The Fall of Filipina Labor Migrants in Italy: A New Progressive Chapter?

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Abstract

Filipina migrant laborers play a significant role in Italy's labor economy. These foreign workers fill labor shortages across numerous divisions, specifically in areas where the availability of local labor is inadequate to meet the limited demand. As well, the influx of migrant labor alleviates the problems emerging from the highly segmented nature of Italy's labor environment. Yet, in the past decade, there has been a significant observable drop in the Filipina [female] labor migrant inflow into the country. This decline poses a worrying scenario since Filipinas fulfill a significant employment demand in the care economy. Focusing on the inflow of Filipina labor migrants, the paper utilized 2007 to 2017 subnational economic indicators from the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica [Italian National Institute of Statistics] (ISTAT) on the twenty regions of Italy at the NUTS2 administrative level. Regardless of the substantial regional differences, one variable remains to be the primary determinant of labor migration inflow: the Filipino migrant stock.

Keywords

Economic migration; Filipina; labor migration; regional differences

Introduction

There are over 86 million labor migrants worldwide due to inconsistencies in national development, segregated labor markets, aging population, and response to the global job crisis. Additionally, due to the variances in salaries and standard of living in different parts of the world (Massey et al., 1993), individuals can substantially increase their income by moving to and working in a more developed nation (Yang, 2008). Accordingly, due to a decline in birth rate and significant out-migration resulting in labor shortages in some valuable industries, Italy has become a primary destination for Filipina [female] labor migrants. Not only does the migration flows of foreign workers help stabilize such declining populations, but between 8–10% of Italy's population are foreign-born immigrants. Filipina labor migrants have become indispensable in Italy's care economy. They are hired to do jobs such as supervising the daily welfare of children and the aging Italian population. However, in recent years the inflow of Filipina labor migrants has dropped in numbers, despite having significant Filipino [male and female] migrant communities across Italy.

Between 2007 to 2017, there was a considerable drop (nearly 97%) in the inflow of Filipino labor migrants arriving in Italy (Magante, 2020). This striking drop in Filipina migrant laborers is interesting since these migrants are significant contributors to the care economy of the country. Seeing as there is a lack of empirical evidence on the diverse reasons contributing to the inelastic migration in Europe (Eichengreen, 1993), this phenomenon makes the Philippines the perfect country to examine the responsiveness of migration to various distortions. Many debates cited different variables that explain the phenomenon, such as regional wages and variances in unemployment (Obstfeld & Peri, 1999), lack of labor mobility and restrictive wages (Bertola, 2000), and labor market adjustments considering migrant destination (Niebuhr, 2003).

McKenzie et al. (2014), in their research of the immigration of Filipino migrant workers and wages to different work destinations worldwide, showed that a one percent change in GDP has almost a one-to-one effect on Filipino labor migrant inflow. This study uses subnational data from the 20 regions of Italy that focus only on the labor migration of Filipinas from the Philippines. Hence, by attaching a spatial dimension to labor market conditions, this study offers insight into the analyses of the regional conditions that potential labor migrants deliberate on before migrating. Moreover, this research does not include the wage variable, as there is no official minimum wage in Italy, and these minimum wages are primarily based on labor union agreements.

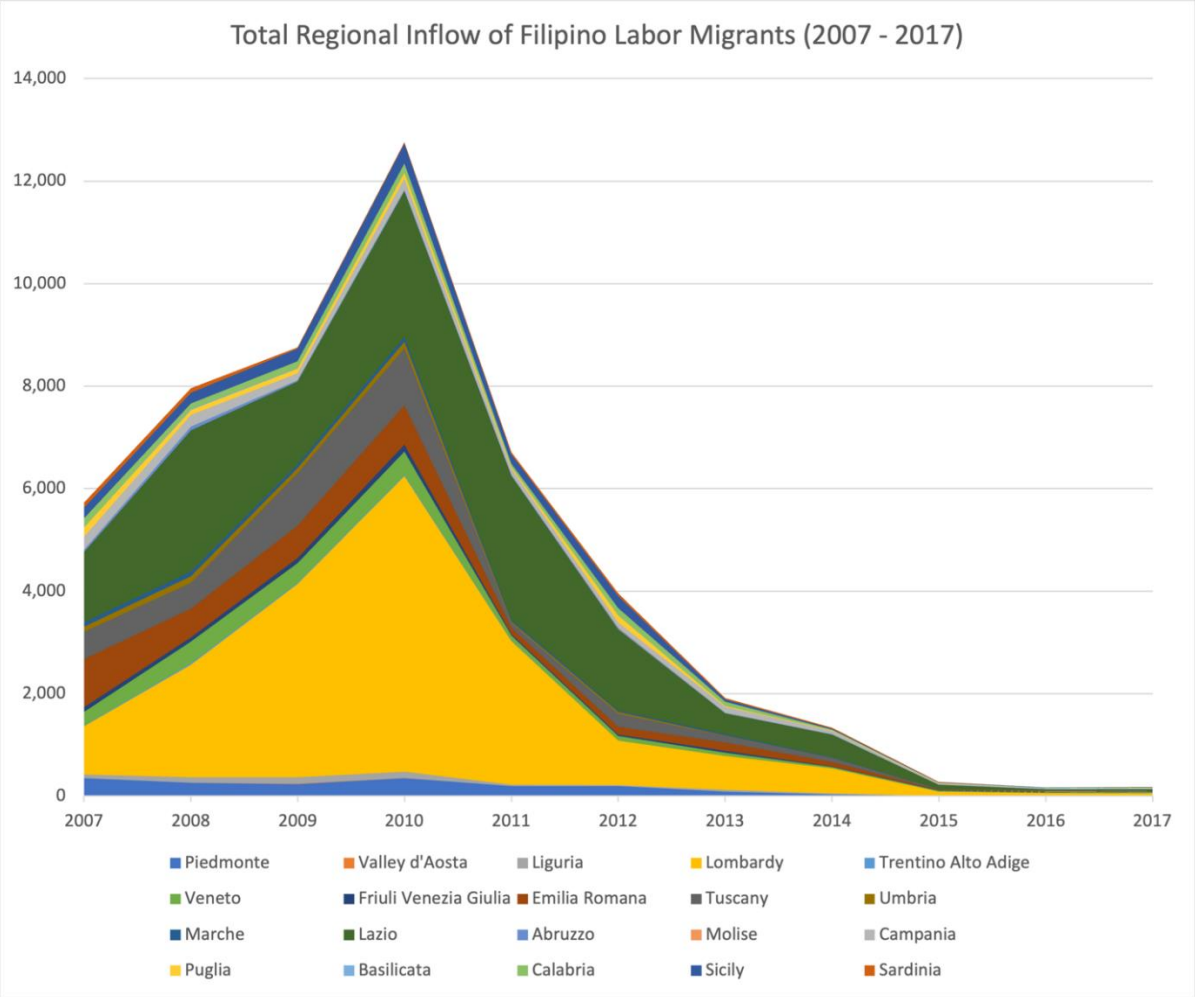
Review of literature

Trends in Italian regional migration

As presented in Figure 1, the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica [Italian National Institute of Statistics] (ISTAT, n.d.) shows a continuously decreasing trend from 2007 to 2017 in the influx of total Filipino labor migrants from the Philippines to the twenty regions of Italy: Abruzzo, Valley d'Aosta, Puglia, Basilicata, Campania, Calabria, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Emilia Romana, Lombardy, Lazio, Liguria, Molise, Marche, Piedmonte, Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino Alto Adige, Tuscany, Umbria, and Veneto. The decline in numbers was reasonably consistent, except for

2007 to 2010, which saw a surge in labor migration flows. The increasing total Filipino labor migrant figures from 2007 to 2010 could be attributed to the approved labor migration visas and signed contracts given to Filipino laborers before the onset of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis.

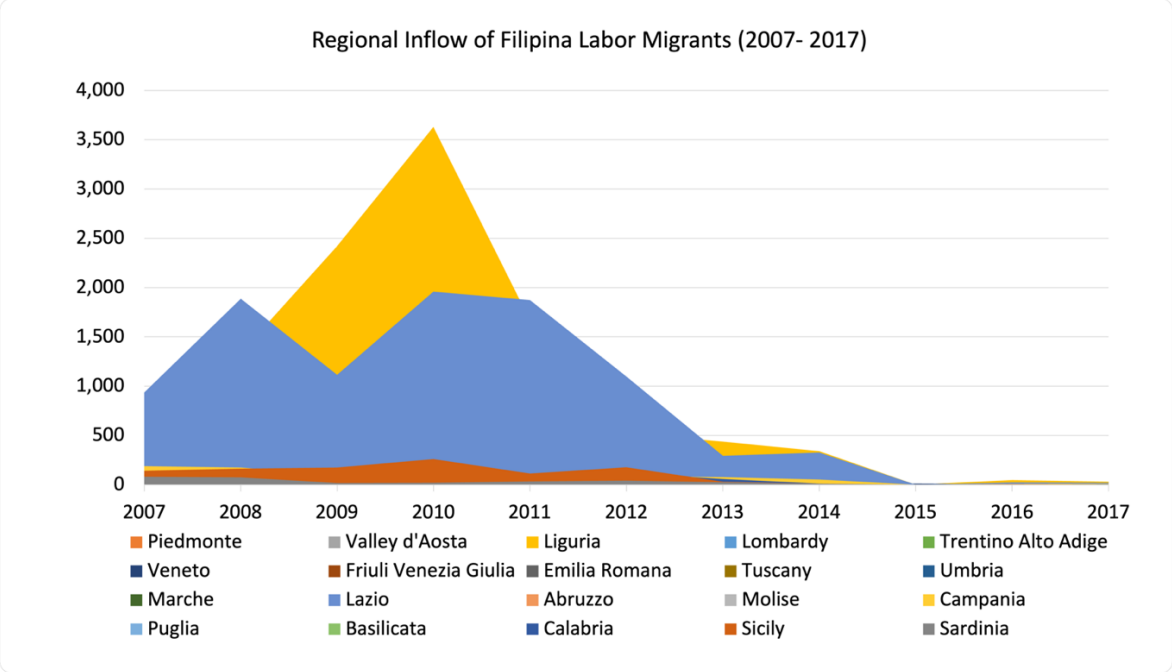
Figure 1: Total Regional Inflow of Filipino Labor Migrants (2007–2017)



Note: Data from ISTAT (n.d.), based on the author's computations

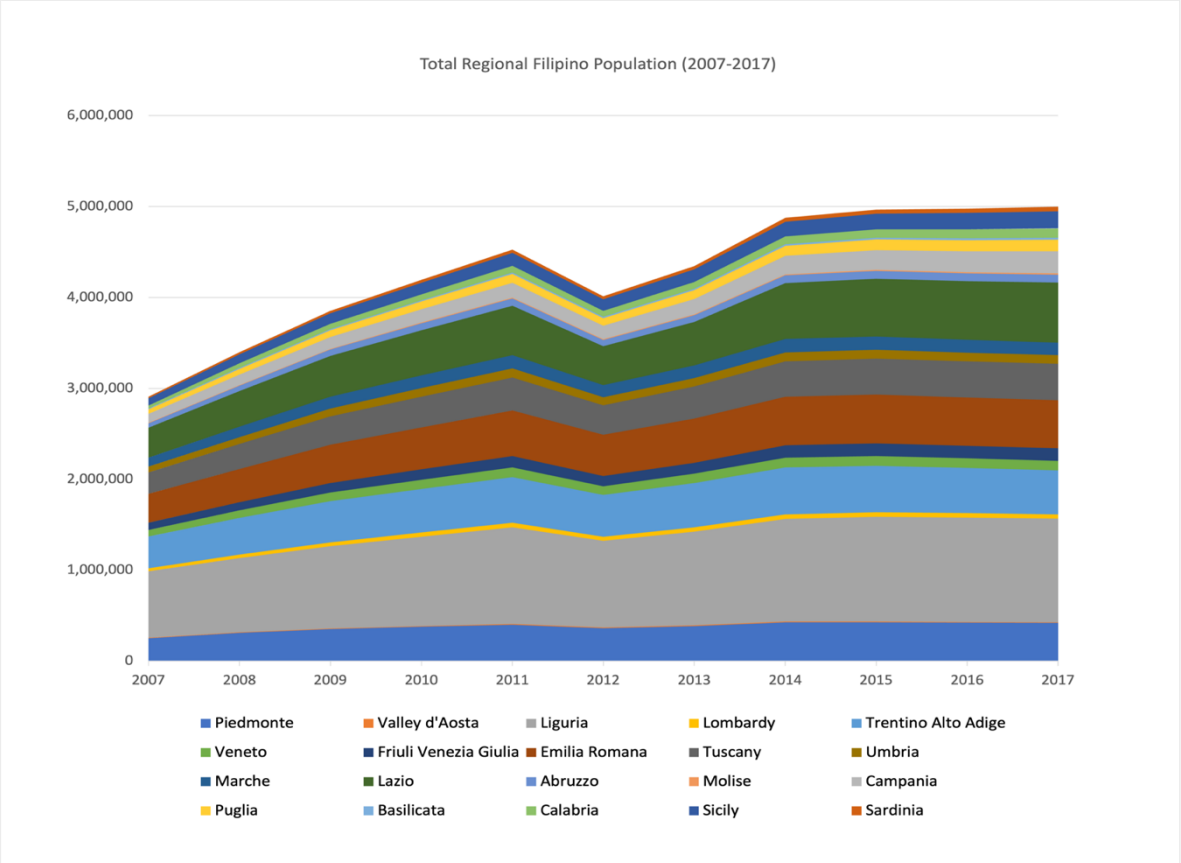
Figure 2 shows the yearly inflow of Filipina migrants from the Philippines to Italy for employment purposes, reflected by the number of work visas registered in ISTAT. The figure explicitly indicates the inflow of only Filipina labor migrants to the twenty regions of Italy from 2007 to 2017. Compared to the inflow of total Filipino labor migrants in Italy, which only fell from 2010 onwards, the regional inflow of Filipina labor migrants already saw a decrease in numbers during the 2008 Global Financial crisis, specifically in the region of Lazio. The opposite is seen in the region of Lombardy, where there was a spike in the Filipina labor migrant inflow until 2010. Although there was a significant drop in inflow between 2008 and 2009 in the Lazio region, contrary findings could be claimed for the region of Lombardy. There was a continued rise in the influx of Filipina labor migrants in that region despite the Global Financial Crisis. The steep drop in inflow for all Filipino labor migrants was seen in 2010.

Figure 2: Regional Inflow of Filipina Labor Migrants (2007–2017)



Note: Data from ISTAT (n.d.), based on the author's computations

Figure 3: Total Regional Filipino Population (2007–2017)



Note: Data from ISTAT (n.d.), based on the author's computations

As seen in Figure 3, despite the dip in figures in 2011 and the substantial decrease in the inflow of Filipina and Filipino labor migrants for all twenty regions, Italy experienced a steady increase in the total Filipino [male and female] migrant population in all the regions of Italy. Contrary to the figures of labor migrants (both Filipino [male] and Filipina [female]), there has been no decrease in the migrant population following the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. The movement of the Filipino migrant population continued to increase, opposite to Filipino labor migrants. As such, using various economic and geo-demographic variables, this research aims to establish the factors that affect regional Filipina labor migration.

Economic geography of Italy

It is necessary to understand the background of the differences in the twenty regions of Italy to comprehend the Filipina migrant labor figures, particularly concerning their economies. A North-South economic divide with intense regional disparities characterizes Italian regions. The strength of Northern areas of modern history is mainly due to their earlier industrial development. Northern Italy is the industrial seat of the country responsible for much of the nation's GDP. Industrialization localized in the Northern regions slowly spread to the rest of the country, albeit unequally.

The current disparities between the regions of Italy are traced to the pace and prevalence of industrialization. The significant variance of regional economies is seen through the distribution of various economic activities. Below is the distribution of employment in different regional sectors for 2007–2017.

Table 1: Average Employment Labor Sectors per Region 2007–2017 (In Thousands)

Province	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Services
Piedmont	42.25	362.30	128.52	1,285.85
Valle d'Aosta	2.21	5.22	6.44	46.53
Liguria	11.64	70.06	48.45	531.84
Lombardy	57.03	987.71	311.14	3,259.62
Trentino Alto Adige	26.35	67.04	41.03	382.64
Veneto	57.79	551.57	155.58	1,411.44
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	13.84	115.75	32.42	377.34
Emilia Romagna	57.15	463.19	144.80	1,401.00
Tuscany	49.93	314.46	114.30	1,159.05
Umbria	14.85	66.17	28.39	257.15
Marche	20.07	178.23	44.87	412.98
Lazio	52.30	180.01	163.87	2,173.52
Abruzzo	24.24	98.30	45.88	351.26
Molise	9.41	15.52	10.26	75.32
Campania	82.79	222.22	140.89	1,409.51
Puglia	124.41	169.32	105.61	941.15
Basilicata	21.63	29.06	17.16	128.34
Calabria	96.25	38.81	52.78	452.85
Sicily	121.92	116.14	115.65	1,192.64
Sardegna	43.55	47.15	49.15	454.60

Note: Data from ISTAT (n.d.), based on the author's computations

In Table 1, the sector that employs most of the labor force in each region is the Service sector, predominantly in Lombardy. Manufacturing and construction sectors follow. The least number of the labor force employed is in the agriculture sector.

Spatial interaction and regional unemployment

In addition to Italy already suffering from high levels of unemployment in various regions, several factors have led to detrimental effects on its labor market. As postulated by Faggian and McCann (2009), migration is the reaction toward spatial variances in economic elements. Literature has shown that the distance between the sending and destination country (Helliwell, 1998; Tassinopoulos & Werner, 1999) and the potential for employment in the destination region (Harris & Todaro, 1970) is contrariwise to the probability of migration. Status quo, such as the country's economic environment and the Philippines' aggressive employment policies, could also exacerbate the situation. Burridge and Gordon (1981) studied the dynamics of unemployment and migration in some British metropolitan areas. They showed that migration provides equilibrating results to regional unemployment and that this status was mainly attributed to the migration brought about by regional variances.

Sert (2018), in their research on East-to-West migrations, concluded that 1) migrants resort to self-employment to bypass the strict rules and structure created by various European destination countries; 2) the increasing number of international students migration as a reasonable means of obtaining citizenship; and 3) changing demographics—more women migrating compared to the early waves of migration, where the men were the dominant migrants. In the end, the combination of institutional policies, historical practices, and individual choices alters the existing migrant corridors, making geographical proximity less essential in determining migration pathways.

Determinants of employment: The role of gender and ethnicity

There is still the persistence in some industries for women to hold different jobs than men, despite the moderate decrease in some gender-based professions (Hanson & Pratt, 1995). The division of labor between genders is seen among American-born ethnic parties outside the black-white dichotomy, regardless of other factors such as human capital. For women, several factors beyond human capital have great significance in determining the jobs they hold than those jobs where men are employed (Lieberson & Waters, 1988). First, gender is still the top justification for categorizing labor into various types of employment (Cassirer & Reskin, 1996). Second, gender now plays a principal role, rather than ethnicity, in dictating employment (Albelda, 1986). Finally, a migrant's nativity matters in imposing the occupation, but gender is more important (Wright & Ellis, 2000). Ultimately, these perceptions are detrimental to determining the divisions of labor in Italy (Jackson & Palmer-Jones, 1999).

In Italy, Filipinos are among the most notable migrants in the Italian labor market. Due to their inconspicuous behavior in society and their truancy in public places, workers from the Philippines are often seen as compliant and passive. Historically, the first batches of Filipinas who began migrating to various Italy regions were involved mainly in domestic services (Tacoli, 1999). Therefore, this perception of compliance and passivity continues to be perpetuated as most of these labor migrants are still employed as domestic workers with live-in arrangements with their employers (Lainati, 2000). In the migrant labor market of Italy, social reproduction labor or domestic jobs are still described as a woman's work; therefore, employers mainly hire female migrant workers for domestic jobs that involve children or elderly care (Lindio-McGovern, 2003). Often only migrant women are eager to do care jobs, live in the employer's house, and be in service anytime.

From the standpoint of Italian society, Filipina migration poses a minor issue for two reasons. One, they are not in competition with the locals for higher-status jobs. Second, they fulfill the labor demand that would otherwise be left unfilled (Barsotti & Lecchini, 1995). Even young Italian women are unwilling to accept such jobs due to the long and hard-working hours, which render them social outcasts (Reyneri, 1998).

While Filipinas are more favored as house helpers in Italy, Filipinos are also employed in the domestic care industry. The well-known reputation of Filipinas as good workers in the domestic sector led to an increase in the hiring of Filipinos in the same industry. Compared to other male migrants in the domestic sector, more Filipinos are employed with the help of personal acquaintances and word-of-mouth marketing. Most Filipinos are employed through the support of their spouses or mothers who also work as house helpers (Gallo, 2006). In some instances, Filipino house helpers in Italy are employed under the same patron (Chell-Robinson, 2000).

Theories of labor migration

Migration scholars have long been interested in understanding the push and pull factors that drive migration behavior. Scholars focus on different aspects of practice and explanatory factors, including differences in wages (Harris & Todaro, 1970), the current migrant population and probable compensation (Bauer et al., 2005), economic conditions (Jennissen, 2004), employment prospects (Massey et al., 1993; Reich et al., 1973), housing cost and geographical location (Andersen et al., 2013; Andersson and Nilsson, 2009; Potepan, 1994). Scholars have created models to conceptualize the migration decision to simplify the complexity inherent in modeling the phenomenon with many variables in sending and receiving contexts.

Network Externalities Model

While the direction of the positive or negative effect is debated, the Network Externalities model attempts to explain migrant settlement in relation to the relevance of factors such as potential wage and existing migrant stock on clustering behavior. Migrants are known to agglomerate into immigrant groups, particularly if the migrants share the same ethnicity or background. The presence of enclaves and social networks have several effects, both positive and negative, and have been researched in various literature, such as Bauer et al. (2005), Chiswick and Miller (2005), Nee and Sanders (1987), and Sanders and Nee (1987). Ethnic enclaves and location clustering significantly affect (though debated) migrant adaptation, and their existence tends to impact the settlement preference of migrants (Bauer et al., 2005). New migrants move into enclaves to enjoy the externalities during the initial adaptation phase. However, the location of co-ethnic peers has long been acknowledged to be a determinant of migrant settlement locations.

Buffer Theory

Buffer Theory was postulated in the 1950s when there was a surge in migrant laborers across many European nations. The theory posits that migrants are projected to enter and reside in more developed host nations as a response to the growth of job opportunities (Beets & Willekens, 2009). Since the economic situations dictate the movement of these migrant laborers, they are likely to return to their home countries when the situation gets more stable.

Their return signals the freeing up of employment positions for the locals (Dobson et al., 2009). In summary, economic expansion invites an influx of migrants for labor, while economic contraction discourages migrants (Jennissen, 2004).

Neo-Classical Theory

The Neo-Classical Theory, in a nutshell, posits that differences in salaries and the possibility of employment are the two critical predictors of migration, particularly for laborers (Harris & Todaro, 1970). Under this theory, the possibility of landing a job attracts the influx of migrant laborers. When both the possibility of landing a job and earning more is higher in a different country, it is also highly likely that these migrants will move for labor. In summary, this theory states that the possibility of employment moves parallel with the inflow of labor.

Dual Labor Market Theory

The Dual Labor Market theory also uses employment as a significant determinant in attracting possible employment, even migrant employment. Under this theory, primary and secondary markets comprise the entire labor market. Primary markets are areas where job compensation is high, and skills can be learned throughout working. It is also where job ascendancy or promotions are possible. Short-term, irregular employment and low-skilled jobs are often the characteristics of secondary labor markets. Hence, jobs in these sectors are often low paying. Typically, these jobs offer few avenues for upward mobility. Jobs within the secondary labor market are filled extensively but not exclusively by migrants (Reich et al., 1973). The continuous call for unskilled labor in this sector drives migration to industrialized nations (Jennissen, 2004; Massey et al., 1993).

Several scholars in the migration field cited different elements that affect the migration inflow, particularly interregional movements in Italy. Salvatore (1977) cited unemployment rates and wage variances between Northern and Southern regions as primary influencers of interregional migration between the 1950s and 1960s. Furceri (2006) noted that regional income variances determined net migration from 1985 to 2001. Furceri also concluded that the variances in unemployment rates had no significant impact on migration for the study duration. Scholars like Cannari et al. (2000) also found that variances in the costs of shelters prevented internal migration between regions in Italy.

Etzo (2007) cited many determinants for interregional migrations in the case of Italy. They found that migration was influenced by the 'social networks' in the regions, where previous migrants are a pull factor for potential migrants to move. Another pull factor, per capita GDP, is a significant economic determinant of migration flows. The housing cost for immigrants also serves as a determinant for migration. The cost, which is not limited to the monetary cost of housing (actual monthly rent of housing, transaction costs, and taxes), also covers the non-monetary cost. The same study also cited several push factors from the country of origin. Conclusively, variables that push migration include unemployment rate and per capita GDP variances (Etzo, 2007), and exchange rate (Yang, 2008), among many others.

Based on the work of scholars in the field, this research uses regional GDP (real), regional housing cost, female employment (total), and Filipino migrant stock (total) to determine the changes in the influx of Filipina labor migrants per region from years 2007 to 2017. This research will test the following hypothesis:

H1: Higher regional real GDP brings on higher Filipina labor migrant inflow
H2: Higher regional female employment brings on higher Filipina labor migrant inflow
H3: Higher regional housing costs bring on lower Filipina labor migrant inflow
H4: Higher regional total Filipino population brings on a higher Filipino labor migrant inflow

Data and methodology

Data

This research utilizes data compiled from 2007 to 2017 by the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica [Italian National Institute of Statistics] (ISTAT, n.d.) referencing the twenty regions of Italy at the NUTS2 (Nomenclature des Unités territoriales statistiques) level. Table 2 presents the list of the variables used.

The independent variables were chosen grounded on a broad literature review, focusing mainly on the relevant theories that discuss labor migration in light of the Philippine migration diaspora of female workers. The independent variables tested in this research were divided into two measures: economic and geo-demographics. The economic variables were chosen to represent the macroeconomic performance of each region. Including the regional Gross Domestic Product and regional Female Employment would roughly state the economic vitality of each region. The geo-demographic variables reflect the livability of the region based on the regional population and the availability of decent housing. Geo-demographic variables are also included to capture the non-economic determinants of Filipina labor migration and highlight the differences between regions.

Table 2: Data Explanation

Data	Explanation	Source
RIFLM	Regional Inflow of Filipina Labor Migrant	ISTAT: Permits of stay to foreigners
RGDP	Regional Gross Domestic Product at constant prices	ISTAT: National Accounts
RE	Regional female employment	ISTAT: Labor Force
RHC	Regional housing cost (the average monthly expenditure in euros)	ISTAT: Housing Costs
RFMS	Regional Filipino migrant stock	ISTAT: Number of Resident Non-Locals on the 1st of January - Citizenship

Dependent variable

Regional Inflow of Filipina Labor Migrants measures total Filipina migrants from the Philippines to Italy under a working visa, as stated by ISTAT databank. The figures are the total number of Filipina migrant labor workers reported per region and year.

Independent Variables

Regional Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) measures Gross Domestic Product (GDP in constant prices of 2010) in millions of Euros. The RGDP includes the inflation-modified market value of merchandise and services in each region for each year.

Regional Female Employment (RE) measures the number of female-employed persons (all citizens from 15 years old and above) per region and year.

Regional Housing Cost (RHC) measures recorded mean monthly rent expenses on shelters as reported in Euros per region and year.

Regional Filipino Migrant Stock (RFMS) measures the total Filipinos (female and male) currently residing in each of the regions in Italy.

Methodology and estimation strategy

To capture the changes in Filipina migrant inflow and produce robust results, this paper uses static panel analysis covering 11 years (2007 to 2017) of data across the 20 regions of Italy, totaling 220 migrants for the entire sample size. Control variables are the Philippine GDP growth rate, Philippine GDP per capita growth rate, and unemployment rate. This first set of controls represents the economic conditions of the country of origin. This paper used the exchange rate, birth rate, and the total foreign population per region for the controls representing various economic conditions in the destination country.

The econometric model that this paper follows is presented in its general form:

$$\ln Y_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \ln X_i + u_i$$

where ln Yi is the natural log of the variable Yi and ln Xi is the natural log of the variable Xi.

Applying this general model to this research, the equation takes the form:

$$\log(RIFLM_t) = \beta 0 + \beta 1 \log(RGDP_t) + \beta 2 \log(RE_t) + \beta 3 \log(RHC_t) + \beta 4 \log(RFMS_t) + \varepsilon t$$

wherein the dependent variable is the $RIFLM_t$ which reflects the annual regional inflow of Filipina labor migrants in a year, t. The predictor variables are regional GDP ($RGDP_t$), regional employment for females (RE_t), regional housing costs (RHC_t), and regional Filipino migrant stock ($RFMS_t$) in year t, and εt is the error term in year t. Note that the first two independent variables are the economic variables, while the last two are the geo-demographic variables in the study.

This research uses double-log regression to determine the responsiveness of the independent variable (Regional Inflow of Filipina Labor migrants) vis-a-vis the paper's dependent variables.

The coefficients of the independent variables resulting from the regression measure the estimated correlation impact on our independent variable, elasticities. These show the partial elasticity of the dependent variable with regard to each of the predictor variables. Assuming

that all variables are constant, the coefficients reflect the percentage increase in the dependent variable from a 1% increase in the independent variable. The magnitude and direction of the effect of these dependent variables on our independent variable are computed and represented by the coefficients.

Presentation and discussion of results

Presentation of results

The first set of regression results, as seen in Table 3, shows the base model without any controls. Using the data from the 20 regions of Italy, Column 1 shows the coefficients for each predictor variable regressed against the dependent variable in the study—the regional inflow of Filipina labor migrants. In this model, only the Filipino Migrant Stock variable is significant at a .01 level of confidence.

Table 3: Regression Results for the Base Model (no controls)

Variables	(1)
GDP (ln)	-0.043 (2.956)
Female Employment (ln)	-2.352 (4.333)
Housing Cost (ln)	3.556 (2.896)
Filipino Migrant Stock (ln)	-4.189*** (0.917)
Constant	44.915–52.714
Observations	184
R-squared	0.498
Number of regions	20

*Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .10*

Table 4 below presents the base model with the gradual inclusion of controls obtained on the Philippines side. These controls are the country's GDP growth rate, GDP per capita growth rate, and unemployment rate. Columns 1 to 3 present the result of regression analyses with the Philippines GDP growth rate, unemployment rate, and GDP per capita growth rate, respectively, included in the base model. Columns 4 to 6 present the various combination of the base model with two additional controls included (i.e., the Philippines GDP growth rate, the unemployment rate in Column 4, the Philippines GDP growth rate, and the GDP per capita growth rate in Column 5 and GDP per capita growth rate and unemployment rate on Column 6). Column 7 presents the base model with all Philippine controls in place.

The third set of regression results shows the various permutations of control groups using Italian data. Table 5 below presents the regression model with a gradual increase of various controls. Italian controls are the total foreign population in Italy (without Filipino population), the exchange rate (euro to pesos), and the birth rate of Italy per region. Columns 1 to 3 present the result of regression analyses with the total foreign population, exchange rate, and birth rate included in the base model. Columns 4 to 6 present the various combination of the base model with two additional controls included (i.e., exchange and birth rates in Column 4, exchange rate and total foreign population in Column 5, and birth rate and total foreign population in Column 6). Column 7 presents the base model with all Italy controls in place.

Table 4: Regression Results With the Inclusion of Philippine Control Variables

Variables	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**	**(7)**
GDP (ln)	0.111 (2.966)	4.905 (3.609)	0.100 (2.963)	5.115 (3.561)	0.178 (3.019)	5.149 (3.560)	5.496 (3.660)
Female Employment (ln)	-2.589 (4.272)	-0.124 (3.131)	-2.550 (4.268)	0.657 (3.101)	-3.011 (4.510)	0.632 (3.091)	-0.374 (3.414)
Housing Cost (ln)	3.168 (2.949)	-1.964 (1.451)	3.187 (2.949)	-1.711 (1.368)	3.119 (2.993)	-1.719 (1.365)	-2.039 (1.379)
Filipino Migrant Stock (ln)	-4.069*** (0.919)	-2.121** (0.827)	-4.056*** (0.918)	-2.160** (0.821)	-4.319*** (0.815)	-2.200** (0.824)	-2.772*** (0.739)
Philippines GDP Growth Rate	-0.046* (0.022)			0.102*** (0.023)	-0.671 (0.608)		-1.612*** (0.501)
Philippines Unemployment Rate		1.948*** (0.177)		2.166*** (0.187)		2.182*** (0.188)	2.252*** (0.190)
Philippines GDP Per Capita Growth Rate			-0.045* (0.022)		0.644 (0.618)	0.111*** (0.022)	1.771*** (0.504)
Constant	47.818 (51.364)	-28.009 (33.967)	47.153 (51.408)	-42.673 (33.556)	55.631 (52.654)	-42.293 (33.726)	-24.761 (33.415)
Observations	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
R-squared	0.502	0.726	0.501	0.742	0.504	0.744	0.758
Number of regions	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

*Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .10*

Table 5: Regression Results With the Inclusion of Italy Controls Variables

Variables	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**	**(7)**
GDP (ln)	-0.667 (3.603)	-1.619 (2.946)	-4.067 (3.031)	-3.807 (2.984)	-2.460 (3.843)	-4.570 (3.968)	-4.303 (3.958)
Female Employment (ln)	-2.173 (4.467)	-1.305 (4.341)	3.392(3.015)	3.280 (3.013)	-1.045 (4.495)	3.532 (3.145)	3.422 (3.166)
Housing Cost (ln)	3.723 (2.727)	2.503 (2.806)	-2.590 (1.793)	-2.484 (1.790)	2.682 (2.654)	-2.447(1.697)	-2.362(1.700)
Filipino Migrant Stock (ln)	-3.720*** (0.934)	-3.654*** (0.882)	-0.826 (0.847)	-0.875 (0.853)	-3.041*** (0.812)	-0.447 (0.537)	-0.516 (0.547)
Total Foreign Population (ln)	-0.597 (1.137)				-0.759 (1.111)	-0.487 (1.020)	-0.454 (1.026)
Exchange Rate		0.000*** (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)
Birth Rate			1.658*** (0.223)	1.691***(0.225)		1.656*** (0.224)	1.686*** (0.227)
Constant	51.933 (52.467)	47.181 (51.245)	11.305 (36.451)	10.151 (36.670)	56.168 (51.948)	17.061 (40.096)	15.642 (40.217)
Observations	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
R-squared	0.500	0.516	0.735	0.735	0.519	0.736	0.736
Number of regions	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

*Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .10*

Interpretation of results

This research expected to see the inflow of Filipina labor migrants responding positively to the regional GDP of the host country. The regression run results, specifically the base model (Table 3) and the model with Italian controls (Table 5), show otherwise. Aside from the reverse direction of the relationship, throughout all the models, the regional GDP was an insignificant variable in attracting Filipina labor migrants. Migrants are historically attracted to more developed countries and tend to migrate to these places as suggested by various theories; therefore, the findings go against the expected relationship of the dependent and independent variable (i.e., Buffer, Neo-Classical, and Dual Labor Market Theories) of labor migration.

The second economic variable, total female employment, resulted in a largely negative relationship vis-a-vis the inflow of Filipina labor migrants. The findings show that overall female employment maintained an inverse relationship, meaning as female employment decreases, the inflow of Filipina labor migrants increases. From the labor migration theories discussed in the first half of this paper, it was expected that increasing employment would signify an economic boom, attracting potential laborers. The probability of getting employed would drive migrants to move into that region, hoping to secure a job. In the scope of the study, an increase in female employment in Italy discourages the inflow of Filipina labor migrants. The possibility of landing employment affects the flow of migrant laborers as postulated in the neo-classical theory (Harris & Todaro, 1970). This realization likely means that there is a positive relationship between employment and the flow of migrants for labor.

However, contradictory to the predicted movement, the inflow of Filipino labor migrants was seen to react negatively to regional employment. The findings in this research offer oversaturation and substitution as explanations for the anomaly. The labor markets could be overly saturated, and the difficulty in entering into employment discourages potential labor migrants from moving. The substitution of other labor migrants may also be a possible explanation, as labor migrants from nearby countries or within Europe may have replaced Filipina labor migrants in their traditional sectors within the care economy.

As for the geo-demographic variables, the findings show that the housing cost was not a significant determinant, resulting in a positive relationship between the regional inflow of Filipina labor migrants. The housing cost variable was anticipated to show an inverse affiliation with the dependent variable since the high cost of housing could deter migration into that region. Housing costs have been a long-time consideration of migration and have been examined in various literature (Andersson and Nilsson, 2009; Sim, 2000; van der Vlist et al., 2011). Housing cost and other considerations, such as the availability of housing choices, better locations, the economic standing of the migrants, and proximity to schools, hospitals, and other services, serve as deterrents to migration.

The findings show zero consistent economic determinants for the arrival of Filipina migrant laborers. The variable used as a geographic indicator showed to be insignificant as well. The absence of receptivity from the utilized economic determinants is compatible with the conclusions of Fachin (2007) and Daveri and Faini (1999) in their studies of Italian migration. As for the housing cost, the findings are parallel with the research of Cannari et al. (2000), which observed housing cost as a restriction for internal migration within the country.

Throughout all the models in this research, the only significant and consistent variable in predicting Filipina labor migration is the Filipino migrant stock. The significant but negative

relationship between our dependent variable is relatively unforeseen. The association was expected to be positive because, historically, as assumed by the Network Externalities model, migrant networks are known to be effective in attracting new migrants (Biagi & Dotzel, 2018; MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964). The direction and magnitude of the relationship are often debated. However, the model has been studied by scholars such as Bauer et al. (2005), Chiswick and Miller (2005), Nee and Sanders (1987), and Sanders and Nee (1987).

In the case of Filipina labor migrants, the existence of Filipino migrant communities in various regions serves as a deterrent for their migration decision. Focusing only on this significant variable throughout the models, this paper offers several explanations. First, the Networks Externality model is mainly viewed as beneficial in areas such as cutting down the cost of information in a new environment, adjusting to new norms and language, finding housing, and assimilating into a local community. This paper argues that although such benefits exist in easing the adjustments into the host country, the benefits do not necessarily translate to attracting probable labor migrants, at least in the case of Filipinas. The reverse has already been argued by Etzo (2007) in the case of Italy. However, this is counterintuitive since numerous studies have already stressed the importance of finding employment through a network.

It could be debated that networks were valuable in former batches of labor migrations where technology was not a popular platform for seeking employment. Networks are less important than before in landing a job in host countries now that job seeking can be done with the aid of technology in the least costly and efficient manner.

Second, job posting which requires specialized skills tends to require a thorough and lengthy screening process. Such a tedious hiring process resulting in international migration often, if not all the time, requires an invitation to apply from the employer. Rather than placing the probability of employment on chances and networks within the host country, specialized employment search (targeted) and job offers are made even before immigration to the host country happens. Quota-based specialized jobs tend to be processed and arranged in the country of origin, primarily by employment agencies, leaving networks in the host country insignificant for the employment search.

Third, employment agencies which are highly popular among job seekers in the Philippines, decide the destination country or region of the labor migrant. Public and private employment agencies tend to have internal access to job openings that cannot be publicly accessed online. These employment agencies are widespread across the Philippines due to the numerous benefits of hiring one (i.e., matching a jobseeker's skills to the right job, facilitating employment papers and visa permits, and arranging flight logistics to the host country). The dynamics commonly observed in the close-knit ethnic community with positive employment externality were strengthened and commoditized, not leaving employment dependent on chances and word of mouth.

To answer the research questions, this paper summarizes that among the various economic and non-economic variables used, the Filipino migrant stock serves as the consistent signal in influencing the inflow of Filipina labor migration from the Philippines.

Conclusion

The effects of migration have been increasingly recognized. In the host countries or regions, migrants are instrumental in filling labor force gaps, establishing entrepreneurial activities, subsidizing taxes, and pension systems, developing skills, and promoting cultural diversity, among many others. Significant is the contribution of the migrants, which fills in much-needed labor demand in specific regions where the local labor supply is depleted due to falling demographics, the refusal of locals to work dirty jobs or the out-migration of locals from their own countries. Hence, understanding the complexities of migration, including having a significant grasp on the emerging trends and investigating the characteristics that influence migrant settlement, is necessary to fully apprehend the phenomenon.

This research primarily utilized ISTAT data, the principal source of official data in Italy. Using data from 2007 to 2017 relating to Italy's 20 regions, this research focused mainly on analyzing how regional economic and non-economics characteristics influence the settlement choice of Filipina labor migrants from the Philippines. This paper attached the spatial dimension to the labor migration of a sub-ethnic group, Filipina labor migrants in Italian regions, contributing to our understanding of migration drivers and variation at a regional level. The analyses were accomplished using double-log regression to provide robust results.

The results of this paper show that non-economic variables weigh more in Filipina labor migrants' settlement decisions than economic variables such as the region's GDP and employment possibilities. For Filipina labor migrants, the economic characteristics of the Italian region are insignificant in determining migration. Instead, Filipino migrant stock in different areas determines Filipina labor migration. These are significant findings as they add to the scarce literature that studies the roles of regions in the migration and migration settlement process, mainly how the host regions' economic and non-economic features affect the settlement patterns of labor migrants.

This research has demonstrated the importance of studying the micro-level geographical scale in investigating migration settlement decisions. This approach has established that national scale analyses produce a lot of oversight in migration analysis. The purely economic strategy also has its shortcomings. Hence, the adopted approach, which includes place-based considerations, is a novel take on studying migrant settlement selection. Also, this research's findings show that combining complex elements involving local and regional dimensions predominantly influences migration. From this perspective, subnational analysis is recommended to prevent the inaccuracy of conclusions and to capture smaller scale nuances. These results supplied further understanding of how neighborhood affects migrant decisions, knowledge of group variations in migration, and sub-ethnic migrant mobility and settlement patterns.

These findings contribute to the current literature in several ways. This research contributes to the under-researched area of spatial segregation among ethnic communities in Europe, specifically on the importance of considering non-economic variables in settlement decisions. This research highlighted the role of the local and regional attributes of migrants' landing pads and settlement site selection. This conclusion consequently emphasized the importance of including these characteristics in policymaking. Accordingly, the research findings are particularly pertinent to policymakers since the findings could be the basis for project proposals that target local migrant integration, place-based developmental policies, and the

restructuring of social housing mechanisms to address poverty and concentration, among many things. Specifically, the findings of this research could be used as the basis for policy proposals in revamping inefficient housing systems. The regional government could also use the findings to adjust the local quotas placed on working visas for labor migrants. This suggested policy could address labor shortages in local or regional areas that struggle with falling demographics.

The findings of this research confirmed and invalidated some existing theories in migration literature. Simultaneously, compelling questions arise as the consequences of the research findings. The results of this research have acknowledged other areas of investigation. This research focused on variables that affect the labor migration of Filipinas in different Italian regions, suggesting that in the case of Filipina labor migrants, the settlement choice is highly influenced by a non-economic variable: the Filipino migrant stock. Although previous studies already cited this variable on a national scale, further research might be dedicated to expanding the focus to include migrants' macro groups to develop and provide an array of behavioral decisions. Another additional research area is investigating the role of private and public renting in migrant mobility decisions.

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