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Emigrants' Participation in Homeland Politics: A Case of the Philippines' Overseas Absentee Voting

移民的母國政治參與：
以菲律賓海外缺席投票為例

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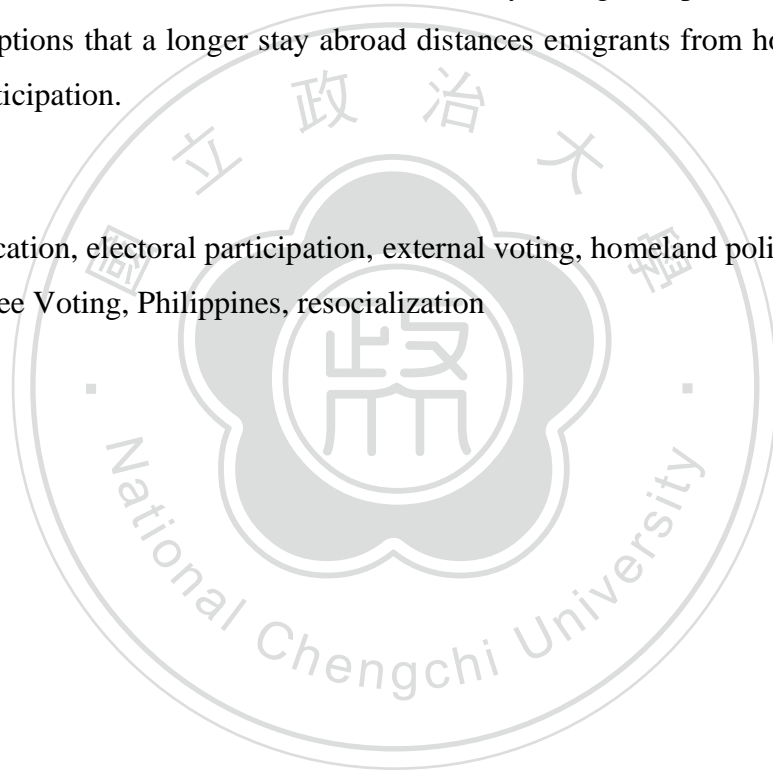
I owe my two years in Taiwan and this research to everyone.

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ABSTRACT

Bringing migration and electoral studies together, this research focuses on emigrants' homeland political participation through external voting. It primarily uses the concepts of socioeconomic and resocialization factors and their influence on migrants' voting behaviors. The study centers on Taiwan-based Filipino migrants' perspectives and explores their awareness, participation, and perceived importance of the Philippines' external voting policy through Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV). Results show that education as a socioeconomic indicator coincided more with assumptions on how it can positively influence emigrants' homeland political and electoral participation or perspectives. On the other hand, length of stay abroad as a resocialization indicator shows a weaker link, yielding both positive and contrasting results on assumptions that a longer stay abroad distances emigrants from homeland politics and electoral participation.

Key words: education, electoral participation, external voting, homeland politics, migration, Overseas Absentee Voting, Philippines, resocialization



摘要

本研究將海外移民和選舉研究結合在一起，重點關注於海外移民透過海外不在籍投票參與母國的政治。本篇主要使用社會經濟學之觀點、再社會化之因素、以及前述兩者對移民投票行為之影響等三項概念進行研究。本研究以定居臺灣之菲律賓籍移民的觀點為中心，探討他們透過海外不在籍投票（OAV）對菲律賓海外投票政策的認識、參與投票和投票意識的重要性。結果顯示，教育作為一個社會經濟程度上的指標，符合研究假設中教育如何積極影響海外移民對母國的政治參與、以及對選舉的觀點。另一方面，移民在海外停留的時間長度作為再社會化之指標，研究發現顯示僅有較微弱的關聯性，若在假設更長的海外停留時間，會使移民遠離母國政治和選舉參與的情況之下，產生出既正面又截然不同的兩種結果。

關鍵字：教育、選舉參與、外部投票、母國政治、移民、海外不在籍投票、菲律賓、再社會化。

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	i
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
Research Scope and Limitations	2
Significance of the Study	5
Thesis Organization	5
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Migration and Its Influence on Homeland Politics	6
External Voting	8
Factors Affecting External Voting Participation	10
The Philippines: Migration, Politics, and Overseas Absentee Voting	13
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY	19
Research Variables.....	19
Research Design.....	20
Research Questions	21
Research Hypotheses	22
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....	26
Interview Implementation	26
Research Respondents' Demographics	26
Affiliations and Organizations	29
Return Migration, Homeland Contact, and Homeland Contributions	30
News and Politics: Exposure, Engagement, Understanding, and Perceptions	33
Participation in Elections and Overseas Absentee Voting.....	39
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	49
Policy Implications	51
Recommendations for Further Research.....	51
BIBLIOGRAPHY	53
APPENDICES.....	i
Appendix A: Research Information Sheet and Consent Form.....	i
Appendix B: Interview Questions for Migrant Respondents.....	iii
Appendix C: Summary of Interview Answers.....	iv
Demographics	iv
Organizations and Affiliations, Return Migration, Homeland Contact, and Homeland Contributions.....	v
News and Politics: Exposure, Engagement, Understanding, and Perceptions	vi
Participation in Elections and Overseas Absentee Voting.....	viii

LIST OF TABLES

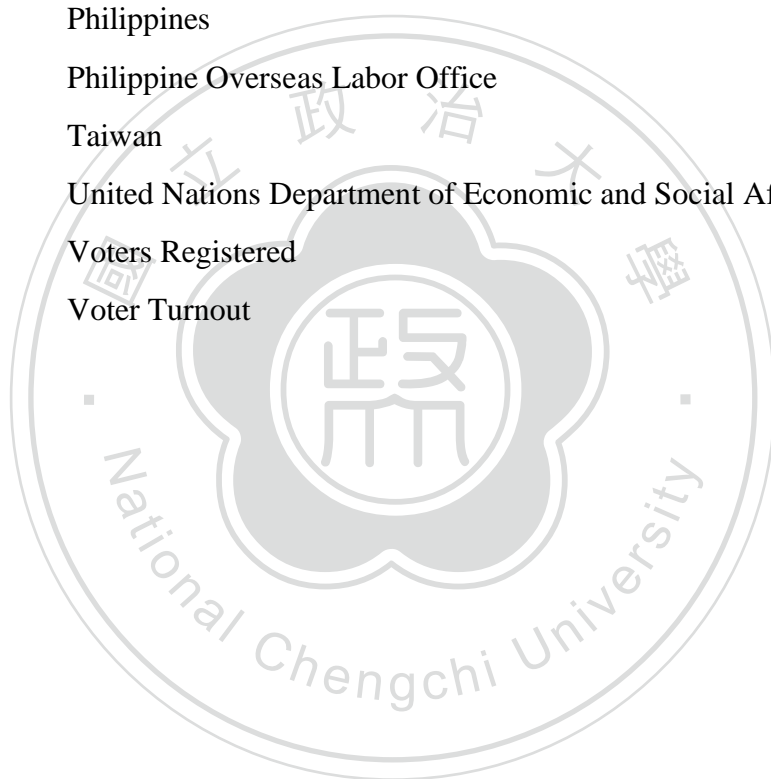
Table 1.1. OAV Participation in Taiwan for Election Years 2004-2013.....	3
Table 1.2. OAV Participation for Election Year 2022.....	4
Table 2.1. Countries and Territories with Provisions for External Voting as of 2013	10
Table 2.2. International Migrant Stock from the Philippines by Destination as of 2020	13
Table 2.3. Voter Statistics for 2019 Midterm Elections	15
Table 2.4. Voter Statistics for 2022 Elections	15
Table 3.1. Respondent Categories	20
Table 3.2 Research Hypotheses According to Education Level.....	22
Table 3.3 Research Hypotheses According to Length of Stay Abroad	23
Table 4.1 Research Findings According to Length of Education Level.....	45
Table 4.2 Research Findings According to Length of Stay Abroad	46

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1. OAV Statistics for Election Years 2004-2022	16
Figure 4.1. Respondents' Sex vs. OFWs Worldwide	26
Figure 4.2. Respondents' Age vs. OFWs Worldwide.....	27
Figure 4.3. Migrant Status and Highest Educational Attainment	27
Figure 4.4. Years of Stay in Taiwan and Abroad	28
Figure 4.5. Categories by Education and Length of Stay Abroad	29
Figure 4.6. Affiliations and Organizations	29
Figure 4.7. Plans on Return Migration and Homeland Contact.....	30
Figure 4.8. Self-Identified Homeland Contributions	32
Figure 4.9. Sources of Philippine (Political) News.....	34
Figure 4.10. Frequency of Exposure to PH News and Discussions with PH Networks.....	34
Figure 4.11. Discussions with TW Networks and Perspective of Social Circles	36
Figure 4.12. Exposure to TW News and Self-Evaluation on Understanding of TW Politics..	37
Figure 4.13. Respondent and Community Participation in OAV	39
Figure 4.14. Participation in Past Elections	40
Figure 4.15. Perceived Importance of Migrant Participation in Home-Country Politics	42
Figure 4.16. Perceived Political Influence of Migrants	43

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COMELEC	Commission on Elections
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
MECO	Manila Economic and Cultural Office
OAV	Overseas Absentee Voting
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFWs	Overseas Filipino Workers
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
PH	Philippines
POLO	Philippine Overseas Labor Office
TW	Taiwan
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
VR	Voters Registered
VTO	Voter Turnout



CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Does migration affect home-country politics? Are migrants guaranteed the universal right to suffrage? Do migrants participate in external voting? What drives this participation or non-participation? What challenges do migrants face in exercising their right to vote from abroad? Migration has continued to grow rapidly over the past years, and studies have debated how the transnational mobility trend plays a role, if at all, in influencing various aspects of development both in origin and receiving countries. Migration is generally believed to increasingly affect not only cross-border economic development but also continues to influence the political and institutional, socio-cultural, and human capital landscapes, thus making it a significant area of research in development studies.

For the purposes of this research, *migration* refers to a movement from one country to another, *immigration* signifies an inward migration or coming to live in a receiving or host country, and *emigration* specifies an outward migration or leaving an origin or home country. Following the above differentiation, people engaging in these movements are referred to as *migrants*, *immigrants*, or *emigrants*, respectively. Although this research primarily focuses on *emigrants* and their participation in homeland politics, it also touches upon discussions related to *migrants* and *immigrants*.

Before disruptions in the migration flow due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of international migrants has been growing over the past two decades. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) estimates that in 2020, 280.6 million people lived outside their country of origin (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020). The number of international migrants increased by 48 million between 2000 and 2010, with another 60 million added from 2010 to 2020 (United Nations, 2020). This increasing migration trend can play an important role in influencing development both in origin and host countries. Specifically, it is believed to impact not only cross-border economic development but also continues to influence the social, cultural, and political atmospheres.

Many of today's immigrants who live in the Global North or the rich countries come from the Global South, including poorer countries located mainly in Africa, Asia, or Latin America. In the early 2000s, 76% percent of immigrants were born in developing countries, and 42% of emigrants from the Global South moved to high-income countries that were members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) while another 12% moved to high-income non-OECD countries. In the context of this large South to North

movement, little attention has been given to how migrants have participated in or influenced the communities they leave behind (Eckstein, 2013). Focusing on the political aspect of emigrants' potential influence on their home countries, it is thus crucial that we look at how states respond to the challenge of assuring their citizens' right to universal suffrage while they are abroad through policies on external voting and how emigrants themselves participate in elections back home.

External voting refers to processes that allow part or all of a country's voters who are temporarily or permanently abroad to exercise their voting rights from beyond the national borders. Voting from abroad can mainly be through *personal* voting wherein emigrant voters go to a polling place or diplomatic missions, through *post* where ballots are sent by postage, through a *proxy* where voters select another individual to cast a vote on their behalf, through *electronic* means where votes are cast online or through personal digital devices, through *fax*, or a combination of the above methods (International IDEA, 2007). In 2013, 119 countries and territories had already allowed external voting (Lafleur, 2013). Throughout this study, *external voting* is used interchangeably with the terms *absentee voting*, *overseas voting*, *voting from abroad*, *overseas absentee voting*, *homeland electoral participation*, or *out-of-country voting*.

Research Scope and Limitations

Tackling emigrants' home-country political participation, this study focuses on the Philippines and its external voting policies, considering Taiwan-based Filipino migrants' perspectives. For several reasons, the case of external voting by Filipino migrants in Taiwan is an interesting area of study. First, the Philippines has one of the largest migrant populations across the world, accounting for 2% of the global number, and is one of the 119 countries enfranchising its emigrants through external voting. Notably, its labor migrant population is estimated to be also 2% of its total national population and is reported to have contributed at least 9.3% of the country's gross domestic product in 2019. Recognizing their importance, the state has hailed Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as "modern-day heroes" and has enfranchised its emigrants through the Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) Act of 2003.

Although most OFWs are located in North America and the Middle East, a number of them can also be found in nearby Asian countries. In particular, Taiwan is the Philippines' neighboring state and shares a maritime border across the South China Sea. In 2019, an estimated 154,000 OFWs were residing in Taiwan, making it the third-largest migrant

nationality, comprising 21.8% of the total 706,060 migrant workers in the country (Everington, 2019).

From the perspective of democratic diffusion studies further discussed below, it is also important to point out that Taiwan ranks as the 11th most democratic country globally and the first in Asia. In contrast, the Philippines is tagged as a “flawed democracy” and ranks 55th out of 167 countries surveyed (The Economist, 2020).

Furthermore, a study of migrants’ external voting behavior found that the prospect of returning to their home country motivated some people to vote in national elections from abroad (Bertelli, et al., 2021). Thus, it is also important to consider the case of external voting in Taiwan as a host country where permanent residency is not available for unskilled workers. According to its Employment Service Act, migrant workers are generally only allowed to work in Taiwan for a maximum of 12 accumulated years (Employment Service Act, 2018), although plans to enable foreign blue-collar workers to apply for permanent residency are underway (Everington, 2022).

Table 1.1. OAV Participation in Taiwan for Election Years 2004-2013

Year	Rep. Office	Voters Registered (VR)	Voter Turnout (VTO)	VTO to VR %
2004	Taipei	6,682	2,977	44.55%
	Kaohsiung	3,330	2,214	66.49%
	Taichung	1,597	833	52.16%
2007	Taipei	9,964	1,205	12.09%
	Kaohsiung	4,533	612	13.50%
	Taichung	2,770	595	21.48%
2010	Taipei	12,225	2,227	18.22%
	Kaohsiung	6,009	1,133	18.86%
	Taichung	4,451	856	19.23%
2013	Taipei	10,772	1,095	10.17%
	Kaohsiung	5,165	901	17.44%
	Taichung	5,004	659	13.17%

Source: Jaca & Torneo (2021)

Logistically, Taiwan has also been one of the top ten countries with the most number of OAV participants during the election years between 2004 to 2013. Table 1 summarizes the number of voters registered, actual voter turnout, and percentage turnout (expressed through a ratio of voter turnout to voter registered) per Philippine representative office branch during these election years. For the election years 2004 to 2013, the average global OAV turnout for

the top ten countries is 19.26% (2007), 24.01% (2010), and 17.32% (2013). In line with this general trend, Taiwan falls no more than 6 points below these averages, having a turnout of 15.69%, 18.77%, and 13.59% for the respective years (Jaca & Torneo, 2021).

Table 1.2. OAV Participation for Election Year 2022

2022 OAV	Voters Registered (VR)	Voter Turnout (VTO)	VTO to VR %
Worldwide	1,697,215	591,989	34.88%
Taiwan	72,779	26,492	36.40%

Source: Ombay (2022) and Manila Economic and Cultural Office (2022)

Additionally, for the recent May 2022 elections, Taiwan's percentage turnout was higher than the worldwide OAV turnout estimate by 1.52 percentage points. Global OAV registration amounted to nearly 1.7 million and had a reported 34.88% turnout. Voting through OAV during this election year was carried out for one month, from April 10 to May 9 (Ombay, 2022). Meanwhile, the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) in Taiwan reported a 36.40% turnout for 72,779 registered voters in the country (Manila Economic and Cultural Office, 2022).

As the Philippine representative office in Taiwan, MECO serves as the OAV registration and voting center. It currently has offices in Taipei and Kaohsiung after downsizing operations in Taichung from January 2021. Further discussed in Interview Design, the research focuses on migrants living in Taichung, Taoyuan, and Taipei, as these cities have a high number of migrant workers in the country. Additionally, the difference in distance to the voting center (MECO office) may account for possible variations in cost-benefit rationalizations. Taking all these into consideration, OAV in Taiwan should provide a fruitful case study on external voting participation among Filipino emigrants.

This research is limited by time, distance, and COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Due to these constraints, the researcher could only interview 20 Filipino respondents in three Taiwanese cities. As such, although patterns generally emerged from these qualitative interviews, they are difficult to generalize due to the small number of respondents. Interview Design on Chapter 3 Methodology further discusses how respondents were chosen, and Recommendations for Further Research on Chapter 5 Conclusion suggests areas which future studies may further explore.

Significance of the Study

While research exploring the topics of migration and emigrants' home-country influences has focused mainly on their economic side, such as remittances, emigrants' participation in home-country politics through external voting has mostly been understudied. This is despite the fact that migration plays a role in the lives of millions of people and that more than half of today's democratic countries have policies on external voting. This research attempts to fill the gap by directing attention towards how countries enfranchise emigrants through external voting policies and why these emigrants participate (or do not participate) in these mechanisms. Specifically, it looks at the case of the Philippines as one of the largest migrant populations across the globe, the Philippines' external voting policy enacted through the OAV Act of 2003, and Taiwan-based Filipino emigrants' political participation through OAV. A discussion on Filipino emigrants' home-country political participation is not only important in the context of an increasing global migration trend, but it is also timely as the Philippines recently held its Presidential elections in May 2022.

Thesis Organization

Chapter 1 introduced the themes of the research, including migration, external voting, and the Philippines as a case study. It further outlined its scope (Taiwan-based Filipino migrants) and limitations and described its significance and purpose. The remaining parts of this research will be organized as follows. Chapter 2 relates how migration is seen to influence homeland politics, discusses the concept of external voting, examines factors that may affect external voting participation, and introduces migration and external voting in the Philippine context. Chapter 3 describes the study's methodology by identifying research variables, enumerating specific research questions, and drawing study hypotheses. Chapter 4 outlines and analyzes the interview results, while Chapter 5 concludes and recommends areas for further research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration and Its Influence on Homeland Politics

Although there is an ongoing debate on how migration influences both origin and receiving countries, literature on the subject generally shows that even if the main driver for migration is economic, its impacts overflow into the social, cultural, and political aspects. Through transnational interaction, immigrants influence and transform not only the communities they move to but also the ones they leave behind, as today's immigrants do not necessarily sever ties with their homeland (Eckstein, 2013). Research on transnational migration has also shown how migrants play an increasingly significant role in politics and governance. Progress in transportation, information, and communication technologies continue to facilitate political involvement across borders (Lafleur, 2013) as migrants bring with them ideas about governance that transform their destination country's politics, reformulate these ideas according to their experiences, and communicate these "social remittances" back to their homelands through social networks (Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

For emigrants who are conceived as not being assimilated to their host countries, the term "diaspora" has been invoked by nationalist groups to stimulate imagined collectives and push nation-building or by governments appealing to 'their' emigrants abroad for political loyalty or resources through financial investments. Diaspora claims in migration are the outcome of political mobilizations within transnational social spaces, while the consequences for political institutions back home include the three elements of citizenship, namely, equal political liberty and democratization, rights and duties, and collective affiliation (Faist, Fauser, & Reisenauer, 2013). Despite being a controversial practice, states enfranchise migrants on variables such as economic dependence in relation to remittances, investment, and the country's export performance, as well as the migrant population's political influence in their host countries. At the same time, emigrant associations and lobbies play a role in this political influence by acting as mediators (Lafleur, 2013).

Empirically, openness to migration was found to contribute to the improvement of institutional quality in migrants' origin countries, as measured by indicators of democracy and economic freedom. Specifically, a ten percentage point increase in the emigration rate improves Freedom House's Political Rights and Civil Liberties Indexes and the Economic Freedom of the World indicator by about five percentage points in the short-run and 15 to 20 percentage points in the long run (Docquier, Lodigiani, Rapoport, & Schiff, 2016). Research

also found that prominence garnered through successes, affluence, and education by the large population of Indian migrants in the United States has been utilized as soft power to influence the countries' bilateral economic and political relations (Sahay, 2009).

From a micro-level perspective, international migration is believed to influence countries' politics as emigrants are found to be agents of democratic diffusion. Regardless of their legal status, migrants are exposed to how politics work in their destination countries, operate under that country's institutions and economy, and interact with other residents and other more politically incorporated migrants. Most destination countries have better economic standing and efficiency, and these qualities become a powerful incentive for migrants to emulate what they observe there, including political behaviors. Thus, being a returning migrant and membership within a migrant's social network are associated with changes in political attitudes (Armendáriz & Crow, 2010).

A study on Mexico found that migrants internalize democratic attributes in their destination countries and relay these to their origin countries either when they return home, remain overseas but transmit information to those in their homeland, or through community-wide migrant social networks. Having relatives or friends who have migrated North greatly raises one's inclination toward democratic participation, and migration results in higher rates of non-electoral political participation, greater tolerance of political and social difference, and more critical evaluations of both democracy and observance of rights. Returning migrants' internalization of the United States and Canadian cultures affected their attitudes. This was manifested in how they were more critical of the Mexican government's record on rights and more tolerant than those who had never lived overseas. Even emigrants who are still overseas were found to influence the political attitudes of those back home. Friends and relatives of migrants still in the United States or Canada were found to be less satisfied with Mexican democracy, more politically engaged, and more involved in individual political activity, civic organizations, and protests than those who do not know anyone living outside the country. Specifically, respondents with social networks abroad were 1.55 times more likely to participate in at least one civic organization and 3.5 times more likely to participate in an organized protest. Outside emigrants' close social networks, members of communities with higher migration were also found to have participated in organizations more than those who lived in low-migration communities. Thus, migrants contribute to channeling political beliefs and behavior from more to less democratic countries, not only when they return home but through their social networks and communities as well (Armendáriz & Crow, 2010).

On the other hand, some studies argue that migration and remittances pose a problem by reducing home countries' political will to enact policy reform. Along with the positive effects they can bring to economic growth, compensatory remittances that insure the public against adverse economic shocks and insulate them from government policy may reduce households' incentives to pressure the government to implement reforms that facilitate economic growth (Chami, et al., 2008). Research also on Mexico contrasts the above-cited positive effects of migration on the country. In the short term, it found that migration can be detrimental to the politics of origin communities by reducing the population that is most likely to participate in politics and for those left behind, by moving from participation in formal political institutions towards local civic groups because of economic and social remittances (Goodman & Hiskey, 2008).

Comparing the two studies on Mexico made by Armendáriz and Crow (2010) and Goodman and Hiskey (2008), we see a consistent finding of higher participation in local civic groups in communities with high migration rates. However, the same result was interpreted in contrasting ways. In the former, participation in local civic groups was seen as an indication of increased political participation. In contrast, the latter saw it as a move towards self-reliance, which may result in greater disengagement of those left behind from their formal political system. Simply stated, while Armendáriz and Crow (2010) saw political engagement in local civic group participation, Goodman & Hiskey (2008) cited possible political disengagement. However, the different interpretations seem to lie in how political engagement is defined, as the latter study limits it specifically to formal political institutions that exclude civic organizations.

In summary, literature on migration generally highlights democratic diffusion and social remittances to explain how emigrants impact home-country politics. On the other hand, compensatory remittances and population reduction brought about by emigration were cited as potential detriments to positive influences on home-country politics.

External Voting

On the other side of the debate on how emigrants influence their home-country politics is a discussion on how states politically engage their emigrant population. They generally do so through policies such as those related to citizenship, external voting, and representative bodies, which indicate that they consider emigrants as continuing members of the polity regardless of their willingness to return (Lafleur, 2013). Although many countries generally guarantee the

right to vote for all their citizens, in reality, those who are outside their home country during elections, such as refugees, diplomats, members of the armed forces serving overseas, overseas students, and migrant workers, are often disenfranchised due to the lack of procedures enabling them to exercise this right from outside their home country. Transnational movement produces a population of potential external voters, regardless of their underlying circumstances of migration (International IDEA, 2007). Rooted in the theory of democratic diffusion discussed in the studies cited above, we turn to the discussion on how emigrants may influence their homeland politics through, specifically, external and overseas voting.

Historically, external voting seems to have been practiced as far back as the Roman Empire, when Emperor Augustus allowed colonies to cast votes for the city offices of Rome. In contemporary history, legislation for external voting was enacted in 1862 when Wisconsin became the first state in the United States to enable absentee voting by soldiers outside the country during the American Civil War. Besides external voting for the military, New Zealand also introduced external voting for seafarers in 1890 and Australia in 1902 (International IDEA, 2007). Even if external voting policies were initially designed to allow citizens in specific professions such as the military and diplomats to vote, many states have now adopted legislation to enfranchise a broader scope of their emigrants (Lafleur, 2013).

Although an increasing number of developing countries are also considering providing external voting opportunities to their numerous emigrants as a response to expanding worldwide democratization and vast globalization, the right of citizens to vote from abroad has yet to be unrestricted and unconditional. This is despite the fact that migration has become a part of millions of people's lives in a highly globalized world. As emigrants can affect election results, various stakeholders such as political parties, the incumbent government, and opposition groups may hold contrasting views on enfranchising them with the right to vote beyond their home country's borders. Providing external voting opportunities is thus considered a challenge to democracy, specifically among migrant voters (International IDEA, 2007).

Updating data from International IDEA (2007), Lafleur (2013) lists 119 countries and territories that have allowed external voting in 2013. Out of the total number, around two-thirds enable all citizens to vote from beyond the country's borders, while the remaining one-third partially restrict external voting. The number of countries and territories with external voting policies is more than 50 percent of the world's democracies — if we define democracy by the

minimum standard of having multiparty elections and universal suffrage. Although most common in Europe, most countries and territories per global region have provisions for external voting (International IDEA, 2007; Lafleur, 2013).

Table 2.1. Countries and Territories with Provisions for External Voting as of 2013

Region	Country
Africa (31)	Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Zimbabwe
Americas (17)	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Falkland Islands, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Venezuela
Asia (20)	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Oman, Philippines, Singapore, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Yemen
Europe (41)	Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Guernsey, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jersey, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Isle of Man, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom
Pacific (10)	Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Pitcairn Islands, Vanuatu

Source: Lafleur (2013)

On the other hand, the challenge to external voting, the lack of a system to enact it, or discussions for abolishing its practice is essentially rooted in its high cost, where considerations of cost per voter have been applied as a criterion for its cost-effectiveness. However, the principles of equal rights and opportunities in political participation argue against using such a criterion for a fundamental right to suffrage (International IDEA, 2007).

Factors Affecting External Voting Participation

Literature on emigrants' political participation generally shows that socioeconomic resources and homeland attachment influence participation in external voting (Jaca & Torneo, 2021). Classic models of political participation, such as those employed in the seminal work of Verba and Nie in 1972, have highlighted how social-economic status plays a role in political participation, where those with more socioeconomic resources were found to be more likely to participate politically (Gherghina & Tseng, 2016). Voter turnout is believed to be correlated

with education and income because higher education and income afford citizens access to a better quality of information on candidates and issues, suggesting that this demographic is more likely to vote (Feddersen, 2004). From a rational model perspective of voting, education is also seen to have a strong effect on participation by reducing costs and increasing benefits. This is because higher education increases cognitive skills that facilitate learning about politics, gives more gratification for electoral participation, and helps people overcome bureaucratic barriers enabling them to participate more in the voting process (Cho, 1999).

Studies on emigrants' voting patterns seem to yield similar results as those in general electoral research regarding the correlation between political participation and socioeconomic resources. A survey of Mexican migrants across the United States found that income and education were significant factors associated with participation in external voting for the Mexican 2006 presidential elections (Leal, Lee, & McCann, 2012). Similarly, research on Romanian immigrants also shows that education plays a significant role in electoral participation, with higher involvement among those who were more educated. This was found to hold for participation in both host-country and origin-country elections (Gherghina & Tseng, 2016). A study on twelve immigrant groups in five European countries also suggests that educated, older, and currently employed immigrants were more likely to vote in homeland elections (Chaudhary, 2018). However, although classical predictors such as socio-economic status can partially explain migrant populations' electoral participation, Cho (1999) argues that factors related to the migration process should also be considered.

One such migration-related factor may be the resocialization perspective, wherein as immigrants become more integrated into their host society, their transnational political participation is believed to decline gradually. Consistent with this view, Chaudhary (2018) found that migrants with more years spent in their European host country were less likely to have participated in the most recent home-country elections through external voting. Specifically, the study estimates that for immigrants who have stayed in the host country for approximately five years, the probability of homeland electoral participation is 0.28, while for those who have stayed for 15 years, this number decreases to 0.14. The same research notes that, on the other hand, immigrant integration in their host country, such as through civic participation, positively affects homeland electoral participation. In a separate study, Gherghina and Tseng (2016) also observed that a longer length of stay in a receiving country increases the likelihood that Romanian immigrants will vote in host-country elections but creates an alienation effect on home-country elections.

In their study of migrant political engagement, Bertelli, et al. (2021) discovered that Polish immigrants who favor external voting cited the concepts of Polishness, citizenship, and national identity, as well as familial and economic ties to their native country as reasons for such opinion. Furthermore, the prospect of returning to their home country motivated some people to vote in national elections from abroad. Romanian migrants, on the other hand, were found to be less likely to mention the concepts of identity and homeland as justifications, instead citing citizenship and the constitutional right to vote. The study also found that both groups of migrants participated in external voting for the following reasons: to fulfill democratic duties, because they were used to consistently voting, to give the opposition a stronger mandate, to vote against ruling parties or coalitions, to support specific candidates, and to a lesser degree, to support a political program that would help the return of the diaspora. On the other hand, reasons for not voting include technical justifications such as failing to register; logistical issues such as queues, lack of time to vote, or geographical distance from polling stations; and, for Romanians, a lack of choice in candidates. Political indifference, disappointment with the political system, distrust in political platforms, perceived lack of change, lack of choice, and lack of clear information, as well as “geographical, temporal, and psychological distance” from their home country, were also cited as reasons for why migrants do not vote in home-country elections. Additionally, they found that some migrants voted by proxy, wherein their vote reflected views of their social networks living in the country of origin rather than their own.

As for external voters’ behavior, Lafleur (2013) argues that political participation and opinions before home-country departure may strongly shape the voting behavior of migrant citizens, but experiences in their host country, along with strong transnational connections with other actors in their origin country, are also crucial in the dynamic process of forming political opinions abroad. In the study by Bertelli, et al. (2021), although a majority of the respondents believed that migration had changed their views, they affirmed that they would not have voted differently had they not migrated, citing how political opinions formed before migration shape political behavior more than exposure to a new environment. However, an empirical study by Fidrmuc and Doyle (2004) yields seemingly different results than migrants’ self-perception in Bertelli, et al. (2021). In contrast, they found that not only did the preferences of Czech and Polish migrants who voted from abroad differ from those in their origin country, but they also varied significantly across receiving countries, possibly supporting literature on democratic diffusion discussed in the previous section. The researchers attribute this to “political re-

socialization” or how migrants adopt values from receiving countries, finding “strong indications that migrants’ voting behavior is indeed shaped by the institutional environment prevailing in the host country” (Fidrmuc & Doyle, 2004, p. 31).

The Philippines: Migration, Politics, and Overseas Absentee Voting

One of the 119 countries enfranchising its emigrants through external voting, the Philippines ranks as the 9th largest country of origin for all international migrants. Home to an estimated population of 109 million (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021), 6.1 million migrants (or more than 2% of the global migrant population) come from the Philippines. By regional destination, Filipino emigrants account for more than 4% of the total migrant populations in Northern America and Oceania, more than 2% of the total migrant population in Asia, and less than 1% of the total migrant populations in Africa, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean (see Table 3) (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020).

Table 2.2. International Migrant Stock from the Philippines by Destination as of 2020

Migrant Destination		Total Migrant Stock	Country or area of origin	
			Migrants from the Philippines	Percent of the Philippines to Total Migrant Stock
Geographic Regions	Africa	25,389,464	8,617	0.03%
	Asia	85,618,502	2,402,967	2.81%
	Europe	86,706,068	571,640	0.66%
	Latin America and the Caribbean	14,794,623	9,139	0.06%
	Northern America	58,708,795	2,696,634	4.59%
	Oceania	9,380,653	405,310	4.32%
WORLD		280,598,105	6,094,307	2.17%

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020)

This migration trend started in the 1970s when the Philippine government, through its Labor Code, encouraged Filipinos to work abroad to mitigate high domestic unemployment rates and boost dollar reserves through remittances (Jaca & Torneo, 2021). Today, the top destinations for Filipinos are Northern America (44%) with 2.7 million migrants and Asia (39%) with 2.4 million migrants (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020), but they also actively participate in nearly 200 labor markets. Migration has become one of the major livelihood strategies of millions of Filipinos seeking better employment opportunities, and has become an integral part of the Philippine economy and development. The Philippines

has become the largest exporter of government-sponsored temporary contract labor, where transnational migration has become increasingly commodified (Tyner, 2009).

Philippine national statistics estimate the number of OFWs to be at 2.2 million as of the most recent census in 2019 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). In line with this, the country's central bank disclosed that personal remittances from overseas Filipinos reached a record high of USD 33.5 billion in the same year and were a significant driver of domestic consumption (Rivas, 2020) — that's 2% of the Philippine population accounting for 9.3% of the country's gross domestic product. Historically, a steady flow of remittances has supported the country amidst internal economic struggles, with Filipino migrants maintaining ties to the Philippines and, beyond the family, are inclined to support religious philanthropic projects (Baggio & Asis, 2008).

Acknowledging their socio-economic contributions, the Philippine government has hailed labor emigrants as “modern-day heroes” and implemented policies targeting the diaspora. It reinforced mechanisms that encouraged political involvement of emigrants in their home country through policies such as the OAV Act of 2003 and the Philippine Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003. This study focuses on the former.

Although the right to suffrage has been long-enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, in reality, it was only through the OAV Act of 2003 — which took 16 years for the Philippine Congress to pass — that this right was realized for citizens overseas (Center for Migrant Advocacy, 2011; Moon, 2009). Republic Act No. 9189 entitled “An Act Providing for a System of Overseas Absentee Voting by Qualified Citizens of the Philippines Abroad, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes” or the “The Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003” for short (Republic Act No. 9189, 2003), was enacted under the mandate of the Congress under the Philippine Constitution's Article 5, Section 2 on Suffrage seeking to provide “a system for absentee voting by qualified Filipinos abroad.” The constitutional provision specifically recognizes the role of OFWs in nation-building and aims to ensure equal voting opportunities for Filipino emigrants so they can exercise their fundamental right to suffrage (International IDEA, 2007).

Initially, Filipino emigrants were required to sign an “affidavit of intent to return” declaring their intention to resume residence in the Philippines within three years to be able to register as overseas voters. This provision was later dropped through an amendment to the law in 2013. The OAV law allows for either personal or postal voting and enables registered

emigrants to vote in all national referenda and plebiscites, as well as the Presidential, Vice-Presidential, Senatorial, and Party-list elections (Commission on Elections, 2013). To date, the Philippines has carried out seven OAV implementations, namely during the national presidential elections in 2004, 2010, 2016, and 2022, as well as the midterm elections in 2007, 2013, and 2019.

Table 2.3. Voter Statistics for 2019 Midterm Elections

Voters Type	Voters Registered	Voter Turnout	VTO to VR %
In-Country	61,843,750	46,937,139	75.90%
OAV	1,822,173	334,928	18.38%
Total	63,665,923	47,272,067	74.25%
OAV vs Local in %	2.95%	0.71%	

Source: Compiled from Commission on Elections (2019), Department of Foreign Affairs (2019), and Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (2019).

For the 2019 midterm elections, there were 1.8 million registered overseas Filipino voters (a 100% increase from the number during the 2013 midterm elections), while 61.8 million were registered in the country (Commission on Elections, 2019; Philippines News Agency, 2019). Comparable to the country's 2% emigrant population, overseas voter registration is 2.95% of the local (in-country). However, there is a large discrepancy between voter turnouts: compared to the 75.9% turnout of in-country voters in 2019, overseas turnout was only pegged at 18.38% (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 2019; Department of Foreign Affairs, 2019). The total percentage turnout was 74.25%. Admittedly, voter turnouts fall during midterm elections; but it is also important to note that 2019 saw the highest OAV turnout during midterm elections (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2019).

Table 2.4. Voter Statistics for 2022 Elections

Voters Type	Voters Registered	Voter Turnout	VTO to VR %
In-Country	65,745,512	55,549,791	84.49%
OAV	1,697,215	591,989	34.88%
Total	67,442,727	56,141,780	83.24%
OAV vs Local in %	2.58%	1.07%	

Source: Compiled from Bordey (2022) and Ombay (2022).

Compared to the midterm in 2019, the 2022 elections saw a decrease in overseas registered voters at only nearly 1.7 million, from more than 1.8 million. This may be the result of the COVID-19 pandemic from late 2019, which saw stricter border controls that affected the country's export of labor migrants. Meanwhile, there was an increase in local voter

registration to 65.7 million, from 61.8 million (Bordey, 2022; Ombay, 2022). However, the turnout for the last elections considerably increased by 12.1%. Local numbers increased 8.59 percentage points or 8.5%, while OAV numbers jumped by 16.5 percentage points or 89.8%.

OAV Statistics: Voters Registered and Turnout

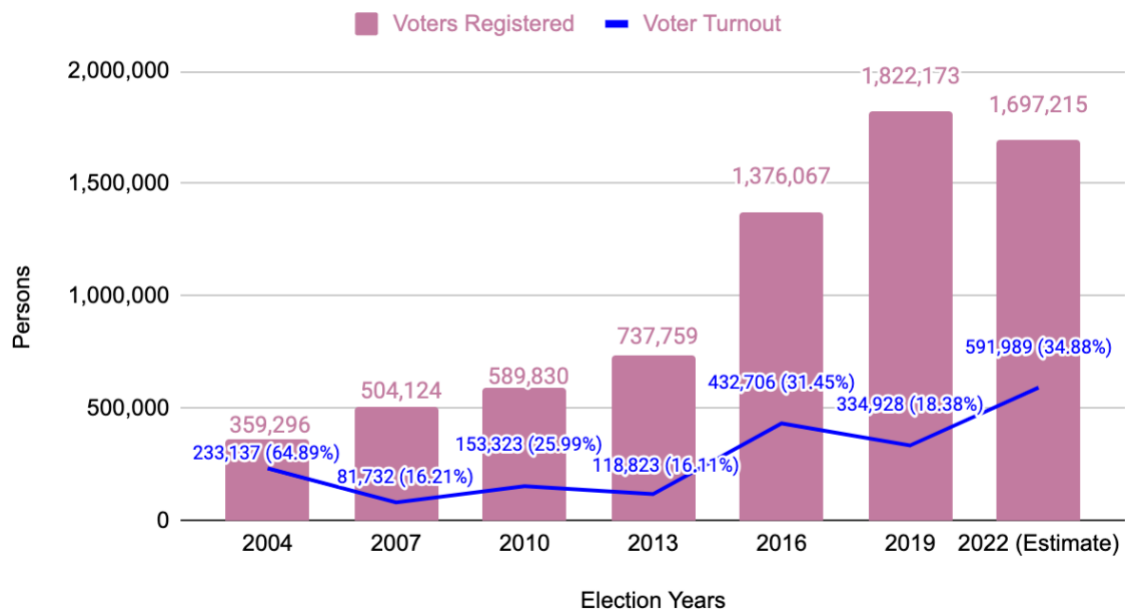


Figure 2.1. OAV Statistics for Election Years 2004-2022

Source: Compiled from Department of Foreign Affairs (2019), Department of Foreign Affairs (n.d.), and Ombay (2022)

Differentiating between midterm and non-midterm elections, which take place alternately every three years, percentage turnout for overseas voting has been historically increasing for both types. This is in exception of 2004, which saw the first OAV implementation after the law was signed in 2003. Comparing the 2016 and 2022 election years, both non-midterm elections, we see an increased turnout of 3.43 percentage points.

Jaca and Torneo (2021) relate that despite continued state efforts to engage its emigrant population, electoral participation through OAV remains significantly low amid electoral automation and high voter turnouts in local (in-country) elections. Assessing the low external voting participation of Filipino migrants in Japan through a rational model, they find that emigrants are discouraged by voting costs, such as distance and accessibility of registration and polling centers, as well as the perceived opportunity loss should they decide to register and vote. The benefits of electoral participation for overseas voters are also less tangible and less direct, and migrants choose to prioritize their daily lives over participating in homeland politics.

Instead, Filipino migrants in Japan seem to find active involvement in Filipino communities and organizations more appealing than home-country electoral participation (Jaca & Torneo, 2021).

In a separate study, Alarcon (2012) attributes the disappointment of OAV law in living up to its expectations as rooted in the failure of the Philippine government through the COMELEC and DFA to ascertain the exact size of the voting population, which leads to the inability to pinpoint and address problems. Furthermore, various structural and ideological issues continue to hinder the full appreciation and implementation of the law both in the Philippines and overseas, such as those related to registration and voting difficulties, voter education, wasted ballots, embassy-migrant group relation and coordination, and overall voter cynicism. The author expresses pessimism about the possibility of the law and its implementation affecting a change in Philippine politics due to a low voter turnout and the kind of politics that the votes reflected. He notes how the 2010 OAV elections in Hong Kong and Singapore showed the same overall winners at the local vote, reflecting the dominance of oligarchs, old names, and celebrities.

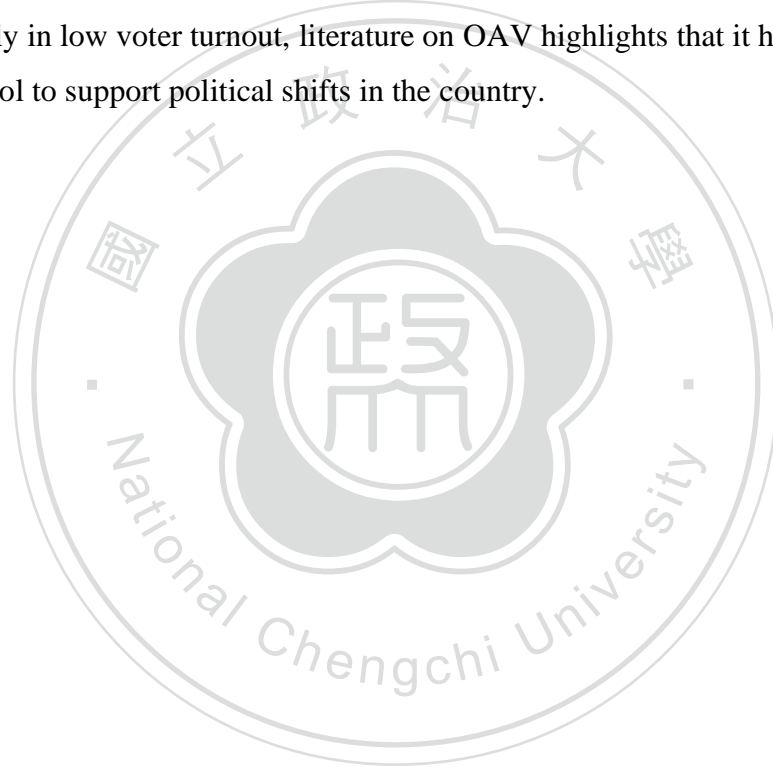
“It is difficult for non-elite/non-traditional political forces to campaign nationally due to the needed logistical requirements, it is even more so if they want to reach the overseas Filipino electorate. The last three OAV exercises have shown that the OAV expands the electorate but, due to its current flaws (both in letter and practice), have yet to show its true potential as an instrument of democratic governance. Furthermore, the structural factors favoring a clientelistic elite democracy remain, and as such, limit the potentials for change and deeper democratization through the OAV” (Alarcon, 2012, p. 191).

Despite this, Kessler and Rother (2008) found that many Filipino migrants still held the essential principles of electoral participation and equality before the law in high esteem, followed by rights of political freedom, although they do not value democracy when asked generally. Additionally, they note that if the democratization process in the home country is highly prolonged and the system is not able to deliver a degree of economic prosperity and the equal rule of law for all, labor migration has the potential to exacerbate its citizens' disappointment in democratic processes which may impede the consolidation of democracy.

Alarcon (2012) thus suggests that the government and advocates turn to explore how to harness opportunities for transformative politics from OAV. Although the importance of

voter education has equally been highlighted, the key, he believes, lies in politicizing the electorate. “This means making them aware not just of the dos and don’ts of the system of election but more importantly making them aware and conscious of their interests and those of the various candidates and parties vying for their votes. Until then, OAV will just remain a routine exercise of legitimizing the status quo of elite-dominated Philippine democracy.” (Alarcon, 2012, p. 191)

The Philippines, along with its growing transnational emigrant population, which has crucially kept its economy afloat through remittances, has also moved towards amplifying its citizens’ right to suffrage through external voting, enfranchising those it has hailed as its “modern-day heroes.” However, faced with structural, logistical, and ideological hurdles that manifest primarily in low voter turnout, literature on OAV highlights that it has yet to be seen as an effective tool to support political shifts in the country.



CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Exploring the topics of migration, emigrants' participation in homeland politics, and external voting, this research takes the Philippines as a case study of a country with a large emigrant population that has enfranchised its diaspora through external voting since the country's national elections in 2004. Through in-depth interviews and discussions, the case study seeks to provide perspectives on home-country political participation, external voting participation through OAV, and voting behaviors of Filipino migrants residing in Taiwan. Interview respondents were selected according to the research variables and design discussed below.

Research Variables

Primarily anchored on previous literature discussing external voting cited above, this research considers *educational attainment* and *length of residence abroad* as two variables used to select and categorize interview respondents. For this study, considering the possibility of Filipino migrants' relocation overseas, the length of stay in the host country (which only considers residence in a single and current recipient country) has been broadened to encompass the length of residence abroad. Whereas educational attainment has been widely regarded as a socioeconomic indicator in electoral studies, length of residence abroad (or length of stay in the host country) is a variable specific to the study of migrants' voting behavior. Considering both views may prove helpful to integrate perspectives from electoral and migration studies better.

The educational attainment variable will be defined according to the current Philippine educational system's compulsory education¹. Those who graduated from senior high school (after K-12 implementation in 2013) or high school (before K-12 implementation) but did not earn a college degree will be classified as *average* on the educational attainment axis. On the other hand, migrants who have graduated from college or pursued higher education will fall under *high* on the same axis.

As for the length of residence abroad, the researcher notes the twelve-year limit of industrial migrant workers' stay in Taiwan and that most Filipino migrants in the country fall

¹ The Philippines enacted significant changes to its educational system during the academic year 2012-2013. After implementing the K-12 (kindergarten to grade 12 or senior high school) program, compulsory education was lengthened to thirteen years. Previously, only six years of compulsory primary (elementary) education was mandated by law.

under this category. Thus, regardless if respondents are actually industrial migrant workers, those who have stayed abroad for less than six years or less than half of this limit will be considered *short* on the length of residence abroad axis. Meanwhile, those who have rendered more than six years will fall under *long* on the same axis. For respondents with prior experience residing in other countries or territories aside from Taiwan, the total number of years absent from the Philippines (total years residence abroad) will be considered for the study, regardless if they were rendered consecutively.

Research Design

The variables of educational attainment and length of stay abroad discussed above were interacted, resulting in four respondent categories: (A) average education with a short stay abroad, (B) high education with a short stay abroad, (C) average education with a long stay abroad, and (D) high education with a long stay abroad. A total of 20 interview respondents were chosen for this study across these four categories.

Table 3.1. Respondent Categories

Length of Stay Abroad	Educational Attainment	
	Average	High
Short	(Ave-Short A) From no education to college level, with 1-6 years residence abroad	(High-Short B) At least college graduate, with 1-6 years residence abroad
Long	(Ave-Long C) From no education to college level, with more than 6 years residence abroad	(High-Long D) At least college graduate, with more than 6 years residence abroad

Previous literature points to cost-benefit rationalizations influencing external voting participation, such as that geographic distance to registration and polling centers may affect respondents' opinions on OAV. To account for this, half of the respondents were chosen from cities near a Philippine representative office and another half from farther away. Taoyuan City and Taipei City respondents were considered nearer to MECO Taipei, and Taichung respondents were farther away but with an alternative of going to similarly distant MECO Kaohsiung. Furthermore, Taoyuan and Taichung are the top two cities with the most number of migrant workers in Taiwan, with 113,000 and 105,000 migrant populations, respectively, out of the total 706,060 (Everington, 2019).

Migrant respondents qualified under the research scope and design were identified through the help of Filipino migrant organizations or the researcher's personal contacts. Respondents were individually interviewed by the researcher using the information sheet and consent form in Appendix A and questions in Appendix B. Audio recordings were made after obtaining consent from respondents, and interview notes were taken for documentation and data collection.

Research Questions

In the context of an increasing South to North migration, this research considers the Philippines and how its emigrant population participates in politics back home, specifically through external voting. Generally, the study aims to examine how Filipino emigrants participate in home-country politics by looking at their awareness, participation, and perceived importance of OAV. Specifically, it attempts to answer and discuss the following questions while considering the two variables and four categories outlined above.

1. **Affiliations and Organizations:** Are Filipino emigrants in Taiwan affiliated with organizations back home and in Taiwan?
2. **Return Migration:** Do Filipino emigrants plan on returning to their home country?
3. **Contact with Homeland Ties:** How often do Filipino emigrants contact family and friends back home?
4. **Migrants' Homeland Contribution:** Aside from external voting, how do Filipino emigrants in Taiwan think they contribute to their home country?
5. **Political News in PH:** How exposed are Filipino emigrants to homeland political news? How often do they discuss politics with their social circles back home and in their host country?
6. **Political News in TW:** How exposed are Filipino emigrants to host-country political news? How well do they think they understand host-country politics? How do they perceive host-country politics compared to homeland politics?
7. **OAV Awareness:** Are Filipino emigrants in Taiwan aware that they can vote for Philippine national elections through OAV?
8. **OAV and Electoral Participation:** Do Filipino emigrants in Taiwan participate in external voting through OAV? Who is more likely to participate in OAV? How much

of their community do respondents think participates in OAV? What are the reasons for participation or non-participation in OAV? Did respondents also participate in previous elections?

9. **Perceived Importance of Participation in Home-Country Politics:** Do Filipino emigrants in Taiwan think that migrants' participation in home-country politics is important? Do they think that migrants should have a say in Philippine politics? Do they think that migrants can be drivers of political change in their home country?

10. **Perceived Influence of OAV:** Do Filipino emigrants think participation or non-participation in OAV influences political shifts in the Philippines?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the discourse of previous studies on migration, emigrants' political participation in homeland politics, and external voting, this research puts forward the following hypotheses divided between education level and length of stay abroad.

Table 3.2 Research Hypotheses According to Education Level

Research Questions	Socioeconomic Factor	
	Average Education	High Education
1 Affiliation and Organizations	Less affiliated with both PH and TW organizations	More affiliated with both PH and TW organizations
2 Return Migration	Less likely to want to return home	More likely to want to return home
3 Contact with Homeland Ties	-	-
4 Migrants' Homeland Contribution	Financial Remittances, Social Remittances	
	Less likely to cite participation in homeland politics	More likely to cite participation in homeland politics
5 Political News in PH	Less exposed to PH news and less likely to discuss them with both their homeland and host-country networks	More exposed to PH news and more likely to discuss them with both their homeland and host-country networks
6 Political News in TW	Less exposed to TW news and have lower self-perceived understanding of it	More exposed to TW news and have higher self-perceived understanding of it
7 OAV Awareness	Less aware of OAV	More aware of OAV
8 OAV and Electoral Participation	Less participation in OAV and previous elections; lower perceived community participation in OAV	More participation in OAV and previous elections; higher perceived community participation in OAV

Research Questions	Socioeconomic Factor	
	Average Education	High Education
9 Perceived Importance of Participation in Home-Country Politics	Less likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics	More likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics
10 Perceived Influence of OAV	Less likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics	More likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics

In line with previous electoral studies discussed above on how education plays a role in political participation, this research hypothesizes that respondents with higher education are more likely to: be affiliated with organizations, want to return home, cite participation in homeland politics, be exposed to Philippine (political) news, discuss them with their homeland and host-country social networks, be exposed to (political) news in Taiwan, have a higher self-perceived understanding of (political) news in Taiwan, be aware of OAV, participate in OAV, have participated in previous elections, perceive participation in home-country politics as important, think that migrants should have a say in politics, and perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics compared to their counterparts with average education. Regardless of education level, respondents are expected to cite financial and social remittances as homeland contributions. Additionally, no hypothesis is made regarding frequency of contact with homeland networks as literature covered does not cite how education can influence maintaining homeland ties.

Table 3.3 Research Hypotheses According to Length of Stay Abroad

Research Questions	Resocialization Factor	
	Short Stay Abroad	Long Stay Abroad
1 Affiliation and Organizations	Less affiliated with TW organizations	More affiliated with TW organizations
2 Return Migration	More likely to want to return home	Less likely to want to return home
3 Contact with Homeland Ties	Frequent contact with homeland ties	Less contact with homeland ties
4 Migrants' Homeland Contribution	Financial Remittances, Social Remittances	
	More likely to cite participation in homeland politics	Less likely to cite participation in homeland politics

Research Questions	Resocialization Factor	
	Short Stay Abroad	Long Stay Abroad
5 Political News in PH	More exposed to PH news and more likely to discuss them with their homeland networks, but less likely to discuss them with host-country networks due to lesser integration	Less likely to be exposed to PH news and less likely to discuss them with their homeland networks due to alienation, but may possibly discuss them with host-country networks due to integration
6 Political News in TW	Less exposed to TW news and have lower self-perceived understanding of TW politics	More exposed to TW news and have higher self-perceived understanding of TW politics
7 OAV Awareness	Less aware of OAV	More aware of OAV
8 OAV and Electoral Participation	More participation in OAV and previous elections; higher perceived community participation in OAV	Less participation in OAV and previous elections; lower perceived community participation in OAV
9 Perceived Importance of Participation in Home-Country Politics	More likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics	Less likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics
10 Perceived Influence of OAV	More likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics	Less likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics

Differentiating between length of stay abroad, the study's hypotheses are anchored on the resocialization perspective, where transnational political participation is believed to gradually decline as migrants become more integrated into their host society. It also considers the concepts of migrants bringing origin-country ideas, social remittances, and democratic diffusion. These suggest that although migrants bring with them ideas about governance from their home country, they are exposed to how politics work in their destination countries – in this case, a more democratic Taiwan – and are believed to emulate these ideas and convey them to their networks back home.

Specifically, this research hypothesizes that respondents with a shorter stay abroad are more likely to: want to return home, frequently contact homeland networks, cite participation in homeland politics, be exposed to Philippine (political) news, discuss Philippine events or politics with their homeland networks (but less likely to discuss them with host-country networks due to lesser integration), participate in OAV and previous elections, perceive participation in home-country politics as important, think that migrants should have a say in

politics, and perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics compared to longer staying migrant respondents. Respondents with a shorter stay abroad are also expected to be less affiliated with organizations in their host-country, less exposed to Taiwanese (political news), have a lower self-perceived understanding of it, and less aware of OAV due to fewer host-country ties which may serve as source of information. Regardless of length of stay abroad, respondents are expected to cite financial and social remittances as homeland contributions.

Thus, highly educated respondents who have a shorter stay abroad (High-Short B) are hypothesized to be more likely to participate in, and place importance on, home-country politics and OAV. Similarly, respondents' frequency of contact with homeland networks may also influence participation in OAV through the ideas of resocialization and democratic diffusion.

Concepts relating to citizenship and nationalism are expected to come up as reasons for homeland electoral participation, especially by respondents with high education and a shorter stay abroad. Furthermore, in line with Bertelli, et al.'s (2021) findings, the prospect of returning to their home country may also motivate some respondents to participate in OAV. On the other hand, cost-benefit rationalization such as distance and accessibility of registration and polling centers may be cited as reasons for non-participation in OAV, especially by respondents with average education and a longer stay abroad. These cost-benefit rationalizations may also be expanded to include non-economic aspects such as unfavorable policies for taking a leave from work which exacerbates perceived opportunity loss. Alternatively, Filipino emigrants in Taiwan may opt to go home during elections to vote, thus rendering non-participation through OAV but actually voting in home-country elections.

In summary, this research will explore Taiwan-based Filipino migrants' awareness of, participation in, and perceived importance of OAV in the context of emigrants' participation in homeland politics and external voting while attempting to supplement studies on how educational attainment and length of residence abroad influence these perspectives.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Building on the theoretical and methodological discussions of the previous sections, the following chapter describes how the interviews were carried out, respondents' demographics, responses to the questionnaire, and research analyses.

Interview Implementation

Twenty respondents based in the cities of Taoyuan, Taipei, and Taichung were identified and chosen through the introduction of Filipino migrant organizations or the researcher's personal networks. As of the time of the interviews, ten respondents were based in Taichung, nine in Taoyuan, and one in Taipei. Interviews were done individually by the researcher for a span of two weeks, from May 1 to May 16, 2022. Agreeing to individual respondents' preferences, 15 interviews were carried out in person and five were online. Each interview lasted from a range of 18 minutes to nearly an hour. A tabulated summary of interview details and answers can be found on Appendix C.

Research Respondents' Demographics

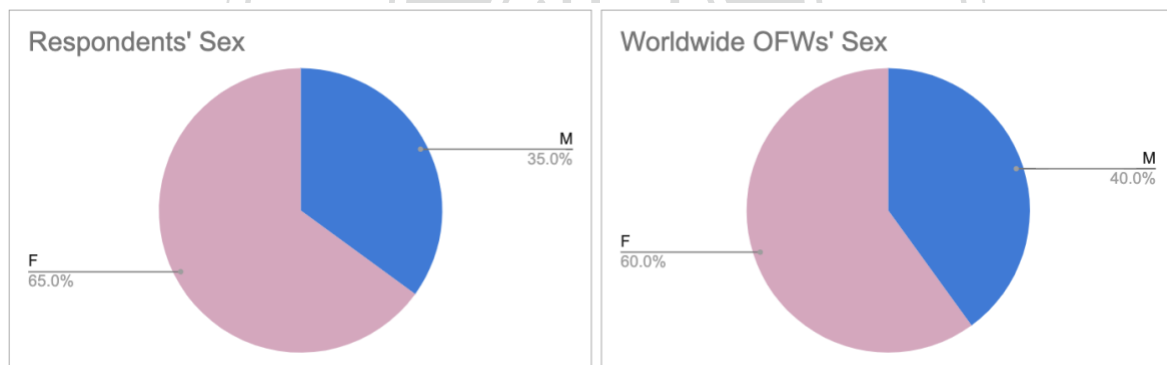


Figure 4.1. Respondents' Sex vs. OFWs Worldwide

Out of 20 respondents, 13 (65%) were female, while seven (35%) were male. This ratio is close to the Philippine Statistics Authority's data in 2020, which estimates 60% of Filipino overseas workers to be female and 40% male (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022).

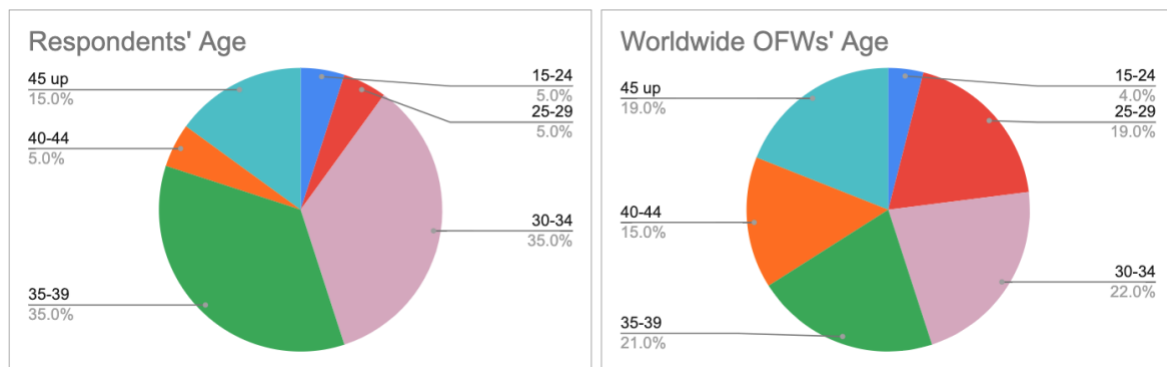


Figure 4.2. Respondents' Age vs. OFWs Worldwide

As for age, one respondent (5%) was 15-24 years old², another one (5%) was 25-29 years old, seven (35%) were 30-34 years old, another seven (35%) were 35-39 years old, one (5%) was 40-44 years old, and three (15%) were 45 years old or older. Although not at similar ratios, the respondent population represents all of the age groups identified by the Philippine Statistics Authority's data in 2020, which estimates the following age demographics for OFWs worldwide: 4% for 15-24, 19% for 25-29, 22% for 30-34, 21% for 35-39, 15% for 40-44, and 19% for 45 and older (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022).

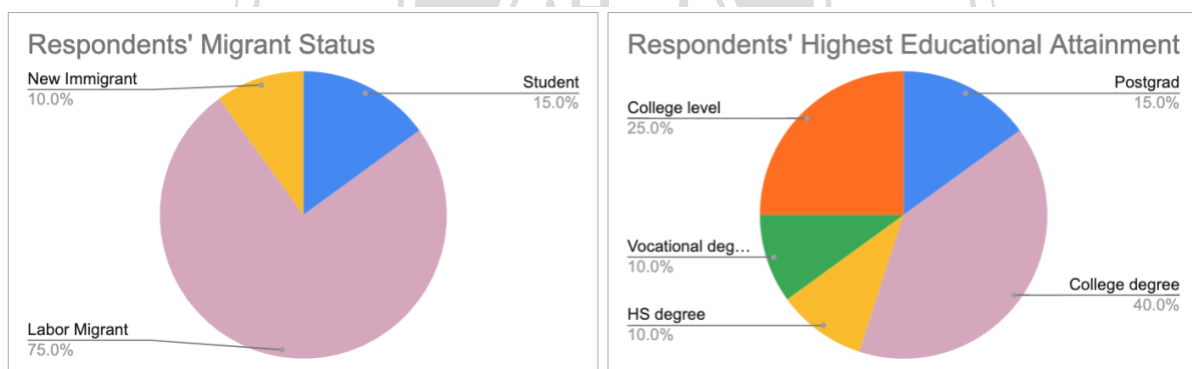


Figure 4.3. Migrant Status and Highest Educational Attainment

During their interviews, two respondents (10%) disclosed that they had renounced their Filipino citizenship (new immigrants), three (15%) identified themselves as students, and 15 (75%) were labor migrants. As for their *initial* reason for migration, however, four respondents (20%) identified education while 16 (80%) identified employment. Two of the four respondents who were initially students are now employed in Taiwan after their postgraduate

² Age brackets were adapted from the Philippine Statistics Authority's OFW demographic data categorization. Although the bracket 15-24 years old is included, the voting age in the Philippines is 18 and all research respondents were of voting age as of the time of interviews, with the youngest at 21 years old.

studies. Conversely, one respondent's migrant status shifted from employment (initial) to education (current).

For their highest educational attainment, two respondents (10%) graduated from high school, another two (10%) finished a two-year vocational degree, five (25%) were at the collegiate level, eight (40%) graduated with a bachelor's degree, and three (15%) were either pursuing or have a post-graduate degree.

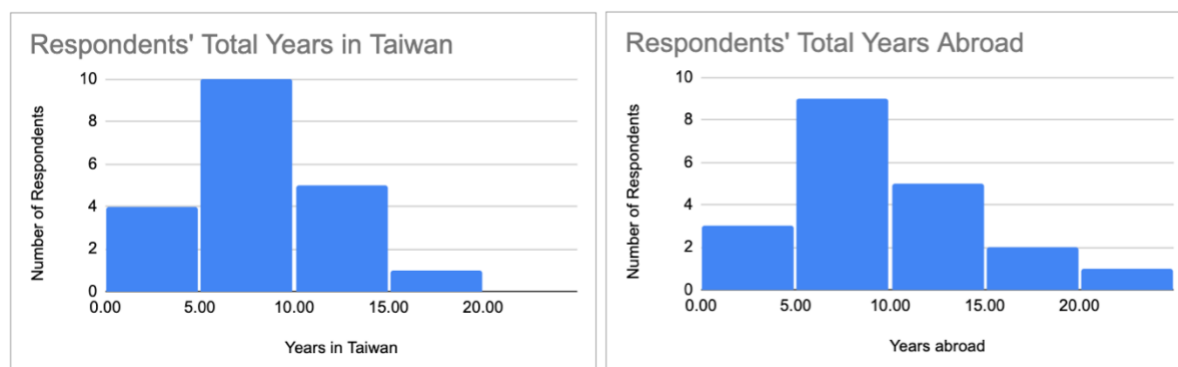


Figure 4.4. Years of Stay in Taiwan and Abroad

Length of stay outside the home country is one of the two variables used in this research. To account for prior experience residing in other countries or territories overseas, both years in Taiwan and the total number of years absent from the Philippines (total years abroad) were queried, regardless if they were rendered consecutively. This research focuses on respondents' total years abroad.

For residence in Taiwan, four respondents (20%) have lived in the country for less than five years, ten (50%) for five to less than ten years, five (25%) for ten to less than 15 years, and one (5%) for more than 15 years.

Six respondents had previous experience of living abroad aside from Taiwan. Their prior countries or territories of residence were all in Asia – specifically Singapore, United Arab Emirates, Israel, Hong Kong, and Macau. For respondents' total years abroad, three (15%) have lived outside of the Philippines for less than five years, nine (45%) for five to less than ten years, five (25%) for ten to less than 15 years, two (10%) for 15 to less than 20 years, and one (5%) for more than 20 years.

Respondent Categories

by Education and Length of Stay Abroad

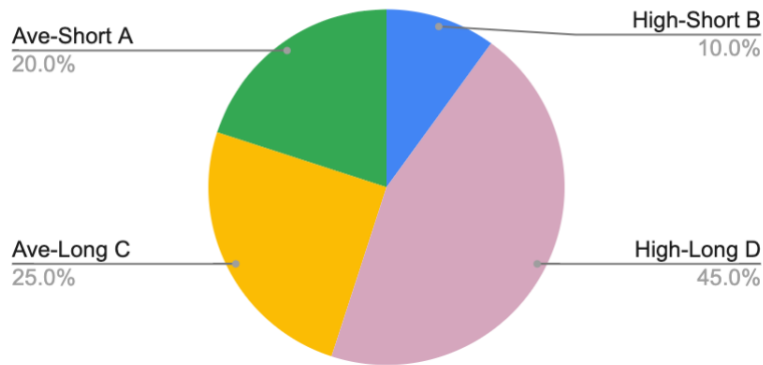


Figure 4.5. Categories by Education and Length of Stay Abroad

Based on the Respondent Categories outlined in the Methodology chapter, migrant interviewees were categorized into four types according to two variables: educational attainment and length of stay abroad. Respondents who were at the most college level and with 1-6 years residence abroad were categorized under Ave-Short (A); those who were at least college graduate and with 1-6 years residence abroad under High-Short (B); those who were at the most college level and with more than six years residence abroad under Ave-Long (C); and those who were at least college graduate and with more than six years residence abroad under High-Long (D). Four respondents (20%) were identified to be under the category Ave-Short (A), two (10%) under High-Short (B), five (25%) under Ave-Long (C), and nine (45%) under High-Long (D).

Affiliations and Organizations

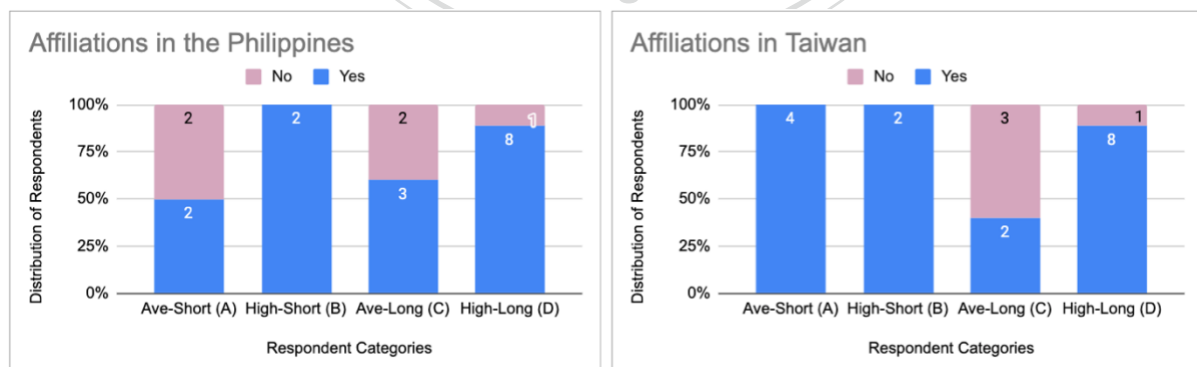


Figure 4.6. Affiliations and Organizations

Generally, Filipino migrant respondents are (or were) affiliated with, and participate in, political, civic, religious, or social organizations. A majority of 15 respondents (75%) said they

participated in organizations while in the Philippines. The breakdown per respondent category is as follows. There was 50% participation versus 50% non-participation for Ave-Short (A) respondents, 100% participation for High-Short (B) respondents, 60% participation versus 40% non-participation for Ave-Long (C) respondents, and 89% participation versus 11% non-participation for High-Long (D) respondents. Affiliation and participation in organizations before living abroad coincide with education level: respondents with higher educational attainment were more likely to participate in organizations in the Philippines.

Furthermore, 16 respondents (80%) said they participate (or have participated) in political, civic, religious, or social organizations while in Taiwan. There was 100% participation for Ave-Short (A) respondents, 100% participation for High-Short (B) respondents, 40% participation versus 60% non-participation for Ave-Long (C) respondents, and 89% participation versus 11% non-participation for High-Long (D) respondents. Interestingly, all respondents with a short residence abroad participate (or have participated) in organizations in Taiwan, which contrasts with assumptions that a longer stay abroad correlates to host-country affiliations.

Return Migration, Homeland Contact, and Homeland Contributions

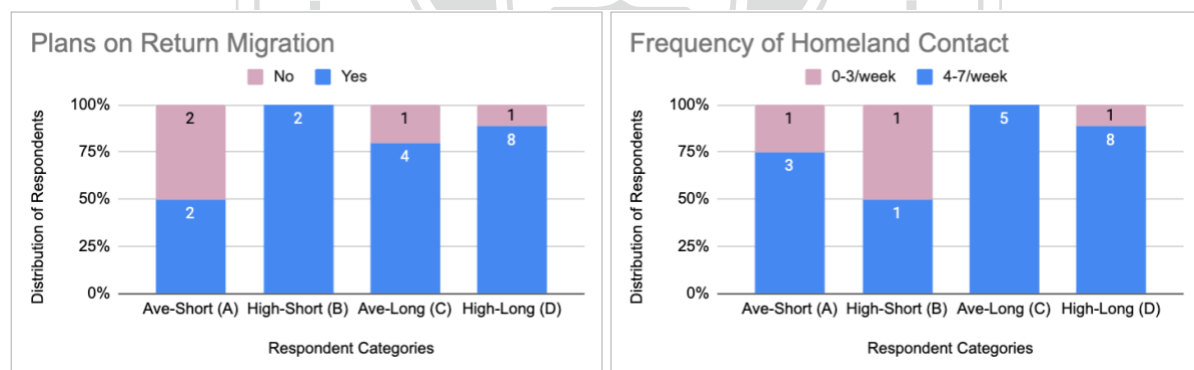


Figure 4.7. Plans on Return Migration and Homeland Contact

For the question on plans to return to the Philippines, a majority of 16 respondents (80%) indicated they want to go home for good in a few years or retire in the Philippines. Categories with higher education were more likely to want to return to the Philippines. However, in contrast with resocialization, respondents who had a longer stay abroad were more inclined to want to go home. This includes 50% of Ave-Short (A) respondents, 100% of High-Short (B) respondents, 80% of Ave-Long (C) respondents, and 89% of High-Long (D) respondents. A minority of respondents indicated aspirations or plans to settle outside of their home country,

citing a “better life” and “higher income” overseas compared to the “hard” life in the Philippines, “higher goals,” or having a foreign partner as reasons for such.

As mentioned in the research introduction, permanent residency is currently not available for unskilled workers in Taiwan and this may have been an influencing factor for the above responses, especially for migrant respondents who have their own families back home.

Generally, migrant respondents *frequently* contact family and friends back home. When asked how often they keep in touch, 17 respondents (85%) answered 4-7 times a week, while only three (15%) said 0-3 times weekly. The latter three respondents are composed of two unmarried students and one new immigrant with a family member living with her in Taiwan. Additionally, the same two students have had a shorter stay overseas. As for the medium of contact, migrant respondents mainly used Facebook Messenger chat, audio, or video call to keep in touch with family and friends back home. The only other medium of contact was Viber, mentioned by two respondents.

Although outside the scope of this study, it can be argued that because the main driver of migration in the Philippines is economic and most of the respondents are labor migrants, it is imperative that Filipino emigrants maintain ties with their family and friends back home as they are the recipients of their financial remittances.

Furthermore, it is important to note that although the number of respondents who do not have plans to return to the Philippines is similar to that of those who do not frequently (0-3 times a week) keep in touch with family or friends in the Philippines, they *do not* correspond to each other. All four respondents who indicated their plan to migrate overseas permanently said they keep in touch with family or friends daily. Meanwhile, all three respondents who do not frequently (0-3 times a week) stay in touch with family or friends back home indicated their plan to return to the Philippines.

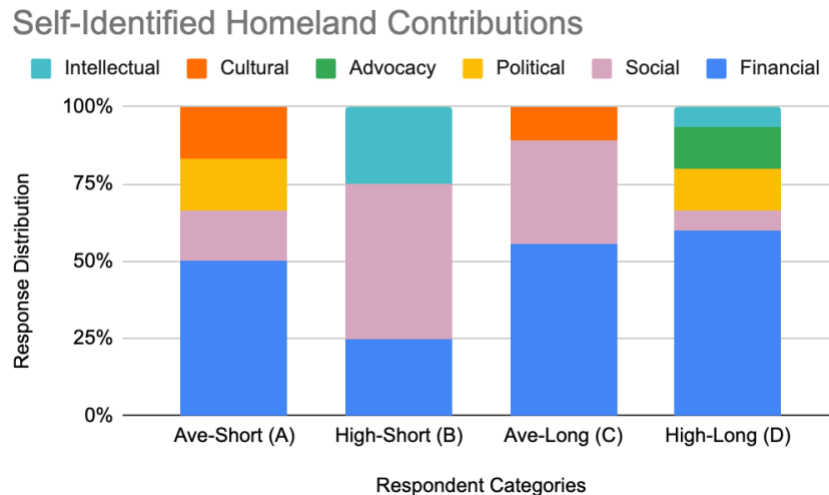


Figure 4.8. Self-Identified Homeland Contributions

Where multiple answers were possible, respondents were asked to identify how they think they contribute to the Philippines despite being abroad. Respondents enumerated various activities as migrants' homeland contributions ranging from tangible financial remittances to abstract "concern" through emotional support. The researcher then interpreted these activities listed by respondents and classified them into intellectual, cultural, advocacy, political, social, or financial contributions to the homeland.

Understandably, while all labor migrants and new immigrants responded quickly that they remit money back to family and friends, student migrants did not cite financial remittances. However, the labor-migrant-turned-student respondent reported that he previously sent remittances when he was employed. Some respondents also described how they donate to calamities back home or send "balikbayan" boxes (cargo boxes usually filled with imported material goods such as chocolates, shoes, clothes, soap, or other commodities) from overseas to the Philippines.

Second to financial remittances, social remittances were most identified by respondents across categories. They cite being socially aware, voicing one's opinions through social media, giving advice to family or friends when they have problems, showing concern by contacting or conversing with them as emotional support, imparting values to social networks such as on education, and holding online bible study studies with family back home. Of all the types of contributions that respondents self-identified, only financial and social remittances were present across all respondent categories.

Although separately discussed in the section below on election participation through OAV, only three respondents (one from Ave-Short A and two from High-Long D) self-identified political contributions to the Philippines. They cited voting, generally participating in politics, and joining discussions on issues about the Philippines.

Two High-Long (D) respondents also cited advocacy as a homeland contribution. One identifies as an advocate of migrant workers in a church community, specifically by serving as a bridge for Philippine government agencies in Taiwan (such as the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) or Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO)) and giving advice to Filipino migrants in Taiwan. Another respondent relates how she actively participates in the migrant-advocacy organization *Migrante* by helping or rescuing abused Filipino migrants or those tasked to do illegal work, and organizing educational seminars such as on workers' rights.

Respondents with average education (Ave-Short A and Ave-Long C) identified cultural contributions such as promoting Philippine tourist spots or Filipino food to international and Taiwanese friends, sharing information about the Philippines while in Taiwan, and introducing homeland culture, manners, or attitude to the host society. Meanwhile, an intellectual contribution was cited by highly educated (High-Short B and High-Long D) respondents. This type of contribution includes online academic lectures for Philippine students, information drives, knowledge transfer, and sharing information on internship, education, or scholarship opportunities overseas to a Filipino audience.

News and Politics: Exposure, Engagement, Understanding, and Perceptions

Respondents were also asked about their engagement with news and politics in their home and host countries. These include questions on how often they read or watch news about politics in the Philippines, through what kind of sources, how often they discuss local issues with family and friends back home, how often they discuss Philippine politics within their social circles in Taiwan, and if members of their social circles usually have similar or different political ideas. In the same way, respondents were asked how often they read or watch news about politics in Taiwan, how well they think they know or understand Taiwanese politics, and how they perceive politics in Taiwan compared to the Philippines.

News Sources for PH News

20 responses

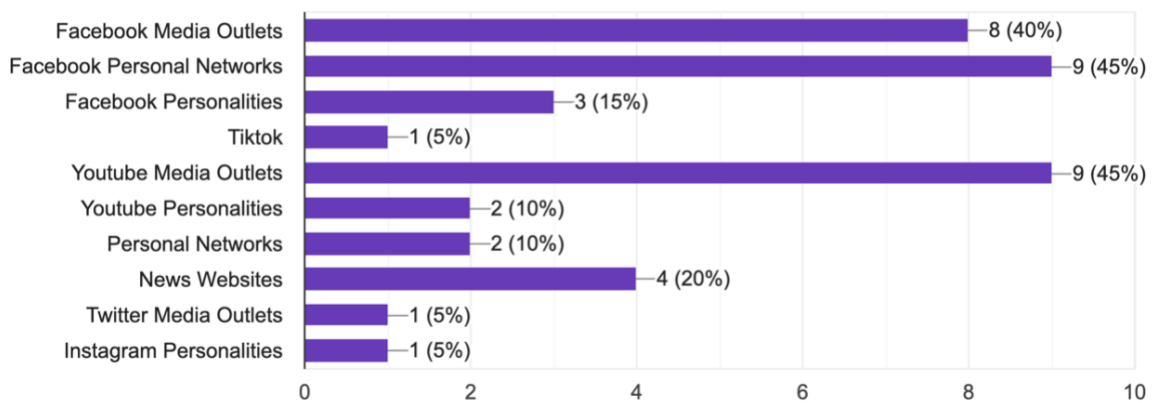


Figure 4.9. Sources of Philippine (Political) News

For news sources, where multiple answers were possible, nine respondents (45%) cited personal networks through Facebook, while another nine (45%) cited YouTube channels or videos of media outlets as their main platforms of political news consumption. Other news sources enumerated were Facebook posts or accounts of media outlets (8 or 40%), news websites (4 or 20%), Facebook posts or accounts of personalities or candidates (3 or 15%), YouTube channels or videos of personalities or candidates (2 or 10%), personal networks (2 or 10%), TikTok (1 or 5%), Twitter accounts or posts of media outlets (1 or 5%), and Instagram posts or accounts of personalities (1 or 5%). These sources were similarly spread across different respondent categories, with no apparent pattern.

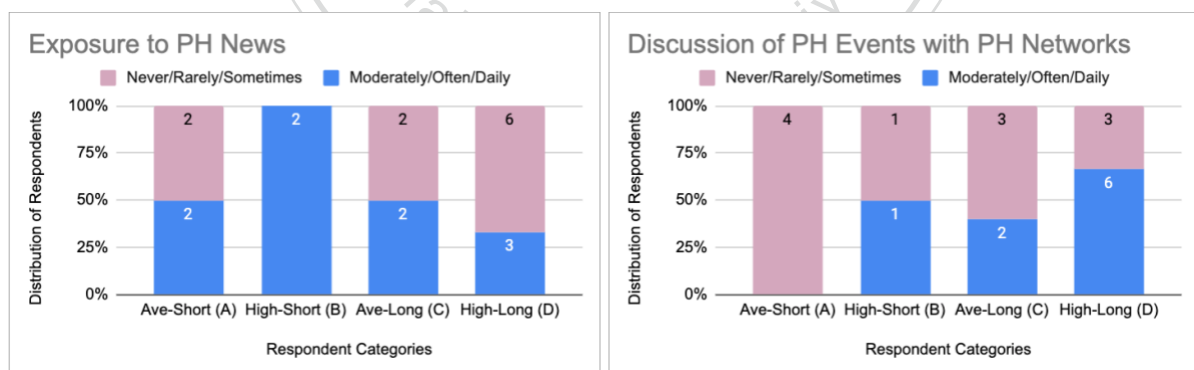


Figure 4.10. Frequency of Exposure to PH News and Discussions with PH Networks

Asked how often they read or watch news about politics in the Philippines, interview respondents were divided between frequent and non-frequent news consumers. Those who answered from 0-3 times a week were categorized under the non-frequent category of

Never/Rarely/Sometimes, while those who answered 4-7 times a week were under the frequent category of Moderately/Often/Daily.

Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents with average education (Ave-Short A and Ave-Long C) were frequently exposed to politics in the Philippines, while the other half (50%) were not. All two respondents (100%) of the High-Short (B) category were frequently exposed, and only three (33%) of High-Long (D) were frequently exposed, whereas the other six respondents (67%) were not. One respondent did not give a definite answer to the question.

Based on the interview results, it can be argued that exposure to Philippine political news may be influenced by the length of stay overseas, where a shorter stay increases the propensity to be exposed to homeland news. Although exposure to political news is not equal to participation, this exposure pattern is in line with the resocialization theory wherein transnational political participation is believed to gradually decline as migrants become more integrated into their host society. Contrary to socioeconomic factor assumptions, however, respondents with high education were less exposed to Philippine political news than average-educated ones.

Respondents were also asked how often they discuss local issues or events with their family or friends back home. The answers were similarly classified under a non-frequent category of Never/Rarely/Sometimes or frequent Moderately/Often/Daily. All (100%) Ave-Short (A) respondents, one (50%) of High-Short (B), three (60%) of Ave-Long (C), and three (33%) of High-Long (D) non-frequently discussed events or issues in the Philippines with their networks back home, while one (50%) of High Short (B), two (40%) of Ave-Long (C), and six (67%) of High-Long (D) frequently did. Respondents more likely to discuss events or issues in the Philippines with their home networks fell under the high education categories, High-Short (B) and High-Long (D). This supports previous studies and the research's hypothesis correlating higher education to more participation from a rational model perspective.

It is also interesting to note that respondents who frequently discuss homeland events or issues with their networks back home were more likely affiliated with organizations while in the Philippines and also frequently contacted networks back home. Of the nine respondents whose answers fell into the frequent category, only one (11%) was not affiliated with an organization back home. Additionally, all nine frequently contacted family or friends in the Philippines. Thus, for migrant respondents, membership in an organization back home and a

higher frequency of contact with homeland networks may increase ties to social circles there, which may result in a higher inclination to discuss different topics with them.

It can be argued that although exposure to homeland political news decreases over the course of a migrant's stay overseas by resocialization theory, higher education, affiliation to homeland organization/s, and frequency of contact with homeland social circles may increase the propensity of migrants to discuss homeland events with their networks back home.

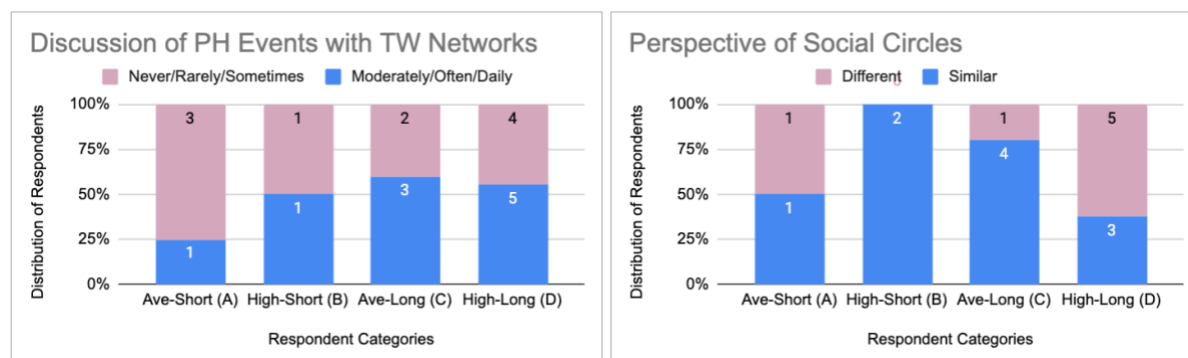


Figure 4.11. Discussions with TW Networks and Perspective of Social Circles

Asked how often they discuss homeland events with their Filipino networks in Taiwan, respondents' answers were classified under a non-frequent category of Never/Rarely/Sometimes or frequent Moderately/Often/Daily. Three respondents (75%) from Ave-Short (A), one (50%) from High-Short (B), two (40%) from Ave-Long (C), and four (44%) from High-Long (D) non-frequently discussed homeland events with their Filipino friends or family in Taiwan. On the other hand, one respondent (25%) from Ave-Short (A), one (50%) from High-Short (B), three (60%) from Ave-Long (C), and five (56%) from High-Long (D) frequently did.

It may be the case that because of resocialization, migrant respondents who have a short stay overseas are less inclined to discuss homeland politics with their social circles in the host society as they have not yet established deeper connections with communities there. In contrast, long-staying migrant respondents have more-established social networks in the host society where they feel comfortable discussing politics.

As for the political perspective of their social circles in Taiwan, more migrant respondents reported having similar opinions to their peers. Out of the three groups, only the High-Long (D) category has more respondents (5 out of 8 or around 63%) who indicated they discuss politics with family or friends who hold different opinions. On the other hand, one respondent

(50%) of Ave-Short (A), two (100%) of High-Short (B), four (80%) of Ave-Long (C), and three (37%) of High-Long (D) said they have social circles who share their own or have similar perspectives.

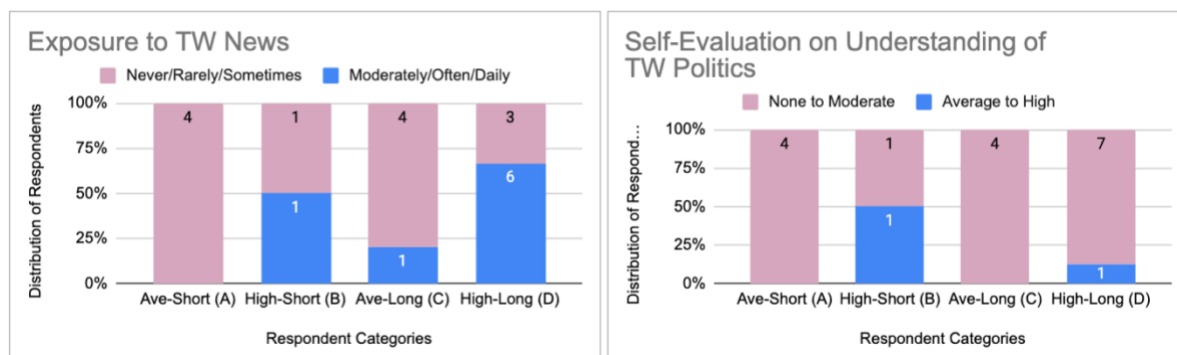


Figure 4.12. Exposure to TW News and Self-Evaluation on Understanding of TW Politics

Asked how often they read or watch news about politics in Taiwan, interview respondents were divided between frequent (Moderately/Often/Daily) and non-frequent (Never/Rarely/Sometimes) news consumers. Most respondents answered that they were non-frequently exposed to news on Taiwanese politics. All four respondents (100%) of Ave-Short (A), one (50%) of High-Short (B), four (80%) of Ave-Long (C), and three (33%) of High-Long (D) were not frequently exposed to news on Taiwanese politics. Meanwhile, one (50%) of High-Short (B), and one (20%) of Ave-Long (C) frequently watched or read news on politics in Taiwan. Only the High-Long (D) category had more respondents (6) who indicated they were frequent consumers of Taiwanese political news, with a 67% distribution.

Interestingly, this is the opposite of the results on respondents' exposure to Philippine political news discussed above, where the High-Long (D) category was least likely to be frequent consumers of homeland political news. However, if responses were differentiated between education levels and length of stay abroad, highly educated (compared to those with average education) and long-staying (compared to those with a shorter stay abroad) respondents were more exposed to homeland political news. This is in line with prior hypotheses based on socioeconomic and resocialization considerations. On an additional note, it may be fruitful to explore homeland news consumption separately in future studies, while also considering the language barriers in accessing the host country's news sources.

As to a self-evaluation of how well they know Taiwanese politics, only two respondents gave themselves a grade of 6-10 (Average to High), while 16 gave 0-5 points (None to Moderate). Two respondents did not provide a definite answer. Interestingly, the two

respondents who answered Average to High both came from high-education categories, High-Short (B) and High-Long (D), strengthening previous assumptions on the correlation of education with exposure and understanding of host-country's politics.

Despite relatively having a low self-evaluation regarding their understanding of Taiwanese politics, most respondents held positive or neutral perceptions of Taiwanese politics compared to the Philippines. Respondents were found to perceive Taiwanese politics as better (e.g., no money-giving during elections, succeeding politicians supporting previous terms' projects), peaceful, honest, transparent (e.g., visibility of meetings), rule-driven, and disciplined. Taiwan is perceived to be sensitive to citizens' complaints, adhere to human rights, and have good, loyal, honest, and less-corrupt politicians. Furthermore, its politics is seen as less noisy and having less drama. The Taiwanese society is perceived to be a place where using connections or money is less necessary to thrive, where implementation of the law is stronger and more equal between the rich and the poor, and where citizens are obedient, united, compliant, disciplined, respectful, participative, and rule-abiding. One respondent also cites Taiwan's two-party system characteristics as positive, wherein it's easier to choose candidates during elections.

In contrast to these host-country perceptions, most respondents see homeland politics as disorderly and personalist. They cite how connections are important and political dynasties are rampant in the Philippines. Only two respondents think that the Philippines and Taiwan are equally democratic or hold the same democratic values, while only one perceives the Philippines as more democratic.

Participation in Elections and Overseas Absentee Voting

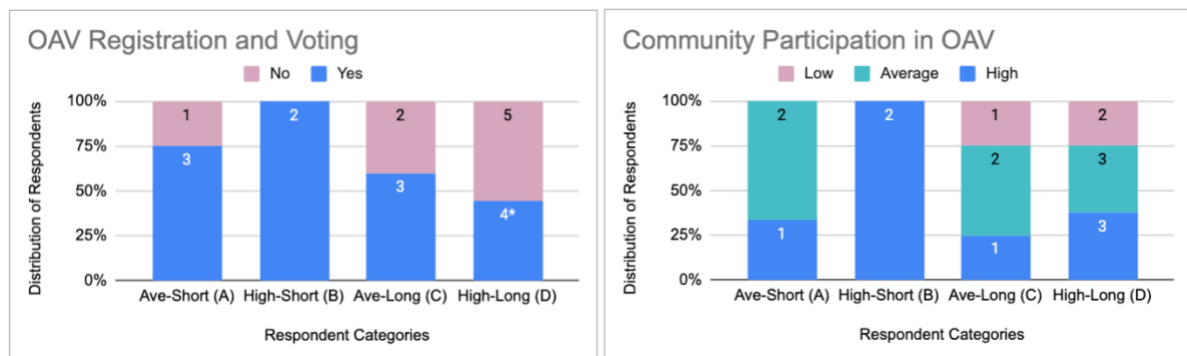


Figure 4.13. Respondent and Community Participation in OAV

As to OAV awareness, all respondents said they were aware that they could vote outside of their country. However, information that led to this awareness mainly came from personal networks or was coincidental (e.g., some respondents were told they could register to vote for the elections when they were renewing their passport at the Philippine representative office), rather than from governmental agencies pre-migration.

Asked about their participation in this year's (2022) Philippine elections, a majority (60%) of respondents said they registered and voted through OAV. This includes one respondent under the High-Long (D) category, who said she registered but did not get to vote due to a medical emergency. Divided according to respondent categories, migrants who have stayed abroad for a shorter period were more inclined to register and vote, with three responses (75%) from Ave-Short (A) and two (100%) from High-Short (B). Meanwhile, a lower distribution of three respondents (60%) from Ave-Long (C) and four (44%) from High-Long (D) were voters. This follows the resocialization perspective, where migrants' homeland political participation is expected to decline as they become more integrated into their host society. Comparing between levels of educational attainment results also show that Ave-Short (A) respondents were less likely to vote than High-Short (B) respondents, in line with studies on how a higher level of education influences political participation. However, compared between Ave-Long (C) and High-Long (C) categories, this does not seem to be the case, as average-educated respondents were more likely to participate in OAV. Educational attainment as a factor affecting OAV participation thus yields ambiguous results.

However, it is also important to note that the High-Long (D) category includes two new migrants who have renounced their Philippine citizenship, which prevents them from registering and voting for homeland elections. Aside from citizenship reasons, respondents cite

lack of time to register for overseas voting, lack of clear information as to registration deadlines, and missing name in the Certified List of Voters as reasons for non-participation in OAV.

Asked about their perception of their communities' participation in OAV, highly educated respondents were more likely to have networks that participate more in OAV when cut across categories. By respondent categories, two respondents (100%) of High-Short (B) and three (37.5%) of High-Long (D) said they had networks who had high participation in OAV. In comparison, only one respondent (33%) of Ave-Short (A) and one (25%) of Ave-Long (C) had networks with high participation. However, looking at the absolute number of high and average participation perceptions, highly educated respondents had lower perceived community participation in OAV than those with average education. Comparing their length of stay abroad, respondents who have been out of their homeland for a shorter period were also more likely to have networks with high participation than those who had been abroad for longer. All three respondents who said their communities had low participation in OAV came from longer-staying respondent categories.

Thus, interview results on respondents' and their communities' OAV participation show that both education and length of stay may affect the propensity to participate in homeland politics through external voting.

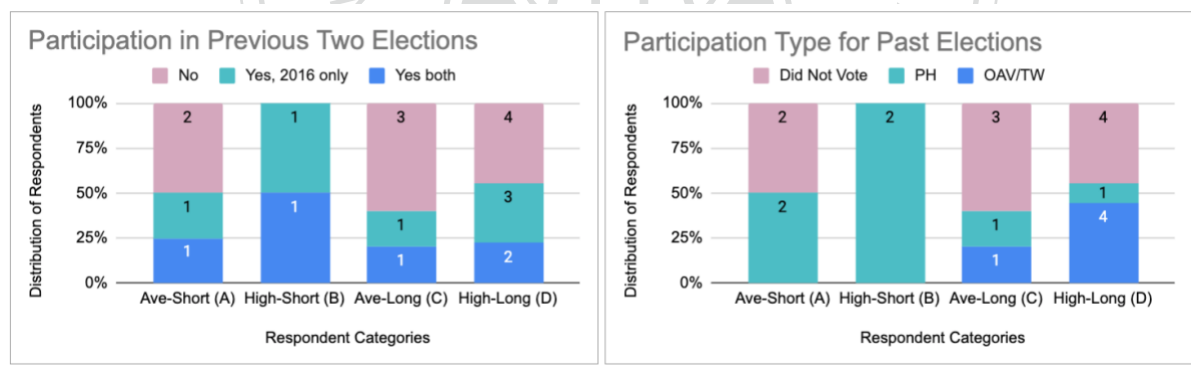


Figure 4.14. Participation in Past Elections

Eleven (55%) out of 20 respondents said they voted at least once in the previous two elections. The last two elections (instead of one) were considered as the DFA admitted that voter turnout during midterm elections decrease (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2019). Respondents' participation in the previous two elections supports the premise that education influences political participation: two respondents (100%) of High-Short (B) and five (55%) of High-Long (D) have participated in at least one of the previous two elections, whereas a

lower distribution of two (50%) respondents of Ave-Short (A) and two (40%) of Ave-Long (C) have.

Comparing the length of stay overseas also supports resocialization theory, as respondent groups with a shorter stay overseas were more likely to participate in homeland politics: two (50%) of Ave-Short (A) compared to two (40%) of Ave-Long (C), and two (100%) of High-Short (B) compared to five (56%) of High-Long (D). Reasons cited for non-participation in previous elections include: unclear or lack of information on OAV or midterm election implementation, no interest in elections, non-registration, being underaged³, and renounced citizenship.

Respondents who participated in at least one of the two previous elections and had a shorter stay overseas voted in the Philippines. Meanwhile, two out of the seven respondents who have stayed long-term overseas voted in the Philippines, as the election day coincided with their visit or stay back home. Because the response to this question is dependent on the previous one on participation, patterns observed between respondent categories are also the same.

A few respondents cited distrust in the system as a barrier to voting. They shared anecdotes on how migrants are not sure if their votes are counted, especially if they are made through postal ballots, as well as possible cheating in the elections. Regarding postal ballots, one respondent also shared how migrant voters received envelopes with no ballots and pointed to the problem of misaddressed envelopes due to location transfer.

Asked whether there are enough efforts to encourage migrants to participate in OAV, some respondents suggested better information dissemination, especially about registration periods. They suggest that government agencies can reach out to brokers or workers' dormitories to inform migrants better; or for them to put out advertisements, carry out information drives, and hold activities, dialogues, or events. One respondent also suggested a longer time for voters to register.

Two respondents also mentioned the downsizing of the Taichung representative office as a possible factor affecting this year's voting, citing the distance of both Taipei and Kaohsiung MECO offices to some Taiwanese cities. The researcher also notes that this

³ Only one respondent was underaged during the past two elections.

downsizing may have been one of the reasons why the COMELEC decided to shift Taiwan's OAV implementation from personal voting for all registrants during previous elections, to a mixed type with partly postal voting for some counties such as Hualien, Yilan, Taichung, and Miaoli. Some extreme suggestions from respondents include giving monetary incentives to migrant voters and making external voting mandatory. Meanwhile, four respondents think that enough efforts are already being made to encourage migrants to vote and that, ultimately, it is up to them to do it.

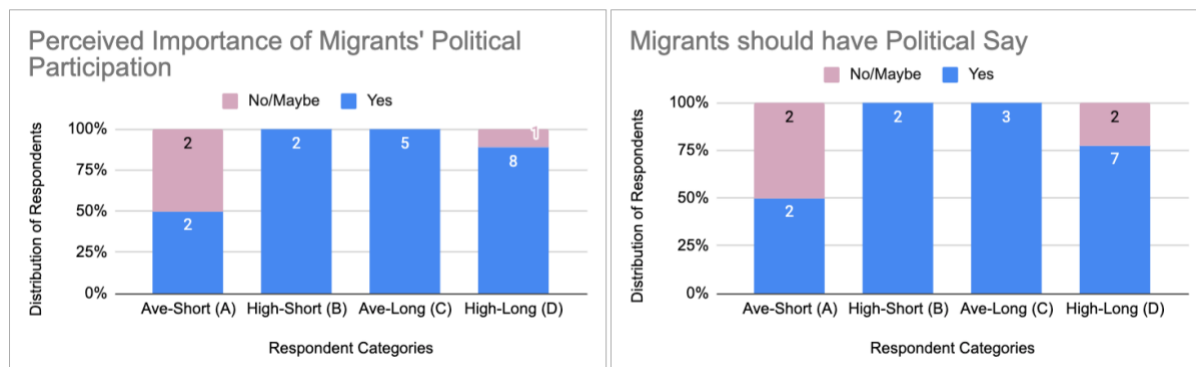


Figure 4.15. Perceived Importance of Migrant Participation in Home-Country Politics

Most respondents think participating in home-country politics is still important even for citizens abroad (85% of respondents) and that migrants should have a say in homeland politics (80% of respondents). Two respondents (50%) of Ave-Short (A) and one (11%) of High-Long (D) were unsure or did not think it was important for migrants to participate in politics. Additionally, two respondents (50%) of Ave-Short (A) and two (22%) of High-Long (D) were unsure or did not think migrants needed to have a say in politics.

The results are in line with assumptions on education as a positive factor influencing perspectives in migrants' political participation and political opinion. Respondents with high education were more likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics. On the other hand, they contrast with expectations following a resocialization premise wherein a shorter length of stay positively influences views on political participation. Respondents with a longer stay abroad were more likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics.

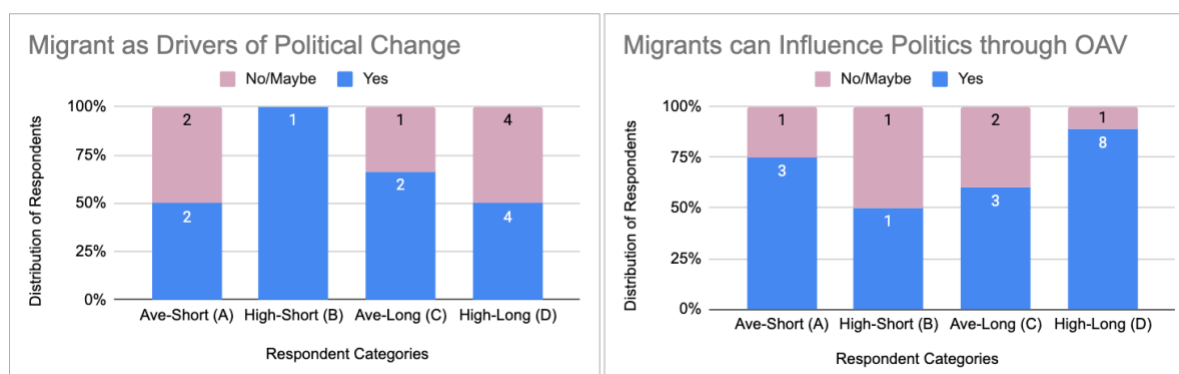


Figure 4.16. Perceived Political Influence of Migrants

Compared to the perceived importance of migrants' political participation and opinion, more respondents were unsure or pessimistic about migrants as drivers of homeland political change. Two (50%) of Ave-Short (A), one (33%) of Ave-Long (C), and four (50%) of High-Long (D) were unsure or did not think that migrants can be drivers of homeland political change. There were also some respondents spread across categories who were pessimistic or doubtful if migrants could influence politics through OAV. One respondent (25%) of Ave-Short (A), one (50%) of High-Short (B), two (40%) of Ave-Long (C), and one (11%) of High-Long (D) were not optimistic that migrants could influence politics through external voting.

Differentiating between education levels and length of stay abroad, the latter results follow the assumption that education positively affects respondents' perception, but contrast with that on length of stay abroad. Those with high education (compared to those with average education) and a longer stay abroad (compared to those with a shorter stay abroad) were more likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics.

Explanations cited for being unsure or pessimistic with regards to migrants' role in homeland politics mainly focus on migrant reasoning. These include migrants' priority as employment, being outside of the Philippines means they should not have a say, they can contribute more if they were back home since host countries benefit more from migrants, policies still depend on incumbent politicians and they may or may not listen to migrants, the comparatively small population size of migrants cannot influence election results, those who win in the elections will win regardless of migrant votes, migrants do not benefit from understanding homeland politics, their interest in politics is not that high even if they are aware, they get stressed over homeland politics, politicians do not value them, individual issues of migrants are not addressed because of their large number, the proliferation of fake news and disinformation among migrants mainly because of their large social media consumption (one

respondent cited how Facebook had questionable content), they do not have a powerful influence, it's futile, some migrants would instead take their family out of the country, and that simple inspiration will not do as there is a need to raise capital for funds and logistics to enact change. Reasons for non-participation in the OAV such as mistrust in the system especially with postal voting may also be a factor affecting these views.

On the other hand, some optimistic respondents cited politics as the indirect reason for migration, mentioning that labor migrants leave the country because there is "something missing in the Philippines", because of the poor governance in the country leading to low wages, or because our resources are "mishandled" by leaders causing the country to be economically left behind. One respondent said, "[e]verything is political. Migrant workers are abroad because of the lack of opportunity at home and income disparity. If we have a good government, we get more opportunities in the Philippines, so we don't have to work overseas." Another one says that she looks forward to a better Philippines so migrants "are not forced to leave because of the lack of choice."

Optimistic perspectives with regards to the importance of migrants' homeland political participation or opinion, and migrants as drivers of change generally include ideological reasoning such as a sense of being Filipino or nationalism, external voting as a social responsibility, duty, right, and contribution; and political participation as a means to help the country's improvement.

Meanwhile, some reasons are migration-rooted such as the large number of migrants, particularly OFWs; the influence of breadwinner migrants' voice on "indebted" family they support back home; migrants as affected by homeland price increases as it is their remittances that fund family's education and expenses; migrants' influence through remittances that may translate to political influence; migrant-related policies and platforms; effects or benefits of political actions and plans on migrants; migrants as concomitant to homeland development; migration as temporary and migrants' return to the homeland as inevitable; and migrants having a comparative vantage point because they are exposed to homeland and host-country differences and can thus provide feedback on areas for improvement.

Finally, some explanations were practical or rational such as voting to be able to ask for help from the government in the future; and how a voter's certification (evidence that a Filipino is a voter) can help reduce medical finances. One respondent was only partially

optimistic and offered that external voting may affect senatorial polls, but probably not for the president and vice president positions.

Aside from OAV, some respondents cited how engrained social media is in the country and that it can be a platform for political participation. Even without registering to vote, citizens' concerns can be voiced through social media, which may reach politicians or the government. It can also be a means to hold elected officials accountable by contacting them directly or posting about them on social media platforms.

In summary, the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3 only hold **partly true**. Assumptions made under education as a socioeconomic factor were found to hold more than those made under resocialization or length of stay abroad.

Table 4.1 Research Findings According to Length of Education Level

Research Questions	Socioeconomic Factor	
	Average Education	High Education
1 Affiliation and Organizations	Less affiliated with both PH and TW organizations	More affiliated with both PH and TW organizations
2 Return Migration	Less likely to want to return home	More likely to want to return home
3 Contact with Homeland Ties	Frequent contact with homeland ties	Less contact with homeland ties (one unmarried student and one new immigrant with a family member in Taiwan)
4 Migrants' Homeland Contribution	Financial Remittances, Social Remittances	
	Additionally cited cultural contributions	Additionally cited advocacy and intellectual contributions
	Less likely to cite participation in homeland politics	More likely to cite participation in homeland politics
5 Political News in PH	More exposed to PH news but less likely to discuss them with both their homeland and host-country networks	Less exposed to PH news, but more likely to discuss them with both their homeland and host-country networks
6 Political News in TW	Less exposed to TW news and have lower self-perceived understanding of TW politics	More exposed to TW news and have higher self-perceived understanding of TW politics
7 OAV Awareness	Both groups are equally aware of OAV	
8 OAV and Electoral Participation	More participation in OAV but less participation in previous elections; higher perceived community participation in OAV	Less participation in OAV (if new immigrants are disregarded, equal with average education respondents), but more participation in previous

Research Questions	Socioeconomic Factor	
	Average Education	High Education
		elections; lower perceived community participation in OAV
9 Perceived Importance of Participation in Home-Country Politics	Less likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics	More likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics
10 Perceived Influence of OAV	Less likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics	More likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics

In line with this research's hypotheses (colored green in preceding table) differentiating between education as a socioeconomic factor, respondents with higher education were seen to be more affiliated with both homeland and host-country organizations, more likely to want to return home, more likely to cite participation in homeland politics as homeland contribution, more exposed to host-country (political) news, have higher self-perceived understanding of host-country politics, more likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important, more likely to think that migrants should have a say in politics, and more likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics. However, differentiation across education levels yield mixed or inconclusive results (colored yellow) for exposure and discussion of Philippine news with homeland and host-country networks, OAV awareness, and OAV and previous electoral participation.

Table 4.2 Research Findings According to Length of Stay Abroad

Research Questions	Resocialization Factor	
	Short Stay Abroad	Long Stay Abroad
1 Affiliation and Organizations	More affiliated with TW organizations	Less affiliated with TW organizations
2 Return Migration	Less likely to want to return home	More likely to want to return home
3 Contact with Homeland Ties	Less contact with homeland ties (2 unmarried students)	Frequent contact with homeland ties
4 Migrants' Homeland Contribution	Financial Remittances, Social Remittances	
	Additionally cited cultural and intellectual contributions	Additionally cited advocacy, cultural, and intellectual contributions
	More likely to cite participation in homeland	Less likely to cite participation in homeland politics (two with high education)

Research Questions	Resocialization Factor	
	Short Stay Abroad	Long Stay Abroad
	politics (one with average education)	
5 Political News in PH	More exposed to PH news but less likely to discuss them with both their homeland and host-country networks	Less exposed to PH news, but more likely to discuss them with both their homeland and host-country networks
6 Political News in TW	Less exposed to TW news but have higher self-perceived understanding of TW politics (higher in comparison to respondents with long stay abroad but still relatively low at 17% or 1/6)	More exposed to TW news but have lower self-perceived understanding of TW politics (1/12)
7 OAV Awareness	Both groups are equally aware of OAV	
8 OAV and Electoral Participation	More participation in OAV and previous elections; higher perceived community participation in OAV	Less participation in OAV and previous elections; lower perceived community participation in OAV
9 Perceived Importance of Participation in Home-Country Politics	Less likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics	More likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important and to think that migrants should have a say in politics
10 Perceived Influence of OAV	Less likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics	More likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics

Additionally, in line with this research's hypotheses (colored green in preceding table) differentiating between length of stay abroad as a resocialization factor, respondents with a shorter stay abroad were more likely to cite participation in homeland politics as homeland contribution, more likely to participate in OAV, more likely to have participated in previous two elections, and had a higher perceived community participation in OAV. However, differentiating between a shorter and longer stay abroad yields mixed or inconclusive results (colored yellow) for exposure and discussion of Philippine news with homeland and host-country networks, exposure to host-country (political) news and perceived understanding of host-country politics, and OAV awareness.

More importantly, research results contrasted (colored pink) with hypotheses on five research questions. Migrant respondents who had a shorter stay abroad were found to be: more affiliated with host-country organizations, less likely to want to return home, less connected with homeland networks, less likely perceive participation in home-country politics as

important, less likely to think that migrants should have a say in politics, and less likely to perceive OAV as influential to home country politics. These results contrast with assumptions based on the concept of resocialization wherein short-staying migrants were seen to be more attached to their homeland (and consequently, to its politics) while longer-staying migrants as more alienated.



CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Along with the increasing global migration trend, numerous research has explored emigrants' home-country influences, but these have focused mainly on their economic side such as financial remittances. On the other hand, emigrants' participation in home-country politics through external voting has mostly been understudied. Meanwhile, electoral studies generally focus on in-country voting. To bridge this gap, the study focuses on emigrants' political influence through external voting by exploring Taiwan-based Filipino migrants' awareness, participation, and perceived importance of the Philippines' Overseas Absentee Voting implementation enacted in 2003.

The Philippines, as a home country, has one of the largest emigrant populations across the world, accounting for 2% of the global migrant number, and is one of the 119 countries enfranchising its emigrants through external voting. Its northwest neighbor Taiwan ranks as the 11th most democratic country globally and the first in Asia. Filipinos in Taiwan account for the third-largest migrant nationality in the country. Additionally, Taiwan has also been one of the top ten countries with the most number of OAV participants in the election years between 2004 to 2013.

Previous literature on migration and how it affects the sending country tells us that migrants bring ideas about governance, reformulate these ideas according to their experiences, and communicate social remittances back to their homelands. Democratic diffusion also suggests that migrants convey political beliefs and behavior from more to less democratic countries, not only when they return home but also through their social networks and communities.

With regards to voting and political participation, literature on electoral studies shows how socioeconomic resources such as education and income may affect political participation, such as that people with higher education are believed to participate more in voting because of increased cognitive skills that enable them to better learn about and engage in politics. As to a migration-related factor influencing political participation, a resocialization perspective suggests that deeper integration into migrants' host society decreases homeland political participation.

Using these theoretical perspectives as its foundation, this research primarily considered the level of education as a socioeconomic indicator, and length of stay overseas to

substitute for integration into the host society. Secondly, it looks at migrant respondents' ties both in the homeland and host countries, such as organizational affiliation, plans for return migration, frequency of contact with family and friends in the Philippines, frequency of exposure to political news, and frequency of political discussions.

Interviews with 20 Filipino emigrants based in Taipei, Taoyuan, and Taichung show that hypotheses laid out according to socioeconomic and resocialization assumptions only hold partly true. While all respondents were aware that they could vote for home-country elections outside of its borders, participation and perceptions related to OAV showed mixed results on assumptions based on education and host-country integration variables.

Results show that education (as a socioeconomic indicator) and length of stay abroad (as a resocialization indicator) may influence emigrants' homeland political participation and perspectives on homeland politics, although possibly at varying degrees. Consistent with socioeconomic links to political participation, higher education was seen to coincide with affiliations in both the homeland and host country, desire to return to the homeland, exposure to host-country political news and perceived understanding thereof, perspectives on the importance of participation in home-country politics and migrants' opinions, as well as perceived influence of OAV.

On the other hand, length of stay abroad based on the resocialization perspective seems to have influenced migrant respondents to a lesser degree. Although a shorter residence abroad coincided with higher exposure to homeland political news, more participation in OAV, more participation in the previous two elections, and higher perceived community participation in OAV in line with initial assumptions, longer staying migrants were found to be less affiliated with host-country organizations, were more likely to want to return home, had frequent contact with homeland networks, were more likely to perceive participation in home-country politics as important, more likely think that migrants should have a say in politics, and more likely to perceive OAV as influential to home-country politics which contrast with assumptions on resocialization and consequent alienation from the homeland as host-country integration deepens.

Additionally, regardless of education and length of residence abroad, migrant respondents accessed homeland news through social media, and cited financial and social remittances as migrants' homeland contributions. Most respondents also hold a positive or neutral perception of Taiwanese politics in comparison to the Philippines.

Policy Implications

While acknowledging their role in sustaining the Philippine economy and hailing migrants as “modern-day heroes”, government policies should also seek to encourage the political involvement of its large emigrant population – especially those from more democratic states, by democratic diffusion theory – if it hopes to strengthen and improve democracy in the country.

Results of the study support vast literature showing how education may positively influence perspectives on politics and electoral participation. In general, this points to the importance of strengthening the educational sector in the country to encourage a more inclusive homeland electoral and political participation across the globe. Although systematically enacting external voting policies serves as one of the main instruments for enfranchising migrants and promoting national democracy beyond borders, opportunities for migrants to participate in homeland politics may remain untapped or under-used if they are not equipped with tools to better understand politics or the external voting system.

Furthermore, as migrant respondents cited the lack of information as the main reason for non-participation in the OAV, better information dissemination especially through social media (as one of migrants’ main sources of news) may prove to be effective in encouraging emigrants to vote from abroad.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research focused on 20 migrant respondents from Taichung, Taoyuan, and Taipei and was constrained by time, distance, and COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Although patterns generally emerged from these limited qualitative interviews, they are difficult to generalize due to the small number of respondents. Interview respondents were introduced by the researcher’s existing social and professional contacts, and the results apply to the specific migrant demographic outlined in the study. As respondents needed to have a certain level of integration into the host society to have been introduced to the researcher and be part of the research, this may have resulted in an unintended selection bias. Future research may complement this study by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data to supplement results and further explore the assumptions made.

For countries with high language barriers to Filipino migrants, such as Taiwan, it may also be interesting to explore how language affects integration in the host country and exposure to host-country political news.

Furthermore, it may be fruitful to examine the possibility that in the contemporary age of online connections, migrants no longer lose homeland “socialization” but maintain them by frequently contacting family and friends back home. This requires redefining the idea of *resocialization*, which assumes that migrants integrate into their host country while severing ties with their homeland. If such is the case, length of stay abroad may be an ineffective indicator of host-country integration. On the other hand, it may be the case that these results are only applicable specifically to largely labor migrant populations such as in the Philippines, because emigrants necessarily keep in touch with family and friends back home who serve as recipients of their financial remittances.

In closing, the increasing migration trend has raised new questions on how it affects different aspects of both home and host countries. The political side of this phenomenon, including migrants’ awareness, participation, and perceived importance of external voting and what factors influence them, continues to be a fruitful area of research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Information Sheet and Consent Form

Research Information Sheet

Good day! I am Grace Longakit, a candidate for the International Master's Program in International Studies (IMPIS) at National Chengchi University (NCCU) in Taipei, Taiwan. I am conducting interviews to gather data for my master thesis on emigrants' participation in homeland politics through external voting.

I am asking you to participate in my research project as an interviewee. Please read this information sheet carefully to learn more about my research. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them by contacting me through my e-mail address below.

Purpose of the study

The research tackles emigrants' home-country political participation, focusing on Taiwan-based Filipino migrants' perspectives. It seeks to examine how Filipino emigrants participate in their home-country politics by examining their awareness, participation, and perceived importance of external voting. External voting refers to processes that allow part or all of a country's voters who are temporarily or permanently abroad to exercise their voting rights from beyond the national borders. In this study, external voting is used interchangeably with the terms absentee voting, overseas voting, voting from abroad, overseas absentee voting, homeland electoral participation, or out-of-country voting.

Selection of participants

You have been selected as a research participant as a Filipino migrant in Taiwan. Your insights on home-country political participation through external voting can provide important information necessary to enrich the analysis and findings of this research.

Interview process

Should you agree to be interviewed, you will sign a consent form. The researcher will contact you to arrange the interview date, time, and place. The interview will be conducted in person and will be audio recorded in full.

Research results

The results will be presented in the researcher's master thesis. Excerpts of the interview included in the study will be anonymized. The research will be examined by a committee consisting of the supervisor and two other panel members. However, only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the full transcript of the interview. A printed copy of the master thesis will be submitted to the National Chengchi University's library, and a digital copy will be stored in the library's database. Hence, the master thesis may be read by students and faculty of the university. The study may also be published in a research journal and presented at conferences.

Contact information

You may contact the researcher or her supervisor if you need further information.

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Prof. Eric Chen-Hua Yu
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Interview Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes. The researcher does not anticipate any risks associated with your participation. However, you have the right to refuse to answer a question or questions, stop the interview, or withdraw from the research at any time.

Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken by institutions in Taiwan require that interviewees explicitly agree to be interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Please read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve of the following actions.

The interview will be audio-recorded, and a transcript will be produced.

1. The researcher will analyze the transcript of the interview.
2. Access to the interview transcript will be limited to the researcher and her academic adviser. Any summary interview content or direct quotations from the interview made available through academic publications or other academic outlets will be anonymized to protect your identity. Care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify you is not revealed.
3. All or part of the content of your interview may be used in academic publications and conference presentations.
4. The actual audio recording will be deleted permanently six months after the completion of the researcher's thesis examination.

By signing this form, I agree to the following statements.

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I don't have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time.
2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above.
3. I have read the information sheet.
4. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality.
5. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.
6. I have received an iCash voucher of 300NT as a token of gratitude from the researcher for my participation.

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Migrant Respondents

I. RESPONDENT'S BACKGROUND

Interview Date and Time:

Name:

Sex:

Age:

Highest educational attainment:

Migrant status (employed, student, etc.):

Number of years in Taiwan:

Total number of years abroad:

II. HOMELAND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

1. During your stay in the Philippines, did you participate in any political, civic, religious, or social organization/s?
2. Do you plan to return to the Philippines after staying in Taiwan or abroad? Why or why not?
3. Do you think you still contribute something to the Philippines despite being abroad? Through which means (e.g., financial remittances, political, social, cultural, etc.)?
4. How often do you read or watch news about politics in the Philippines? Through what kind of sources? (List specific newspapers, websites, or social medium.)
5. How often and through what medium do you contact family or friends in the Philippines? How often do you discuss local issues with them?
6. How often do you talk about Philippine politics in Taiwan among your friends from the Philippines? Do they usually have similar or different political ideas or party/policy preferences?
7. In your opinion, is participating in home-country politics important even for citizens abroad? Why or why not? Should migrants have a say in Philippine politics? Can migrants be drivers of political change in their home country?

III. TAIWAN AND OVERSEAS ABSENTEE VOTING

1. Do/Did you participate in any political, civic, or social organization/s in Taiwan?
2. How often do you read or watch news about politics in Taiwan? How well do you know Taiwanese politics? What is your perception of politics in Taiwan (e.g., compared to that of the Philippines)?
3. Are you aware that you can vote for Philippine national elections through external voting? Do you have migrant friends or family members who voted through OAV?
4. Did you register and plan to vote for the 2022 Presidential Elections through OAV? Why or why not?
5. Did you vote during the last elections (2019 midterm elections or 2016 national elections)? Was it through OAV or in-country voting?
6. Do you think migrants can influence political shifts in the Philippines through OAV or other means?

Appendix C: Summary of Interview Answers

Demographics

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Migrant Status</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Years in Taiwan</i>	<i>Years Abroad</i>	<i>Length of Stay</i>
<i>R1</i>	A	M	31	Labor Migrant	Vocational degree	Average	5	5	Short
<i>R2</i>	A	F	39	Labor Migrant	HS degree	Average	2.5	5	Short
<i>R3</i>	A	F	27	Labor Migrant	Vocational degree	Average	4	4	Short
<i>R4</i>	A	M	21	Student	College level	Average	3	3	Short
<i>R5</i>	B	M	33	Student	Postgrad	High	2.5	2.5	Short
<i>R6</i>	B	M	31	Labor Migrant ⁴	Postgrad	High	6	6	Short
<i>R7</i>	C	F	51	Labor Migrant	HS degree	Average	6	12	Long
<i>R8</i>	C	F	35	Labor Migrant	College level	Average	7	9	Long
<i>R9</i>	C	F	38	Labor Migrant	College level	Average	9.5	9.5	Long
<i>R10</i>	C	M	35	Labor Migrant	College level	Average	10	10	Long
<i>R11</i>	C	F	37	Labor Migrant	College level	Average	7.5	7.5	Long
<i>R12</i>	D	F	48	Labor Migrant	College degree	High	14	22	Long
<i>R13</i>	D	F	35	Labor Migrant	College degree	High	8	8	Long
<i>R14</i>	D	F	32	Labor Migrant	College degree	High	7	9	Long
<i>R15</i>	D	M	37	Student ⁵	College degree	High	14	14	Long
<i>R16</i>	D	M	34	Labor Migrant ⁶	Postgrad	High	13	13	Long
<i>R17</i>	D	F	34	Labor Migrant	College degree	High	7	7	Long
<i>R18</i>	D	F	34	New Immigrant	College degree	High	11.5	11.5	Long
<i>R19</i>	D	F	43	Labor Migrant	College degree	High	8	15	Long
<i>R20</i>	D	F	62	New Immigrant	College degree	High	16	16	Long

⁴ Initially a student

⁵ Initially a labor migrant

⁶ Initially a student

Organizations and Affiliations, Return Migration, Homeland Contact, and Homeland Contributions

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>PH Organizations</i>	<i>TW Organizations</i>	<i>Return Migration</i>	<i>Contact with PH Friends and/or Family⁷</i>	<i>Self-Identified Homeland Contributions</i>
<i>R1</i>	A	Yes	Yes	No	7/2	Financial, social
<i>R2</i>	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	7/2	Financial
<i>R3</i>	A	No	Yes	No	7/1	Financial
<i>R4</i>	A	No	Yes	Yes	1/3	Cultural, political
<i>R5</i>	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	Social, intellectual
<i>R6</i>	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	7	Financial, social
<i>R7</i>	C	Yes	Yes	No	7/2	Financial, social
<i>R8</i>	C	Yes	No	Yes	7	Financial, social
<i>R9</i>	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	7	Financial, social
<i>R10</i>	C	No	No	Yes	7	Financial, cultural
<i>R11</i>	C	No	No	Yes	7	Financial
<i>R12</i>	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	Financial
<i>R13</i>	D	Yes	Yes	No	7/1	Financial
<i>R14</i>	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	7	Financial
<i>R15</i>	D	Yes	Yes	Maybe	7	Financial, advocacy
<i>R16</i>	D	Yes	Yes	No (Yes retirement)	7	Financial, intellectual
<i>R17</i>	D	Yes	Yes	Maybe	7	Financial, social
<i>R18</i>	D	Yes	Yes	Maybe	6	Financial, political
<i>R19</i>	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	7	Financial, political, advocacy
<i>R20</i>	D	No	No	Yes	3	Financial

⁷ Asked how many times in a week. Where respondents did not differentiate between friends and family, only one number is recorded.

News and Politics: Exposure, Engagement, Understanding, and Perceptions

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Exposure to PH News⁸</i>	<i>Discussion of PH Events with PH Networks</i>	<i>News Sources for PH News (FB = Facebook; YT = Youtube)</i>
R1	A	2	Never	FB Personal Networks, YT Media Outlets
R2	A	6	Rarely	FB Personal Networks
R3	A	3	Rarely	FB Media Outlets, Instagram Personalities
R4	A	7	Sometimes	YT Media Outlets, Personal Networks, News Websites
R5	B	7	Rarely	YT Media Outlets, News Websites, Twitter Media Outlets
R6	B	6	Moderately	FB Media Outlets, FB Personal Networks
R7	C	6	Moderately	FB Media Outlets, FB Personalities, News Websites
R8	C	-	Rarely	FB Personalities
R9	C	2	Rarely	FB Personal Networks
R10	C	1	Often	FB Personal Networks, YT Media Outlets, YT Personalities
R11	C	7	Sometimes	FB Media Outlets
R12	D	7	Often	FB Media Outlets
R13	D	7	Sometimes	FB Media Outlets
R14	D	2	Daily	FB Personal Networks, Tiktok
R15	D	7	Never	FB Personal Networks, YT Media Outlets, Personal Networks
R16	D	4	Moderately	FB Media Outlets, YT Media Outlets
R17	D	7	Often	FB Personal Networks, FB Personalities, YT Media Outlets, YT Personalities, News Websites
R18	D	3	Moderately	YT Media Outlets
R19	D	6	Often	FB Personal Networks, YT Media Outlets
R20	D	3	Never	FB Media Outlets

⁸ Asked how many times in a week

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Discussion of PH Events with TW Networks</i>	<i>Perspective of Social Circles</i>	<i>Exposure to TW News</i>	<i>Self-Evaluation on Understanding of TW Politics⁹</i>	<i>Perception of TW Politics Compared to PH Politics</i>
<i>R1</i>	A	Never	-	Rarely	1	TW peaceful, next term supports programs
<i>R2</i>	A	Never	-	Never	0	No idea
<i>R3</i>	A	Moderately	Same	Rarely	1	TW better, less noise
<i>R4</i>	A	Rarely	Diverse	Rarely	4	TW same democratic values, less drama
<i>R5</i>	B	Rarely	Same	Often	6	TW good politicians
<i>R6</i>	B	Often	Same	Rarely	3	TW bi-party easier to choose
<i>R7</i>	C	Daily	Same	Moderately	4	TW rules and human rights more observed
<i>R8</i>	C	Sometimes	Same	Never	0	TW better, no money-giving
<i>R9</i>	C	Often	Same	Sometimes	-	TW rules, honest, transparent
<i>R10</i>	C	Daily	Same	Rarely	3	TW transparent, investigate complaints, scared of people complains
<i>R11</i>	C	Rarely	Diverse	Never	1	TW more obedient, united, rule-driven
<i>R12</i>	D	Rarely	Same	Moderately	5	TW more disciplined
<i>R13</i>	D	Daily	Same	Sometimes	3	-
<i>R14</i>	D	Daily	Diverse	Rarely	4	PH disorderly
<i>R15</i>	D	Often	Diverse	Daily	-	TW implementation of law, loyalty, honesty, no differentiation rich-poor
<i>R16</i>	D	Rarely	-	Frequently	5	TW also with corruption but more output, more people participation
<i>R17</i>	D	Sometimes	Diverse	Sometimes	3	TW more compliant, disciplined, respectful
<i>R18</i>	D	Always	Diverse	Frequently	3	Ph more political dynasty, connections, personalism
<i>R19</i>	D	Often	Diverse	Moderately	5	TW less corrupt, connections or money less effective
<i>R20</i>	D	Sometimes	Same	Daily	6	TW visibility of monthly meetings

⁹ Asked “out of 10”.

Participation in Elections and Overseas Absentee Voting

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>OAV Awareness</i>	<i>Registered and Voted for OAV</i>	<i>Community's OAV Participation</i>	<i>Participation in Previous Two Elections</i>	<i>Participation Type for Previous Two Elections</i>	<i>Reason for Non-Participation (Previous Elections)</i>
R1	A	Yes	Yes	Half	No	N/A	No interest
R2	A	Yes	No	40%	Yes	PH	N/A
R3	A	Yes	Yes	Most	No & Yes	PH	Did not know about midterm elections
R4	A	Yes	Yes	-	No	N/A	Underaged
R5	B	Yes	Yes	Most	Yes	PH	N/A
R6	B	Yes	Yes	Most	No & Yes	PH	Unsure of location
R7	C	Yes	Yes	Half	No & Yes	PH	-
R8	C	Yes	Yes	Quarter	No	N/A	Late information, busy with work
R9	C	Yes	Yes	Most	No	N/A	No information
R10	C	Yes	No	Half	Yes	TW	N/A
R11	C	Yes	No	-	No	N/A	No information
R12	D	Yes	No	Most	No & Yes	PH	-
R13	D	Yes	No	All	No	N/A	Registered in PH
R14	D	Yes	No	60%	No	N/A	Did not register but was informed
R15	D	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	TW	N/A
R16	D	Yes	Yes	Half	No	N/A	Not interested in midterm elections, did not register
R17	D	Yes	Yes	Most	No & Yes	TW	No information
R18	D	Yes	No	10%	No & Yes	TW	Renounced citizenship
R19	D	Yes	Yes/No	Half	Yes	TW	N/A
R20	D	Yes	No	30%	No	N/A	Renounced citizenship

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Perceived Importance of Migrant Participation in Home-Country Politics</i>	<i>Migrants should have Political Say</i>	<i>Migrants as Drivers of Political Change</i>	<i>Migrants Can Influence Politics through OAV</i>	<i>Recommendations or Further Comments on OAV</i>
R1	A	No	No	No	Yes	Voting depends on voter
R2	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Use list of OWWA to reach out to voters
R3	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
R4	A	No	No	No	Maybe	Internet voting; advertisements for information dissemination
R5	B	Yes	Yes	-	No	-
R6	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
R7	C	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-
R8	C	Yes	-	-	No	-
R9	C	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Improve information dissemination and encourage voting
R10	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Voting depends on voter
R11	C	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Improve information dissemination; mandatory voting; provide longer reg time
R12	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
R13	D	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Improve information dissemination
R14	D	Yes	No	Maybe	Yes	Already enough efforts
R15	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Reach out to dormitories; Taichung office
R16	D	Yes	Yes	No	No	Postal mistrust; Taichung office
R17	D	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Improve information dissemination; reach out to brokers
R18	D	Maybe	Yes	No	Yes	Hold dialogue to encourage voting
R19	D	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Provide voting incentives, put out advertisements, do information drives
R20	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Voting depends on voter