

EDUCATION IN THE ‘NEW SOCIETY’ AND THE PHILIPPINE LABOUR EXPORT POLICY (1972-1986)

Mark Maca^a
Kyushu University

Abstract: *The ‘overseas Filipino workers’ (OFWs) are the largest source of US dollar income in the Philippines. These state-sponsored labour migrations have resulted in an exodus of workers and professionals that now amounts to approximately 10% of the entire country’s population. From a temporary and seasonal employment strategy during the early American colonial period, labour export has become a cornerstone of the country’s development policy. This was institutionalised under the Marcos regime (1965-1986), and especially in the early years of the martial law period (1972-81), and maintained by successive governments thereafter. Within this context, this paper investigates the relationship between Marcos’ ‘New Society’ agenda, the globalization of migrant labour, and state sponsorship of labour exports. In particular, it analyses the significance of attempts made to deploy education policy and educational institutions to facilitate the state’s labour export drive. Evidence analyzed in this paper suggests that sweeping reforms covering curricular policies, education governance and funding were implemented, ostensibly in support of national development. However, these measures ultimately did little to boost domestic economic development. Instead, they set the stage for the education system to continue training and certifying Filipino skilled labour for global export – a pattern that has continued to this day.*

Keywords: *migration, labour export, education reforms, Ferdinand Marcos, New Society*

Introduction

This paper extends a historical analysis begun with an investigation of early Filipino labour migration to the US and its role in addressing widespread poverty and unemployment (Maca, 2017). That paper argued that it was during the colonial era that, for the first time, labour migration was employed as a palliative economic strategy by the state and co-opted local elites. Early colonial education policies and practices were found to have abetted, albeit indirectly, this migration. Half a century later, in an independent Philippines under military rule, labour export was deployed once again, on a far larger scale, as a political and economic strategy, eventually becoming a full-blown state enterprise. This time, education was treated by the state as a critical lever for promoting labour migration.

The analysis proceeds in three stages, examining the interconnection of politics, economics, education and labour export policy under the Marcos administration. The first section investigates the nature of the post-colonial Philippine state (1946-1965), particularly the consolidation and emergence of a ‘national oligarchy’ (Anderson 1988), the implications of the neocolonial relationship it has maintained with the US, and how the expanding post-colonial education system was managed. It traces the country’s developmental strategy through the early decades of independence to the 1974 Marcos edict on labour export. The second section focuses specifically on Marcos and his ‘New Society’ experiment (1972-1986). It discusses the origins of the associated proposals to radically transform Philippine society and the performance of the Marcos regime in pursuing these.

The third section looks into the educational reforms designed to align schooling to the economic development agenda. Extant literature on this topic focuses principally on major reforms to higher

^a Correspondence can be directed to: markmaca@gmail.com

education – i.e. post-secondary streaming, expansion of public higher education – and has mostly been conducted from a narrowly functionalist human capital perspective (cf. Alba, 1979; Dubsky, 1993; Gonzalez, 1989,1992). I argue here, however, that under the New Society scheme, the whole education system was subjected to sweeping reforms that need to be understood in the context both of the regime’s attempt to maintain political control, and of its relationships with foreign agencies and creditors. These reforms extended to curricular policies (civics and history education, technical-vocational education expansion, bilingual education), governance in higher education (*laissez faire* and decentralised) and funding (foreign loan-funded).

The Post-Colonial Philippines (1946-1965)

The US-Philippines Neo-Colonial Relationship

The post-American colonial Philippines has retained the structural features of the pre-war Philippines: a landed elite class, a semi-feudal land tenure system, and a heavy reliance on agricultural production for export (de Dios and Hutchcroft, 2003; Litonjua, 1994). Post-independence governments before Marcos also pursued development strategies dictated by the neocolonial relationship with the US, inaugurated with the ratification of two major treaties in 1946 – the Military Bases Agreement and Philippine Trade Act– as preconditions for the release of 260 million US dollars (USD) in rehabilitation funds (Abinales and Amoroso, 2005; Constantino and Constantino, 1978). The trade act established a lopsided ‘tariff-free’ trading arrangement that privileged American exports as well as some agricultural imports from the former colony. The most controversial provision involved the granting of “parity” to Americans and Filipinos in rights to property in land, natural resource exploitation, and other commercial ventures. Whilst hosting the US bases provided additional state revenue, technology transfer and other benefits for the Philippine military, this policy attracted domestic criticism for entangling the country in Cold War geopolitics.

Post-War Economy and Development Strategy

Aside from ensuring the economic and military dependence of their former colony (Litonjua, 1994), the Americans had also effectively rehabilitated most pre-war power brokers by suppressing the issue of wartime collaboration (Constantino, 1975). But Anderson (1988) has suggested that family business interests in the Philippines were related to MacArthur’s reluctance to break up the feudal system of land tenureship there, in contrast to the reforms introduced at American instigation in post-war Korea, Taiwan and Japan itself (where MacArthur headed the occupation authorities). This coincided with the consolidation of a ‘national oligarchy’ (ibid), as provincial elites congregating in newly developed gated villages in Metro Manila, some taking their places as elected officials following the reestablishment of the Philippine Congress. Anderson dubbed the post-independence, decades prior to the Marcos era as the heyday of ‘cacique democracy’,¹ when ruling dynasties manipulated state institutions to expand and or create new monopolies as they diversified from agriculture into urban real estate, hotels, utilities, insurance, the mass media, and so forth (Anderson, 1988 p.16)

Nevertheless, the Philippines became Asia’s second biggest economy next to Japan from the late 1940s until the 1960s, partly because of favorable trade relations with the US and aid inflows linked to the Military bases Agreement of 1946 (Constantino, 1975). But with landholdings largely retained by oligarchical families, and a post-war economic strategy focused on exporting plantation crops tying the economy to the US, the country’s commercial position remained fragile. The 1949 crisis triggered by the increasingly negative balance of trade with the US resulted to import and foreign exchange controls that lasted until the early 1960s (Dolan, 1993). This turn in policy helped to jumpstart manufacturing industry, which grew from 10.7 percent of GDP in 1948 to 17.9% in 1960 (de Dios and Hutchcroft, 2003), making it the flagship sector of the Philippine economy until the 1970s. But only a favoured segment of the cacique class who diversified into manufacturing from cash-crop production benefited from this short-lived increase in economic productivity.

Educational Development

A continuing dependency on the US and oligarchical control of the economy resulted in conflicting development strategies by a succession of pre-Marcos governments. The impact of this on the expansion of education, as elucidated below, was further compounded by chronic budget deficits associated with the growing public school sector. This hobbled the education system, making it difficult for the state to address increasing demand beyond elementary schooling. The task then fell to the private sector dominated by Catholic schools (now ultimately accountable to American rather than Spanish chapters), joined by newly arrived Protestant missionaries and a few enterprising returned pensionados from oligarchic families. The general absence of a centralized, state-directed educational expansion, along with a generally laissez-faire attitude towards the education sector, meant that the law of supply and demand prevailed as Gonzalez (1989) further noted. However, supply was actually controlled by the profit-seeking private institutions, which created programs designed to yield high return on minimal investment. The unhampered proliferation of programs in the liberal arts, education, and business courses evoked another wave of 'mass education' reminiscent of the early decades of American colonization, but this time in higher education.

In an earlier study, I discuss how the Philippine state, unlike those of the East Asian tigers, did not adopt a sequential approach to developing the system during the post-war period; in other words, tertiary education was rapidly expanded before elementary and secondary education had been universalized and subjected to rigorous standardisation (Maca and Morris, 2012). Carnoy (1974) viewed this pattern as problematic for a largely agriculture-based developing country like the Philippines, which had yet to achieve industrialization – generally seen as a prerequisite for the competitiveness of an emerging economy in the global capitalist system. With college education deemed as critical social capital by majority of Filipino families, the heightened demand reinforced the monopolistic behavior of the private education sector. The absence of government regulation and a conscious strategy to match manpower needs of new economic programs resulted to disastrous result of, paradoxically, overeducation in non-technical fields on one hand and continued lack of skilled technicians and engineers for the manufacturing industries.

This education-industry mismatch further deteriorated with the import substitution industry stagnating by the early 1960s. With the domestic labour market unable to absorb the products of an expanded higher education system, the 'graduate unemployment' phenomenon first noticed in India began to cause alarm (Gonzalez, 1989). The rapid growth of the private market for tertiary education was being blamed for the failure of the government to 'regulate' the sector. Table 1 below shows the rapid progress of privatization in the Philippine higher education system, making it one of the most highly privatized in the world (Gulosino, 2003). Marcos made a few attempts to reign over this sector as discussed below.

Table 1. Tertiary School Enrollment by Public Versus Private Institutions, 1946-1985

Year	Institutions			Enrollments *			
	Public	Private	Total	% Private	Public	Private	Total
1946	5	498	503	99	1	45	46
1955	26	351	377	93	7	177	184
1965	26	440	466	94	59	468	527
1975	126	628	754	83	106	660	766
1985	319	838	1,157	72	230	1,274	1504

Source: Data from Philippine Statistical Yearbooks and Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission adapted from Ruiz (2014) p. 101

*Data for 1946 in 10,000 and from 1955-85 in 100,000

Marcos Government (1965-1986), 'New Society' Experiment (1972-1981)

Ferdinand Marcos was the sixth post-independence president of the Philippines and the longest-serving: from 1965 to 1986. First elected in 1965 and re-elected in 1969 amidst allegations of election irregularities (Wurfel, 1988), he declared martial law in 1972, a year before he was due to step down under the provisions of the 1935 Constitution, which banned presidents from standing for a third term. Marcos justified this move with reference to the 'communist threat', at a time when the movement's influence was spreading both in the countryside and in urban areas. Successive US governments accommodated his regime as a bulwark against the further spread of communism in Southeast Asia following the 'loss' of Vietnam and Cambodia. Having issued Proclamation 1081 on September 21, 1972, Marcos assumed dictatorial powers under a system of government he called "constitutional authoritarianism" (civilian government was notionally restored on January 17, 1981). Furthermore, throughout his 21 years in power, the Philippines was in practice ruled as a 'conjugal dictatorship' (Mijares, 1975/2017) due to the enormous influence of Marcos' wife Imelda over affairs of state – as elucidated below.

The 'New Society' Programme

Under his 'New Society' experiment, Marcos sought to implement a coherent economic development strategy without the complexities of democratic institutions of the old political structure. He overhauled the bureaucracy, introduced tax and budget reforms (including foreign borrowing) and institutionalized long-term economic planning which resulted in the crafting of the 1972 -82 Philippine National Development Plan. A national survey of education by the Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education (PCSPE) was also conducted in 1970 resulting to the formulation of the first 10-year Education Development Plan in 1972, highlighting human capital formation and manpower development as key objectives.

Most Filipinos welcomed the early years of the New Society and Marcos' military rule due to subsequent improvements in peace and order, cleanliness and the generally more disciplined behavior of the people (Bello, 2009). Massive beautification and greening projects undertaken by Imelda Marcos in her role as Governor of Manila also contributed to an initial optimism regarding the promised changes under the New Society program. However, unlike its Asian counterparts (particularly South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and even Indonesia), the Philippines' pivot towards authoritarianism was not associated with the creation of a strong foundation for sustained economic growth but rather degenerated into blatant kleptocracy by the ruling family and their associates. In the end, Marcos and his technocratic advisors did not really consider as models the 'developmentalist' forms of authoritarianism practiced in neighboring countries (Katayama, et al 2010), but perpetuated instead the patrimonial exercise of political power which has typified Filipino leaders since the American colonial era (Hutchcroft, 1991).

Perhaps one redeeming feature of the New Society era was the so-called 'golden age' of Filipino technocracy, which saw Marcos recruit into his government an array of talented individuals from academia, industry and the military (c.f. Tadem, 2012, 2014, 2015). As technocrats, they were regarded as professionals and experts in their fields, and more importantly, "apolitical" (Katayama et al 2010). Their main concern was to make sure that economic policies and development strategies they formulated were implemented, which during Marcos' rule involved battles on many fronts. During the martial law period, they were looked upon, particularly by the Philippine business community as well as by the country's major lending institutions – i.e. the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (IMF/World Bank) – as a bulwark against corruption, crony capitalism and patronage politics (Tadem, 2015). These technocrats were the post-independence or modern incarnations of the US *pensionados*. Like their colonial-era counterparts, most were also scions of the oligarchy, who had received education and training from US Ivy League universities through American scholarships.

Labour Export as an 'Emergency' Development Strategy

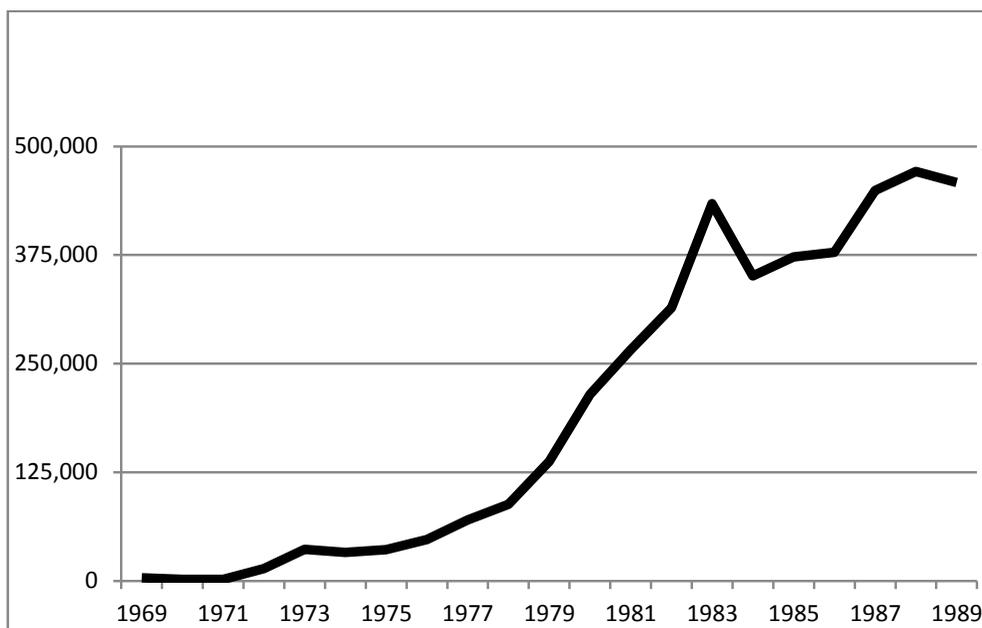
Officially, the labour export program was launched as a stop-gap measure to deal with domestic unemployment due to the inability of the local economy to provide for the 700,000 or so new entrants into the labour force every year. But privately, for Marcos and his technocrats, the program from the outset had an important political dimension. According to senior technocrat and former Prime Minister Cesar Virata, the voice of the educated, young, urban and unemployed population became a major problem for President Marcos (Sicat, 2014). This suggests that concerns to maintain political control and limit dissent informed the adoption of labour export as an economic strategy. As I have argued elsewhere, this can be seen as a revival and expansion of a strategy first employed by the American colonial state as a temporary remedy for political and socio-economic maladies during the early 20th century (Maca, 2017). In 1972, two years before the labour export policy was implemented, unemployment was highest among urban youth (50% of the unemployed were 20-24 years old and 30% 25-44 years old). The first stirrings of protest amongst these unemployed youth precipitated the so-called First Quarter Storm from January to March 1970, led by leftist groups and activists (Doronila, 1992). Labour export was thus in part a tactic calculated to stem or divert growing dissent by finding work for under-occupied urban youngsters.

The labour export pivot also benefited from favorable US immigration policies reminiscent of the early decades of American colonization. Almost a decade before the New Society initiative was launched, the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act was passed in 1965 abolishing restrictions on particular nationalities (including Filipinos) and replaced it with a preference-based immigration policy focused on immigrants' skills and family ties with current U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Between 1965 and 1966 there was a near-doubling of annual Filipino immigration into the U.S. (from 3,130 to 6,093); by 1977, this number had climbed to more than 40,000.

The new Labour Code of the Philippines was officially signed into law on May 1, 1974. This sought both to reform labour policies to mitigate the worsening unemployment situation and to systematize the program for overseas employment of Filipino workers. It led to the creation of new state agencies to manage the labour export business, including the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB) and the National Seamen Board (NSB), later (1982) consolidated as the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA). POEA initially had the task of promoting, monitoring, and regulating overseas employment. In 1987, the organization's regulatory functions were expanded to include the licensing and monitoring of private recruitment agencies, market development, skills enhancement and testing, and accreditation of foreign employers (Asis, 1992). In the same year, the Welfare Fund for Overseas Workers was renamed the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA). This administrative body was in charge of welfare issues facing workers and of providing support to their families and dependents. A variety of incentives were also simultaneously implemented to lower the cost of emigrating: tax was reduced, one-stop shops for processing travel papers were created, and customs duties were lifted. Finally, labour attaches (under the Foreign Affairs Ministry) and labour welfare officers (under the Labour and Employment Ministry) were deployed in Philippine embassies overseas.

The labour export program expanded exponentially. Within its first four years, the Overseas Employment Development Board had job orders from over 1,500 employers in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. Figure 1 show how the number of OFWs increased from 3,694 in 1969 to 47,754 by 1976.

It also shows that even before the labour export policy formally began in 1974, a rapid rise of labour migration – managed by the private sector – was already well underway. By harnessing and institutionalizing this growing trend, the Marcos regime sought both to extract a surplus and gain relief from the social and political pressures caused by rising domestic unemployment. The government takeover and eventual monopoly of the sector meant additional fee revenues from prospective migrant workers – from documentation fees (i.e. birth certificates, police clearance, etc) to insurance and placement fees (some partly paid by foreign employers). The government further decreed that overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) could only remit their dollar earnings to families back home through government banks.

Figure 1. Annual Deployment of Filipino Overseas Workers (1969-1989)

Source: for 1969-1976 data, Ministry of Labor as cited in Abella (1979, p.8); for 1977 to 1989 data, POEA in Asis (2008, p. 80)

Whilst the bureaucracy was reorganized and new agencies were created to support labour export, educational support to the new state enterprise was indirect and nonspecific (based on the detailed reading of policies formulated on the same period).² To avoid unwarranted scrutiny on the new labour export policy, the Marcos regime avoided explicitly linking education to Filipino overseas work. Policy statements and political rhetoric seldom strayed far away from prevailing conservative orthodoxies on the role of education in Filipino society. Nevertheless, political solutions to lingering issues like language of instruction, regulation of private education, and expansion of technical-vocational education, among others were carried out. These became critical levers in the deployment of education in support of the labour export strategy as elucidated in the following sections.

Education Under the New Society

One of the ostensible aims of Marcos' grand vision for the New Society was the pursuit of a more egalitarian social order of a kind that previous regimes, from the American colonial period onwards, had failed to establish. He criticized the prevailing orthodoxy that state provision of education to all citizens would, of itself, bring about benign social change – equalising opportunity and accelerating social mobility:

Almost a century ago, it was said in the Western world that there would be no need for a scheme of economic redistribution as long as an egalitarian educational system assures to rich and poor alike a competence in those things which are the riches of a human being - his learning, his skills, his opportunities in life! . . . But history unfolds itself in ways that defy the most confident of our assertions. Rather than as an equalizer in society the transmission of learning has often reinforced the inequalities of society. The pursuit of education can lead along paths that prove inimical to the realization of national government (Marcos 1974 in Manalang, 1977 p. 66).

This heralded a serious (and partly successful) attempt to align education and the political agenda under the auspices of the New Society experiment. Although there has been little recognition of Marcos as the only post-war Philippine leader strongly linking education to the country's development strategies (Maca and Morris, 2012), extant literature from education scholars (c.f. Manalang, 1977; Doronila, 1996 and Gonzalez, 1989) and recent publications about Marcos technocrats (e.g. Landingin, 2017; Sicat, 2014) highlight efforts by the regime to synchronize education reform with economic strategy. Three years before declaring martial law, Marcos created the PCSPE (as discussed in the preceding section) with the mandate to analyze the performance of the educational system and its relevance to development goals (PCSPSE, 1970). Marcos' efforts to overhaul the country's education system were the first substantial program of this kind since the establishment of the public school system by the Americans in 1899. According to one contemporary observer, he was guided by the "belief that the economic and social survival of development of the nation was dependent on education" (Clarke 1977, p.61).

The resulting PCSPE recommendations were immediately translated into programs and projects, with seed funding from multilateral agencies like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Under martial law, the state had the opportunity to redirect, adjust, and experiment with education and manpower development policies (Ruiz, 2014). In 1972, directly under the Office of the President, Marcos created the Education Development Projects Implementation Task Force (EDPITAF) through Presidential Decree 6-A. This special office was mandated to coordinate and manage most of these foreign-funded education development projects as shown in the table below. The extent of the direct 'inputs' these lending institutions were given into the formulation of Marcos-era education programs and policies remains unclear.³ However, recent studies of the elite group of US-educated Marcos technocrats argue that their reputations as foreign-trained 'experts' lent legitimacy to the Marcos regime while channeling ideas dominant within the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Katayama 2010; Tadem 2012, 2014, 2015).

Table 2. Loan-Funded Education Development Projects (1973-1989)

World Bank	Years of implementation
1. Second Education Project	1973-1978
2. Textbook Project	1976-1982
3. Agricultural Education Project	1976-1982
3. Communication Technology on Education Pilot Project	1978-1981
4. Fishery Training Project	1980-1987
5. Sector Program for Elementary Education Project	1982-1988
Asian Development Bank	
1. Engineering Education Project	1981-1989
2. Technical Vocational Education Project – (TVEP)	1981-1989

Source: Nationalist Resource Center (1982) and EDPITAF (2016)

How the results of the 1970 study of the PCSPE and the blueprint of the 1972 National Education Development Plan were translated into education policies and structural reforms in support of the labour export program is elaborated below. Three reform areas emerge as critical – governance and funding of education, revival and expansion of technical and vocational education and a political solution to the language of education policy.

Curriculum Reforms

History and Civics Education

Under Marcos, the 'national curriculum' underwent two cycles of 'redevelopment' – first in 1972 at the onset of the New Society experiment, and again in 1982 under the re-branded 'New Republic,' although this second attempt remained uncompleted at the point of Marcos' overthrow in 1986. Major elements of New Society thinking found their way into the area of social studies – particular history and civics education (see Maca and Morris, 2015). Key concepts and messages about the New Society were also tied to government-wide initiatives in moral education, food production and the promotion of the 'Green Revolution', a 'Buy Filipino' campaign and education on the dangers of illegal drug use (Manalang 1977, p.64). Additionally, Marcos had his speeches and writings compiled, published and distributed nationwide, although no study has been conducted to date regarding the extent to which they were used as teaching materials in schools.

Education under the New Society also engendered a hybrid conceptualization of Filipino citizenship. It signaled the construction of Filipino labour migrants as an archetype of the model citizen – a trend which eventually culminated in their celebration as 'modern-day' heroes by officialdom in the 1990s. Lesson themes on 'working abroad' began to feature in textbooks such as the widely used Grade 6 text *Araling Panlipunan – Pambansang Kaunlaran* (Social Studies-National Development) (MEC, 1980a). A utopian vision for *Bagong Lipunan* (the New Society) is discussed therein, highlighting how the state is actively addressing employment issues facing ordinary labourers, through measures that include scouting overseas work opportunities:

Many of our workers are getting employment inside and outside the country. Various agencies under the Ministry of Labour actively seek placements for our workers. The Public Employment Office manages local placements. The Overseas Employment Development Board facilitates the securing of work opportunities abroad. From the previous lesson, give examples of countries where our workers are deployed (MEC 1980a, pp. 194-195).

Unemployment in our country went down due to work opportunities abroad. Remittances by our overseas workers provide additional revenue for the government. At least 30% of their income is required to be sent through government-accredited banks. Aside from these benefits, what do you think is the impact of overseas employment on the social condition of our workers? (MEC 1980a, p. 195)

The Marcos regime put a high premium on the production and distribution of textbooks as these were seen as playing a critical role in communicating the vision and achievements of the New Society.⁴ Each book bore an introductory message under the signature of the President. Practically all subject areas (except for Mathematics and Science) featured themes explicitly related to nation building, civics, citizenship and the New Society. Education – and hence school textbooks – also became a vehicle for the personality cult of the Marcoses. A 1980 Grade 4 Communication Arts (Filipino) textbook for example, featured Imelda Marcos as *huwarang Filipino* (model Filipino) and portrayed her as *Ina ng Bayan* (Mother of the Nation), also mandating the study of a poem (*tula*) where she is further compared to the mythical Queen Esther of Persia (MEC 1980b, p. 112). During this period, schooling was the most potent platform for political socialization of most Filipinos. With resources available in schools severely limited, the textbook often formed the principal (or only) source of lesson content for both teachers and students (Hornedo, et. al. 2000; see Doronila, 1989; Segovia 1997; Constantino, 1982 for more detailed content analysis of Marcos/martial law era textbooks). Although New Society messages also permeated the modern mass media (radio, television and cinema), most rural inhabitants lacked electricity. Textbooks were rivaled in terms of reach and coverage only by comics, which the regime also harnessed and utilized extensively for propaganda purposes (San Juan, 1978).

Language in Education/ Bilingual Medium of Instruction Policy

Aside from the pre-war leader Manuel Quezon (1935-1942), who initiated an articulation of Filipino national identity through a policy of using Tagalog-based Pilipino as the national language, and promulgated code of ethics for Filipino citizenship, Marcos was arguably the only twentieth-century leader with a clear vision for nationhood and citizenship formation (Maca and Morris, 2015; David, 2002). As part of his efforts to promote a cohesive sense of national identity, he sought a political solution to the lingering issue of medium of instruction in basic education. This resulted in the controversial bilingual education policy (Tagalog-based Pilipino and English) promulgated in 1974. However, eminent linguist and former Education Secretary Andrew Gonzalez (2000) has criticized the bilingual policy as just another exercise in transactional politics. Gonzalez portrayed the policy as an 'attempt at compromise between the development of the national language and its use as a medium of instruction to facilitate learning, and the continuing use of English' (p38). Since the 1960s, the private schools attended by the country's elite have resisted abandoning the use of English as medium of instruction as 'they base much of their reputation on their supposedly superior ability to teach English' (Hunt and McHale 1965, p.69). Nevertheless, Marcos, by inserting the bilingual policy in the 1973 Constitution (Article 15 Section 3.3), sought to resolve decades of inertia regarding the legislated 'national language' among academics, politicians and regional leaders.

Gonzalez (1980), in his seminal study linking nationalism and language in the Philippines, identified two major factors behind the failure to instate Tagalog (called Pilipino after 1959 and finally Filipino in the 1987 Constitution) as a functional national language: continued refusal by non-Tagalog speakers to accept Pilipino, and the government's lukewarm propagation of the language. Perhaps Gonzalez himself, a US-educated linguist and former President of the private Catholic De La Salle education system, where English was (and still is) the medium of instruction from the early years to tertiary level, was himself unconvinced of the pressing need for an 'official' national language or languages'. Not discounting class interests in the maintenance of English, he was nevertheless cognizant of its benefits, highlighting how 'Philippine socio-economic development thus far has been achieved using a borrowed common language (Gonzalez 1980, p. 154).'

The use of English as medium of instruction (MOI) in higher education and largely- private secondary schools was reaffirmed by the 1972 constitutional provision on the two 'national languages'. This legislative fiat further increased academic programs delivered in English as a demand for overseas work expanded rapidly. Evidence further suggests a concerted effort by the Marcos government to promote the policy, with the issue dominating the 1976 Educators Congress. Even the Minister of Economic Planning, the last person expected to comment on the issue, was at pains to defend the bilingual policy (Sicat, 1976). This was bolstered by rhetoric in academia about English language competency, portraying this as a distinct advantage for Filipinos vis-à-vis their largely monolingual Asian neighbors (Gonzalez,1998).

In the same session of the 1976 Educators Congress, buoyed by the initial gains of New Society's education reforms in basic education, Marcos proudly declared how the Philippines ranked second to the US in college or university enrolment and how 'educated manpower constitutes one of our exports to other countries' (Marcos 1976, p. 31). This public declaration of pride in the ability of the state to train and supply Filipino labour internationally was an affirmation of English-based instruction, a practice long-established since the US colonial period. By engineering a political solution (1973 Constitution; PD 6-A series of 1972; Department of Education and Culture Order 25 series of 1974) to this issue, the state effectively (if indirectly) appropriated an integral component of the labour export machinery: continuous English-based training by Filipinos.

Expansion of Technical-Vocational Education

Marcos made the case for the revival of technical-vocational education by highlighting the mismatch between the output of the education system and the manpower needs of the economy. He also

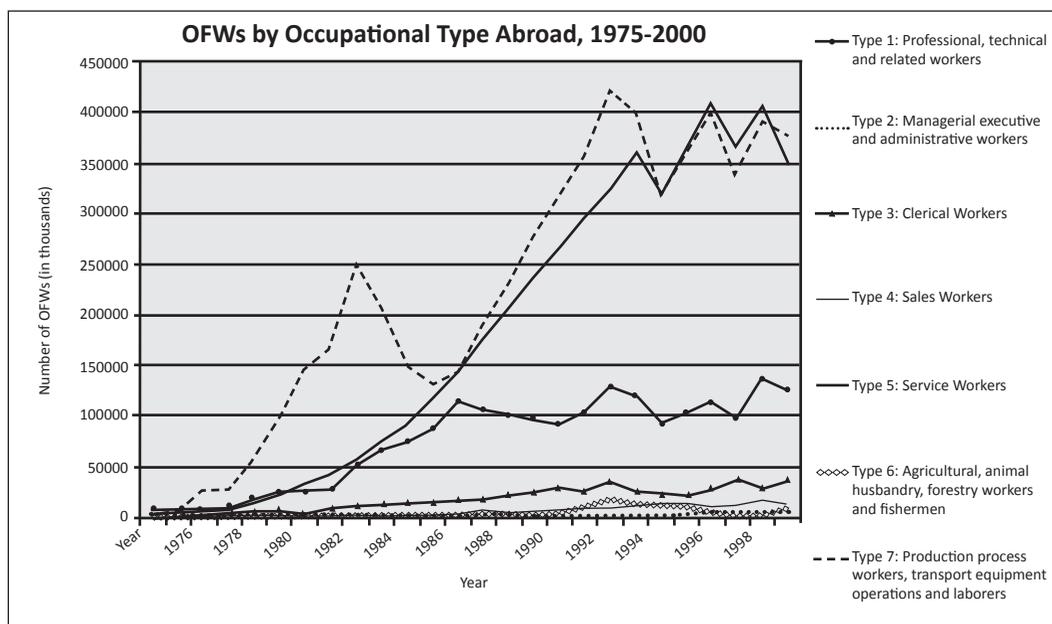
highlighted the fact that economic development was lagging behind educational development, which was inimical to a developing country like the Philippines,

The introduction of education in the Third World, which in the colonial era initially began with a conception of education as something that confers ease, proved disastrous to the very effort of the society to advance. It bred as in our case a large group of graduates trained for white collar jobs. But the level of economic development was not such as to absorb this group in the modern sector of society. Here we have the supreme irony of education proceeding much faster than economic development, and creating difficult burdens for the country in terms of an educated unemployed (Marcos 1976, p. 29).

The reorganization of the educational system by virtue of Presidential Decree 6 in 1972 resulted in the creation of the 13 administrative regions and the expansion of the National Manpower Youth Council (NMYC) to address the need for middle-level skills development or labour institutions, four science educational centers, and the upgrading of 11 agricultural schools to improve farming programs (Marcos, 1976).

This policy reform accomplished two things; it democratized access to post-secondary education by offering a more affordable route towards obtaining certifiable skills; and it ensured a steady supply of new technical skills needed for the export industrial zones in various parts of the country and supply the overseas demand for technical labour. Figure 2 below reflects the increasing trend in OFW deployment from 1975 onwards but the occupational classification system (types 1 to 7) designed by Philippine authorities blurs the demarcation lines on the supposedly hierarchical nature of educational qualification and training obtained by a departing overseas worker. Nonetheless, the case for the expansion of technical-vocational education was partly enacted due to the difficulties encountered by the Marcos government in regulating the private sector which has grown unhampered since after WWII. Dumping the labour market with manpower incompatible to the economic requirements of the country, the Marcos government sought to re-organize and redirect post-secondary schooling in the country as elucidated below.

Figure 2. Overseas Filipino Workers Occupational Types



Source: Survey on Overseas Filipinos, 1993-2001 and Philippine Statistical Yearbooks, various years (in Ruiz, 2014 p.147)

Governance and Financing of Education

Aside from the aforementioned curricular reforms, re-engineering the Philippine education system became the test case or model for further bureaucratic changes under the New Society (through Presidential Decree No. 1 Series of 1972). Marcos and his technocrats introduced reforms to overhaul the planning (and targeting), financing and regulating functions of the education bureaucracy. By integrating education in the centralized planning grid of the National Economic and Development Authority, human capital forecasting and allocation to key economic sectors were, in theory, rendered more efficient (Alba, 1979). The industry players, mediated by different associations of private schools, were also closely involved in education forecasting (and planning).⁵ Planning services were installed at different levels of education governance, simultaneous with the creation of Ministry of Education satellite offices in the newly created 13 administrative regions. All these were ostensibly part of the efforts to align manpower needs of the economy and educational outputs as reinforced by other policies discussed below.

The Marcos government's attempts to redirect the education system culminated with the streaming of secondary education graduates as they moved to higher education. In 1972, the National College Entrance Examination, a national school leaving examination, was introduced. This was aimed primarily at addressing the rising problem of a surplus of college and university graduates and the imbalance between labour market needs and the training of graduates (Cardozier, 1984). But early critics (mostly nationalists and anti-capitalist scholars and activists) of this means of 'control' feared that the government could steer the nation's manpower where it wished (Clarke 1977, p.60), which was partly confirmed when Marcos decreed the labour export policy in 1974 (Tupas, 2011). But a few evidence also suggest that this measure was imposed on the Marcos government, that the NCEE implementation was a response to a World Bank mission finding which 'was convinced that the Philippine education system was not focused on the needs of a rapidly growing economy. Education is regarded more as a constitutional right than an instrument of economic progress' (Clarke, 1977:61).

Even with the NCEE in place, there was no slowing of the expansion of private higher education (see Table 1). The Marcos regime did not effectively rein in the private education sector. Instead, the *laissez faire* attitude of Marcos' predecessors, whom he had blamed for the 'overdevelopment' of higher education in particular (Ruiz 2014), was effectively maintained. The highly privatized and deregulated institutions operated by church-based organizations and influential family corporations were allowed 'self-regulation through voluntary accreditation by private groups. As Ruiz (2014, pp. 126-127) argues,

the tension between state and elite interests continued to thrive when the state was heavily involved in transforming the postsecondary educational system. Instead of closing down schools and removing tax incentives for opening private tertiary schools, the state adopted indirect regulations for quality control by pushing the use of private accreditation associations

In other words, the Marcos regime accommodated the business interests of the elite in the education sector and made no attempt to close private schools that were oversupplying degrees and fueling graduate unemployment. Instead, the Marcos government developed the Professional Regulation Commission in 1973 to institute Board Exams and licensing of professions, rather than 'dictating the number of degrees private schools could grant per school year,' what a migration scholar recently posited as the most radical action Marcos could have taken to rein over this sector (Ruiz, 2014 p. 126).

Further, the promise of a decentralized and region-specific development failed to materialize when reforms essential to modernizing the agricultural sector (e.g. land distribution, farming and fishing subsidies) were effectively abandoned when Marcos cronies were awarded monopolies from sugar to coconut and even banana and pineapple production (traditionally controlled by the Americans). Education support for agricultural modernization came largely through multi-million dollar loan packages from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, which included

training facilities and programs for the workforce that would be needed if and when the regional industrialization strategies bore fruit.

The failure of strategies for domestic industrialization meant that these new training institutions ended up as de facto training centers for prospective migrant labourers. Eventually, skilled technicians and craftsmen joined the ranks of the educated unemployed with college diplomas discussed earlier. Whilst archival materials (especially the FAPE Review series for the 1970-75 period) and recent studies appraising economic policy-making in the Marcos years suggest that well-crafted plans and strategies were being spawned within the governing bureaucracy, these were strangled at birth by entrenched vested interests.

Conclusion

More than fifty years after his ascent to power, narratives on Ferdinand Marcos and his New Society experiment highlight achievements in the areas of national security, civic consciousness, cultural renaissance (e.g. Lico, 2003; Baluyut, 2012) and a few bright spots in the economy (e.g. Paterno, 2014). Marcos succeeded in recruiting bright, US-educated technocrats from academia and industry, which lent some degree of legitimacy to his authoritarian rule, especially in the eyes of the international community. The New Society also ushered the 'golden age' of Filipino technocracy, which laid the foundations for a more modern and professional bureaucracy. Economic and education planning was systematized, government codes were formulated across all sectors (i.e. tax code, insurance code, labour code) and management of international financing for development programs instituted in national agencies (i.e. EDPITAF in the Department of Education). As part of this administrative overhaul, Marcos and his technocrats in the labour department also formalized the labour export strategy, creating new agencies and codifying protocols for this state enterprise. Today, the Philippines is hailed as a model in 'managing' labour migration by the global community (Asis, 2017).

The Marcos-era oral history project (Katayama, et al 2010) and recent biographical accounts (e.g. Sicat, 2014) have supplied critical historical evidence partly confirming labour export strategy as political solution to the growing discontent of the young, educated working (and middle) class towards the abuses and excesses of the Marcos regime. But Anderson (1988) had recognized earlier that labour export promotion was a masterstroke by Marcos (whom he branded the 'Supreme Cacique'), suggesting that the state had effectively facilitated the exodus of many of those who constituted the most significant potential threat to the Marcos regime: educated and politically conscious Filipinos. Had they not permanently emigrated (almost a million by 1980, especially to the US), they might have played a major role in Philippine politics as Anderson (1988) further underscored. The historical analysis generated in this essay validates this early (yet speculative) assertion.

This essay has exposed what was then the tension between the 'New Society' vision of broad-based domestic prosperity and national renewal, and the reality of domestic economic failure leading to labour export. The divergence between rhetoric and reality can be traced to the political and institutional order that Marcos inherited (and eventually reinvented) for his own ends. Meanwhile, the kleptocratic tendencies of the Filipino oligarchy reared its ugly head on the way the education sector behaved all this time, ensuring in particular the unregulated expansion of cheap college courses and raking profits from it. It can be argued that this singular education policy alone had directly contributed to the growth of labour for export.

In ascertaining the role (and influence) of external actors for the direction that Filipino policy in labour export has taken, the prevailing 'neo-colonial' relationship with the US at that time becomes suspect. The whole PCSPE survey alone which supplied the basis for the educational reforms implemented and identified in this essay as critical levers (whether intentional or otherwise) in the success of the ensuing labour export policy was premised on the whole idea 'to interest the World Bank in Philippine educational improvement' (PSCPE, 1970). However this warrants a separate investigation altogether especially with emerging new materials (i.e. biographies, interview transcripts, diaries among others) from Marcos' inner circle.

Whilst some sectors in Philippine society blame Marcos and his technocrats for initiating (and exploiting) export of Filipino labour, it can be argued that they only systematized this exodus, which started in the colonial period. This relates to the socializing role of education in the Philippine context (Maca and Morris 2012, 2015), which involved schooling and other institutions (especially the church) emphasizing the essentially private or familial nature of morality, and downplaying or ignoring the civic or public dimension. In other words, education in the Philippines has overwhelmingly been seen as involving the acquisition of skills, which one then deploys for individual benefit or for the sake of one's family. Its role in fostering or promoting engaged, participatory notions of citizenship that might lead to searching social or political critique has tended to be downplayed or ignored. Instead, education under Marcos (and since) has sought to minimize any popular expectations of the state (e.g. in the realm of welfare provision or domestic job creation) - even while ostensibly trying to foster patriotism.

Notes

¹ In the Philippine context, a *cacique* is the local political boss, and oftentimes also the local landlord. Before its incarnation in Spanish Philippines, *cacique* was originally the traditional clan or tribe leader in the Spanish colonies in Mexico and the West Indies.

² Archival research covered a review of: a) the 12-volume PCSPE report, b) presidential decrees and executive acts penned by Marcos 1972-86 and c) Department/ Ministry of Education and Culture issuances (1972-86).

³ I would argue that aid agencies inputs into the framing of this document were more indirect; Marcos technocrats with experience of the international financial institutions 'milieu' did the drafting (Tadem, 2014; Katayama, et al, 2010). However nationalist scholars like Doronila (1989, 1992) and Constantino (1982) have argued otherwise which is partly validated by Jones (2007) historical study on World Bank's foray into education – including a criticism on the WB's interventionist stance towards pioneer borrower-states like the Philippines.

⁴ For this essay, a total of 37 Marcos-era textbooks (elementary and secondary levels) produced by the Department/ Ministry of Education and readily available in the libraries of the Department of Education- Central Office and the University of the Philippines-College of Education were reviewed. The absence of proper and comprehensive archiving of textbooks and other curriculum materials produced by the education system is a severe limitation to educational studies similar to this undertaking.

⁵ Archival review of publications of Fund Assistance to Private Education (FAPE) between 1970 to 1980 reveal a healthy dialogue between education stakeholders- government, industry and private education sectors. FAPE Review (one of FAPE's official publication), for example have a published special editions which unbundled the findings, issues and recommendations of the massive 1969 education survey conducted by the PCSPE.

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