Moral Mismatch: Narratives of Migration from Immigrant Filipino Women in New York City and the Philippine State

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The moral economy is a hermeneutic largely used by scholars studying premodern economies and societies. Today, the moral economy still figures into the market and social relations of globalization and migration. The Philippine state actively carves out a gendered rhetoric of "migrant heroes" in discursive and material ways as a pseudo-moral economy, justifying policies of labor export as ideologies of independence through migration. Simultaneously, Filipino migrant women construct an alternative moral economy that bridges community with the market, embody an expanded (and unfair) sense of responsibility to family and the state. While Filipino migrant women, are hyper visible as independent actors, they are tethered to gendered familial roles and social reproductive labor that translate to their invisibility as women, migrant workers and returnees. The contradictions of the moral economies of migration emerge in the treatment of migrant women workers' deaths, thus laying bare the mismatch in these moral economies and, more importantly, the mistreatment that arises from the conflict. This, then, serves as a basis for a diasporic solidarity and politics for Filipino migrant women workers.

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The multi-purpose room of the small Filipino community center is really the basement of the office upstairs, the room has been used for different things for the community. It's dry wall and linoleum wood floors and IKEA brand chairs have been host to many occasions, but today the organization members took time to make it a little bit nicer. It looked neat with all of the chairs lined up and a picture of Putli Asjali in the front of the room. The memorial picture of the deceased

domestic worker was simple. The last picture taken of her during the last holiday, she's sitting on a chair, legs crossed, smiling into the camera. That picture was blown up to a eight and a half by eleven color copy and mounted on a white foam board, simply stating her name and the dates of her birth and death.

Close to noon, community members, youth, seniors, Asjali's friends who took a two-hour bus ride to Queens filled up the chairs. Quickly, the room was teeming with people. The heat of the summer was just not waning and humidity stayed on until September this year. No matter what the weather was, 80 people cramped into the lower level of the community center to attend the service. All of the seats were taken up and people were standing against the back and sidewalls. Many more who couldn't find space in the room chose to stay upstairs in the common area where other domestic worker volunteers were preparing food for the reception.

Someone was passing out paper with prayers and songs on it as the priest presided over the mass. During the prayers and the songs, a box of Kleenex was passed around. In unison, we all said, "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy." We all held hands to say the Lord's prayer and went on to sing a customary mourning song in Tagalog, "Hindi Kita Malilimutan," "We will never forget you." As we continued with the song, people were getting choked up and if it wasn't for the one person who carried the tune for the rest of the people in attendance, the whole room would've just sobbed until the priest started the next prayer.

One after another, friends of Putli went up to speak about her. They all said nice things that she was a kind person, a god-fearing woman, church is how people came to know her, she always talked about her children in the Philippines. The last speaker was Putli's best friend in the upstate New York town they worked in, Angie. She started with a tissue balled up in her hand by talking about how this shouldn't be the way that people remembered Putli. She went on by saying she found out that when Putli died, her employer found a stash of earnings under her bed amounting to $10,000. After a couple of days of arranging where Putli's body would go, the amount lessened by $4,000. "This shouldn't be, even in her death she can't get pay," said Angie. "I called the consulate after asking if they could help us, and they could say nothing to me. They keep passing me on to another and to another. At the end of it, I asked how much they could give to send Putli back, they said nothing to me. They wanted to cremate her. They could not even give her cents to go back as a whole. Wala ba tayong halaga? Do we have no value?" Angie's eyes were filled with tears now but her

face was austere, she continued. "It's lucky that we are all here. If we were not here, there would be no one to remember Putli."

In the back row, I sat with Rita, the domestic worker support network's main organizer; she took my hand as she started to cry. She bent towards me and said, "Palagi patay ang pinababalik natin. Ni isang buhay, wala." We only send back dead people. We can't even send back a live person."

(Field notes, Putli Asjali's memorial service, September 2008)

For more than 30 years, labor export has been the policy to resolve the staggering unemployment rates of the failing Philippine economy (Barber 2000). Only a few other countries other than the Philippines have 10 percent of their population, about 10 million people, living outside of the nation-state boundaries (International Organization for Migrants 2005). For the past eight years, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the Philippine president, has applauded the migrants' plight, hailing them as modern day national heroes in her annual state of the nation address. As migrants and a culture of migration have become more and more embedded in Philippine culture, politics and economy, the Philippine state has invested in the idea that immigration is the key to development (Rodriguez forthcoming). The Philippine state is convinced that migration and development go hand in hand, a symbiotic partnership that has rescued a Philippine economy on the brink of collapse. Philippine government, officials, legislators and even the president can not seem to keep migration and migrants out of their minds and mouths. And to no surprise, immigrants and migrants can not keep Philippine politics and nation-state out of their conversations either.

The phenomena of migration in the Philippines is crafted by different justifications, motivations and goals, in this paper, I will call these "moral economies." The moral economy is a hermeneutic largely used by scholars studying premodern economies and societies. Today, the moral economy still figures into the market and social relations of globalization and migration. The Philippine state actively carves out a gendered rhetoric of "migrant heroes" in discursive and material ways as a pseudo-moral economy, justifying policies of labor export as ideologies of independence through migration. Simultaneously, Filipino migrant women construct an alternative moral economy that bridges community with the market, embody an expanded (and unfair) sense of responsibility to family and the state. The contradictions

of the moral economies of migration emerge in the treatment of migrant women workers' deaths, thus laying bare the mismatch in these moral economies and, more importantly, the mistreatment that arises from the conflict.

I begin this paper with two images from the different sides of migration in the Philippines. The first, shown in my field notes, is an image of a Filipino immigrant community in New York City remembering one of their own, a fellow immigrant woman, a domestic worker that died miles and miles away from her family and friends in the Philippines. The mood of the day and the memorial service was one of despair, anxiety and betrayal. The domestic worker group, PAGKAISA (or ISA for short) meaning unity in Tagalog, organizes much of the support networks for domestic workers, including the service for Asjali and other migrant women in need of similar assistance. During that particular afternoon, new sets of claims began to arise in the midst of mourning a fellow Filipina, as participants they insisted that this is not the kind of treatment Asjali should get. Indeed, they insist that this is not the kind of treatment that they should get as overseas workers. They claim that the consulate, the responsible governmental body for Filipinos abroad, should be more present and nearby at tragic moments like these. Their demands on the Philippine government are based on the fact that, "Without overseas workers, the Philippines is like a sinking boat in the middle of the ocean. And we are the ones saving them," as Helen, a member of the domestic worker support network said. But in the cases of Putli, Mayet and Fely, three domestic workers in the New York City area who died in the span of between 2006 and 2008, there was no government around to rescue them as their bodies were thrown overboard.

The second image is one of the Philippine government lauding migration and overseas workers as the saving grace of the country. Scholars have long argued that the colonial history of the Philippines has set up conditions making migration an inevitable option for many educated and professional Filipinos (Rodriguez forthcoming; Espiritu 2003; Barber 2000). The rhetoric of "migrant heroes" has stretched from the Philippines all the way around the world, following Filipinos seeking work abroad. Filipino enclaves globally are lined with remittance centers and consular offices offering legal services to Filipinos abroad to remind them of their heroic duties and financial obligations to their families and country. The type of institutionalized support bolstering the Filipino immigration and immigrants has become a huge investment for the Philippine government. However, considering the cases of these

abandoned New York City domestic workers, the investment falls short when it comes to immigrants who die abroad. Their heroic duties remain wanted and recognized, however, their deaths go unnoticed and ignored.

This article draws on field observations, interviews and focus groups wherein Filipino immigrant women talk about their reasons and justifications for leaving home. The women in this study have grown from children into adults, went to school and graduated, bore children and left their homes within a familiar culture of state-sponsored migration. They have lived through the Marcos dictatorship and the introduction of the Labor Export Policy under his regime and the extension of this policy through each administration thereafter. These immigrant women, products of the systematic labor-migration-as-development policy, work as domestic workers in New York City, a majority of them middle-aged with children in the Philippines. Most are working without legal documents, searching and finding jobs in the networks they create and sustain for themselves. A main driving force for each woman is the remittances they send monthly to their families in the Philippines. Daily, on their walks to work, their thoughts turn to their transnational relationships with families back home. They are at once catapulted into the global stage, yet tied to the nation state through a financial tether.

Filipino immigrant women still look to the Philippine government to demand certain rights and attention they feel are owed to its diasporic population. Most of the women know that their absence from their country contributes greatly to its survival; this is the intimate relationship between immigrants and their sending state. I will argue that in this relationship we can perceive contradictory conceptions of the moral economy of migration from the vantage points of the transnational lives of Filipino immigrant women and the transnational governance of the Philippine state.

Past studies show how gendered Philippine migration has colored the national identity and discourse of the Philippines, asking how have women as the constituted body in the Filipino diaspora affected the subject-status of the Philippine state (Rodriguez 2002, Tadiar 1997)? In a critical turn, scholars have exposed the labor-brokering machinery of migration inside the Philippine state, combing through various governmental institutions, officials and the rhetoric they produce (Guevarra 2006; Rodriguez forthcoming). In this paper, I will extend these scholars' projects to develop how contradictory moral economies deployed by both the Philippine state and Filipino women

immigrants create a gendered discourse around responsibility and obligation (Guevarra 2006). I insert the narratives of Filipino domestic workers in New York City to illuminate the ways in which institutional mechanisms, discourses and processes become embedded and embodied experiences (Harding 2006). Through a juxtaposition of state and immigrant narrative, I show the negotiations of moral economies when violation and contradictions come to the fore. To this end, some questions that guide this paper are: what types of moral investment is the Philippine government fermenting to buttress labor emigration? What are the moral economies of migrant women workers in the diaspora? What does it look like when these moral economies collide and contradict? What are the consequences of these conflicts?

I begin with a critical engagement of theories of the nation-state in transnational and diaspora studies as the theoretical frame for this study. Throughout this paper, I will employ the analytic model of the "moral economy" to illustrate how different moral economies are created and launched as reflections of their own moral communities. In the second section, I provide a discussion of the Philippine state and its investment in a particular kind of moral economy (Guevarra 2006). Third, through the narratives of Filipina domestic workers in New York, I juxtapose the construction of the moral economy of Filipino immigrant women working as domestic workers based on family, responsibility and latent nationalism (Cheng 2006). In the final section I close with what I began with, the matter of conflicting moral economies deployed by both Filipino immigrant women living in the US and the Philippine nation-state, the life and death implications of this contradiction. Lastly, I discuss the lives of Filipinos in the diaspora in terms of the economies embedded in their lives as a possible terrain of rupture and action.

THE NATION IN THE DIASPORA

Scholars in the transnationalism and diaspora literature suggest to decentralize the nation-state in studies of the diaspora. Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut posit that many first generation immigrants' political participation are concerned with homeland issues (2001). Depending on their economic goals and occupation in the US, Portes and Rumbaut also argue that political motivation of immigrants vary, hinging on the idea that more economic security means more political participation. Nancy Foner has long argued that immigrants' political mobilization have always targeted homeland issues since much of migration is informed by the political economic climate

in sending countries (1997). She has continued to suggest that immigrants make good use of their location abroad to highlight political issues at home.

Diaspora scholars however have expanded the conception of transnational political participation by looking outside of a binational formulation of sending and receiving states (Smith 2006). As migrant communities from the same sending states have settled in different countries, Paul Gilroy, for example, argues that migrant populations develop a culture that fosters relationships between communities in diasporic locations (1993). In the Filipinio case, this shift in transnational politics is important because it reflects the empirical reality of numerous Filipino diasporic communities politically interlocked with one another outside of the bounds of the nation-state. Diasporic cultures begin to inform one another as they proliferate within the global dimension of diaspora. For Filipinos, the longstanding labor diaspora has and continues to produce relationship between diasporic ties, independent from the Philippine nation and betwixt migrant communities around the world.

Similarly, Yen Le Espiritu states, "A critical transnational perspective also provokes us to think beyond the limits of the nation-state, that is, to be attentive to the global relations that set the context of immigration and immigrant life" (2003: 4). In her book *Homebound,* Espiritu begins with a move away from the model of the nation-state to examine the diasporic cultures and migration trends of Filipinos across communities and countries. Her "critical transnational perspective" heeds the challenge of diaspora scholars to look at the ways in which communities and cultures develop inside nation-states other than the homeland. In Espiritu's study, the racialization of Filipinos in a new host land allows for the US to emerge as a focal point for defining a Filipino American community. Espiritu's project shifts away from a diaspora and nation-state dyad, by pointing to a history of US imperialism in Asia to understand the trends of Asian immigration to the US and the variation in racialization of Asians in America. Specifically, she argues that moving Filipinos away from the nation-state allows for a deeper discussion of US imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism in the context of the Filipino diaspora.

These scholars have provided healthy conceptualizations of nation-states in immigrant and migrants' transnational and diasporic political cultures. However, in all of these frameworks the model of nation-state is assumed as a reified and bounded entity. In terms of the Philippine and US relations, maintaining a model of disparate nation-states does not address the historic

imperial interests and current neocolonial relationship of these enmeshed governing bodies. It is necessary to couch the discussion of both Filipino migration and forced migration in terms of a permeable Philippine nation-state intertwined with US political economic interests. To assume that the Philippines is a nation-state that serves as the referent for many Filipino diasporic subjects assumes that its colonial relationship with the US was severed when the US granted its nominal independence in 1946. However, the trends in migration and foreign investments demonstrate that active negotiations and exchange between the US and the Philippine produce people as cheap labor for the US and Philippine natural resources as investment opportunities. Substantive evidence of US intervention in the Philippine is blaringly present in the constitution and national politics (San Juan 2000). The supply of specific workers to meet the needs in the US labor market is ample evidence to see the partnership between the Philippines and the US. Therefore, there is a danger in considering the Filipino diaspora an autonomous nation-state as it obscures the "collaborative empire," as E. San Juan would say, that the Philippines and US nation-states work under.

Although in this paper, I will not treat the US-Philippine collaborative empire in much detail, I think that expanding the notion of the nation-state for the Filipino diaspora in this way is a useful tool to think with as we move forward to examine the types of moral economies activated through Filipino migration. In other words, the moral economy fostered by the Philippine state is always in concert with US economic interest and labor demands, under the conditions of neoliberal globalization. The moral economy of migration of the Philippine state allows it to seem as if it is a sovereign body since it is producing its own citizenship as a export product. However, in this paper I will show that when the moral economy of the seemingly independent Philippine state collides with the moral economies of its laboring migrant citizens located in US, the enmeshed governance and economic interests of the Philippines and the US put migrant women workers in vulnerable and dangerous positions.

Taking from immigration scholars, historic transnational politics have plenty to do with binational relations and governance and migrants' speaking back to homeland issues. And still, as diaspora scholars suggest, moral economies of the state are informed by the ever widening relationships between diasporic sites and locations, thus influencing political participation of migrants. In a complex relationship with the US, the treatment of diasporic Filipino communities is couched in the terms of the Philippines' historic and

continuing relationship with American politics. In looking at the moral economies of both the state and migrant workers, I find that the migration and the labor diaspora is a social process continually contested and constructed by nation-states, immigrants and migrants. Still, even under the intense collaboration with the US, the nation-state and diaspora dichotomy is important as it produces a moral economy of the Philippine state and Filipino immigrant women that often leads to a moral mismatch and, even worse, material mistreatment.

THE PHILIPPINE STATE'S MORAL ECONOMY

On 12 December 2007, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo lauded the efforts of *Bagong Bayani*, literally translated as modern-day heroes, by presenting 12 awards to different overseas contract workers (OCW) for particular categories. In the "Most Outstanding Employee" category, two women—Josefina Villarey, a housekeeper in the US, and Hazel Reposo, a housekeeper in Kuwait—were given recognition alongside nurses, seamen, teachers and factory managers. This celebration of OCWs is representative of the Philippine state's view on migration: celebratory. One, the occupations that the OCWs held are representative of the type of global labor niches that employ Filipinos: nursing, domestic, maritime, education and managerial industries of the world. Second, most importantly, the recognition given to the 12 OCWs honored represents a trophy rhetoric given to migrants, an affective citizenship of dignity, empowerment and duty to the millions of OCWs worldwide. The Philippine state invokes a type of moral economy to manage and regulate the most important industry in the rubric of the Philippine economy, the migration industry. Through the formalization of migration institutions like the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), the Overseas Workers Welfare Agency (OWWA) and the all encompassing Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Philippine state cements the culture of migration as an institutional process (Smith 2003). Cultural benchmarks like the Bagong Bayani award night or the red carpet at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport welcoming returning OCWs are building blocks in the migrant nationalist discourse that frames migrants and migration as national trophies.

As scholars have studied it in premarket economies, the moral economy secured livelihood, community and citizenship through non-economic institutions like family, kinship, religion and politics (Polanyi 1957). Market relations in premodern and modern societies functioned with the moral economy as a mechanism for exchange, obligations, gifts and moral reciprocity

directed the processes, social relations and objectives of people's actions and behaviors (Thompson 1971). In this "premarket" society, money economy was not a central feature of the social world, it was not a preeminent component in people's lives. Instead the economic interactions were lodged into other institutions, like filial piety or reciprocity (Scott 1977).

William Booth describes the embedded economy as the integration of patterns of distribution and production, division of labor and exchange inside "noneconomic values and institutions" in families or communities (1994: 654). In a premodern moral economy, there is no clear distinction between economic and noneconomic institutions like family, kinship or religion. The totality of social phenomena, social, economic, political and traditional, renders the economy theoretically indistinct, intermingled with the rest of society's institutions. Until the substantive market economy became formal, human action and behavior was oriented towards a pursuit of a good social life. People's decisions, actions and moves, economic or not, were geared towards sustaining their communities.

The shift from a premodern to a modern market economy pushes economic transactions from moral to mechanical. Goals and objectives within the social world become purely economic-oriented (Scott 1987, Rozario 2007). The transactions in the modern market economy do not necessarily hinge on developing a social livelihood, nor do their goals become embedded into social life, the transactions are discussed and executed plainly on economic terms. An inversion occurs in which, the primacy of economy becomes apparent over noneconomic institutions in the social world. In a market society, the economy has a "self-regulating" character, wherein as an isolated and independent entity, it is equipped to regulate itself, no longer enveloped by noneconomic institutions, values and processes (Scott 1977). In this shift, the economy, with its self-regulating character, pulls itself out of the community where it was situated in for much of human history (Booth 1994).

The implication of the economy emerging as an autonomous institution is that it becomes another force for social actors to contend and negotiate with. Without the embeddedness of the economy in social life, as Booth would say, the economy possibly becomes the driving force for social life. In his studies of the transformation of the moral economy under market relations, Karl Polanyi, argues that, "the market threatens to become the dominant mechanism integrating the entirety of society" (1957). The market as an

unnatural phenomenon, according to Polanyi, points to the construction of economic impetus with its basis in social relations built on social processes and institutions. In the Philippines this integration has meant the governmental institutionalization of managing and regulating the thousands of immigrants leaving daily (Guevarra 2006).[1]

Beginning in 1898, the DFA was one of the first departments set up by a postcolonial Philippines to be recognized legitimately on the international stage. The DFA becomes a fixture in Philippine history facilitating many international relations agreements, a number of them in concert with US interests in military support and natural resources. A key player in formalizing Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1989 and in establishing the ASEAN Free Trade Area, the Philippines continues to rely on an external geography as to build the nation and its "global exposure." Starting with the administration of Ferdinand Marcos in the late 60s, the presence and possibility of overseas workers broke open infinite economic and political expansion opportunities for the Philippines. Not only could overseas Filipino workers contribute to the national economy, they could also support the Philippine state as cultural ambassadors. During Fidel Ramos' administration from 1992-1998 he named "the enhancement of national security, promotion of economic diplomacy, protecting Overseas Filipino Workers and Filipino nationals abroad, the projection of a good image of the country abroad"[2] as chief goals for foreign affairs.

The primacy of foreign affairs and overseas workers was sealed into Philippine culture and society through the institutionalization of migration as development. In 1982 under Ferdinand Marcos, the POEA was created through Executive Order 797, the "Labor Code of 1974," institutionalizing labor export as a policy for the Philippine state. The impetus for this policy was the changing market and economic conditions (into neoliberalism) and the need to regulate and facilitate the migration of Filipinos out of the country. The focus of this institution was to facilitate employment outside of the Philippines, regulate the migration industry and "protect" workers.[3] Through this policy, the Philippine state is getting its bearings in the global economy through institutionalizing the movement of bodies out of the country; pushing forth a type of moral economy that hinges on a twofold conception of migration: one, on the surface, the idea of protecting citizens through programs and, two, agencies to maintain the social fabric of Filipino society. "When nature and persons, the world and human activity are made into objects of sale—when that is the dominant mode for their transaction—the remaining

barriers to marketization must be frail indeed" (Booth 1994: 656). The market has pervaded the intentions of the Philippine state to produce people as commodities.

E.P. Thompson argues that the measure of the dominance of the market over the social can be found in the commodification of every and any thing, and further its ability to spread around the world in and out of local, national and global markets (1971). For the Philippines, the pervasive character of the economy now envelops the whole society, the economy is what sets goals, processes and objectives of social life down to the decisions to move from one place to another, duty to the family and sacrifices in quality of life. These are the moral norms in which the Philippine state carves out its moral economy, the mores of the market economy. Globalization and neoliberalism is the bedrock of its production of a diaspora. The moral economy of the Philippine state is first anchored down to its loyalties to economic production and profit in the increasingly neoliberal world.

The feminization of migration and the gendered labor market demands has established labor niches for Filipino women around the world as domestics, housekeepers, nannies, nurses and caregivers to the elderly (Pratt 2004; Parrenas 2001). At least three thousand migrant workers leave the Philippines daily, over half are women and their highest concentration is in global cities in the US like New York City, Chicago and San Francisco, to name a few (Chua 2009). Filipino women are manufactured, marketed and sent out as "domestic bodies" as Neferti Tadiar calls it, inscribing them and the diaspora with a gendered code of the Philippine nation (1997). I note this particular conceptualization of Filipino women as the mobile bodies catapulted onto the world stage because this is where the "gendered moral economy" of the Philippine state begins (Guevarra 2006). Instead of shying away from a nation-building project that is based largely on women and feminized labor, the Philippine government, a culturally patriarchal institution, has embraced it. In fact, it has capitalized on women.

The visual cues and emblems of Philippine economic progression are embodied in the Filipina flight attendant, Filipina wife, Filipina nurse, Filipina domestic worker, Filipina mother and Filipina daughter. Robyn Rodriguez argues that these gender labor niches have had implications for the nation-building identity of the Philippine via migration (2002). The neoliberal ideology suffused into this gendered construction of the Filipino diasporic subject is in the ideology of individualism the neoliberal state doles out. The ideology of the labor-brokering state supports the global demand, policies

like the “Supermaid program”—training hundreds of Filipino women to become better domestic workers—facilitates the production of women bodies as the representative of the Filipino diaspora. No longer are women just nannies; on the government’s dime they have the potential to be the best nannies in the world. This policy confirms that instead of economic strangulation, a Filipino woman’s individual freedom and choice become the deciding factor in migrating. This ideology of individualism is what David Harvey would call a “neoliberal principle,” a claim that people should get whatever they want at the expense of others (2001). The supermaid program emphasizes options and choices of Filipinos have to achieve an individual dream through moral obligation, hard work and merit. Disguised by the discourse of merit and morals, the role of the economy is embedded into life choices.

The above picture on an OWWA website of a Filipino nurse not only constitutes the Filipino overseas worker as a woman but a woman that has a bright future in the US. For the Filipina in the picture, and the hundreds of thousands of Filipinas in the Philippines gazing at the picture, the moral economy is hinged to an empowerment that can be achieved through migration (Guevarra 2007). The woman’s smile and the stethoscope go hand in hand with the biggest word on the ad, “employment,” therefore coding the migration labor market with a Filipino woman’s body and her ability to care for others.

These types of state-sponsored advertising are how the Philippine state reinforces gender in two ways: first, a woman’s role to care for others in the productive economic sense is depicted in the photo, an extension of the

social reproductive labor that scholars have tagged "women's work" (Dalla Costa 1972; Beneria 1996). And second, the discourse of personal responsibility, similar to welfare rhetoric in the US, Filipino women's responsibilities and work in the private sphere. Filipino women, comprising 60 percent of the migrants leaving the Philippines daily, often leave their home to go abroad in the name of their families and later as I will show, a latent nationalism. In the next section, I explore what the consequences of this moral economy are on Filipino immigrant women and how they are constructing one of their own.

AN IMMIGRANT WOMAN'S MORAL ECONOMY

> There are many reasons why people leave. But the main reason is to help your family. That's why when I'm here, instead of studying and going to school you save money to send money to help. Because they can't make it without me. Yourself is the second. Always the priority is the family. (Lily, an ISA member, October 2008)

Lily is echoing the very gendered moral economy dished out by the Philippine state. In this statement, Lily asserts her reasons for leaving the Philippines as an economic impulse but first and foremost, it is her responsibility to her family that justifies her migration. At the age of 24, Lily left the Philippines to work overseas. In 1987, jobs for college graduates were so few and far between that working as a teaching assistant was the only job Lily could get with her college diploma. Her family was being threatened with eviction if their mortgage on their house and small field was not paid for quickly. And with her brother and sister only in elementary and the beginning of high school, respectively, Lily felt that she had no other options but to leave the country to support her brother and sister. As a sister and a daughter, Lily's moral responsibility was to support her family. Hearkening back to the traditional model of the moral economy, Lily's decision to leave the Philippines was not out of economic lust to become richer. Rather, the decision she made was integrated in sustaining a life for her family. In this sense, the moral economy bolstered by Filipino women more resembles a traditional moral economy wherein decisions are created to maintain a social life for a particular family or community. However, the nature of these decisions is undoubtedly compounded by the influence of the state's moral discourse around gender and responsibility. I suggest that a traditional moral economic stance contributes to Filipino migrant women current moral economy since migration decisions are informed by generations

of migrant workers. These generations of migration narrate the transnational lives and sacrifices of many Filipino families for decades thus embedding decisions to leave as a part of familial obligation. However, since these moral economies have been constructed under the conditions of globalization, they are always nested in the economic impetus of capitalism.

Broadly, "...the moral economy concerns the way in which people conduct themselves that articulate relationships in positive ways for both actors and the market economy" (Smyth 2006: 1). Chief in the construction of Filipino immigrant women's moral economy to stay actively participating in the market economy is their obligations to their children and families. It is their number one priority to be the breadwinner for their families, and this act of duty is not scorned or resented, it is just plain duty, a moral obligation to their family. The separation and sacrifice are afterthoughts, taking care of their children, putting brothers and sisters through college and paying for a mother or father's operation has primacy over loneliness and depression. Potential migrants do not think about being lonely, they think about helping their family survive.

These are the moral norms that surrounded them as they grew up around relatives and neighbors who left their families to support them. Dutiful daughters and wives who must pitch in to provide for their families find that migration is not only a viable way to do it but sometimes, the only option for them. Regardless of how long the separation is or can be, some of the women see their families' futures as the main reason why they must sacrifice. For different players in the migration schema, the moral economy shifts ethical frameworks based on the objectives and goals an actor wants to achieve through participating in the market economy. In the case of the immigrant women, building a moral economy on the basis of supporting their families allows them to make affirmative decisions towards migration.

Still, nuanced dynamics of family play into this moral economy. After years of parents being away, raising children from afar and observing a society wherein each family has at least one person working abroad, children of migrants come of age with the possibility of migration in their future. When tables turn and children must step up into being providers and they take any opportunity they can get:

> My story of migration started the year 92, 1992. I just graduated college, started work, the pay was really low. And at that time I had a sister who was overseas already. Our eldest sister was in, uh, ISRAEL already.

> From Turkey, she went to Israel. So our family is a family that goes abroad, nagaabroad, is what they call it in the Philippines. Families that go abroad, because my Mom, she went abroad, she went to Saudi for eight years, she put us all through school. That's why she left to go abroad…That's why I went. (Rita, main organizer for ISA, August 2008)

Rita comes from a family where almost all of the members migrated. Her mother and all three of her sisters, including her, left in turns to keep a steady flow of income for the family. Like many of the domestic workers, Rita traveled around before she came to the US. In her narrative, many of the decisions she and the women in her family made to migrate were based around what would be good for the family. For families whose characteristic is to go abroad, the filial duty to take care of the family, whether its your children or your parents or your siblings, is passed down from generation to generation. Like an unwanted inheritance, family members must consider the importance of migration over their own desires, "to help the family," as Lily said. When the job market is bankrupt the home country and there are abundant options abroad, the morally correct choice is to take the latter.

This cycle of family migration is normalized in many households, thereby setting a standard of what supporting a family looks like for Filipinos. Even though Rita possess a college degree which gave her a small leg up in the job market in the Philippines, her mother and sister have set a precedent as to what kind of breadwinning can prove useful to the family's sustenance and growth. Rita's reciprocity to give back for her mother's sacrifices, resonates with E.P. Thompson's discussion of gift economies across class lines (1971). The gift of obligation through migration is a cornerstone in Rita's moral economy around family and migration:

> Who's gonna send money back to support our family? What'll happen? What'll really happen? Eh, my Mama had already gone home by then from Saudi. Mama had already gone home, while I was in Israel, and I sent for one of my other older sisters. Because that's the only way. (Rita, main organizer for ISA, August 2008)

She wants to pay, literally and metaphorically, her mother back for the sacrifice she made to put her children through school. Rita wants to let her sister have a break from being the sole breadwinner, reciprocate her sacrifice by making one of her own. Much of the women's sacrifices have to do with love for their family and hope for the future.

In her study of single Bangladeshi women migrants and the moral economies they live and work under, Santi Rozario states, "For these women,

spending their resources on their families is a reflection of their love and faith in their families" (2007: 165). Rozario's argument rings true for Filipino immigrant women, their sacrifices are out of love and duty thus an essential building block in their moral economy.

Now, we have seen how the moral economy for immigrant women reflects back on an ethical framework based on their need to support their families. But how do the constraints of the moral economy of the state inform their framing of morals and migration? Scholars have studied how gender and sexuality have constituted the Filipino worker in the diaspora and its reverberations back to the nation-state (Pratt 2004; Parrenas 2001; Rodriguez 2002). The diasporic female body is the overseas representative of Filipino laborers. Neferti Tadiar argues that the "domestic body" of the Filipino woman is implicated in the "contradictions and congruences among several systems of value and differentiation which motor the production of domestic helpers as well as the production of the nation, which is a constituent and constituting part" (1997: 154). Filipino overseas contract workers, male or female, are inextricably linked to producing a nation through various practices like return migration and remittances.

> Joy: You know fortunately, when I leave my kids they are big already. My youngest then, is 12 years old and they're big already. And when I talk to them, they understand. When I came here, when…when…when we separate, I found out that my daughter did not go outside of our house for one week. (She starts to tear up). My daughter, you see she's 16 at that time, one week she did not outside because I'm not there anymore. (She's crying now). But they don't say to me, (I nod) When I call, "We're okay Mama, don't worry about us." We're very close. That's why when I left, I needed to. Because all we were doing was waiting to die there, like that? You know, waiting for a hand out. And all my kids go to school. So I have to go because I could. So even if its tourist visa, at least I can work now as a woman, I took it. I needed to. There was no option. That's my story with them and they bounced back. When I call they say, "We're okay now."
>
> Valerie: What else do you think about when you're here in the US or other countries?
>
> Joy: Especially now, I always think about the rest of the people in the Philippines. What will they do if we come home? Especially now, when the economy is low. What will they do? If we lose our jobs here, how about all of the children of the Philippines. This is for the Philippines. Sacrifice for the Philippines. One third of our earnings

will be left to us. And all of the earnings go to the Philippines. (ISA member, October 2008)

Filipino women overseas workers are thus not only responding to gendered global labor demands but to a Philippine-based rhetoric of heroism for their country and family. Here, Joy talks through her tears as she remembers her children, a sensitive topic for many of the domestic workers who talk through their migration story with me. The moral economy for the women reflects back the obligations they have to their children and families. Again fitting in with the traditional moral economic model, Joy incorporates her decision to migrate as part and parcel of producing and reproducing a life for their families in the Philippines. Much of the women's sacrifices have to do with love for their family and hope for the future, however, they also carry a broader moral burden. In the same breath, Joy is also talking about how women's migration also carries implications for the socio-economic changes and shifts in their country as part of the moral economy they construct for themselves.

As Joy continues discussing the issues that swirl around in her head as she thinks about being away from home, she mentions that she also feels responsible for the situation of the young people in the Philippines. When Joy speaks about job insecurity, she acknowledges a generalized conception that overseas work is a mechanism for rescuing the future of the Philippines. When women leave the Philippines to support their family, the nation becomes an extension of one's family. Instead of focusing solely on the family as the reason to migrate out of the Philippines, the prosperity of the country is also folded into the reasoning of migration. With the family and future generations of children as the rhetorical basis of migration, mothers become the narrowest target for the migration. In a staunchly Roman Catholic country, women's responsibility over the home and the family has not waned with the progression of women's rights and visibility in the public sphere. Ultimately, this dynamic has worked paradoxically, the visibility of women as economic agents compounded on their domestic responsibilities makes them the most available and reliable workers to be sent out to the world market. Women, as the responsible parties for the growth and success of their children and family, are compelled to step up to earn because "they can" and they "need to."

Robyn Rodriguez examines two specific moments in the labor migration history of the Philippines as evidence of the nation-state's loyalty to capital and more importantly, as a beginning discourse that craft migrants as heroes

of Philippine society (2002). As emigrants were exported under the Marcos dictatorship, *balikbayan* or "returnees to the nation" (literally translated) programs were set up for emigrants who lived outside the Philippines allowing them to invest their money back into the country in remittances and frequent visits back home (2002: 346). As laborers are sent to any and all the corners of the world, the Philippine state reminds her global citizens of their obligations to save the failing economy. Working under the mechanisms of personal freedom and agency, the state encourages workers to choose their destinations, simultaneously tying down those freedoms to the Philippine national debt. Rodriguez argues that the neoliberal program of the Philippine state insists on making heroes out of migrant workers thus imposing sanctions on these global citizens to be responsible for the Philippine economy. The dynamic of gender, motherhood and responsibilization woven into the Philippine state's rhetoric of migrant heroism found in these interviews extend Rodriguez' project and critique of a (productive and reproductive) labor-brokering state.

Joy's job as a domestic worker in New York City is a faint echo of the millions of jobs around the world for other Filipino women as domestics. The construction of the Filipino woman's body as an overseas worker hinges on both a gendered imperative and the neoliberal conception of labor as a privilege. Anna Guevarra has argued that this contradiction is a Philippine state ideology wherein Filipino women are at once taking an "empowered" step to earning money and also compelled to leave because of filial obligation (2006). The state rhetoric continues to project women's independence through migration as a characteristic of heroism. Cloaked in feminist ideals, the state has easily brokered women into a global gender division of labor in the name of women's progress. In a sense, feminist calls for equal work opportunities and mobility for women been inculcated by the state's ideology of neoliberal development (Eisenstein 2009).

Here is where the moral economy of the state and immigrant women rub up against each other: Philippine governance claims the Filipino woman in the diaspora becomes evidence towards the advancement of women's economic opportunities and individual freedoms to work and, for Filipino women, migration is an avenue to fulfill their moral obligations to their families. When juxtaposed, they seem to work together to bring better work opportunities for Filipino women and better lives for families in the Philippines. "So I have to go because I could," Joy states in our interview, that if she as a woman has an impetus and the opportunity available to her, she will choose

to leave. The point I want to make is that folded into the moral filial duty of Filipino women, there is an implied national duty they also carry. In the introduction, I quoted Helen when she said, "Without overseas workers, the Philippines is like a sinking boat in the middle of the ocean. And we are the ones saving them," echoing Joy's embodied knowledge, she understands that migration is dual in its purpose, family first and the nation at a close second.

Nevertheless, a contradiction stands: the Philippine government lauds migrant workers while refusing to provide security and basic rights to their migrant heroes. Although there are regulatory institutions like the POEA and the OWWA, the lack of protection and attention to migrant workers once outside of the Philippines, fracture the rhetoric of heroization crafted by the state. Further, the splinters of this breakage spread into the moral economy of immigrant women that find some of its basis in a state-sponsored discourse of *bagong bayani,* modern-day heroes. The violations in these moral economies are apparent in the diasporic locations of Filipino immigrant women as they tackle issues in their receiving state. These ruptures are our next stop, specifically, the death and repatriation of deceased domestic workers.

A CONTRADICTION: SENDING MORE THAN JUST MONEY BACK

PAGKAISA (or ISA) was born in the midst of despair and out of the need to fight for what Filipino domestic workers identified as an integral part of their dignity. In 2007, a small group of domestic workers at a community center in Queens came together around the suicide of a Filipina domestic worker, Fely Garcia, in the Bronx. Through the network of Filipina domestic workers, word spread that Garcia was found by the police in her rented room face down on her bed already deceased and that her body was aimlessly waiting at the morgue since all of her family and friends lived in the Philippines. ISA's inception was to rally around Garcia's death because of the Philippine consulate's refusal to help Fely and the Garcia family. The domestic workers fought a hard campaign with the consulate to retrieve repatriation fees for Garcia to go back home, through rallies, petitions and meeting with consular officials. They fought an even more painful campaign with the community to explain why a modern-day hero of the Philippines was getting such a brush off. ISA's community-based memorial service for Garcia drew hundreds of Filipino immigrant and Filipino American community members who felt a relative connection to an immigrant woman so far away

from her family. Especially at a time of death, the Filipino American community in Queens, New York embraced Garcia as one of their own even though they had never met her, and consequently, the community embraced ISA as an organization of domestic workers that were working on a death of someone who they didn't know personally but could be any one of them.

Because of ISA's steady work to get Garcia's body out of a morgue into a funeral home and then all the way to her province in the Philippines, the campaign to send her home gained international attention. Many angered families in the Philippines came together through an organization called MIGRANTE that revived a national fervor to protect the rights of overseas contract workers. There have been similar incidents of migrant workers isolated in their host countries and then abandoned by the Philippine government in times of need still percolating in collective memory of the families left behind, for example, the hanging of Flor Contemplacion in Singapore (Rodriguez 2001). In the Philippines, Fely Garcia's case added to the deteriorating moral economy in the minds and hearts of Filipino families sacrificing their family members to go abroad. While the paradox of the state-sponsored modern-day heroes is ever pervasive in the halls of government institutions and media, families and migrant workers were feeling the inconsistency in their bodies and represented in the dead body of Fely Garcia.

What moved domestic workers, mostly Filipino immigrant women, to action two years ago is a conception of justice for migrants that brings together what Morton Deutsch would call "equity, equality and need" (Deutsch 1975). Dignity and respect are foundational components of the gendered moral economy of migration and labor according to Filipino domestic workers, deployed in two ways. First, for ISA members, the dignity of being migrant workers was fostered by the Philippine government's heroization of their overseas occupations wherein, "positions of authority lend dignity to the occupant, but the person needs to behave ethically in order to earn respect, thus maintaining the dignity acquired in their role" (Smyth 2006:4). As the Philippine state lauded the service of their overseas heroes, Filipino women workers abroad work hard and sacrifice much, gaining the respect and dignity promised to them. Second, the domestic workers themselves develop an ethical framework to earn respect through sacrificing their lives with families to go abroad. The blend of a state rhetoric and narratives of filial obligation in the lives of Filipina domestic workers insists on dignity and respect.

> "At the end of it, I asked how much they could give to send Kadija back, they said nothing to me. They wanted to cremate her. They could

not even give her cents to go back as a whole. Wala ba tayong halaga? Do we have no value?" (Field notes, Kadija Asjali's memorial service, September 2008)

Let us think back to the memorial service for Kadija Asjali I opened with earlier in the paper. In Angie's testimony, the dignity of Asjali had been formally violated through the consulate's immobility when Asjali's case was unfolding. Angie asks a rhetorical question to the crowd at the service about the value of "we;" the collective she refers to represents broadly the categories of parents, domestic workers, immigrant women and overseas workers, calling into question the kinds of dignity attached to the moral economy so cultivated by the Philippine state. Through their separations, loyal remittances and daily labor, domestic workers feel that they earn the respect of the Philippine state, requiring the dignity that should be afforded to them. But a year and a half and three deceased Filipina immigrant domestic workers[5] later, the Philippine consulate's reticence around repatriation was another slap in the face for ISA. The dignity bestowed upon migrant workers was effectively expunged by the consulate's lethargic response to the deaths of domestic workers in the community. The bankruptcy of the Philippine government's moral economy communicated through their satellite representatives is visible when the state ignores domestic workers' dire need for assistance at a time of death.

The distrust of the domestic workers towards the consular office and the Philippine state in general is apparent. The DFA claims that the consulate offices around the world are the representation of the Philippine government abroad, all of which claim to extend the regulatory responsibilities of the aforementioned institutions. Consular offices state that they are the responsible parties to "provide services to support Filipino immigrants" (Philippine Consulate General, NY website 2008). And in contrast ISA members laughed at my suggestion that the consulate office could help them out on their concerns about legal status, low wages, remittances and security. They all agreed that the consulate offices were the representations of the Philippine government but all understood that that these institutions were not invested in their welfare:

Valerie: Eh, what about the consulate?

Rita: (silence for 3 seconds) No, they weren't giving us any help. Because we had a friend there at the consulate…and …we asked him, why is it that when people are raiding houses…there's no…they don't condemn those raids. Because the things Israeli police do when they raid…is they come barging in at two in the morning, really like wee

> hours in the morning. Sometimes, they follow you from the disco, they follow you home and then they come and get you—the people who don't have papers. So we complained one time back then, why does it have to be like that? Our friend, Jose, I forgot his last name, he said, "When that happens, you have to report it!" Eh, it's done! What I mean to say is that there's nothing...no..."Before the raids happen this is what you are supposed to do." Nothing eh! No one informs us, what are our rights anyway, nothing. We feel like, you don't have rights because you don't have papers! (Rita, main organizer of ISA, August 2008)

In Rita's story about her time in Israel, she clearly looks to the Philippine consulate to denounce the unfair treatment of migrant workers. Although undocumented Filipino immigrants are legally in the hands of their receiving state, Rita renders the Philippine state as a responsible governmental body because she sees that institution as a repository of information for migrants' rights, at the very least. However, the lack of response from these offices, wherever they are in the world, is evidence that the moral economy the state invests in through the rhetoric of balikbayan and migrant heroes falls short of providing dignity to migrant domestics in New York. The consulate's reticence around repatriating the bodies of Asjali and Garcia violates the trope of "migrant heroes," rendering immigrant women workers as disposable and dispensable within the global economy (Wright 2006). The value of Asjali and Garcia's laboring bodies in the global economy expired with their death and therefore the moral orientation of heroes expired for her as well, in the eyes of the Philippine state.

The metaphorical significance of the bodies of Asjali and Garcia for this group of domestic workers is succinctly summarized by Rita's comment at Asjali's memorial service:

> In the back row, I sat with Rita, the domestic worker support network's main organizer; she took my hand as she started to cry. She bended towards me and said, "Palagi patay ang pinababalik natin. Ni isang buhay, wala." ("We only send back dead people. We can't even send back a live person.")

Rita's tearful aside is not only mourning the fact that ISA's balikbayans are all deceased but that their trip back is riddled with strife, struggle and a denial of financial support for the return. Following the logic of immigrant women's moral economy, many of the women overstay in the US as long as they can bear it before returning, knowing that going home means never

being able to come back to the US to make the kind of money they are making as domestics.

In a mixture of exile due to the constrictions of legal and economic conditions, the moral economy of domestic workers to be providers trumps their rights to be with their families. They leave the country and their families to support and provide from afar. They know they cannot go back until they have saved enough, put enough kids through school, secured a house and lot, and the list goes on. Their desires to be with their families and to provide for them are set under the conditions of separation. But even in death, a dignified burial and return home is up for contention? This is the violation of the moral economies that lock horns during these moments of grief. The dignity and respect due to heroes are readily abandoned as the immigrant women demand claims to the state's moral economy. Symbolically, the bodies of immigrant women as overseas workers are invisible as long as they leave for work, remit and return for visits. But the dead bodies of Filipino migrant workers magnifies their visibility because at that point of vulnerability, the state ought to be primary in fulfilling the moral economic promises they set forth for the country's modern-day heroes. Taking the corpses of immigrant women workers back home to the Philippines and to their families for burial is the very basic sign of dignity and respect that domestic workers demand of their government when they are abroad. And yet, this is even too hard a task to complete for the Philippine's heroes.

CONCLUSION: MORAL ECONOMY AS CRITIQUE AND REVISIONS

Even though the Philippine state invests in institutions like the DFA, POEA and OWWA to "protect" migrant workers and their rights, why do the deceased bodies of migrant workers present such a problem? The conflict that presents itself in these particular cases demonstrate the contradictory moral economies with the state, immigrant women and between the conceptualization of the two. The moral economies do not match. For the neoliberal state of the Philippines, a pseudomoral economy of migrant heroes is a strategy to integrate into a global capitalist economic stage at the cost of citizens, migrant rights and domestic "development". While the wave of migration-as-development is the rule of thumb in an era of globalization, the state will most likely deliver their Filipino citizens to the global economy. If immigrants send dead bodies back, the moral economy of the state is likely to be tarnished. Anything more than remittances, goods and stories of success is not welcome. The Philippine state is invested in a certain type of moral

economy and therefore the lifeless corporeal objects of citizens are rogue representations to their savior rhetoric. Therefore the state disengages. Repatriation and resolving migrant issues and rights outside of their own territories are not part of developing a global economic status.

The neoliberal state often plays a clear role when it comes to facilitating export-led growth and short-term answers to deeply toxic issues of globalization but it is also often unstable and incongruous in the application of quick fix strategies provided by neoliberal theory (Harvey 2001). The evidence in this paper proves that the strategies of migration as development is fundamentally flawed as it is compromises people's safety, dignity and rights to be respected as family members, workers and citizens of a nation. Trends of Filipinos continuing to leave the Philippines suggest that people are exercising agency towards cosmopolitanism, however, if asked, Filipina migrant workers themselves answer that they would rather be with their families in their home country.

For immigrant women, a moral economy based on the family and the Philippines as a nationalist referent allows them to leave their homes, knowing that dignity and respect is afforded to them for making such a sacrifice. Their migration is based on being good providers, parents who offer a better future for their children and, undoubtedly woven into their stories, good citizens to their nations. However, in times of desperation and need, like in the cases of Asjali and Garcia, the government's negligence around assisting its diasporic subjects confirms the contrasting objectives of the Philippine state and immigrants. The women of ISA understand this as a violation of their own moral economies even if they did not buy in wholly to the state's discourse of immigration. The refusal to repatriate the bodies of domestic workers in New York is a breach of dignity and respect they have earned by leaving the country in the name of their families and the nation.

I am not suggesting that the Philippines, or any sending state at that, be responsible for all the citizens of the country that choose to leave for various reasons. I am aware that transnational governance is constricted by bilateral relationships between nation-states and host countries must also assert their own sovereign governance over people living in their territorial bounds. However, if the Philippine nation-state is so invested in exporting its citizens to the world through fostering a moral economy of migrant heroes, they must hold up their end of the deal as they claim that migrant regulation and protection is a part of that campaign. Or else the moral economy touted by the Philippine government is an empty and promissory one.

The violations in the moral economy of the state towards their migrant citizen expose the limits of the modern-day hero rhetoric. The investment of the Philippine state in maintaining a migrant labor-brokering machine stops within the bounds of the country as soon as overseas workers leave.

> Valerie: What is the role of the government when you get to your destination?
>
> Andrea: Basically, you're on your own because when you're working already they're not gonna ask you what happens to you every hour, day to day. If you get sick, they wouldn't ask you about that. If you get a sickness, which is a big deal now, to them, NO! They wouldn't ask that. They would just say this is what they want from you and that's it! (Andrea, ISA organizer, November 2008)

Andrea recounts the expectations that domestic workers have towards the Philippine state, and she honestly describes the types of treatment they expect to get. There is common knowledge between the domestic workers that as soon as you leave the country, claims for rights are scarce and inaccessible from the Philippine government, despite the existence of numerous nationally funded migrant institutions. However, if we look through the lens of the moral economies that are the foundation of a vast Filipino diasporic geography, we find that conflict centers like the struggle to repatriate fellow domestic workers become a moment of anger, unity and perhaps redefinition of rights and justice.

Instead of a forthright process of repatriation, the situations of Asjali, Garcia and many other overseas workers dying abroad, brings to light a break down in the morality promulgated by the state. These failures by the state allow a revision of the moral economy for immigrant women. The deaths of Fely Garcia and Putli Asjali brought ISA together in ways that continues to splinter off into different revisions of a moral economy for immigrants. An example of a re-vision of is the blossoming of a sisterhood that allows immigrant women to support one another emotionally, spiritually and physically. ISA is expanding the meaning of justice by including immigrant women's holistic needs, fostering a moral community based on their economic work, familial and personal relations with their families and with each other. In expanding the conception of what is included in their moral economy and community, ISA members are revising the issues they can claim justice for (Opotow 1995). Justice does not only mean decent conditions for labor and a living wage, but it means respect and dignity for their bodies, their families and their health.

The moral community in ISA is forged in the spirit of solidarity and equality; it becomes a culture of accountability to each other through job security, health and safety. These are exciting steps. Immigrant women are finding support from one another through collective action and organizing. The women share a common sympathy for their collective story of transnational families and children in the Philippines, thus looking out for each other in their diasporic community revises the conception of the moral economy defined by their obligations to the Philippines, both family and nation. For the women of ISA, a diaspora-based moral economy is a welcomed revision as they continue to build a foundation based in their neighborhoods, borough and community. They reimagine the geography of the community they are accountable for, starting all the way from their families in the Philippines and now include their peers and community in New York. The creativity of ISA is not just a reaction to the collusion of the Philippine and US states to engender invisibility to workers like them. It is a reimagining, restorying and revising of models of diaspora and moral economy. The home-host dichotomy is braided into each other through ISA's edits of the scope of their moral community and therefore justice. The active construction of justice and moral community is a production of diaspora. ISA is the manifestation of networks, spaces and collectives created by immigrant women that is then filled up with their diaspora-grown purposes: political critique, friendship, a yearning for home, establishing a home away from home.

This paper offers an insight in the ways economies and governance intersects in the lives of Filipino immigrant women. I have shown that in the efforts of the Philippine state to integrate into a global capitalist economy, discursive, moral and political economies must also be mobilized to buttress such an effort. These state practices can be traced through the institutionalization of neoliberalism in migration and governance (Smith 2003). Further, and perhaps more importantly, this paper reveals the implications of neoliberalism and migration as development on the everyday lives of Filipino immigrant women. Proven by intense conflicts like the deaths of domestic workers and the contradictions in the construction of moral economies, the state's practices to push out people and then, their incapacity to take care of their global workforce haunts the present and future terms of immigrant women. However, ironic as it may sound, the possibilities for political mobilization from inside the violations of moral economies abound, in that, these moments of crisis allows domestic workers to critique the moral economies of the state as it stands. These moments hold the potential for a

revisioning and reimagining of a diasporic moral economy that fuse place-based issues with transnational concerns. In looking at the different processes that produce diaspora, rhetoric of modern heroes and the morality of leaving and return, demonstrate the diaspora is a contested conception, space and lived experience. Lastly, this study offers a methodology of juxtaposition to illuminate the transformation of socio-economic relations occurring in the current moment of globalization and neoliberalism. Putting the narratives of the state side by side of overseas workers tells us much about the implications of neoliberal governmentality and governance on the lives of the people who live in and through the consequences.[6]

NOTES

1 For a deeper discussion on the Philippine state's creation and management of migrant institutions, please read Anna Gueverra's illuminating work, "Managing 'Vulnerabilities' and 'Empowering' Migrant Filipina Workers: the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency."

2 This quote comes directly from the DFA website history page (http://www.dfa.gov.ph/about/about-us.htm). For a deeper discussion of the these institutions, please see Robyn Rodriguez, forthcoming.

3 Executive Order 797 can be found in these internet archives (http://www.lawphil.net/executive/execord/eo1982/eo_797_1982.html). The services of the POEA can also be found on their website.

4 The picture is published on a nursing recruitment agency website (http://www.iqteam.com) sponsored by a government institution, the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA).

5 Between the deaths of Fely Garcia and Kadija Mansali, another domestic worker, Margerie Talumban, committed suicide in another mysterious case just as her son had come to join her. Talumban's arrangement with an American citizen for green card status and employers were never investigated.

6 The incongruence in immigrant narratives juxtaposed to state storylines litter homes, neighborhoods and communities. The promise of citizenship for undocumented youth for their service to the US military has taken many young Filipino men and women to Iraq. The claim that they are American heroes and the refusal in showing their faces or their caskets when the dead bodies come home serve as a iteration of the hero narratives and economies. It compels me to further study how the parallels

in heroisms and moralities and bodies as corporeal objects and ask under what conditions are citizenship and membership so up for grabs?

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