded because Emirates and Etihad airlines canceled several repatriation flights from Dubai to Manila after airports in the Philippines were temporarily closed to passenger flights due to the quarantine restrictions” (Casayuran, 2020b). Or they found themselves trapped in Manila, increasing their

exposure to the disease, contributing to their physical isolation, and heightening emotional distress during a chaotic and uncertain time. There was one suicide during quarantine, an OFW hung herself in the stairway of her hotel (Liao, 2020).

ABS-CBN News (2020) reported a few migrant workers did not honor the 14-day quarantine and instead left their hotels without obtaining their certificates. The state responded with an increased police presence to monitor the facilities (Merez, 2020). This is indicative of the current administration's law and order approach to dealing with citizens,¹⁷ divergent from the agency and self-sacrifice mantra that birthed *bagong bayani*.

Though Senator Leila de Lima,¹⁸ a champion for OFWs, described this response phase as a “complete and utter failure in the handling of the return of the repatriated OFWs,” (Torregoza, 2020b), the government proved its ability to shift mid-crisis and offer some solutions. To address the paper certificate delay, BOQ pivoted to a digital copy that was emailed directly to repatriates at the end of their mandatory quarantine (ABS-CBN News Staff, 2020a). State agencies implemented other electronic solutions during this phase. By June 11, 2020 DOLE, OWWA, and POEA launched a joint tracking system called OASIS that has helped to “identify and classify arriving OFWs, and facilitate efficient swab testing and rapid pick-up and transfer to their hotels” (Asis, 2020, p. 6). Lastly, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) “has also provided technical assistance for DOH, drafted protocols for digital solutions to track Covid-19 patients, and augment the Epidemiology Bureau's data gathering and disease surveillance and response functions compliant with cybersecurity and privacy laws, rules and regulation” (Philippine News Agency Staff, 2020b).

4.6.3. Reintegration

“The homecoming of our OFWs should be seen as their road to recovery from the crisis and the continued fulfillment of their dreams for their families.” – Administrator Hans Leo Cacdac, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, December 4, 2020.

¹⁷ President Duterte has been widely criticized by Filipinos and international human rights organizations for the extrajudicial killing of thousands of citizens during his ‘War on Drugs.’ (Bachelet, 2020).

¹⁸ Senator de Lima was imprisoned in 2017 on drug related charges after she led an investigation into Duterte (Yap & Ramos, 2021). Despite this political vendetta, Senator de Lima remains an outspoken advocate for OFWs from detention.

Reintegration refers to the phase of pandemic response that is characterized by intentional efforts to resettle migrant workers into the domestic labor force. It is incredibly important because under non-pandemic conditions, migrants often return to stagnant home economies, with limited resources, non-transferable skills, and may experience stigma (Wickramasekara, 2019). COVID-19 has exacerbated all these issues, leaving returnees to compete for limited jobs at home. The topic classifier identified 2,702 sentences pertaining to this phase. Seventy-five percent of those contained neutral sentiment, 15 percent were negative, and 10 percent were positive. Compared to the other phases, the media considered this response effort to be best handled, shown by the highest ratio of neutral and positive and lowest negative sentiment.

The Philippines may have fared well in this phase since the country has an established National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO). RA 8042 mandated the creation of the Replacement and Monitoring Center under the supervision of DOLE (1995, Sec. 17). The policy requires TESDA and the Technology Livelihood Resource Center (TLRC) to give priority to women who were deployed as domestic helpers and entertainers. RA 10022 (2009) and the OWWA Act (RA 10801, 2016) restructured the NRCO placing its program development under the supervision of OWWA (Wickramasekara, 2019).

Successful reintegration is everyone's responsibility and requires collective problem-solving (Asis, 2020). Through a public-private partnership with Coca-Cola Philippines, the government rolled out a free online entrepreneur training for reintegrated OFWs. The Reintegration through Skills and Entrepreneurship (RISE) Program "envisioned to train at least 10,000 OFW returnees across all genders and to engage them in strategic areas including the airport upon their return, in the quarantine facilities, in the PITEx/terminals as they return to their hometowns, and upon return in their homes" (National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO), 2020). This program was motivated by the NRCO survey where 60 percent of displaced OFWs indicated they dream of starting a business (Business Mirror Staff, 2020b).

The government is also turning to civil society and multilateral organizations for reintegration efforts. The BRIDGE program spearheaded by UN Women, IOM, ILO in collaboration with DFA and DOLE "aims to support the government in promoting fair and ethical recruitment and ensure that returning OFWs can successfully reintegrate through an approach that puts them at the center, address the challenges to women in particular, and is inclusive of all groups, including the OFW community and civil society organization" (Manila

Bulletin Staff, 2020b). This program is anchored on the Global Compact of Migration (2018) which contains objectives that align with 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2021). At the time of this writing, these programs are only four months old, and there are no publicly available data to determine their effectiveness yet.

An initiative receiving less praise is the DOLE-Abot Kamay ang Pagtulong (DOLE-AKAP) which provides one-time cash assistance to *qualified* OFWs whose jobs have been affected by the pandemic. The means-testing was implemented to protect limited funds for the one-time payment of \$200 (P10,000). The disbursement is less than one month's remittances as the average family of an OFW receives \$1,600 (P82,000) in a six-month period (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). According to Schneider and Ingram (2019, p. 223), this aid is considered largely a symbolic benefit since it offers “few if any material gains.” The AKAP program appears 85 times in sentences with neutral sentiment, 15 times with negative sentiment, and only once in a sentence with positive sentiment that reads, “He [Bello] added that with additional funding, more OFWs will benefit from the AKAP program and even more overseas workers will be repatriated” (Philippine News Agency Staff, 2020c).

The coronavirus pandemic has significantly altered the lives of many. Some Filipinos have found opportunity in the crisis and are making a new life at home (Mogato, 2020). Others stayed abroad and are still navigating pandemic life in host countries. A third group was trying to stay afloat until the travel bans lifted and they could leave again. Individuals’ motivation and government sponsored redeployment are the topics of the next section.

4.6.4. Redeployment

“We can see that they are highly in demand because they are skilled and resilient.” –Roy M. Señeres Jr., President of the OFW Family Club Party-list, May 27, 2020.

Redeployment is a regular part of the migration cycle especially for Filipinos whose practices have been explained as stepwise (Francisco-Menchavez, 2020; Paul, 2017; Paul & Yeoh, 2021). What is unique about this process during the pandemic is the government’s facilitation for some types of workers and restrictions for others. The topic classifier found 1,316 sentences relating to redeployment of OFWs. Sixty percent of those contained neutral, 31 percent negative, and nine percent positive sentiment.

The Philippines has sought to meet the healthcare labor demands of the world's aging populations by aggressively training and deploying nurses. Many Filipino doctors have retrained (deskilled) as nurses to find higher pay abroad. This practice and consistent underfunding have crippled the state's healthcare system. ILO data indicate that there are 430 nurses per 10,000 people in Germany, 337 in the U.S., 254 in the U.K., and only 65 in the Philippines (Lema & Baldwin, 2020). Early in the pandemic, the government temporarily banned the deployment of medical workers to ensure the country could meet the healthcare needs of citizens as its COVID-19 infection rate climbed to the highest in Asia (Business Mirror Staff, 2020d). Many migrant nurses refused to work at home because "they felt underpaid, unappreciated and unprotected" (Lema & Baldwin, 2020). After pressure from unions, the ban was lifted and host countries happily received Filipino nurses, Saudi Arabia even chartered planes to bring them back to the Kingdom.

"I hope the government will not take it against us that we are leaving," she said. "We are looking forward to helping the government with this fight in other ways. When we are able, when we've risen out of poverty, we will." –Nurse Glory, September 16, 2020

Seafarers were amongst one of the first industries to return to work. International shipping has been a lifeline for global trade during this disaster. Crews remained in high demand and the Philippines was eager to respond. This led to tensions between Manila and Canberra when two bulk carriers arrived in Western Australia in October with multiple COVID-19 cases (Chambers, 2020). The cruise industry has not yet returned although when it does, ships will surely be staffed with Filipino workers.

By December 2020, OWWA chief Cacdac announced the agency was already looking for fresh markets for OFWs. He cited interest from the Czech Republic and Romania (CNN Philippines Staff, 2020). Now that vaccines are being distributed around the globe, the government is negotiating supply for OFWs as a provision of their employment contracts. Filipino migrants have been included in inoculation plans in the U.K., Germany, and Qatar. Unless the state makes a deliberate shift in its migration policy, I suspect many Filipinos will respond to the exacerbated push-and-pull factors, cloaked in heroism rhetoric, by redeploying abroad.

4.7. Discussion & Recommendations

“The evident distrust and lack of confidence from a large contingent of displaced OFWs abroad in the government’s capacity to take care of their needs during this time of pandemic is indicative of its overall failure to adequately address the needs of the Filipino people, OFWs included, arising from the COVID-19 outbreak,” –Senator De Lima, August 20, 2020

Duterte received much support from OFWs during his presidential campaign because of the many promises he made to the target population. While speaking to a Filipino community in Japan in 2016, Duterte claimed this would be the last generation of overseas workers and that their *kababayan* of the future would find meaningful and dignified employment at home (The Filipino Times Staff, 2019). In addition to his job expansion pledges, Duterte has supported the establishment of a new government department to manage all things related to OFWs. He has specifically endorsed a Department of Overseas Filipino Workers (DOFW) to end illegal recruitment, characteristic of his tough-on-crime department. The creation of said department has been widely debated over the last five years and is receiving a resurgence of support due to the inter-agency COVID-19 response efforts.

By 2019, more than 30 bills pertaining to this issue had been presented in the House and Senate (Abao, 2019). The bills are similar in purpose but differ in the handling of existing agencies that manage the labor export scheme. Of particular concern is how to absorb or maintain the OWWA which has a unique trust fund structure unlike the budget and appropriations of the POEA and others. Nevertheless, support for a new institution in Congress is strong.

Civil society groups’ positions on the issue are more diverse. Some support the installation believing it will bring greater protections to migrant workers. Others fear that it will cost too much and hamper ongoing service delivery. Unions fear disruption of public service jobs since many of the proposals suggest abolishing existing agencies (Abao, 2019). But the biggest question being raised by advocates is what further institutionalization means for the future of Philippine labor.

Creating an entirely new government department is an incredible undertaking for a bureaucracy and it signals a nation’s priorities. For example, after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the United States created the Department of Homeland Security to foster better intelligence sharing, increase border security, and manage emergencies. This along with

the War in Afghanistan signaled America's anti-terrorism stance to the world. Establishing a DOFW, on top of the OFW bank, hospital, and e-card, is likely to signal the Philippines' desire to maintain a service-based economy to labor-importing countries. Preserving the status quo tells migrant workers the promises of home-front job expansion are merely lip service.

The pandemic undoubtedly exposed the inefficiencies of the state's labor export system (Casayuran, 2020a; Manila Bulletin Staff, 2020a; Philippine News Agency Staff, 2020a; TendersInfo News Staff, 2020b). Policymakers are reckoning with how to meet the needs of all citizens. Despite RA 8042's specific statement that remittances are not to be a national development strategy, that is absolutely how they have been used over the last four decades. As markets begin to reopen, it will be more enticing than ever before to redeploy workers, in hopes their remitted incomes will prop up a crippled economy. Policy instruments are being put forth promising a slew of new protections for *bagong bayani*, however, I implore the government to resist these band-aid solutions and recommend continued investment in reintegration efforts.

Rather than entertaining the restructuring of bureaucratic bodies to better export labor, those agencies should refocus their efforts on the home front. The global upset caused by the coronavirus pandemic has offered the Philippines an opportunity to break from its old patterns and reshape its economy. Instead of expending diplomatic resources on the minute details of employment contracts, DFA should work collaboratively with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to attract more foreign direct investment. DOLE can also aid these departments by exploring web-based labor demands and find creative solutions for Filipinos to meet those needs from home. This will increase digital literacy and upskill the population, propelling the Philippines into a knowledge economy. A move away from a service-based economy will modernize and professionalize a large portion of the workforce, fulfilling the demands of migrant advocacy groups. Investing in intellectual capital is likely to offer increased dignity, and greater equity for workers, especially women. Households will benefit from increased wages and experience greater opportunities for asset building which is linked to a reduction in domestic violence, divorce, and compromised parenting (Rothwell & Han, 2010). If the Duterte administration makes this the priority for the next two years, they may be able to fulfill his presidential campaign promise and offer a new reality for the next generation of Filipinos.

4.8. Conclusion

The thoroughness of the SCPD framework allows for a comprehensive review of the Philippines' decades-long migration system. It offers an explanation of politicians' agenda setting and design choices rooted in social constructions of a group's deservedness and political power. As demonstrated herein, those with less power are more likely to receive symbolic or deceptive benefits (Schneider & Ingram, 2019). Such deception may go unnoticed until an external shock, like a pandemic, cracks the façade. An upset of this caliber brings with it an opportunity for change.

Further research and migrant advocacy will shine a light on the need for change in the Philippines labor export system. If the goal is truly protection and nation building, more efforts are needed on the home front. This study is only the beginning of the work necessary for a major paradigm shift. I have offered and tested an operationalization of power and deservedness, strengthening SCPD's explanatory ability, one I hope will be taken up by other scholars and continually refined. I did not provide a temporal component to the target group change in this study, though careful attention to the target group's movement in the post-pandemic period is essential to hold the government accountable to and truly protect its *bagong bayani*. Future qualitative research with migrant workers, their families, and government officials can offer a richer perspective of lived experiences than what I could discern through media articles alone. In particular, scholars should solicit OFWs' views on the economy shifts proposed herein.

I hope this study excites policy researchers about the possibilities of adopting automation into their work. The discipline seeks to understand the policymaking process, analyze the contents of public policy, and improve modeling effectiveness. We should embrace the opportunities to discover the trends in the modern era of big data. By incorporating machine learning techniques, analysts can review larger datasets in less time, reduce researcher and coder biases, and make more accurate predictions and recommendations. Additionally, recommendations can be reviewed regularly to maintain a precise trajectory and pivot when necessary.

As a result of these methods, I can say with confidence that OFWs are expressing less power during the COVID-19 pandemic than they were in the 25 years before. The media's sentiment of the Philippine government's response efforts is largely neutral but more negative than positive. The state has provided services to OFWs and their dependents, however, the

response has been inadequate because migrant protection policies were designed to promote development via remittances not the dignity and fulfillment of the Filipino people.

4.9. References

- Abao, C. (2019, October 22). A separate department for OFWs: Should we? Retrieved from <https://www.ateneo.edu/ls/sooss/political-science/news/research/separate-department-ofws-should-we-2-part-blueboard-column>
- Aben, E. (2020, May 27). Duterte orders local govt units to accept returning overseas workers. *Arab News*. Retrieved from <https://arab.news/4znt6>
- ABS-CBN News Staff. (2020a, May 22). OFWs to get faster 'e-tickets' for quarantine completion. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/video/news/05/22/20/ofws-to-get-faster-e-tickets-for-quarantine-completion>
- ABS-CBN News Staff. (2020b, May 17). Some OFWs left isolation facilities before getting COVID-19 positive test results: PCG. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/17/20/some-ofws-left-isolation-facilities-before-getting-covid-19-positive-test-results-pcg>
- Ang, A. P., & Opiniano, J. M. (2020). *Possible Economic Impacts of Falling Oil Prices, the Pandemic, and the Looming Global Recession onto Overseas Filipinos and their Remittances*. Retrieved from <http://ateneo.edu/ls/sooss/economics/wp-2020-05-possible-economic-impacts-falling-oil-prices-pandemic-and-looming>
- Asis, M. M. B. (2020). *Repatriating Filipino migrant workers in the time of the pandemic*. Retrieved from IOM Online Bookstore: <https://publications.iom.int/books/mrs-no-63-repatriating-filipino-migrant-workers-time-pandemic>
- Bachelet, M. (2020) *Situation of human rights in the Philippines*. Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved from: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/PH/Philippines-HRC44-AEV.pdf>
- Brill, E., & Mooney, R. J. (1997). An overview of empirical natural language processing. *AI magazine*, 18(4), 13-24.
- Business Mirror Staff. (2020a, June 25). As COVID upends life of OFWs, migration policy tweak urged. *Business Mirror*.
- Business Mirror Staff. (2020b, December 4). Enabling displaced OFWs to restart and rise again. *Business Mirror*.
- Business Mirror Staff. (2020c, April 14). Leave no one behind. *Business Mirror*.
- Business Mirror Staff. (2020d, August 6). Stakeholders grapple with pandemic's impact on migrants, PHL labor export policy. *Business Mirror*.
- Casayuran, M. (2020a, May 21). Galvez supports bill on Dep't of Overseas Filipinos. *Manila Bulletin*.
- Casayuran, M. (2020b, May 18). Open more airports for OFW return flights. *Manila Bulletin*.
- Chambers, S. (2020, October 13). Manila urged to get its house in order as Covid crewing crisis brews. *Splash 247*. Retrieved from <https://splash247.com/manila-urged-to-get-its-house-in-order-as-covid-crewing-crisis-brews/>
- CNN Philippines Staff. (2020, December 11). OWWA sees Romania, Czech Republic as new sites for OFW deployment. *CNN Philippines*. Retrieved from <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/12/11/OWWA-on-OFW-redeployment.html>
- Department of Foreign Affairs Republic of the Philippines. (2020, March 15). Repatriations Update. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/138743156280527/posts/1907761229378702/>

- Dunn, T. R. (2018). *Talking white trash: Mediated representations and lived experiences of white working-class people*: Routledge.
- Executive Order No. 857, (1982). Republic of the Philippines.
- Fakhruddin, B. S., Blanchard, K., & Ragupathy, D. (2020). Are we there yet? The transition from response to recovery for the COVID-19 pandemic. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 7, 100102. doi://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2020.100102.
- Francisco-Menchavez, V. (2018). *The Labor of Care: Filipina Migrants and Transnational Families in the Digital Age*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Francisco-Menchavez, V. (2020). All in the Family: Transnational Families and Stepwise Migration Strategies. *Geographical Research*. doi:10.1111/1745-5871.12416
- Gauntlett, D. (2008). *Media, gender and identity: An introduction*: Routledge.
- Guevarra, A. (2010). *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Gulf News Staff. (2020, April 17). Coronavirus: Jobless, hard-pressed Filipinos advised to return home. *Gulf News*.
- Ingram, H. M., Schneider, A. L., & deLeon, P. (2007). Social construction and policy design. In P. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (second ed.). Boulder: Westview Press.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2021). Migration data and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Retrieved from <https://migrationdataportal.org/sdgs?node=0>
- Lema, K., & Baldwin, C. (2020, September 16). Pandemic 'hero' Filipino nurses struggle to leave home. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-philippine-nurses-idUSKBN2671Z2>
- Liao, K. A. S. (2020). Emergency returns: COVID-19 and the repatriation of Filipino migrant workers. Retrieved from <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2020/emergency-returns-covid-19-and-the-repatriation-of-filipino-migrant-workers/>
- Macau Daily Times Staff. (2020, March 9). Philippines gov't brings nationals stranded in the SAR back home. *Macau Daily Times*.
- Manila Bulletin Staff. (2020a, October 29). Bill creating Dep't of Overseas Filipino Workers has backing from House. *Manila Bulletin*.
- Manila Bulletin Staff. (2020b, December 16). DFA, UN launch program protecting PH migrants. *Manila Bulletin*.
- McKay, S. (2015). "So they remember me when I'm gone": Remittances, fatherhood, and gender relations of Filipino migrant men. In L. Hoang & B. Yeoh (Eds.), *Transnational Labour Migration, Remittances and the Changing Family in Asia*, 111-135. London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited.
- Medenilla, S. P., Ordinario, C. U., & Piad, T. J. C. (2020, June 18). PHL grapples with impact of host countries' anti-COVID measures on OFW remittances. *Business Mirror*.
- Merez, A. (2020, May 20). Police tighten watch on OFW quarantine hubs. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/20/20/police-tighten-watch-on-ofw-quarantine-hubs>
- Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (amended 2009), Republic Act No. 8042 (as amended by Republic Act No. 10022), Fourteenth Congress of the Philippines (Philippines 2009).
- Mogato, M. (2020, July 23). 'My world stopped spinning'. Life on hold for millions of Philippine migrant workers. *The Jakarta Post*. Retrieved from

- <https://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2020/07/23/my-world-stopped-spinning-life-on-hold-for-millions-of-philippine-migrant-workers.html>
- MonkeyLearn Inc. (2021). Retrieved from <https://monkeylearn.com/>
- Moon, D. J. (2020). Dependents and Deviants: The Social Construction of Asian Migrant Women in the United States. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 1-15. doi:10.1177/0886109920960831.
- National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO). (2020). DOLE, Coca Cola Philippines and other partners ink MOA for the OFW re-integration through skills and entrepreneurship (OFW RISE) program. Retrieved from <http://nrco.dole.gov.ph/index.php/latest-news/393-dole-coca-cola-philippines-and-other-partners-ink-moa-for-the-ofw-re-integration-through-skills-and-entrepreneurship-ofw-rise-program>
- O'Steen, B. (2021). Social Constructions of Overseas Filipino Workers Facing Exploitation: An Automated Content Analysis. *Manuscript submitted for publication*.
- Overseas Workers Welfare Administration Act, Republic Act No. 10801. (2016). Sixteenth Congress of the Philippines.
- Paul, A. M. (2017). *Multinational maids: stepwise migration in a global labor market*. Cambridge University Press.
- Paul, A. M., & Yeoh, B. S. (2021). Studying multinational migrations, speaking back to migration theory. *Global Networks*, 21(1), 3-17.
- Philippine News Agency Staff. (2020a, June 24). Go supports measures giving more benefits to OFWs. *Philippine News Agency*.
- Philippine News Agency Staff. (2020b, April 3). Gov't cites accomplishments in fight vs. Covid-19. *Philippine News Agency*.
- Philippine News Agency Staff. (2020c, August 9). PRRD OKs add'l P5-B aid for displaced OFWs amid pandemic. *Philippine News Agency*.
- Philippine News Agency Staff. (2020a, July 21). PH to repatriate remains of 57 more Saudi OFWs next week. *Philippine News Agency*.
- Philippine News Agency Staff. (2020b, July 8). Remains of 44 OFWs from Saudi Arabia to arrive on July 10. *Philippine News Agency*.
- Philippine Statistics Authority. (2019). TABLE 4 Total and Average Remittance of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) by Selected Characteristics of OFWs, Philippines: 2019. In Survey of Overseas Filipinos PR tables.
- Pierce, J. J., Siddiki, S., Jones, M. D., Schumacher, K., Pattison, A., & Peterson, H. (2014). Social Construction and Policy Design: A Review of Past Applications. *Policy Studies Journal*, 42(1), 1-29.
- Poria, S., Hazarika, D., Majumder, N., & Mihalcea, R. (2020). Beneath the tip of the iceberg: Current challenges and new directions in sentiment analysis research. *IEEE Transactions on Affective Computing*, pp 1-30.
- Punongbayan, J., & Mandrilla, K. (2016, March 5, 2016). Marcos years marked 'golden age' of PH economy? Look at the data. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/views/imho/124682-marcos-economy-golden-age-philippines>
- Republic Act No. 8042, Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, Ninth Congress of the Philippines (1995).
- Roark, B., Mitchell, M., Hosom, J.-P., Hollingshead, K., & Kaye, J. (2011). Spoken language derived measures for detecting mild cognitive impairment. *IEEE transactions on audio, speech, and language processing*, 19(7), 2081-2090.

- Rodriguez, R. M. (2010). *Migrants for Export*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rothwell, D. W., & Han, C. K. (2010). Exploring the relationship between assets and family stress among low-income families. *Family Relations*, 59(4), 396-407.
- Sadongdong, M. (2020, June 7). Galvez vows improved quarantine procedures for 42,000 arriving OFWs. *Manila Bulletin*.
- Schneider, A. L. (1987). Coproduction of Public and Private Safety: An Analysis of Bystander Intervention, 'Protective Neighboring,' and Personal Protection. *Western Political Quarterly*, 40(4), 611-630.
- Schneider, A. L., & Ingram, H. M. (1997). *Policy design for democracy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas
- Schneider, A. L., & Ingram, H. M. (2019). Social constructions, anticipatory feedback strategies, and deceptive public policy. *Policy Studies Journal*, 47(2), 206-236.
- Schram, S. F. (2005). *Putting a black face on welfare: The good and the bad*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Serquiña, O. T. J. (2016). "The greatest workers of the world": Philippine labor out-migration and the politics of labeling in Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidential rhetoric. *Philippine Political Science Journal*, 37(3), 207-227.
- Sievers, T., & Jones, M. D. (2020). Can power be made an empirically viable concept in policy process theory? Exploring the power potential of the Narrative Policy Framework. *International Review of Public Policy*, 2(1), 90-114.
- Tausczik, Y. R., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2010). The psychological meaning of words: LIWC and computerized text analysis methods. *Journal of language and social psychology*, 29(1), 24-54.
- TendersInfo News Staff. (2020a, August 20). Philippines: De Lima urges colleagues to review implementation of govt's OFW repatriation and assistance programs. *TendersInfo News*.
- TendersInfo News Staff. (2020b, May 22). Philippines: IATF concurs with Bong Go's push for the creation of Department of Overseas Filipinos. *TendersInfo News*.
- TendersInfo News Staff. (2020c, May 27). Philippines: P5B funding for assistance programs of OFWs affected by COVID-19 pandemic approved. *TendersInfo News*.
- Terrazola, V. E. (2020, June 23). Attend to Pinoy workers' concerns in Saudi Arabia --- Sen. Villanueva. *Manila Bulletin*.
- The Filipino Times Staff. (2019, July 21). Keeping track of Duterte's promises to OFWs. *The Filipino Times*. Retrieved from <https://filipinotimes.net/news/2019/07/21/keeping-track-dutertes-promises-ofws/>
- Torregoza, H. L. (2020a, June 24). Bello to work for repatriation of deceased OFWs' remains. *Manila Bulletin*.
- Torregoza, H. L. (2020b, June 1). Sen. Leila de Lima seeks probe into prolonged quarantine of repatriated OFWs. *Manila Bulletin*.
- United Nations. (2018). General Assembly Endorses First-Ever Global Compact on Migration, Urging Cooperation among Member States in Protecting Migrants. [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12113.doc.htm>
- Wickramasekara, P. (2019). *Effective return and reintegration of migrant workers with special focus on ASEAN Member States*. Retrieved from TRIANGLE in ASEAN: https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_733917/lang--en/index.htm

- Wilson, T., Wiebe, J., & Hoffmann, P. (2005). *Recognizing contextual polarity in phrase-level sentiment analysis*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of human language technology conference and conference on empirical methods in natural language processing.
- Yap, D. & Ramos, M. (2021, February 20) 3 US senators press De Lima's release from detention. *Inquirer*.

5. General Conclusion

This dissertation exists at the intersection of labor and migration policy. I have analyzed historical and contemporary contexts to dissect the Philippines' web-like labor export system. This research is timely because the country is on the cusp of reorganizing its approach to managing Overseas Filipinos through a new government department. The Philippines is touted as a model for global migration by other low-and-middle-income countries. While the nation has successfully dominated certain industries and enjoys high levels of remittances from its migrants, the system is fraught with weak policy instruments that fail to achieve their intended purposes and leave workers exposed to exploitation. How the country responds to the COVID-19 pandemic will not only determine its future labor export agenda but is likely to influence global migration patterns. The following conclusion revisits my empirical findings, contributions to the literature, and recommendations for data-driven decision making and worker-focused policies.

BLAs have a variety of economic and social uses however, the Philippines has used them since the 1960s to secure labor markets abroad. Article 1 assessed the effectiveness of BLAs to influence the out-migration of Filipinos. The coefficient on *BLA* is not statistically significant in any specification, indicating no evidence of a causal impact of BLAs on migration of Filipinos. The coefficients on GDP per capita ratio and exports are positive and significant at ten and five percent, respectively. These two explanatory variables are jointly significant at five percent ($p = 0.02$) demonstrating that economic conditions and relationship with the host countries matter to Filipino migrants.

The BLA literature to date finds no effect of the agreements on migration (Chilton & Posner, 2018; Chilton & Woda, forthcoming; Peters, 2019). My identification strategy is novel and builds on the OLS, rare events logistic regressions, and event study analyses that precede it. I, too, find that there is not enough evidence to claim a causal effect of BLAs on migration of Filipino workers. These methodological and empirical contributions further strengthen the grounds for this conclusion. However, more empirical research is needed to test other potential effects of these labor agreements such as improving working conditions, streamlining screening and predeparture training, encouraging repatriation and remittance sending, and receiving non-migration related benefits. Efforts in these areas would constitute vital contributions to a scarce literature on BLAs. Until more quantitative and qualitative assessment is conducted,

policymakers should remain skeptical that BLAs increase migration and call for further evaluation of these unique diplomatic tools.

Article 2 uses Social Construction and Policy Design (SCPD) to analyze the distribution of benefits and burdens to OFWs since the implementation of the first migrant workers' protection policy. The findings suggest migrant workers are positively socially constructed, have low-to-moderate levels of power, endure a multitude of problems, and are offered solutions, albeit sometimes ineffective ones. Besides the empirical findings, this article uses novel machine learning methods and argues for greater use of automation in policy studies. I also offer two theoretical contributions in this piece. First, I argue for global expansion of applications based on a nation's level of democracy, urging researchers who may be cautious of the 'developing world' to explore the contributions non-Euro-American analysis can make to theoretical tenets. Second, I present a transparent, empirical operationalization of power and deservedness, responding to critiques of the framework's rigor.

A concern unearthed in this analysis is that administered solutions are not necessarily an appropriate match for the problem endured. Throwing money at issues, without proper support, rarely solves them. The Philippines could make better decisions if they were data informed. To that end, I recommend DFA host a publicly available database that publishes anonymized information on OFW problems, responses, and costs. The ability to aggregate these data into one place that can be filtered by host country, issue type, etc. offers the government a chance to observe trends. This will help the state invest in preventative measures and redirect their diplomatic efforts towards securing concrete protections for workers. Public availability increases accountability to taxpayers. Furthermore, this system can empower OFWs and offer them an additional consideration when deciding where to work.

Article 3, like the last piece, applies the social construction and policy design framework to the Philippines' migrant workers' protection policies to understand the government's distribution of benefits and burdens to overseas Filipinos as a target group during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings suggest migrant workers are positively socially constructed but are experiencing reduced levels of power under these conditions. The media sentiment on government-led efforts is largely neutral, yet over a quarter of sentences pertaining to repatriation, testing and quarantine, and redeployment were negative while less than ten percent were positive.

To arrive at the empirical findings, I use natural language processing assisted by four algorithms, and again call for greater use of these methods in public policy. This essay offers theoretical contributions by way of testing my operationalization of power and deservedness from Article 2, further refining a tool to measure empirically and rank a single target group in any democracy. By applying social construction and policy design in the Philippines, I expand the framework's explanatory power to democracies outside of the U.S., particularly in the Global South where applications are scarce. Lastly, I offer a unique view of migrant workers from their own country's perspective, a lesser explored area in the policy process literature that usually presents host nations' constructions.

Policymakers are proposing a slew of new protections for OFWs to address COVID-19 related needs, however, I implore the government to resist these band aid solutions and recommend continued investment in reintegration efforts. Rather than entertaining the restructuring of bureaucratic bodies to better export labor, those agencies should refocus their efforts on the home front. The global upset caused by the coronavirus pandemic has offered the Philippines an opportunity to break from its old patterns and reshape its economy. Instead of expending diplomatic resources on the minute details of employment contracts, DFA should work collaboratively with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to attract more foreign direct investment. DOLE can also aid these departments by exploring web-based labor demands and find creative solutions for Filipinos to meet those needs from home. This will increase digital literacy and upskill the population, propelling the Philippines into a knowledge economy. A move away from a service-based economy will modernize and professionalize a large portion of the workforce. Investing in intellectual capital is likely to offer increased dignity, and greater equity for workers, especially women. Households will benefit from increased wages and experience greater opportunities for asset building. If the Duterte administration makes this the priority for the next two years, they may be able to fulfill his presidential campaign promise and offer a new reality for the next generation of Filipinos.

Article 1 was presented at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) annual meeting in the Fall of 2020 where useful feedback was gathered on the research design. In the spring of 2021, I received a revise and resubmit decision from IZA Journal of Development and Migration. The final version here reflects changes derived from peer reviews. Article 2 is under review at Asian Politics & Policy and Article 3 is being considered

for publication in the Journal of Migration and Health. It is my hope that once these pieces are officially published, they will be used to support migrant advocacy efforts. This three-article dissertation showcasing a variety of theories and methodologies is the result of my perseverance, grit, and public service ethic. It is with great joy, for what I have accomplished thus far and zeal for my future in public policy, that I conclude this work.