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From Marcos to Aquino Governments: State Sponsorship of Diaspora Philanthropy

Abstract The paper probes into labor migration policies and the evolution of discourses nested in these policies as endorsements of diaspora philanthropy. It reviews government policies on labor migration and diaspora philanthropy and makes sense of the contents of these policies through frame and discourse analyses. Neoliberalism permeates Philippine migration policy-making, positions Filipino labor migration as a crucial national development strategy, and diaspora philanthropy as its byproduct. The “OFWs as Modern-day Heroes Frame” powers and sustains diaspora philanthropy through volunteering, fund-raising, and other practices, to help promote local development. State sponsorship may help explain diaspora philanthropy despite the deterritorialized nature of the phenomenon, which, in turn, appears to contribute to nation-building.

Keywords migrant giving, diaspora philanthropy, state sponsorship, deterritorialization, transnationalism

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From Marcos to Aquino Governments: State Sponsorship of Diaspora Philanthropy

Introduction



Diaspora philanthropy or migrant giving is a recent phenomenon in Asia. It involves sending “donations back to Asian countries for purposes of charitable, social, economic, cultural, religious, and other forms of development, as distinct from family relief, business investment, and other forms of remittances” (Sidel, 2008, p. 3). Although it has several forms, contributions for religious or charitable purposes happened earlier than large-scale contributions for the building of universities and support for social justice organizations. It is a relatively under-researched area, which is fertile with data and insights on human migration, globalization, and post-colonial nationhood. Research on the topic started to increase by the late ‘90s, though still limited to Asian countries like India, Philippines, and China.

Early studies on diaspora philanthropy dealt with the Jews in Israel and Mexico. Current researches on the topic, though, deal more with the phenomenon in Asia than in Africa, Latin America, and other regions of the world. Experts give different explanations to the shift in research interest. Sidel (2008) attributes the shift to the “size and demographics of the Asian diaspora population in the West” (p. 4) and to the Middle East and the rich countries

in East Asia like Japan. He notes that the relative wealth of the Asian diaspora, the “growing numbers and wealth of Indian, Chinese and Filipinos abroad” (Sidel, 2008, p. 3), and the prominent role they play as donors in their countries of origin might have fueled the shift. The recent attention coming from migrant-sending countries and the efforts of local research institutions would also partly explain it. In addition, international institutions such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Global Equity Initiative based in Harvard University encouraged research interest on the subject.

Sidel¹ (2008) identifies four gaps in research on Filipino diaspora philanthropy for the last ten years. These gaps relate to (1) the types of diaspora, (2) the channels of diaspora, (3) the nature of diaspora for religious causes, and (4) the relationships between remittance flows, diaspora, and diaspora-promoted social development. He mentions that, because “the pace and sophistication of the diaspora philanthropy practice to Asia is ahead of research,” there is a “need for better understanding of philanthropic intermediaries” (p. 14). In Philippine context, he cites the “insufficient research on diaspora giving in natural disasters,” particularly the “role of diaspora giving in recovery and redevelopment after natural disasters” (pp. 13-14).

Jeremaiah Opiniano (2002) researched on diaspora philanthropy (also, transnational migrant philanthropy) in the town of Pozorrubio,² Pangasinan. He conducted face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation with community leaders in Pozorrubio, and online correspondence with Pozorrubio migrants in the United States, Hong Kong, and China. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) from Pozorrubio donated money for public utilities and medical equipment for the town’s only hospital. Donors from the United States were wealthier than those from Hong Kong who were mostly domestic workers.³

Opiniano recommends more research on transnational diaspora philanthropy. He identifies action research and best practice studies as effective methods for research. He also states that there is a need to allocate donations not only to hometown development but also to programs designed to “offset the dangerous social costs of migration” on family members left-behind, especially the children of the OFWs (Opiniano, 2002, p. 1). He underscores the need to channel OFW donations to local economies in order to “transform the costs of migration into opportunities for socio-economic development” (2002, p. 1).

Occupational affiliations, i.e., seafarers, or umbrella organizations set up and managed by Philippine embassies abroad engage in fund-raising activities to support various small and medium-scale projects. The OFWs volunteer their time and expertise, and they donate money to various projects that include community feeding programs and the construction of classrooms and hospitals in far-flung areas in the country.

Filipino diaspora philanthropy flows through four channels. These channels are: (1) secular, grassroots OFW organizations; (2) “collapsible” multi-sectoral ad hoc networks sporadically established in response to crisis situations like natural disasters, usually headed by Philippine embassies and expatriate Filipino communities; (3) non-government organizations based abroad or in the Philippines; and (4) church-led philanthropy programs.⁴

This paper aims to uncover government policies specific to labor migration and to trace the evolution of government discourse on labor migration as platforms upon which the government promotes diaspora philanthropy. Two approaches, frame and discourse analyses, were used. Frame analysis and discourse analysis are similar in various ways. As “cultural and ideational” approaches to the study of social movements, they underscore the role of ideas in collective action. Both involve the analysis of texts (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002). Frame

analysis is widely applied to the study of social movements and contentious politics since the early 1980s. The idea of frame, though, maybe traced to Bateson in 1954, who defined “frame” as a “mental construct that defines ‘what is going on’ in interactive situations” (p. 63). Goffman (1986) introduced the idea of “framing” in sociology to analyze “layers of framing in interaction” and to examine “conversational conventions” in the usage of and transformations in interpretive frames (pp. 63-64).

Goffman (1986) explains his concept of “frame” as one that “organizes more than meaning” because it “also organizes involvement.” “[A]ll frames involve expectations of a normative kind as to how deeply and fully the individual is to be carried into the activity organized by the frames” (p. 345). He regards the concept of involvement as a “psychobiological process in which the subject becomes at least partly unaware of the direction of his feelings and his cognitive attention” (p. 346). Referring to “involvement” as “engrossment,” he views the concept as “an interlocking obligation” (p. 346), which suggests that if a person fails to keep his attention directed in a strip of activity, it affects other persons in the group whose levels of involvement might adjust upon observing others.

Goffman’s notion of frame as an organizing mechanism of meaning and involvement is used to make sense of the various diaspora philanthropy activities of OFWs in Japan. The idea of “involvement as an interlocking obligation” is used to capture diaspora philanthropy as a form of collective behavior in the context of a social movement. Frame analysis is used to understand the volunteering and fund-raising activities of OFW networks as a “movement-specific, collective-action” frame. Since there are varied, and at times conflicting conceptions of “frame,” this paper singles out Goffman’s conceptualization of “frame” as a “cognitive structure” or “schema,” with contents that are “hierarchically organized”⁵ (Klandermans and Staggenborg 2002,

p. 64). Frame analysis is deployed to identify key ideas animating Filipino diaspora philanthropy in the review of Philippine labor migration policies across seven governments.

Discourse analysis is used to make sense of the organization and substance of state ideology. Ideology is expressed in discourse, and practice is based on ideology (Van Dijk, 2006). This paper examines diaspora philanthropy as social practice and assumes that certain ideas are responsible for producing diaspora philanthropy. It looks at the ideas produced by the Philippine government in relation to diaspora philanthropy and labor migration in general. Van Dijk (2006) argues that “systematic discourse analysis offers powerful methods to study the structures and functions of underlying ideologies” (p. 115). Arguing that state ideology is imprinted in state policies, this paper utilizes discourse analysis in understanding the ideology that underpins Philippine migration policy.

Discourse analysis became popular about the same time as frame analysis at the beginning of the 1980s in history, literary criticism, and cultural studies (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002). Van Dijk (1997) notes in *Discourse as Structure and Process* that “discourse” and “discourse analysis” (p. 1) are defined in many ways across disciplines. The closest definition of “discourse” to this paper’s goals is the one that Parker offers. He defines discourse as “a system of statements which constructs an object” (1992, p. 145). He adds that discourses emanate from texts. The texts used include policy speeches, presidential state of the nation addresses, government policy documents, and migration literature in order to thresh out government discourse.

Texts may come in various forms such as talk, pictures, symbols, oral reports, and written documents (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough posits that since discourse could not be directly investigated, one should turn to texts in order to trace the

relationship between discourse and social reality. As a graduate student in Japan, I observed diaspora philanthropy, whose social production I am to understand by analyzing government discourse expressed in documents. This paper examines various secondary materials from seven Philippine governments. It follows Fairclough's caveat that discourse analysis should analyze a body of texts produced by different actors from different periods.

Internet research and library research served as data collection methods. Data sources are mostly secondary in nature, culled from the Internet, particularly from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and other government agency websites. Library research was conducted in the Sophia University Central Library in Tokyo, Japan. In the University of the Philippines College of Law Library in Diliman, Quezon City, I used their *Lex Libris* software in order to access the *Philippine Law Encyclopedia 2010* and *Folio Views – Labor and Social Legislation 2010*. Data is presented by means of tables and diagrams.

This paper is limited to understanding how state sponsorship helps produce diaspora philanthropy as a social movement. It hopes to contribute to migration literatures that deal with the relationship between state sponsorship and diaspora philanthropy, particularly how state discourses create OFW philanthropy.

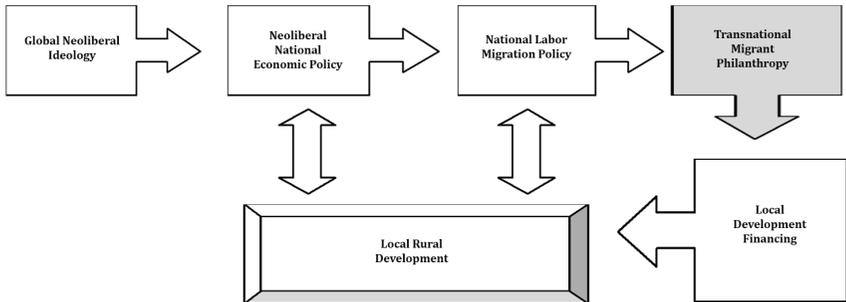
This paper hypothesizes that state sponsorship is a crucial variable that can be used to explain Filipino diaspora philanthropy. The conceptual framework traces the connections between the global and the local, transnationalism and post-colonialism, deterritorialized nation-state building, strategic framing and ideology, economic globalization and cultural/political globalization, governments and social movements, and transnational diaspora philanthropy and local development financing.

Neoliberalism is an ideology that is embedded and manifested in Philippine migration policy. Harvey (2005) argues that it is an economic philosophy and social structure at the same time. He says,

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political and economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit (p. 2).

Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005) write that, “[W]e live in the age of neoliberalism” (p. 1). This paper advances their suggestion that neoliberalism is a global ideology that works through the local. It assumes that neoliberalism influences policy-making that is translated into programs by state agencies.

Figure 1 shows the global-local dynamics involved in the construction of diaspora philanthropy. Neoliberalism shapes migration policies and creates out-migration in developing countries. The OFWs try to “keep their feet in both worlds,”⁶ i.e., engaging in volunteering and fund-raising activities, that create “transnational migrant philanthropy” (Levitt, 2003, p. 459). In Philippine contexts, they donate to beneficiary institutions, i.e.,

Figure 1. The Global-Local Dynamics of Diaspora Philanthropy

government agency, NGO, hometown association, church congregation, charity institution, etc., for local development.

The term “ideology,” as a multidisciplinary concept, is social, cognitive, and discursive. It is a “system of ideas,” “belief systems,” or “shared representations of social groups.” As “axiomatic principles” of such representations, ideologies “control and organize other socially shared beliefs” (Van Dijk, 2006, pp. 115-116). This paper assumes that neoliberalism is a global ideology that “controls” and “organizes” social practices at all levels (global, national, local), and produces labor migration and diaspora philanthropy as transnational phenomena. Transnationalism is a process that requires border-crossing between countries, and, in the case of diaspora philanthropy, between the sending and the receiving countries.

Ideology structures group “identity, actions, aims, norms and values, and resources as well as its relations to other social groups” (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 15). It is also “expressed and generally reproduced in the social practices” (p. 15) of the members of a cultural community. It interfaces with discourse in the sense that it is through discourse that it is “acquired, confirmed, changed and perpetuated” (p. 115). Discourse analysis lends a

methodological tool to uncover the ideology behind social practices and political rhetoric.

Collective action frames, though, must be differentiated from ideologies. Ancelevici (2002) explains,

Collective action frames do not entail a consensus or support for specific policies, and they are not as elaborated, encompassing and coherent as ideologies. They are interpretive schemata that simplify events and experiences, redefine situations as unjust, and connect several distinct grievances (p. 432).

This paper uses the “Overseas Filipino Workers⁷ as modern-day heroes” (*bagong bayani*) as the master or national frame to explain the relationship between policy and diaspora. The frame demands that, as modern-day heroes, the OFWs should remain connected with the home country however economic the connection may be. The demand is about remitting their incomes to their families in the Philippines, rather than sending philanthropic donations for collective development projects. It is in this context that Filipino diaspora philanthropy emerges as an “accidental by-product” of the master frame. Citing McAdam and Sewell, Ancelevici says,

Strategic framing implies adherence to a nonroutine and conflictual definition of the situation... but this definition is in itself a product of earlier processes of collective interpretation and social construction (2002, p. 431).

A History of Diaspora Philanthropy

To understand Filipino diaspora philanthropy, there is a need to examine the emergence of labor migration as a development strategy.

Labor migration has been going on for the last four centuries. Colonial governments promoted or resisted migration. In Spanish times, migration flows were the anti-colonial migratory movements from 1565 to 1898; in American times, student and

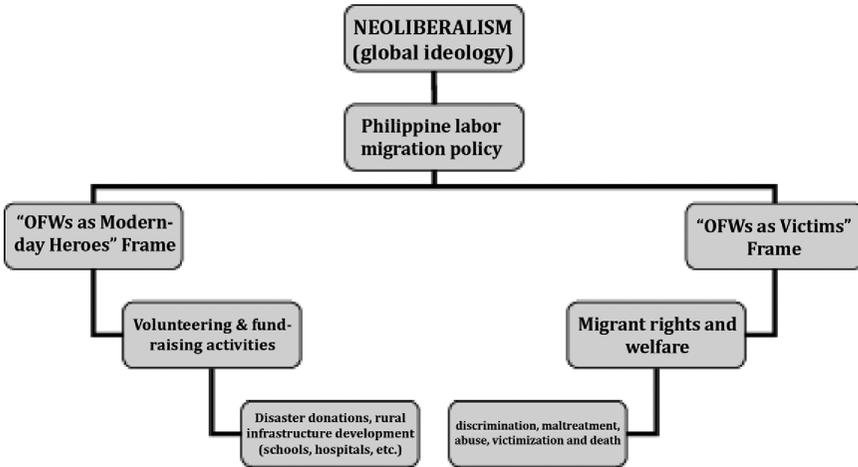
labor migration flows from 1898 to 1946 (Tyner, 2004). The history of labor migration reflects the twists and turns of the global economy. In the 1970s, the OFWs preferred the oil-rich Middle East countries, such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. However, by the late 1990s, an Asianization trend emerged as more OFWs headed to destinations such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan. A feminization trend also appeared as more Filipinas became OFWs.

The Philippines sends more than 700,000 workers to over 160 countries yearly. It is the “world’s largest supplier of government-sponsored contract labor” (Tyner, 2004, p. 2). At the turn of the 21st century, the number of Filipinos leaving the country each year was by the millions. In 2012 for example, 1,802,031 Filipino workers went abroad for work. Majority of them (1,435,166) were land-based workers, while the rest (366,865) were sea-based (www.poea.gov.ph).

Framing Diaspora Philanthropy

Figure 2 shows a frame structure that contains different nodes or points of information, a general description of the master frame, and subordinate elements (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002).

Under the sponsorship of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, neoliberalism structures labor migration policy and implementation in developing countries. In Philippine context, the process can be traced to the Marcos government in the 1970s. “[A] particular discursive formation undergirding Marcos’s development diplomacy is apparent, namely that of neoclassical liberalism” (Tyner, 2004, p. 35). In neoclassical approach, population movement is posited as a “natural response to regional disparities” (p. 35). On the individual level, the model assumes that individuals make “cost-benefit decisions based on pre-existing regional imbalances in wage and/or employment rates” (p. 35). At the aggregate level, the model predicts that

Figure 2. Master Frame of Filipino Diaspora Philanthropy⁸

migration will cease when wage levels reach equilibrium. According to former Labor Secretary Blas Ople (1979),

When... I started the overseas employment program in 1974, I premised this on the theory that in less than two decades that the Philippine economy will have grown so robust the program could then self-destruct (p. 22).

State sponsorship of labor migration is ideologically justified in the eyes of Filipino policy makers. The state produces and perpetuates neoliberalism through the “OFWs as Modern-day Heroes” frame. The success of diaspora philanthropy reveals the extent of influence that the frame wields in driving the collective action of Filipino OFW networks. Collective action involves volunteering and fund-raising for various purposes, i.e., raising donations for natural disaster victims, rural infrastructure development, and so forth.

In contrast to the “OFWs as Modern-day Heroes” frame is the “OFWs as Victims Frame” from the Left side of Philippine politics. The rhetoric focuses on OFW rights and welfare that touch on

issues like discrimination, maltreatment, abuse, victimization, and death while working abroad. It is positioned as an alternative to state ideology and purveyed under contentious politics.

Discursive Shifts in Labor Migration

Table 1 shows discursive shifts in labor migration through time, organized temporally according to the length of each government, as a “container” for regime-specific policy.

Labor migration policy of the Philippines underwent discursive shifts through six governments. It was first conceived during the Marcos regime as a stop-gap mechanism to mitigate domestic unemployment. It co-existed with a development diplomacy framework that bore the rhetoric of self-sacrifice (Tyner, 2004). It was the Cory Aquino government that created the “OFWs as modern-day heroes” frame (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc, 1994). Tyner (2004) claims that the “rhetoric of self-sacrifice” (p. 40) of the Marcos regime was missing under the Cory Aquino government. The Marcos rhetoric of self-sacrifice ceased to be sufficient, as the post-Marcos political sphere necessitated a new discursive framing of overseas employment for “self-fulfillment,” “social mobility,” or “personal growth” (Tyner, 2004, p. 41) rather than simply the pursuit of jobs or money.

An important discursive shift in Philippine labor migration took place during the Ramos (1992) government. Thus,

Overseas employment remains a viable and legitimate alternative for Filipino workers. However, it should be among many available options – not as a single, almost desperate, path to social mobility and personal growth (p.3).

The Ramos government introduced a “discourse of legitimacy” (Tyner, 2004, p. 41) to labor migration in response to public anger in the Philippines stirred by the mysterious death of Maricris Sioson, an entertainer in Japan.

Table 1. Evolution of Labor Migration Policy

Period	Evolution of Labor Migration Policy
Ferdinand Marcos Government, 1965-1986	The Marcos regime's policy of development diplomacy required the standardization of all economic and labor policies (including its labor migration policy) in accordance with the neoclassical liberal model. (Basch, et al 1994, pp. 2-3)
Corazon Aquino Government, 1986-1992	The first Aquino regime effectively maintained and even expanded the Marcos-authored labor export policy, notwithstanding the mounting criticism against overseas employment (Tyner 2004, p. 38). The <i>Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 1987-1992</i> proclaimed labor migration as a national development goal as shown in the following statements: (a) "Overseas employment will continue to provide interim employment until such time that the domestic economy can generate enough jobs." and (b) "Labor market facilitation for both local and overseas workers shall be improved to bring people and jobs together."
Fidel V. Ramos Government, 1992-1998	The Ramos regime continued the labor migration policy of the previous governments, stating that overseas employment was a "major pillar of national development" and a "strategic development program" espoused by the government. (Ramos, 1992, p. 6)
Joseph Ejercito Estrada Government, 1998-ousted in January 2001	The Estrada regime also continued the labor migration policy of its predecessors, witnessing the economic redemption of the Philippine economy with the aftermath of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis through OFW remittances. The regime moved for greater institutionalization of migration through the issuance of <i>Executive Order No. 203</i> in January 20, 2000 to establish "An Inter-Agency Committee on the Shaped Government Information System for Migration." This mandated the linking of various government databases concerning Filipino migrants. (http://www.chanrobles.com/sotnaerap1.htm ; http://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph)
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Government, 2001-2010	The Macapagal-Arroyo regime further institutionalized labor migration by not only facilitating it, but by acting as a recruiter. Her government matched global labor demand with local labor supply, inviting foreign recruiters to come to the Philippines to meet local talent. (Garchitorena, 2007). The 2004-2010 Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan developed under the Arroyo government was able to integrate "international migration in national development planning." In fact, it was dubbed as a "global model of managing international migration." (Opiniano 2010, 6) Through TESDA, her regime also instituted a "supermaids" program which involves instructing domestic helpers in doing first aid, evacuations from high-rises in case of a fire and other skills.
Benigno Simeon Aquino III Government, 2010-present	The second Aquino regime highlighted the need for local job creation in order to mitigate unemployment and lessen the dependence on labor migration. And while jobs are being created at home, the regime sought to expand migrant welfare protection. Within the first 100 days of President Aquino, <i>Republic Act 10022</i> that amended the <i>Migrant Workers Act of 1995</i> had been signed into law. The amended version expanded migrant protection, by highlighting greater bilateral and multilateral relations with Filipino migrant worker-receiving countries and ordered the Department of Foreign Affairs to issue an assessment and certification within 90 days of labor markets which is the basis for deployment of workers by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. This aims to eliminate migrant vulnerability through the avoidance of high-risk geographic areas and occupations. (http://www.philstar.com ; http://www.abs-cbnnews.com)

The discourse again shifted following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, when President Estrada referred to the OFWs as “economic saviors.” In his *State of the Nation Address* in 1999, he lauded the OFWs for their contribution to the country’s stability during the crisis. He said,

In 1998, most of our Asian neighbors sank into recession. In contrast, our country managed a modest but positive growth of one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) in our Gross National Product. However, our Gross Domestic Product dipped by one-half of one percent (0.5%) during the year. In the first quarter of this year, our GNP abruptly surged upward by 2% and our GDP by 1.2%. Last year, we were struggling to keep ourselves from sinking. Today, we are sailing towards the high seas again. It is time once more to pay tribute to a special class of Filipinos: our overseas workers. They, as a group, kept our GNP growth at positive rates even during the worst of times. They continue to be our economic saviors. (<http://www.gov.ph/1999/07/26/joseph-ejercito-estrada-second-state-of-the-nation-address-july-26-1999/>).

The tendency to maximize the economic gains of labor migration intensified under the Macapagal-Arroyo government. The government considered the OFWs as the top export and the state as the top recruiter. Treating OFWs as if they are “milking cows,” President Macapagal-Arroyo aggressively recruited Filipinos for overseas employment.

The Benigno Aquino government shifted the attention away from overseas employment to domestic job creation. President Benigno Aquino III said,

Our goal is to create jobs at home so that there will be no need to look for employment abroad. However, as we work towards that end, I am ordering the DFA, POEA, OWWA, and other relevant agencies to be even more responsive to the needs and welfare of our overseas Filipino workers (<http://www.philstar.com/breaking-news/588762/inaugural-speech-president-benigno-s-aquino-iii-english>).

Neoliberalism as an Ideology

Table 1 shows that the government is aware of neoliberalism. In October 1998, a white paper entitled, "Managing International Labor Migration and the Framework for the Deregulation of the POEA," appeared. It contends that, "Managing a global phenomenon starts with understanding the philosophy of humankind, dynamics of migration, history and natural laws which cannot be repealed" (Casco, 1997, p. 2). It suggests surrender to global forces in the determination of state policy. Thus,

The economic law of supply and demand is an irrepressible force in the global labour market, [more so] now with the globalization era. Unfortunately, this reality seems overshadowed by the application of national labour laws and administrative systems that perpetuate a pathological fallacy that labour migration is a program creation or innovation of government to address employment gaps (Casco, 1997, pp. 2-3).

All governments since the fall of the Marcos regime focused on the economic benefits of international labor migration. They took advantage of the demand created by labor shortages in developed countries to offset domestic unemployment. President Ramos said,

Overseas employment... helps rectify world imbalances of income and human resources... Countries with large incomes but inadequate skilled manpower are able to help and get help from low-income countries with labor surpluses through international labor migration (1992, p. 6).

It was during the Ramos government that the Philippine Congress passed a landmark legislation, the *Migrant Workers Act of 1995* or the *Magna Carta for Overseas Filipino Workers*, to safeguard the rights and welfare of the OFWs.

Table 2 shows that diaspora philanthropy is a by-product of migrant labor policy. It was the Ramos government that

recognized the potentials of diaspora philanthropy to fund development programs. President Ramos (1992) said that, OFW “also generates valuable foreign exchange which is necessary to fund development projects and strategic programs” (p. 6).

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that the government considers OFWs crucial actors in nation-building. Migrant labor policy democratized through time, starting with mandatory remittances, which died a natural death in the post-Marcos era. The first Aquino government also recognized the contributions of the OFWs to national development. Although it did not require philanthropy or remittances, the government indirectly endorsed diaspora philanthropy through state ideology. The Ramos government incorporated the OFW phenomenon in its “economic diplomacy” agenda. The short-lived Estrada government continued the trend, effecting not so much change. It was the Macapagal-Arroyo government that became the most aggressive labor exporter. It was responsible for the “Supermaids” program (Javellana, 2006). It remains to be seen whether the labor policy of President Benigno Aquino would stem labor migration in the years to come.

Theorizing Diaspora Philanthropy

The Association of Foundations defines “migrant philanthropy” as “the act of compatriots based overseas to support development initiatives in the motherland” (Opiniano, 2005, p.2). Diaspora philanthropy can be theorized in three ways: (1) as a social movement; (2) as transnationalism; and (3) as a new discursive formation.

As Social Movement

Social movement refers to “qualities such as collective and innovative behavior, extra-institutionality, their network character and multi-centeredness, the shifting and fluid boundaries of movement membership, and the willingness of members to disrupt order” (Klandermans and Roggeband, 2007, p. 4). There

Table 2. Policy, Diaspora Philanthropy, and Nation-building

Period	Policy, Diaspora Philanthropy, and Nation-building
Ferdinand Marcos Government, 1965-1986	<p>1. Framed within a “discourse of development diplomacy,” overseas employment became an opportunity to satisfy the Philippine development goal which particularly involved the state sponsorship of remittances (where philanthropic donations may have been likely viewed in an “unbounded” manner): “the strategy was expected to promote Philippine development and alleviate balance of payment problems through mandatory remittances.”</p> <p>2. Enshrined in Article 22 of the 1974 <i>Labor Code of the Philippines</i>: “all Filipino workers were (and still are) required to remit a portion of their foreign exchange earnings to their families, dependants, and/or beneficiaries in the Philippines.”</p> <p>-The amount varies by occupation: sea-based workers are mandated to remit 80 percent of their earnings; doctors, engineers, teachers, nurses, and other professional workers whose contracts provide for free board and lodging must remit 70 percent; and domestic and other service workers are required to remit 50 percent.”</p> <p>3. Former President Marcos used the term “balikbayan” for the first time in a speech; he established “Balikbayan” (Homecomers) regulations encouraging “Filipino migrants overseas to visit their home country”; he also announced new regulations to facilitate their return</p> <p>Source: Basch, et al, 1994, pp. 2-3</p>
Corazon Aquino Government, 1986-1992	<p>1. Former President Aquino issued <i>Proclamation No. 276</i> in 1988 declaring December of every year as the “Month of Overseas Filipinos” in order “to give recognition to Filipinos abroad and encourage their participation in development activities in the country.”</p> <p>Source: <i>Philippine Law Encyclopedia 2010</i></p>
Fidel V. Ramos Government, 1992-1998	<p>1. In June 14, 1996, former President Ramos issued <i>Executive Order (E.O.) No. 346</i>, which amended <i>Executive Orders No. 728 and 938</i>, redefining “the organizational structure, functional thrusts and providing for the operational guidelines of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas.”</p> <p>2. <i>E.O. 346</i> promulgated “economic diplomacy as a major development strategy” which is also “aimed at harnessing the fullest potentials of overseas Filipinos as partners in the development efforts of the country.”</p> <p>3. It was under the Ramos government when <i>Republic Act (R.A.) No. 8042</i> or the <i>Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995</i> was promulgated in June 7, 1995. The complete title of the Act is: <i>An Act to Institute the Policies of Overseas Employment and Establish a Higher Standard of Protection and Promotion of the Welfare of Migrant Workers, Their Families and Overseas Filipinos in Distress, and For Other Purposes.</i></p>

	<p>4. It is important to note that <i>R.A. 8042</i> modified and softened the outright endorsement of overseas employment by the Marcos and Aquino government by transforming the discursive framing of migration. Section 2 of the Act states that, "While recognizing the significant contribution of Filipino migrant workers to the national economy through their foreign exchange remittances, the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. The existence of the overseas employment program rests solely on the assurance that the dignity and fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Filipino citizen shall not, at any time, be compromised or violated. The State, therefore, shall continuously create local employment opportunities and promote the equitable distribution of wealth and the benefits of development." Source: <i>Philippine Law Encyclopedia 2010</i></p>
<p>Gloria Macapagal Arroyo Government, 2001-2010</p>	<p>1. Former President Arroyo issued <i>Administrative Order (A.O.) No. 202</i> in October 10, 2007 mandating the creation of an "Inter-Agency Committee for the Celebration of the Month of Overseas Filipinos and International Migrants Day," stating that "the Philippine government recognizes the Month of Overseas Filipinos and the International Migrants Day as avenues for collective action to promote the welfare of Filipino migrants, recognize their role in nation building and national development, strengthen their ties with the Philippines and raise public awareness on various issues concerning migrants." 2. <i>Under A.O. No. 202</i>, Former President Arroyo also ordered the Commission of Filipinos Overseas (CFO), an agency under the Office of the President, "to strengthen the ties of Filipinos overseas with the Philippines, as well as promote their interests in the Philippines and abroad." The CFO, created in 1980, was responsible for various programs that recognized the achievements and contributions to the country of overseas Filipino individuals and organizations, notably through the bi-annual "Presidential Awards for Filipinos and Filipino Organizations Overseas". 3. Former President Arroyo also issued <i>Administrative Order No. 200</i> in October 6, 2007 that mandated the "Reduction of Remittance Fees of OFWs." Section 1 of <i>A.O. 200</i> ordered the Department of Finance, Department of Labor and Employment, Government Financial Institutions and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration to work with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Bankers' Association of the Philippines "on a plan for reducing OFW remittance fees from the current 4%-9% of amounts sent." Source: <i>Philippine Law Encyclopedia 2010</i></p>
<p>Benigno Simeon Aquino III Government,</p>	<p>1. Under the government of President Aquino, <i>R.A. No. 8042</i> was amended by <i>R.A. No. 10022</i> last March 8, 2010, strengthening provisions on migrant welfare protection. Source: <i>Philippine Law Encyclopedia 2010</i></p>

Sources: Tyner (2004); *Philippine Law Encyclopedia, 2010*; *Folio Views - Labor and Social Legislation 2010*.

are two approaches to social movements in sociology: structural and cultural.

The structural approach focuses on how structures are mobilized, how material resources are distributed, and how political opportunities are responsible for the creation of social movements. Smith and Fetner (2007) point to the state as the locus in which social movements operate, hence, highlighting the role of political contexts and mobilizing structures. Global forces shape political contexts and mobilizing structures. Diaspora philanthropy is caused by the push and pull factors of international migration and the structural dynamics of global capitalism and labor markets in the industrialized states. These factors create demands for alien labor in affluent societies from the developing regions of the world.

The cultural approach focuses on how groups and individuals view material conditions and how their cognitive, affective, and ideational dispositions become roots of contention. Jasper stated that the role of “words, artifacts, rituals, events, individuals, and any other action or creation that carries symbolic meanings” (Klandermans and Roggeband, 2007, p. 4) take center stage. I was a witness to a Japan-wide singing competition called *Utawit*, a fusion of the Japanese word *uta* (song) and Filipino word *awit* (song). The contest rules limited the musical pieces to Filipino and Japanese songs only and performers to either Japanese or Filipino individuals only. The cultural approach illuminates on the dynamics of diaspora philanthropy as a social movement.

As Transnationalism

Transnationalism refers to the “multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states (Vertovec, cited in Pries, 2008, p. 1). The linkage fostered by Filipino diaspora philanthropy is transnational in nature. Transnational organizations can serve as the micro-macro links

in transnational studies because they are, according to Pries (2008), “highly decentralized and border-crossing, pluri-locally distributed and, at the same time, intensely coordinated, stable and dense cooperation frameworks with membership rules, deliberately established and variable structures, as well as more or less explicit goals and intentions” (pp. 15-16). Filipino diaspora philanthropy fits, snugly, into Pries’ elaborate model.

Transnationalism is partly founded on “philosophical transnationalism” (Khagram and Levitt, cited in Pries, 2008, p. 5). “Transnational ontology” operates on the assumption that “social phenomena and dynamics takes place within (and across) transnational fields” (p. 5). Drawing from Bourdieu’s conception of “fields,” the Manchester School proposes a notion of social field that view migrants as belonging to “tribal-rural localities and colonial-industrial cities at the same time” (p. 30). This view is particularly relevant in this paper as it regards “migrant networks stretching between... two (or more) sites” as constituting a “single social field created by a network of networks,” which provides a very close depiction of the OFW network, as “tribal-rural localities,” engaging in philanthropy in Japan, as a “colonial-industrial city” (Pries, 2008, pp. 30-31). Pries, citing Lenz, also provides an interesting transnational view of social movements. Contemporary social movements “contest and negotiate with the driving forces of economic globalization” (p. 105). Social movements contest globalization and thereby “contribute to the emergence of political and cultural globalization” (p. 105).

It is important to emphasize the concepts developed by Basch, Schiller, and Blanc (1994). They depict the situation where the Philippines currently finds itself as a “deterritorialized nation-state,” a country still trapped in a “postcolonial predicament,” and the Filipinos outside the country engaging in “transnational projects” like diaspora philanthropy. According to them, “The Filipino transnational social field, built on family networks and

sustained through economic exchanges and gift-giving, has thus been further structured and officially sanctioned by the Philippine state” (p. 3).

As a Discursive Formation

Diaspora philanthropy presents OFWs as development agents. It is a rhetoric powered by government ideology and endorsed by a state machinery, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO). The CFO created the *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino*, (LinKaPil), a pioneering 16-year diaspora philanthropy program. It received a total donation of P2,047,948,015.82 from OFWs all over the world. Majority of the cash donations (24.55%) went to the National Capital Region (NCR), and the remaining amount to 79 provinces. The CFO and OFW donors claim that diaspora philanthropy targets poverty alleviation (Opiniano, 2007).

State sponsorship of Filipino diaspora philanthropy is ideological. It is deeply rooted in realities that the CFO has institutionalized. It inscribes philanthropy on migrant bodies, shaping them as actors who perform roles that a responsible state would have fully assumed. Interestingly, though, the stakeholders of diaspora philanthropy do not seem to question the practice, which suggest that they may have already internalized the ideology of diaspora philanthropy.

Conclusion

State sponsorship is a crucial variable to understanding Filipino diaspora philanthropy. By sponsoring migration, the Philippine government acts primarily as an ideological propaganda machine and, in the worst of times, as a “recruitment agency” that aggressively markets Philippine labor to countries where demand is present. Diaspora philanthropy is also a cultural phenomenon because mass media and kinship networks validate and perpetuate it.

Balikbayan regulations and public policies are manifestations of a “new form of nation-state building” (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc, 1994, p. 260). They enjoin OFWs “in constructing an ideology that envisions migrants as loyal citizens of their ancestral nation-state” (p. 3) through the strategic use of public policies, political symbols, rituals, and language. This ideology encourages the sustenance of the multiple ties that OFWs have with their country of origin. These ties persist while OFWs undergo incorporation into the countries of destination.

The structural and cultural dimensions of state sponsorship are responsible for the production of diaspora philanthropy as a transnational phenomenon. Its ideology begins with state sponsorship and the collective practices of OFWs animate it. Donors are shown to be docile subjects of the Philippine state that continues to control their “minds and hearts” through the strategic deployment of the “OFWs as modern-day heroes” master frame.

Neoliberalism structures Philippine labor migration policy and creates the historical and transnational contexts of Filipino diaspora philanthropy. It evolved from the discourse of “development diplomacy” as a tool for capital accumulation in Marcos’s time. The Aquino government reframed it into the “OFWs as Modern-day Heroes Frame,” while the Ramos government articulated it as a “discourse of legitimacy.” Further, the Ramos government facilitated the remaking of the view of international migration as a “natural process,” thus deflecting attention away from state action. This “discourse of legitimacy” (Tyner, 2004, p. 45) persists up to this day.

Government rhetoric validates the “OFWs as modern-day heroes” frame. As a mechanism for local development financing, diaspora philanthropy reflects the nation-state building project, a process led by the government and supported by OFWs under deterritorialized conditions. Donations aim to address local needs stemming from the insufficient modernity of Philippine society.

From 2001 to 2008, overseas remittances exceeded foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, and official development assistance. The goose that lays the golden egg has always been the remittance-sending OFWs. They helped stabilize the country's balance of payments during the Macapagal-Arroyo government (Opiniano, 2010, p. 12).

In contrast, the Benigno Aquino government emphasized local job creation, and the Department of Labor and Employment⁹ appears intent on creating programs to such effect. Notwithstanding this, it seems that there is still a need to take account of and manage overseas remittances and donations. The Chinese and Indian experiences on maximizing diaspora philanthropy for nation-building would be helpful.



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Notes

¹ Counting from 2008 – Sidel’s point of reference.

² A politico-geographic unit in the Philippines analogous to a “prefecture” in Japan.

³ <http://www.istr.org/conferences/capetown/volume/opiniano.pdf>

⁴ Based on data gathered from interactions as a student researcher and volunteer during activities with the OFW community in Tokyo, Japan from April 2008 to September 2011 as part of the graduation project supervised by Professor Koichi Nakano and submitted to the Graduate Program in Global Studies, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan for an MA in Global Studies.

⁵ Following this definition, data will be presented through a “frame structure” (see Figure 2).

⁶ To know more about this concept, see Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2001); Basch, Schiller, and Blanc (1994). Chaney (1979) also talks about “people with feet in two societies.”

⁷ Heretofore referred to by the acronym “OFWs”.

⁸ With due acknowledgment to the frame structure illustrated in Figure 3.1 Master frame of the Anti-IMF campaign where this paper draws inspiration (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002: 65).

⁹ Based on a technical report titled *Labor and Employment Policy Reforms and Program Implementation for the First 100 Days of President Benigno S. Aquino III Administration 30 June -8 October 2010*.