Transnational Families as Resource for Transnational Migrant Activism

Valerie Francisco, Ph.D.
Center for Global Workers Rights
March 20-22, 2013
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Felisa "Fely" Garcia
March 2007
New York City

Under what conditions are women and families separated? And mobilized?

KabaliKat Domestic Workers Support Network

2007-2011
Qualitative Methods
Manila & Queens
Organizing & mobilizing
Labor Brokerage State

Labor Export Policy

Gendered Logic

- Migration is a nation-building project
- Labor brokerage an entry to neoliberal global economy
- Gender and family as part of the rubric
Families and Conditions of Separation

Madres de Plaza De Mayo

Mothers Reclaiming Our Children (MROC)

Activist Mothering

Labor Brokerage State
As the Philippine economy fails to improve, people are forced to seek work in other countries. The hope is that the work in another country would help solve their problems, but few of them succeed. The Philippines is like a sinking boat, and we are all on it. What are we going to do next? Are we going to move?
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Labor Export Policy
• Institutionalization of Migration
  • Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
  • Overseas Workers Welfare Agency
• Market Research
  • Headhunters
  • Recruitment Agencies
• $24 Billion Remittance Industry
• "Bagong Bayani" or Modern Day Heroes
• 4,500 migrants leave daily
Sampung Bilin ng PDOS


Gendered Logic

Model OFW Family of the Year Award
Parangal sa Matatag na Pamilyang OFW

Sampung Bilin ng PDOS

1. Isa-isip ang gusto mong makami sa pagtrabaho sa ibang bansa. Ito ang susi ng iyong tagumpay.

2. Ihanda ang sarili sa trabahong haharapin sa labas ng bansa.

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Grassroots Warriors
Activist Mothering, Community, and Social and Family Theory

Hancy K. Hynes
Madres de Plaza De Mayo
Mothers Reclaiming Our Children (MROC)
A Mother's Critique of the Labor Brokerage State

As the Philippine economy fails to improve under a regime working with corrupt politicians, we cannot expect that the oppressions against workers, embossed as an anti-migrant stance, be our homeland's troubles and abuses. We do not wish to use the outcry that will not be heard. Instead, because the expansion of our country's economy is therefore our curse, we move towards the lower problems, and we help them. We don't help ourselves.

The Philippines is like a sinking boat, and we are its lifesavers. Even if we are really not going to move?

- Helen
So what if something like that happened to you, especially at work? Especially if you’re in a new place, strictness of a boss, without your family, no one to help you, you know? So if you hear of something, why not help her. Even if you don’t really know her, your will to help is there.

- Vilma
The Philippines is like a sinking boat, and we are their lifesavers. Even if we are dead, are they really not going to move?

- Helen
As the Philippine economy fails to improve under a system reeking with corruption, we can expect that this aggressive outmigration, touted as an economic solution to our homeland's troubles and downturns, will produce more cases like Fely's that will not be handled properly because the orientation of our consular offices abroad is not to help migrants with their basic problems, but help them remit their earnings back to the Philippines.

- Justice For Fely Garcia Online Petition April 2007
A Mother’s Critique of the Labor Brokerage State

As the Philippine economy fails to improve, women workers seeking employment expect that this aggressive recruitment is valuable to our homeland’s troubles and poverty, cost conscious more than they can afford to keep women workers. Their return to the Philippines is not a benefit property. Because the expansion of our own economic activities and income-generating opportunities. The Philippines is as is their livelihood. Even if it is really not going to move? - Helen

So what is happening like that related to you, especially to women. Especially if you are in a bad place, without your family. How can you help your family? Do you have any opportunities. Even if you don’t really know her, you will also help there.

- Unknown
Take Home Messages

- Engaging gender and family as points for organizing and mobilizing
- Critique of neoliberal states and globalization integrated into migrant motherhood
- Migrant, Worker, Mother
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