Mapping the 'home': A literature review on Filipino migration and diaspora

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Abstract This article aimed to present a comprehensive literature review on Philippine migration and diaspora. Diaspora is not a new concept for Filipinos; they have been constantly connected to migration, one of the interconnected aspects of the global workforce. Diaspora and migration as common household terms can be traced back from the first overseas Filipino farmworkers in Hawaii in the middle of 1900s to the presently relocated skilled workers and domestic helpers in the Middle East countries and various Asian countries. The author intended to provide a better understanding of existing researches and debates on the topic and evaluate their relationship with the current research study. More so, the essay was intended to identify the research gaps arising from previous scholarly writings, which was beneficial to the author as he embarks in research on Filipino migration and diaspora. Research gaps serve several purposes for the possible direction of future research projects. Most of the literature focused on the reasons of migration; migration narratives and experiences; homeland media consumption; the role of digital technologies and social media in fostering transnational families' relationships and reinforcing migrant workers' national and cultural identities. In terms of the approaches, participant observation, interview and digital ethnography were the employed research methodologies.

Keywords: literature review; Philippines; migration; diaspora; Overseas Filipino Workers

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, much has been written and published on migration and diaspora. Eisenstadt (1953); Smith (1960); Lee (1966); Safran (1991), Gilroy (1994), Tölölyan (1996) and Cohen (1997) have provided the early academical structure in these fields of inquiries. Furthermore, anthropologists, ethnographers and other social researchers have also

dealt with the subject matters, each employing different perspectives and bringing something new into the table. Most of which dealt with diaspora and migration as interconnected aspects of the global workforce.

However, scholarly discourses focusing on Filipino diaspora had only begun in the mid-2000s through the initiatives of Filipino American scholars (Aguilar, 2015). It was later followed by other social researchers who explored this subject. Hence, it seemed to be a new focus for migration and diaspora studies. Realistically, some of these academic writings were centred on Filipino migrant workers: the meaning and concept of Balikbayan (Blanc, 1996); a background of Filipino diaspora (E. S. Juan, 2011); migrant workers' construction of imagine global community (Parreñas, 2001); the 'care crisis' among Filipino migrant mothers (Parreñas, 2002); migratory narratives of Filipino migrant workers in the United States and the dichotomy of migration (Francisco, 2009); background on the beginning of scholarly discourses on Filipino diaspora (Aguilar, 2015); the labour migration narratives of housemaids in Hong Kong, their political activism and the various challenges arising while performing work duties (Constable & Pai, 2009); Filipino migrant workers' political activism (Rother, 2009); background of Philippine migration and diasporic philanthropy (Garchitorena, 2007); global capitalism and the challenges of Filipino diaspora (Juan, 2011); the national government's effort in promoting labour migration to its citizens and the construction of migration as a concept in the Philippine society (Lusis, 2007); the cosmopolitanism and reintegration of returning migrant workers (Soco, 2015); the re-assimilation of elderly Filipino immigrants to cultural communities (Tiamzon, 2013); the intersection of migration, masculinities, and familial responsibilities among Filipino seafarers (McKay, 2015); the identity negotiation of Filipino migrants in Japan (Tigno, 2008); the self-empowerment of migrant Filipino workers in Israel through a migrant magazine (Kama, 2008); migrant Filipinos' socialisation, belongingness and cultural identity through religious affiliation in the Middle East (Johnson et al., 2010); Filipina migrant workers' religious practices and diasporic journeys in Israel (Liebelt, 2014); private and public spaces (employer's house/balconies and churches) in the host countries as places of forging work-based alliances and familial relationships (Pande, 2014); religious conversions of migrant workers in the Middle East as means of social interaction, affection ties and community integration (Hosoda & Watanabe, 2014); the susceptibility of women workers in Lebanon to different types of abuses and their resistance (Pande, 2014); the different facets of migratory challenges among migrants and migrant workers in the Gulf (Mahdavi, 2014); the possible effects of labour migration to the Philippine society (Rodriguez, 2005).

How internet websites reinforce spatial interactions and transnational identities of overseas Filipino communities (Tyner & Kuhlke, 2002); construction of Filipino identities through social media

(Aguirre, 2014); construction of identity through news and karaoke of Filipino migrants in London (Ong, 2009); Filipino immigrants' consumption of Philippine ethnic media (Lu, 2013); the construction of social relationships and forging of a virtual community through the internet among Filipino diaspora in the United States (Ignacio, 2004); the role of cellular phones and SMS in maintaining transnational relationships (Barber, 2008); bridging parental relationships through mobile phones (Cabanes & Acedera, 2012); the transnational Filipino families' usage of new media technologies (Aguila, 2009); the imagination and construction of the Philippines through cyberspace by Filipino migrants (Figer, 2010); United Kingdom-based migrant mothers' intimate relationships with their children through the aid of digital technologies (Miller & Madianou, 2011); the impact of digital technologies to Filipino transnational mothers (Mirca Madianou, 2012); the diasporic connection among Filipino migrants in London through news consumption and homeland political interest (Ong & Cabañes, 2011); online engagement of OFWs (Overseas Filipino Worker) on national issues (Caguio & Lomboy, 2014); the relevance of the latest communication technologies like Facebook and Skype in maintaining transnational communication and relationships among Filipino migrants in the United States (Francisco, 2015); constructing occupational community among migrant workers on Facebook (Golan & Babis, 2019b); and the integration of Filipino caregivers in Israel through social networking sites (Golan & Babis, 2019a).

The relatively overdue and limited attention to Filipino diaspora made it ironical on the country's position as a premier exporter of migrant workers in the world market. The Philippines is known to be a hub for global work opportunities such as domesticated jobs, health professions, and skilled industries (Gomes, 2016). Nevertheless, despite the high numbers of Filipino migrant workers in various parts of the world, little attention has been directed to them in terms of academic discourses. This gap, the author had stirred a great urge and curiosity to explore the topic by tracing the current status and situation of academic inquiries on Filipino migration and diaspora. Specifically, this paper sought to answer the following questions: 1) What literature and studies have been written focusing on Filipino migration and diaspora? What is the focus? 2) What similarities and differences were evident in them? 3) What are the research gaps identified from the previous academic writings? 4) What is the dominant focus of Philippine migration studies in terms of media and communication?

METHODOLOGY
To gain the impression on migration studies concerning the Philippines, the researcher conducted a rigid collection of literature on Filipino migration for a period of 30 years, from January 1990 to January 2020 using different research databases: Taylor & Francis Online, SAGE

journals, Wiley Online Library, JSTOR and EBSCO Information Services. For the literature search, the researcher used specific keywords, such as 'Philippines', 'Philippine', 'Migration', 'Filipino Migration', 'Filipino Diaspora', 'Filipino Migrant Workers', 'Overseas Filipino Workers', and 'OFW'. The researcher also employed the Boolean search method by modifying AND, OR, and NOT modifiers in the research databases to limit the possible results. Then, the researcher systematically reviewed the gathered literature, scanning through the abstracts, keywords, methodologies, results and findings and conclusions in order to identify those that are deemed relevant to this research endeavour. After this procedure, the researcher gathered roughly 60 related literature and identified 39 research journal articles after delimiting them using a set of criteria: focus on Philippine migration (specifically Filipino migrant workers), written and published by foreign and local scholars, and from 1990 to 2020. This review of related literature will determine the research focus and provide a better understanding of the development of Philippine migration studies throughout the years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Migration and Diaspora in the Philippine Society: A Personal Experience

Migration and diaspora as terms had frequented the early years of the researchers' education who often eavesdropped colleagues whose parents are working abroad in order to provide for the needs of the family. There were times when the terms also induced media attention and would be a focus or theme in radio or television shows, frequently relating it the abuses and gruesome fates suffered by Filipino workers and migrants abroad.

Even in films, the plights of migrant workers were being depicted such as in the cases of Flor Contemplación, an overseas worker who was executed in Singapore for allegedly murdering a fellow Filipino (Ignacio, 2004); Sarah Balabagan, a Filipino domestic worker who was imprisoned and initially sentenced to death for murdering her male employer but eventually freed (Juan, 2011); and Sunday Beauty Queen, a Filipino documentary that portrayed the lives of Filipino domestic helpers and their diasporic communities in Hong Kong (Patterson, 2019). Non-fiction films also portrayed various stories of OFW, which showcased hard work, perseverance, sacrifices and love for their families like in the movies "Anak" (2000), "Milan" (2004), "Dubai" (2005), "Caregiver" (2008), "In My Life" (2009), "A Mother's Story" (2012), "Barcelona: A Love Untold" (2016); "Kita Kita" (2017), "Bagahe" (2017), "Maid In London" (2018), and the recent box-office hit and Philippines' highest-grossing film of all-time, "Hello, Love, Goodbye" (2019). Even more, during the Yuletide season, when the diaspora and migration were deeply embedded in various Filipino Christmas songs that were intended to touch the hearts of every Filipino overseas and connect them with family through lyrics

and melody. On the other hand, this increases their desire to be home for Christmas. All of these auditory, visual and media texts contribute to the creation of consolidated mental images that are spasmodically linked to migration and the diaspora.

For Filipinos, migration is not a new concept as it has long been existing, from the time when the Philippines was under the American rule (1898-1946), though migration which at that point, was somehow limited and predominantly in the form of government-sponsored educational grants (Posadas, 1986 in Tyner & Kuhlke, 2000). Sooner, some Filipinos have left the country for Hawaii to become indentured labourers right at the mid of the 19th century. However, the hostile working environment and poor living conditions of migrant workers had stemmed into a violent clash between the workers and the authorities which created a shift on migration routes among Filipinos, who are now considering the continental United States, particularly the Western coasts (California and its nearby cities), as the new destination (Ballesteros, 2012). Then, the elimination of the prohibition on nationality quotas in the American immigration law had paved the way for local nurses and other health care workers to migrate and fill the growing demands in the US health sectors (Migration Policy Institute, 2014). In this condition, family-based migration had become the most preferred mode of mobility en-route to various parts of the world, especially for the Western hemisphere.

Additionally, the brusque proliferation of skilled jobs in the Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and other Middle Eastern states) had opened far more working opportunities for the local workers who are enticed with relatively higher compensations, free housing, and other allowances and benefits as compared to domestic offers. Subsequently, Philippine migration had undergone feminisation as the demand for gender-segmented jobs such as domestic works, entertainment, and sexual services increased. The country made the bold move of giving in to the migrant worker demands through the sending of Filipino women to be mail-order-brides in Europe as well as entertainers and sex workers in Japan (Lai et al., 2013). Today, overseas deployment of migrant Filipino workers remains in every corner of the world, where they are expected to work and render services in the distinctive Filipino way.

The Commonalities and Disparities of Academic Inquiries on Philippine Migration and Diaspora

Despite the country being one of the largest diasporic populations in the world (United Nations, 2015), only a few studies and literature centred on its migrant workers. Though the reason for such inadequacy is not the prime concern of this essay, it is also best to examine what has been written and published on the matter. The literature review aimed to situate, compare, and contrast the previous academic writings, which will be of significance to the author's future research project.

Table 1. Discussion Areas of Literature and Studies on Philippine Migration and Diaspora (1)

Central Themes	Authors
Motherland Rootedness and Connection	
Transnational communication using Cellular Phones and SMS	(Barber, 2008)
Diasporic Mobilisation	Quinsaat (2016)
Re-Creating Homeland Practices	Tigno (2008)
Diasporic Philanthropy	Garchitorena (2007)
Return Migration	
Returning Home	Soco (2008)
Digital Technologies Strengthening Familial Relationships	
New Media Fostering Familial Intimacies	(Aguila, 2009); Madianou & Miller, (2013); Madianou (2012); Francisco (2009)
Mobile Phones in Sustaining Parental Presence	(Cabanes & Acedera, 2012)
ICTs in Cultivating Belongingness and Constructing Identities	
Constructing Social Networks through Internet and Websites	Tyner & Kuhlke (2000); Ignacio (2005); Figer (2010)
Facebook Online Engagement	(Caguio & Lomboy, 2014); Golan & Babis (2019)
Host Country Assimilation through Facebook	Golan & Babis (2019a)

Source: Data processes by Author (2020)

Table 2. Discussion Areas of Literature and Studies on Philippine Migration and Diaspora (2)

Central Themes	Authors
Backgrounder on Filipino Migration and Diaspora	
The Concept of Balikbayan	Blanc (1996)
Politicising Labour Migration	Lusis (2007)
Status of Migration	(E. S. Juan, 2011); (E. Juan, 2000)
Construction of Philippine Diasporic Studies	(Aguilar, 2015)
The Economic Motives and the Adverse Challenges Of Migration and Diaspora	
Economic Impacts	(Constable & Pai, 2009); Rodriguez, (2017)
Violence and	Francisco (2009); Mahdavi (2014)
Sexual Abuse	
Spaces, Discourses and Spheres of Filipino Diaspora	
National Assimilation	Tiamzon (2013)
Spaces for Communication and Forging Ties	Pande (2014)
Self-Empowerment	Kama (2008)
Political Activism	Rother (2009)
Homeland Media Consumption	
Construction of Identities through various Media	Ong (2009); Ong & Cabañes (2011); Lu (2013)
Binding Diasporic Group through Religion	
Religious Places Enhancing Social and Cultural Gains	Johnson et al. (2010)
Performing Block Rosary as Assertion of Faith	Liebelt (2014)
Religion Conversion	Hosoda & Watanabe (2014)
Gendered Labour Migration	
Feminisation of Labour	Parreaas (2001)
Labour and Masculinity as Norm Conforming	McKay (2015)
From Domesticity to Labour	Parreñas (2002)

Source: Data processes by Author (2020)

Balikbayan: The Beginning of Filipino Diaspora?

The term '*balikbayan*' became a household term when migrant workers became a trend in the country in the 1980s. However, it was only in 1993 when Cristina Szanton Blanc explained the meaning and concept of '*balikbayan*' which refers to Filipino migrant workers. *Balikbayan* signified both connections to home country and belongingness and persuaded overseas Filipinos to be back home while continuously doing their financial remittances. *Balikbayan* as a Filipino term undertook romanticising, with the Philippine government's effort in integrating migrant workers located abroad in the national development. However, such bold steps do not give OFWs the right to do what other Filipino citizens do. They have no chance to vote and be chosen.

It was only in the mid-2000s when the world started reading about Filipino diaspora. Juan (2011) offered a review on the status of migration in the Philippines, explicating labour migration as a form of global capitalism and the different challenges of Filipino diaspora such as the

labour policy in place for the welfare of the few or those in the dominant class and the issue of gender and power struggle. He too provided for better understanding of Filipino diaspora background (Juan, 2000), where migration is highlighted as liberation for someone in seeking for greener pasture. When it comes to memories of the homeland, most often than not, the language, religion, and the various cultural artefacts consumed and experienced by migrant workers rooted from being a member of a family, society or cultural group. San Juan explained that while assimilation is an ongoing quest for migrants, their identification with fellow Filipinos and the Philippines continues, especially in host countries where permanent residency is not available option for them (Juan, 2000). Return migration may not be an excellent idea for everyone as the home country may elicit adverse memories.

Filomeno Aguilar (2015) traced its beginning as a popular discussion initiated by Filipino American scholars paving the way to the construction of diaspora through the convergence of scholarly discourses between the Philippines and the United States. The author explorations on diaspora as an academic discourse, resulted in five emerging dimensions, namely: a) the perception on the mobility of people from their homeland as real or imagined; (b) the diaspora process; (c) memory of homeland and the relationship between the diaspora and his country of origin; (d) return migration; and (e) the interconnection of Filipino across different nations.

Similarly, Lusis (2007), highlighted the Philippine government's effort in promoting and politicising migrant workers as well as underlining its economic benefits to state development and in decreasing national unemployment. He also stressed that despite the commodification of workers, governmental policies and programs concerning the plight of overseas Filipino workers are inadequate. He also talked about how overseas jobs underwent professionalisation, with the government opening the doors to female workers to international migration. This situation further underpins the objectification of women, as they work as entertainers. He claimed that there are possibilities of the workers to be drawn into prostitution and sexual abuses. Lastly, he delved on the discourses surrounding human bodies as mechanisms of labour migration and the political economy of prostitution.

The Economic Motives and the Negative Dimensions of Migration and Diaspora

Most of the discourses on Philippine migration and diaspora focused on the economic motivations and adverse impacts: the migration narratives of housemaids (Filipinos and Indonesians), specifically their reasons for working abroad. Most of the migrant workers stressed that poverty had encouraged them to work away from home, with the dream of providing enough for their families and improving their lives. The literature had examined the changes that occurred after 1997, particularly zeroing into the different dimensions

that affect workers' diasporic lives, such as wages and employment policies, physical abuses and maltreatments from employers, and the emergence of political activism movements. The field research study had led to the comparison of Filipino and Indonesian migrant workers in dealing with the different dimensions of labour migration. Nevertheless, what remained constant are the individual experiences and challenges of domestic helpers as they perform their duties and the reality of inequalities on gendered labour migration deeply embedded in the society (Constable & Pai, 2009).

Regarding the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers (MDW) to discrimination and sexualisation, Pande (2014) conducted a study on the Lebanon-based domestic helpers, some of which were Filipino. He examined the narratives of their diasporic experiences and resistance to such sexual advances. Migrant workers shared how citizenship and gender put them in a very compromising position and subjecting them to discrimination and abuses, both from their employers and other people in the host countries.

Similarly, Mahdavi (2014) explored the intimate lives of migrant workers in the Gulf area, particularly, the inhumane treatments they received from their employers, their immobilisation, the absconding and debt bondage. However, despite being in undesirable situations, migrant workers were compelled to make decisions out of the limited options they have, often because of familial duties, kinship ties, and economic potentialities. The countless narratives and cases of abuses experienced by overseas Filipino workers had led to a public crisis, sparking substantial attention and interrogation on the exportation of migrant workers.

Rodriguez (2017), highlighted how migrant workers had assisted the Philippines politically and economically by providing employment opportunities to thousands or millions of Filipinos and allowing financial transmittals to the families they left behind. With the feminisation of global employment, the influx of Filipina migrant workers aspiring to work overseas increased. They are strongly motivated to be a part of the overseas entertainment and health services sectors by working as entertainers, masseuse and prostitutes. Yet, migration advocates had questioned this government's move of women importation, highlighting possible physical abuses and sexual violence on Filipina migrant workers. Experts on migration too had emphasised the effects of labour migration in the weakening of moral and social fibre of the society and on the projection of the Philippines in the international arena which might affect other nation's perception of the country.

On the contrary, Francisco (2009) studied migrant workers in the United States on their experiences working abroad and away from their home country and families. The study imposed a conflicting idea of migration, challenging the economic and moral aspects of it, as women work abroad on national and familial obligations and bounded by gendered familial roles and social reproductive labour. Nevertheless,

more than the economic gains of working abroad, the study too, zeroed into violence and abuses, some of which led to deaths of migrant workers and resulted in questioning the moral economy of migration.

Spaces, Discourses and Spheres of Diaspora

The relevance of urban spaces, and what they offer to migrant workers had also stirred curiosity among migration scholars. Pande (2014) stressed how foreign domestic workers, among others, Filipinos in the Middle East perceived the comfort of employers' houses as well as ethnic churches as private and public spaces respectively, that reinforce alliances and intimacies among migrant workers. These places were deemed to be the mere witnesses of the ups and downs of their diasporic journeys. The house balconies allowed these workers to interact with their fellows, share personal and work-related information and even critical issues like illegal contracts, unpaid salaries and benefits, and employers' inhumane treatment and abuses.

In a similar situation, Filipino immigrants in the United States upon their elderly years opted for assimilation with fellow Filipinos. In this case, Tiamzon (2013) had argued that reconstitution to the ethnic community by the Filipino immigrants has a big impact on their matured lives. This assimilation with friends coming from the same racial or cultural background is a result of the aspiration to create familial-like relationships in times of familial dispersal or solitarily.

On involvement with a diasporic magazine, Kama (2008) found out that Filipino migrant workers' participation with the print media is beyond journalistic endeavour. Instead, it is an opportunity to express oneself, to be represented and be heard. Also, their participation in the diasporic magazine had augmented their self-worth and self-empowerment despite being in a challenging situation of working far away from home, family and loved ones.

The freedom to assemble in different public and private spaces had allowed Filipino migrant workers to perform political activism in Hong Kong. Rother (2009) provided a case study of migrant activism among Filipino workers who created the organisation that support the plight of every migrant worker and advocate for their rights, such as provisions of legal aid, temporary homes, and assistance at times of abuses and violence. Divisions of migrant organisations also emerged in this study. The divisions were moderate and progressive. The moderate one was very similar to an NGO in structure and functions, while the latter originated from the grassroots movement and in a way more leftist on their dealings and practices.

Homeland Media: Sensing the 'Home'

Upon deployment overseas, migrant always tries to be connected to their home countries. Ong (2009) explored Filipino migrants' construction of national identities through news and karaoke. Migrants foster togetherness through the community gatherings and reinforce

Filipino identity with the selection of songs and images in the karaoke. Singing songs of the national language showed assimilation with the homeland and celebrating its cultural symbolism in a foreign land. While consumption of media, particularly British news, indicated desperation and longingness to fit in the British society, especially on news items tackling terrorism and immigration that somehow direct them back to the Philippines.

Equally, Lu (2013) examined the impact of ethnic media to Filipinos in the United States. Consumption of ethnic media, in this sense, The Filipino Channel (TFC), a Philippine television network that broadcast offshore Filipino TV programs, had crafted a way for Filipino migrants to distinguish national identities belonging to their home country. By watching Filipino programs, they are drawn to be connected to a large community of viewers (domestic and international) and had the opportunity to have shared viewing experience with the rest of the audiences. Moreover, the subscription to TFC provides the feeling of being home through the various Philippine TV shows and programming, which somehow helps to reduce homesickness.

Similarly, Ong & Cabañes (2011) did an interview and participant observation among Filipino migrants in London and found out that the diasporic group consumed homeland news on issues which they deemed to be of personal importance. With news consumption, migrant workers were able to interact with other fellow diasporas regarding the issues and aspire for their resolutions. These short and limited face-to-face interactions signified their political engagement, involvement and connection with the Philippines despite distances. The website became more than just a public space; it provided a sense of togetherness and ownership among the diasporic community, which is considered as the platform's primary goal. For migrant workers, it was a place to live, despite the lack of physical presence, but through space and time connecting them with fellow Filipino workers who were in other parts of the world and of course the people (families and loved ones) left at home.

Religion as Binding Force for Diaspora

One binding factor of diasporic groups, aside from their culture and identity, is religion. In a study focusing on Filipino migrant workers in the Middle East, Johnson et al. (2010) stressed that experiencing religious pilgrimages in Mecca or Medina (for Filipino Muslims), and in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, or Galilee (for Filipino Christians), has allowed these migrant workers to enhance their spiritual, social, and cultural capitals in the host and originating countries. With these experiences, they were able to increase their religious knowledge and spiritualism, engage and interact with fellow migrants, as well as gain respect and prestige from the religious practices and rituals.

Similarly, Liebelt (2014) did an ethnographic study of Filipina workers in Israel who customarily perform block rosary as a way of

'homemaking' as well as imploring personal and familial afflictions and sanctifications. Migrant workers perceived the performance of the religious practice not just as an assertion of their faith, but a mechanism that guides them through their diasporic journeys and experiences while working in a foreign land far away from their family and loved ones.

The study of Hosoda & Watanabe (2014), found that domestic labourers working in Dubai and Doha decided to have religious conversions, in which workers converted to a different religion as a way to facilitate interaction, foster intimate relationships, and initiate community integration. The conversion from Roman Catholicism to Islam or Pentecostalism was deemed by domestic workers as a significant step in improving their work-life situations in the host countries and in countering isolation, discrimination, and marginalisation. With these, religion is more than the moral and ethical gains it provides, it reinforces sociality and facilitates belongingness and social recognition for OFW. It forges migrant workers and provides a sense of togetherness not only through national affiliations but also as a member of a global community with shared beliefs.

Gender at Stake: Masculinity and Femininity in Labour Migration

Gender, like in other fields of scholastic explorations, was not spared from scrutiny in labour migration discourses. Focusing on Filipino seafarers and the interrelations of masculinity, migration and economy, McKay (2015) demonstrated the construction of masculinity to be in observance to traditional norms despite mobility and transnationality. The study emphasised how migration and foreign transmittals reinforce Filipino masculinities, underpinning both their roles as head of the family and member of the global workforce. Additionally, McKay's work highlighted that migration and diaspora had allowed Filipino seafarers to be good family providers all the while asserting traditional gender roles that conform to the patriarchal society. In turn, it fosters a closer and better familial intimacies.

Parreaas (2001) offered an explanation on labour diaspora explicitly dealing with the female gender. According to her, the feminisation of international labour resulted from the Philippines' appealing exportation policy. Filipino women were expected to work in low-wage service work around the world, increasing demand as other nations rely on the Philippines to provide domestic and service care. This situation led to the image construction of the Philippines as the country of female labour. Moreover, with the continuous social and economic constraints, Filipino migrant workers continue to embark on diaspora, accepting mobilities and overseas work opportunities. In turn, while working in foreign lands, to alleviate homesickness and longing to return home, migrant workers created an imagined global community that allows them to be in connection and interaction with other Filipino diasporas, hence, achieving a sense of belonging and reinforce cultural identities.

Some of the literature focused on the other side of migration and diaspora: the shift from domesticated to working roles among Filipino women as they take overseas employment in chase of a better life, compelling them without any choice but to leave their children in the care of others (Parreñas, 2002). This provides a challenging view on the domesticity of women in a patriarchal society where women are expected to be at home and performing household chores while the men are the workers and earners. However, with economic difficulties, Filipino women are willing to be placed in the reverse position, to breadwinners and providers for their family. In the case of Filipina migrant workers, this condition imposed an ironical situation of working abroad. They often care for the children of foreign employers, while unable to care for their own children. She also highlighted the 'care crisis' which occurs the moment the Filipino women decide to work abroad, leaving their families behind and being perceived as bad mothers. This disparaging scenario rooted in the emotional difficulties experienced by the left-behind children, downplaying the Filipina migrant workers' financial contributions to the family and the nation. Although in some cases, migration allows amelioration of migrant parents-children relationships, even creating an intergenerational pattern in which the children often follow their parents abroad to work (Constable & Pai, 2009; Parreñas, 2005; Pingol, 2001; and McKay, 2015).

Connections and Rootedness from Home

On the complexities of labour migration and diaspora, communication back home is something that migrant workers abroad would maintain to have, either as a nostalgic mechanism or a connection. Pauline Gardiner Barber (2008) underlined the importance of cellular phones and its short messaging service (SMS) features on the diasporic lives of Filipino workers and in maintaining transnational communication. Moreover, she highlighted that usage of cellular technologies among overseas workers had allowed them to make decisions more quickly, particularly about their migration and issues concerning their home. Communication technologies in any way motivate and facilitate labour migration. On the other hand, the cellular phone was perceived not only as a communication medium but also as a tool in mobilising political activism. Consequently, communication technologies were used beyond their expected features; in this case, cellular phones are used not just for interaction, but also for social and political practices and movements.

Though located far from their origins, migrant workers continue to partake on various socio-cultural and political issues that their homelands are in affianced to. Filipino diaspora, even when based on the other half of the globe, managed to partake on issues concerning the country. Quinsaat (2016) showed how diasporic mobilisation was formed out of disparaging conditions in the host country. The Marcos

regime was one of the darkest eras of Philippine history. It was characterised by the tyrannical ruling, restriction of expression and press freedom, and excessive human violations. Moreover, through international solidarity, a movement emerged resulting in mobilisation of the sporadic and diverse Filipino community in the Netherlands, including information sharing among its members on the socio-political status in the Philippines.

Filipinos in Japan underwent the process of re-creating practices distinctive to the Philippines, allowing them to be in connection with their home country and to preserve social and cultural ties. Tigno (2008) elaborated how Filipino migrants re-create Filipino culture and traditions through their everyday lives in the form of religiosity and Catholic faith, the commercialisation of goods through the *sari-sari* store, citizenship retention, and Filipino language-based communication.

With luck and hard work, migrant Filipino workers opted to share their savings and wealth to their home countries, on what is known to be diasporic philanthropy. This is more often for those who are nearing retirement who are earning more than what they need. Diasporic philanthropy allowed migrant workers to extend assistance to the home country in the form of monetary value, talent, and time. Reasons for such humanitarian actions may be the desire to give back and sense of gratitude to the country; willingness to serve the poor and the underprivileged; reciprocate or pay forward what good things they experience abroad; retain connections with their originating countries; to prove oneself and to personify the teachings of their religion by helping those who are in great need (Garchitorena, 2007).

Finally, Home Bound: Return Migration

Labour migration is not perpetual, particularly for countries that are not offering permanent residency. In such cases, upon reaching tenure years or after employment contracts, migrant workers have no choice but to go back home. Soco (2008) explored cosmopolitanism and the reintegration of returning domestic helpers to the Philippines. The study centred its discussion on the idea that while working in developed countries, migrant workers were able to practice cosmopolitanism while encountering various socio-cultural and economic difficulties. However, upon returning to their home country, the practice of cosmopolitanism was no longer possible due to cultural constraints. In this scenario, the Filipino migrant workers resorted to re-acclimation of traditional norms and community values in order to be reintegrated to the society and rebuilt their relationships with other community members.

Digital Technologies Fostering Transnational Families and Intimacies

With the advent of technologies resulting to the emergence of the internet and social media, Filipina migrant workers are no longer perceived as 'bad mothers' (Parreñas, 2002) as migrant mothers were

allowed to create intimate relationships and co-presence with the children they left at home through mediated communication (M Madianou & Miller, 2013). In this study, migrant mothers in the United Kingdom with the aid of information and communication technologies (ICT) were able to perform their mothering duties to their kids left in the Philippines. The ethnographic study tackled the relatively challenging situations of transnational families, where mothers were relocated for work abroad and separated from their children who were left under the care of other family members or relatives. Nevertheless, with the advancement of technologies, parents and children, though located in different locations, were drawn closer to each other by the mediation of ICT. Co-presence through webcams disregard distant limitations between parents and their children and reinforce their virtual propinquity. New media allowed parent-children to overcome transnational separation, improving intimacies, and fostering their social relationships.

On the same note, Cabanes & Acedera (2012) examined how mobiles phones foster the relationships between migrant mothers and left-behind fathers. They highlighted the critical role of mobile phones in sustaining traditional gendered roles despite the far distance. Mobile phones alleviate the adverse impacts of mobility, such as lack of parental presence, care and support and distant familial relationships and increase communication and collaboration between left-behind fathers and migrant mothers.

Moreover, Madianou (2012) had further studied the role of ICTs to transnational families. ICT was perceived by Filipino mothers as a mechanism to practise one's mothering obligations and promote their motherly identities. New media empowered migrant mothers to fulfil their duties despite the digital divide, structural constraints, and distances from their children. Consequently, ICTs were solutions for migrant parents to accomplish both the economic and familial responsibilities expected of them, of working abroad to provide the needs of the family and perform motherhood beyond remote social spaces.

Correspondingly, Almond Pilar Aguila (2009) talked about transnational families' use of new media technologies entailing information sharing on gender roles, familial ties, dominant-subordinate roles resulting in cultural change. The online interactions of family members had reinforced virtual propinquities and maintained intimate relationships among each other despite long distances.

With a similar focus on transnational relationship and communication, Francisco (2009) studied migrant Filipino workers (mostly undocumented) in New York City, USA. It centred on how current modes of digital communication, such as Facebook and Skype, paved the way in promoting cyber communication and maintaining intimate relationships between migrant workers and their families in the Philippines. Given the complexities of their situation, having no proper

documents and the impossibility of physical reunification, migrant Filipinos resorted to communication technologies which granted them more modern features of accessibility, visual, and periodicity than the previously offered services by the analogue devices. The visual aspects offered by Skype and Facebook allowed the assimilation of the perceiver on the other persons' lives. The migrant Filipinos are integrating their families at home with their lives, journeys and experiences as diasporas in the same way that families left behind incorporate their migrant family members with their everyday lives. However, more than the initiated interaction and fostered intimacies, some issues emerged from the usage of the latest modes of communication by transnational families. It debated the advantages and issues of monitoring and limitations.

Skype and Facebook offered more than what they are expected of, served not only as communication platforms that facilitate familial relationships but as an integral part in holding transnational families intact despite being in challenging situations. Nonetheless, these modern tools provided migrant Filipinos and their families with communication, affection, and integration. New media created the possibility of the interpersonal relationship among family members in a long-distance setting which was unimaginable in the earlier decades due to the high costs of phone calls and text messaging.

New Media Constructing Belongingness and Cultivating National Identities

Digital technologies not only function as parenting tools but, in the broader sense, build networks among people of the same geographical and cultural backgrounds like in the case of migrant workers in the United States. Ignacio (2005) highlighted the role of the internet in the construction of social connections among Filipinos in the US. Analogously, a website is not just a tool for searching for specific information. It has acted beyond its expected functions.

Caguio & Lomboy (2014) studied overseas Filipino workers' online engagement through the Filipino OFW Facebook page. Migrant workers interactions on various threads of the Facebook page resulted in interaction and connection among the diaspora. It was also found out that engagement on national issues is high when it appeals to emotion.

Similarly, the research by Golan & Babis (2019), examined how Filipino migrants in Israel created an occupational community on Facebook. Through social media, migrant workers share practical information of caregiving, tips on caring patients, the emotional relationship between the caregiver and the care recipient and their legal status. Thus, social media played essential roles in furthering caregiving as a profession, knowledge sharing among practitioners, personal lives and diasporic journeys of migrant caregivers in Israel.

In the study by Tyner & Kuhlke (2000) explored how websites bind OFWs, initiate community interactions, forge social relationships, and represent cultural identities despite being in a virtual setting. The

representation of Philippine identities on the internet endowed us the notion of patriotism being dualistic, flexible and conformable since it is reflective both of the countries of origin and destination. Focusing on migrant workers in the other parts of the world, Alwin Aguirre, in his dissertation, examined the construction of Filipino identities through blog Facebook by Filipino migrants in New Zealand. It was observed that the diasporic group treated social media as a platform for creating memories and performative space. Social media had allowed migrants to document their diasporic journeys, sharing their lives and milestones in New Zealand, making them visible to families and anyone connected to them on Facebook. Social media also acts as a performative space because migrants need to express their Filipino identity, which includes feelings of self, personal life, national ownership, and affiliation.

Moreover, Figer (2010) researched the imagination and construction of homeland among Filipino migrants in Japan through cyberspace. The internet forum site had allowed Filipinos to interact with their fellow migrants; share comments, images, information and perceptions of the Philippines as a citizen and member of the nation; and the nostalgic memories of the country. The coming together of Filipino migrants with the aid of virtual community had not only facilitate interaction and develop social relationships, but assure recognition and project cultural identities.

On the contrary, digital technologies can be a tool for migrants' integration to their new society. Oren (Golan & Babis, 2019a) conducted a study centred on the live-in Filipino caregivers in Israel, specifically on how they use Facebook on their assimilation to the host country. Filipino migrant workers construct Israel culture through online discourses. The identification of migrant workers with Israel was explored and identified through the thematic categories of their cyber interactions, namely: the yearly Israeli celebrations and festivities, Hebrew performances, the sharing of public places in Israel and the current events happening. Henceforth, social media played an important role in the assimilation of migrant workers to their host country, Israel.

Researches dealing with digital technologies and their roles in enhancing social interactions and intimate relationships among users had imposed a challenge on the earlier concepts of distance as an important factor in developing affiliations such as Leon Festinger, Stanley Schachter and Kurt Back's study in 1950 on the social relationships and communal lives of married veterans situated in a house project. This study highlighted proximity (residential propinquity) to elicit friendships between inhabitants of a residential area, emphasising the importance of physical space where the closer the distance, the more friends they have. Consequently, the far distance draws lesser contacts and fewer relationships. Identically, this was supported by the propinquity theory of Newcomb (1956) which emphasise the attraction between people that are proximate with each other. The study centred on students of a US university living in a shared

accommodation, where the degree of their closeness and interactions were studied and perceived to increase the liking among each throughout the time and eventually leading to the development of social relationships. With computer-mediated communication, distance is no longer an issue in solidifying human relationships and in this case of Filipino diaspora, it is possible and attainable to maintain familial ties despite being away from families and loved ones, as well as reinforcing their national and cultural identities.

The (In)Visible Gaps: Synthesising Literature and Methodologies

By examining the scholarly writings, some research gaps were determined, such as the theme or topic, locale, and methods. In terms of theme, most of the literature focus on the economic (reasons of migration; and the economic benefits of working overseas) and challenging sides of being a diaspora (different migration narratives; and the violence, discrimination, struggles and abuses experienced by Filipino migrant workers), and rootedness to the homeland (migrant workers maintaining connections with their left-behind families and homeland in general). In terms of media and communication research focus, some of the Philippine migration studies were leaning towards the role of digital technologies to transnational families (parental tool; child-mother and father-mother familial relationships fostered by new media); the construction of social networks among diasporic groups (interactions among Filipino migrant workers with fellow diaspora; fostering togetherness and belongingness; reinforcing national and cultural identities); and the consumption of homeland media such as news and television subscription shows.

The concentration of academic writings on these topics had overlooked other perspectives that might be beneficial to the study of diaspora and migration. Other possible topics that might be of significance in bridging the knowledge gaps are, but not limited to: the lives of Filipino migrant workers' children and their integration to the host countries; depictions and portrayals of OFWs in various media platforms such as in television, print media and film; studies dealing with worker-employer communication situation; researches on how digital media promote physical meet-ups for digital diaspora; celebrating national festivities and holidays in host countries; and the discourses on specific migrant workers' profession examples: nurses, engineers, teachers etc.

Additionally, the majority of the literature centred their discussion on migrant workers in the Middle East, United Kingdom, Hong Kong, United States of America, Israel and Japan while other continents of the world being missed out such as Europe, Australia, Asia, Africa and the Americas where a large concentration of Filipino migrant workers are currently deployed. The unexplored places might provide new dimensions and perspectives on diasporic and migration studies, contrary to what previous studies had offered. However, OFWs are

deployed across the globe, and it is only impartial to explore other Filipino diasporas in the continents not mentioned above. There is a considerable mass of migrant domestic workers in Italy, Spain, Malta and Asian countries like Singapore and Malaysia; nurses in Germany, Spain, Austria, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Norway, and Ireland; and skilled and professional workers in African and Latin nations.

As regards to the research methods, predominant academic discourses employed participant observations, interviews, digital ethnographies with a countable number combining the three (3) mentioned methodologies. Future researches may employ both online and offline (spaces) methods to provide holistic results on the relatively diverse fields of global migration and diaspora.

CONCLUSION

This narrative literature provided an overview of the scholarly writings on Filipino migration and diaspora: background of Philippine migration and the concept of Filipino diaspora; the economic gains and adverse challenges of migration; the significance of public and private spaces for diasporic connection and interaction; consumption of ethnic media; religion's role in fostering diasporic relationship; the commodification of masculinity and femininity in labour migration; homeland connections; return migration; and the relevance of ICTs in fostering familial ties, diasporic social interactions and networking, and in the construction of a virtual 'HOME' described with the sense of togetherness, belongingness and cultural identities.

The article aimed to outline researches centring on Filipino migration and diaspora and to examine the academic fields or areas of the studies. Additionally, by reviewing the literature, comparison and contrast among studies written and published were achieved, which the author's future studies. With several studies focusing on Filipino migrant workers, the author was able to review literature starting from 1993 to 2019. A gap in the earlier literature was observed as the trend of writing on Filipino migration and diaspora had only started in the 2000s.

It was also observed that most of the works of literature were written and published by foreign scholars; few were considered to be written by local researchers. This also showed one of the academic challenges in the Philippines, the uncultivated research culture among universities and learning institutions, leaving the country far behind from its Southeast Asian contemporaries. Few have written and published academic discourses on Filipino migration and diaspora, and much more needs to be done in these fields of inquiry.

The author will close this section with the following questions, does Filipino diaspora matter? Is it worthy of being explored? These questions were the primary consideration for the author to conduct the current study. For a Filipino wanting to write about his national affiliation, it is extremely hard and risking a lot of possible biases. Even more with the

author being an international student in Germany, where he has direct connections to migrant workers.

Nevertheless, more than the logical vagueness and personal hesitations, the researcher was more concerned in contributing to the body of knowledge on Filipino diaspora. The latest survey of the Philippine Statistics Authority (Phillippine Statistics Authority, 2017) showed that there were roughly 2.3 million Overseas Filipino Workers deployed around the world. This number could not be compared to India, Mexico, China, Russia, Syria, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Ukraine (United Nations International Organization for Migration, 2020). However, being in ninth place gives an idea of why academic attention and salience somehow be given to the diaspora, primarily because limited studies had centred on them despite the extremely high numbers of OFWs working abroad. Thus, it is reasonably and relevantly necessitous to study them.

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