

COMPLETION REPORT

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Research Activities

I was able to visit research institutions and Japanese universities, discuss policy changes with government officials, and interview labor brokers. Furthermore, I was also able to share my findings in various conferences and engage with scholars from Japan, Indonesia and Vietnam. I have prepared research manuscripts, which I am submitting to academic and policy-orientated journals.

Research Results

Japan began to receive foreign careworkers through its economic partnership agreements (EPA). While much has been written on the EPA, a new policy has emerged to meet the labor demands of Japanese healthcare. The Technical Internship Training Program (TITP) aims to bring various workers from Asia to train as technical interns, and then take the skills they learned to bring development to their countries. While it seems promising, it has been criticized as exploiting cheap migrant labor. To address these criticisms, Japan introduced policy amendments that provide for stronger supervision and labor protection. Due to the apparent success of the revised trainee program, the TITP has expanded its scope into construction and healthcare jobs.

Meanwhile, studies have also noted the dominance of migration management as a policy framework. Using this perspective, state policies are focused on maximizing the benefits of out-migration by directing movements through official channels, thus, allowing for greater transparency in labor transfers, employment conditions, earnings and remittances. Using the case study of healthcare migration, this study shows how states continually revise its migration policies and apply migration management models to its migrant healthcare workers.

This study asks: What is the role of the migration industry in migration management? How does the migration industry understand and promote discourses of migration management? Does the migration industry view healthcare migration under the EPA and TITP as policy successes?

With the inclusion of foreign careworkers in the TITP, this paper shows that the migration industry view these policies as moving in the right direction to manage Philippine-Japan migration. It is through policy frameworks of properly “managing” the migration corridor that leads Philippine institutions to present a veneer of protection by managing the flow of workers through humane laws that combat trafficking, even as it aggressively recruits workers. On the other hand, the Japanese migration institutions present a positive image of protection through the 2009 and 2016 amendment of the Immigration Act. It is through highlighting the importance of technology transfer under the TITP that Japan’s migration institutions present an image of a properly managed migration policy that maintains the policy idea that Japan still does not accept foreign unskilled workers.

Further Studies

Previous studies have focused either on government agencies or the conditions of migrants, while studies focusing on the role of the migration industry have been scant. This study was able to show how migration industry, entrepreneurs that facilitate human mobility across borders, plays a larger role in the promotion and revising of labor migration policies. This research recommends that studies focusing on the migration industry would be an excellent research direction for the next wave of migration policy scholarship. (499 words)

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

May 10-13, 2018. Benjamin A. San Jose. “A Win for Whom? The Saliency of Migration Management and Human Security among Healthcare workers along the Philippine-Japan Migration Corridor”. International Conference on Multicultural Democracy. Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan

February 15, 2018. Benjamin A. San Jose. “Conceptualizing Care as a Policy Success: Sending Care Workers through the Technical Internship Training Program (TITP)”. Moving Care Between Japan And The Philippines: Policy, Theory And Experience. Forum & Roundtable. Asian Center, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Philippines.

October 5, 2017. Benjamin A. San Jose. “Rethinking the Southeast Asia - Japan Migration Corridor: Analyzing the role of the Migration Industry in the EPA and TITP”. Asosiasi Studi Jepang di Indonesia (ASJI) INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 2017. Universitas Andalas Padang, Indonesia.

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

December 2018. Benjamin A. San Jose. “Conceptualizing Care as a Policy Success: Sending Care Workers through the Technical Internship Training Program (TITP)” – Forthcoming - in consideration for an international peer reviewed academic journal

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

Not Applicable