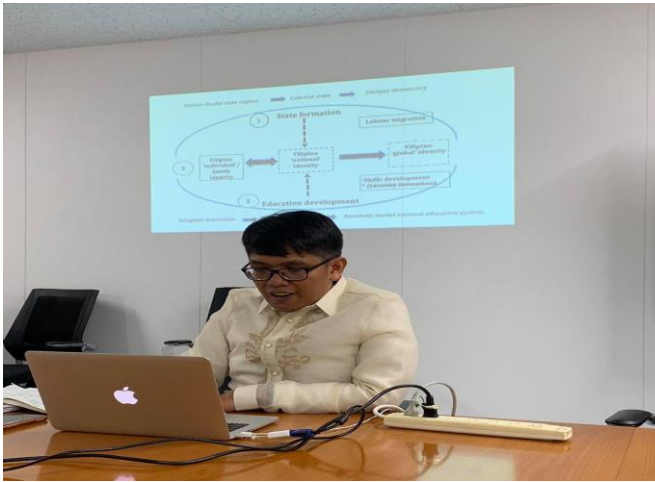


Title of dissertation			
Education for Migration: schooling, development policy and the Filipino aspiration to emigrate			
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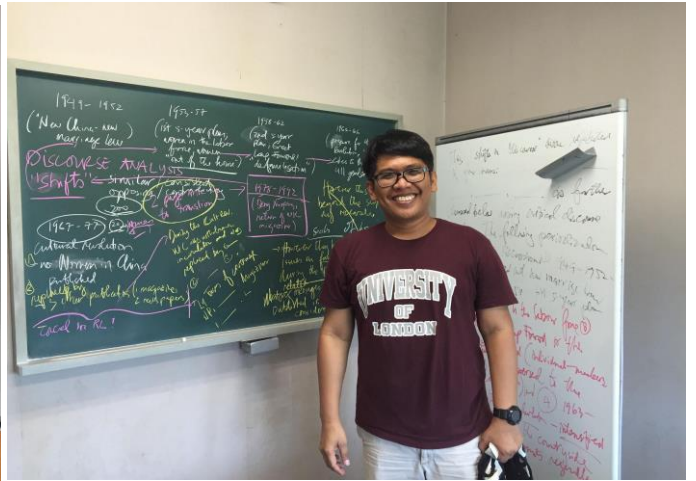
Education for Migration: schooling, development policy and
the Filipino aspiration to emigrate

The proverbial Filipino ‘culture of migration’ is an oversubscribed topic in social science research. Meanwhile, sporadic inquiries to how this phenomenon interfaces with education are limited to skills development and certification for overseas work. Digressing from this tangential approach and peripheral treatment of the historical role of schooling in Filipino migration, this thesis argues that socialization towards labour migration begins in school. By historicizing the intersections of state formation, development policy and education, it traces the inception of Filipinos’ emigrant dreams. But the enduring backdrop to this migration narrative is the phenomenon of underdevelopment, an indictment of the failure of education to spur economic and social development. The research goes back to the colonial era, and shows how the structure and content of schooling in the Philippines had since been fragmented and weakly oriented towards promoting a shared consciousness of nationhood. A highly stratified education system has entrenched profound social inequality, with state weakness and elite rent seeking contributing to prolonged economic stagnation. In this context, it has suited powerful vested interests to direct popular aspirations outwards, towards the international labour market, using migration as a ‘safety valve’ to minimize domestic political discontent. From the 1970s, state sponsorship of labour migration accelerated the exodus of professionals and highly skilled workers. Today, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are hailed in school texts as ‘modern day heroes’, and celebrities who have ‘made it’ in America or elsewhere are feted as models of Filipino success, reinforcing the message that patriots seek fame and fortune abroad. The status of English as the main medium of instruction has meanwhile been maintained, ostensibly to ensure the employability of Filipinos overseas. This thesis explores the roots of this phenomenon, focusing on the role of the school curriculum in contributing both to a relatively weak or loose sense of ‘Filipino’ identity, and to fueling popular aspirations to live and work abroad. Using archival and published sources, I investigate changes to key curricular areas – History, Civics and Language – as well as the factors influencing them. This study thus illuminates both the causes of labour migration, and its implications for state formation and development in contemporary Philippines.

Photos



PhD thesis oral defense last 10 Sept 2019



Senpai tutorial duties for junior colleagues.