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The Philippine's ongoing labor export policy since the early 1970s has resulted in one of the largest national outflow of skilled labor and service workers and in the proliferation of gendered Filipino diasporic and migrant communities around the world (Rodriguez 2002; Migrante Internationale 2004). Poverty and very few economic opportunities in the Philippines explain a significant portion of this outflow. The labor export policy thus creates a structural opening for many to seek livelihood outside the Philippines. The government fosters this policy so that temporary migrant workers and immigrants settlers send remittances back to the Philippines, bolstering the national economy. Since the 1980s, Filipino migration globally exhibits significant gender differences in job recruitment and social network ties.

However, since September 11, 2001, the United States and several countries with sizable Filipina and Filipino migrants have passed legislations and enacted policies that dramatically target Filipina and Filipino migrants for mass deportation and removal (see Migrante Internationale 2005). This paper examines, in particular, post-9/11 governmental activities to start and implement the mass removals of Filipinas and Filipinos in Malaysia, Italy, and the United States. We argue that their forced returned migration is becoming an emerging global gendered regime of labor regulation within neoliberalism and global militarism since 2001.

Regimes of Transnational Migration, Removal, and Return

Conventionally, scholars view the transnational migration of Filipinos within the dominant framework of social integration (see Abella 1992; Porter and DeWind 2004). This integrationist regime focuses on economic incorporation into the new society either as overseas contract workers or as permanent immigrant settlers. The conventional frame straddles the policy and practice tensions between cultural assimilation and pluralism. These tensions guide the sense of belonging for migrants. Often this framework views social and economic exclusion as temporary and can be overcome through better public awareness and policy. It views insurmountable assimilation resulting in the removal of undesired migrants. In the case of contract workers, their return to the Philippines is viewed as renew opportunities to be exported again as labor commodities.

In contrast to the integrationist regime, we contend that a neoliberalist regime of transnational regulation of Filipino migrant labor has emerged. This regime combines migration, return, and the consequential removal process. It approaches global labor movement as a managed process that balances greater governmental deregulation of labor control and privatization of national security (in the forms of corporatized enforcement and imprisonment). For instance in Europe, the recent policies of so-called managed migration (and deportation) exemplify this neoliberalist regime. This management occurs within states that trimmed social welfare, increased policing, and placed individual responsibility as the hallmark for national and global economic betterment. (See Williiams 1995 for embryonic discussion on these issues.) With the aftermath of September 11, 2001 and the so-called global war of terror, this neoliberal regime of transnational labor further get crystallized in new homeland security and immigrant laws and new approaches to detention and imprisonment. Moreover, this neoliberalist regime heightens greater control of migrant workers through state and private means as well as

greater criminalization and incarceration of migrants. In the U.S., this has resulted in the building of detention centers as immigrant prisons that are operated by for-profit private corporations.

Gender, Work, and Filipinas and Filipinos Facing Mass Removal

To explore the development of neoliberalist regime, this paper examines Filipina and Filipino as mass removals in the countries of Malaysia, Italy, and the United States, which have large numbers of unauthorized Filipinas and Filipinos.

Malaysia is the biggest receiving countries of Filipinas and Filipinos undocumented workers in Asia. [Note that the following paragraphs paraphrase accounts from Amnesty International 2004 and Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants 2005.] The Philippine government estimates that there are 300,000 undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos in Malaysia (Commission on Overseas Filipinos 2004). They typically range from 18 to 35 years of age. Over half are single. Many of them reside in the Sabah and Labuan territories in eastern Malaysia; others are scattered on the mainland portion of Malaysia. They lack proper residency documentation, often arriving in Malaysia without prior legal documentation to work. Very few overstay their visas. Moreover, an estimated 10,000 Filipino children reside stateless in Sabah, most less than six years old.

Majority of undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos in Malaysia come from nearby southwestern Mindanao region in the Philippines (from areas such as Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, and Zamboanga City), where many Muslims and minority ethnic groups (such as the Tausug) reside. Most of them were former peasants; others include former fisher folks, carpenters, and electronic technicians. Due to economic hardship and militarized conflicts against so-called Islamic terrorists in Mindanao, these undocumented Filipinas and

Filipinos seek to improve their lives by working in Malaysia.

Frequently, undocumented family members and relatives in Malaysia invite other relatives to go to Sabah. The family members often convince them of the minimum risk for unauthorized work and the ways to evade Malaysia laws. In addition, private labor contract agents recruit Filipina women to Malaysia to work for the highest bidder, who might be a lumber mill owner, a family needing private help, or a brother owner. Undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos pay as much as P2,000 ($35) each to private boat operators from southern Mindanao to bring them across Sabah, just several nautical miles from the Filipino border.

Undocumented Filipino men are employed in the palm old plantations and construction sites and as mechanics and drivers. Undocumented Filipinas are employed as workers in factories, hotels, and restaurants and as entertainers and private domestic helpers. Local Malaysian workers shunned these low pay, unskilled jobs that are often filled by undocumented Indonesian and Filipino migrants. Since the 1970s economic growth in urban Malaysia, rural Malaysian workers moved to cities, resulting in the need for workers to fill jobs on plantations, and later in the construction, manufacturing, and service sectors. Moreover, the demand for private domestic helpers in Malaysia has skyrocketed as more waged earning Malaysian women enter the labor force and need them to look after their children.

Typically, Malaysians perceive single undocumented Filipina migrants as social misfits who could not get a husband or who had personal problems at home. Malaysians view Filipina domestics as potential sex workers. In contrast, Filipino male migrants are viewed as entrepreneurial and adventurous.

Italy is the leading European destination for Filipina and Filipino workers since the

1980s. The Philippine government reports that there are about 78,000 undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos in this country (Commission on Overseas Filipinos 2004). Seventy percent of them have been women. In contrast to undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos in Malaysia, most undocumented in Italy completed college and are skilled in professional occupations (such as teaching and nursing) before working in Italy. A few come from poorer areas, and have had little education. All of them migrate long distances alone without their intimate partners and children.

In comparison, many undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos entered Italy through legal means, traveling with visitor, tourist, or temporary work visas. [Note that the following paragraphs paraphrase accounts from Mills 2003, Boyd 2004, and Migrante Internationale 2005.] Initial labor legal recruitment can cost starting P50,000 (US$900) that includes P27,500 (US$500) for air travel. They then overstay these visas. Few of them, however, gain entry into Italy through human trafficking across land borders or arriving on boats from areas nearby. They reside clandestinely in large cities such as Rome and Milan.

These undocumented – often seen in Italy as both clandestine in terms of residence and irregular in terms of employment – are recruited to work through both formal arrangements and informal tie. For those with prior temporary visas, they arrive through legal channels and work initially through channels. After their visas expired, their old employers re-hired or new employers hired them illegally. Those that have expired visitor or tourist visas gain employment through more personal contacts and informal family ties. These personal contacts and family ties provide information, financial support, and other assistance. Some undocumented Filipino men, for instance, gain unauthorized entry into Italy after legally working the Middle East during the first Gulf War and its

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reconstruction.

Most undocumented migrant Filipinas in Italy are mainly employed to conduct domestic work and housework in private households. These jobs expect them to be available 24-hours through a live-in arrangement. Other women also conduct care-work for Italian children and the elderly. Some undocumented men do housework and care-work.

In Italy, undocumented college-educated Filipinas has filled the increasing demand for unskilled domestic helpers, household workers, and care-givers. Several factors led to this increased demand: the rise of Italian women's paid employment, the weak Italian welfare state to provide meaningful care services for children, the elderly, and the disabled, and the inadequate participation of Italian men to the social reproductive activities at home. In comparison, undocumented men face difficulty in finding employment since the strong demand for domestic helpers. Some of the men are able to find jobs such as cooks, waiters, or kitchen hands in restaurants or housekeeping staff in hotels.

Filipina migrant workers seek employment as domestic helpers in Italy because of its supportive and better work conditions relative to other countries. For instance, the Italian government provides basic guarantees for workers' rights such as the right to unionize. It is also lax in regulating the entry, residence, and employment of authorized migrants. This laxness may promote greater possibility for evading state enforcement of deportation. Still in most circumstances, undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos remain second-class residence without proper political rights and support from the government.

Filipina migrant workers as domestic helpers are so common that they are simply known as "Filipinas." Undocumented Filipina and Filipino migrants face societal huddles

such as racism, anti-migrant sentiments, language barriers, and social exclusion in housing, education, and other arenas.

The United States is the leading north American destination for Filipina and Filipino workers. The Philippine government reports that there are about 350,000 undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos in this country (Commission on Overseas Filipinos 2004). Similar to Italy, most of them completed college and are skilled in professional occupations (such as in nursing, health technicians, and teaching) before residing in the US. Many arrived alone while some are with there other undocumented family members. They typically have good familiarity with the English language and US culture with their exposure and training in the Philippines as a former colony. Like those in Malaysia, many undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos have strong informal ties with their relatives. During their initial period of unauthorized status, their relatives assist them financially and provide them resources such as housing and moral support.

Many undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos entered United States through legal means, traveling with visitor, tourist, student, or temporary work visas (see CFFSC 2004). Initial cost for arrival from the Philippines cost about P385,000 (US$800) for air travel. They then overstay these visas. Few of them, however, gain entry into the United States through human trafficking through various routes. They reside clandestinely in large cities populated with many Filipinos intrinsically linked to many community networks.

Since 1996, immigrant Filipinas and Filipinos with legal resident status may lose this status and be deported. Some former legal immigrants remain in the US and evade deportation.

Unlike Italy, many undocumented in the US were not recruited to work in short-

term contract work. Once they become undocumented with the expiration of their legal visas, they find employment through informal arrangements with close relatives, family friends, and personal contacts. These personal contacts and family ties provide information, financial support, and other assistance.

State Enforced Removals

The Malaysian, Italian, and the United States governments vary significantly in their attempt to remove Filipinas and Filipinos. While they seek to remove certain groups of Filipinas and Filipinos, their political approach, enforcement, and challenges differ.

The Malaysian government views removals of Filipinas and Filipinos as a major way to stop moral vice (including sex work and the drug trade) and terrorism (see Amnesty International 2004; Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants 2005). Yet, its target of low-wage migrant workers highlights its effort to control the use of non-Malaysia labor within its border. With its 1997 Immigration Act, Malaysia intensified its crackdown of undocumented workers and residents. This act criminalized the hiring and harboring of undocumented migrants. Its 2002 Internal Security Act, aiming to limit September 11, 2002 form of terrorism, resists human rights and provides for the mass arrest, imprisonment, caning, and removals of undocumented migrants.

Mass removals of Filipinas and Filipinos occurred in 2002 and 2005 (Asian Pacific Mission for Migrants 2005). Over 20,000 were forced to return to the Philippines in 2002 and several hundreds in 2005. The Malaysian state treated these women, men, and children as children, many experienced physical abuse during detention. Even those with legal work permit face deportation. At times, employers and the State use medical reasons (such as pregnancy and the presence of sexually transmitted infection) for

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deporting Filipinas. Moreover, this policy of managed deportation and greater

regularization of labor export led Filipinas and Filipinos in Malaysia to face greater social

isolation and economic closure.

In contrast, the Italian state has not fully established the machinery for removals

of Filipinas and Filipinos (see Fekete 2002; Calavita 2005). Because Italy needs many

non-migrant workers, its policy approach has been a more of a steady management of

limited deportation with lax enforcement. While Italian laws provided for migrant and

worker rights, enforcement remains difficult with the informal economy.

The August 2002 Bossi-Fini law intensified the exclusion of so-called irregular

migrants through provisions for criminalization, arrest, three months imprisonment, 5,000

euros fine, and removal. It provides for the further "regularization" of unauthorized

migrants (that allows them to legalize their work and residence status). Italy's earlier

regularization laws provided limited amnesty to only a few migrants. The 2002 Bossi-

Fini law forces jobless Filipinas and Filipinos to leave and allows residence permits only

to those with work contracts. The impact of this regularization and criminalization on

78,000 unauthorized Filipinas and Filipinos remains uncertain.

In the United States, intensified removal of Filipinas and Filipinos started with the

implementation of the 1996 Illegal Immigrant Reform and Individual Responsibility Act.

Passed during the Clinton presidency, this legislation consolidated previous deportation

and exclusion procedures to remove non-U.S. citizens. After September 11, 2001, the

government strengthen the enforcement mechanism the earlier removal procedures. In

particular, the 2002 Homeland Security Act passed containing provisions, among others,

to subsume immigration matters into national security concerns. These laws allow for the

deportation and inadmissibility (i.e. denied passage at ports of entry) of lawful residents

who have been convicted of certain crimes and of the undocumented for violating federal laws. They also allow for the short, extended, or indefinitely detention for undocumented and lawful permanent resident.

Our analysis of official removal data shows that the U.S. state has been systematically targeting U.S. Filipinos for removal—many young men because of the focus on deporting criminals (see CFFSC 2004). A dangerous misconception is that deportations in the U.S. are uniform and arbitrary for all racial-ethnic groups. Instead, these laws directly increased the removal of U.S. Filipinos due to the unwarranted fear of religious militants from the Philippines. While there was only five-percent increased in removals from 2001 to 2003, there was a 65 percent increase of U.S. Filipinas and Filipinos removed. The Philippines ranks seventh for "non-criminal" nationals removed from the U.S. behind national groupings like those from Pakistan, Lebanon, Jordan, and Morocco.

With greater automated surveillance, the government monitors federal (social security, employment records), state (i.e. schools, driver license, public library), and private (i.e. credit cards, banks, air travel) databases to select and locate undocumented and lawful resident Filipinas and Filipinos in the U.S. for removal.

Families facing removal face greater uncertainty. They are often caught by surprise and lack legal counsel and adequate due process. They face increased individual and family hardships, living with heighten fear, social isolation, family separation, and racism. Many lose jobs, home, and economic security, interrupting careers and schooling.

Transnational Filipinas and Filipinos Evading Nation-States

Presently, evasion of government entities is an unusual practice given modern

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states' persistent interest to monitor technologically and bureaucratically their subjects, workers, and residents. Five social actions exemplify the practices of state evasion by undocumented and unauthorized Filipinos (see Migrante Internationale 2005).

First, they attempt to belong in the different society they are now residing while concealed from the monitoring apparatus of the state (see Fekete 2005; 2006). Undocumented Filipinas and Filipinos in Italy exemplify this sense of belonging. During their brief time off from work, they collectively gather in public places like parks. More often, they get together in small intimate settings in the residences of friends, where they eat hybrid forms of Filipino meals, sing karaoke, or play cards. They also engage in seemingly leisure and tourist activities by hanging out, "window" shopping, and exploring popular spots and local museums.

Second, they attempt to transform local Filipino communities by getting them to recognize the existence of undocumented Filipinos while the same time evading the removal machineries of the state (see Fekete 2005; 2006). They foster activities in religious and community organizations that would help them explicitly. In these transformed organizations, they seek direct services while at the same time limit the extent other Filipinos become aware of their individual existence. In the U.S., they avoid more seemingly righteous Filipinos who often blame undocumented Filipino for community problems. They also tend to hide from view behind other racial-ethnic groups with large amount of undocumented groups in communities such as these of the Mexican and Chinese in the U.S.

Third, they remit money back to the Philippines as one additional way to engage in transnational practices and evade the restricted political and economic boundaries of the states when they settled. Detailed remittance amount send to their families remains

uncertain for these unauthorized Filipinos. In addition, these Filipinos side-step the

Philippine government and its national economic development policy. They become an

ackward form of national heroes — who the government claims would uplift the

economy—yet they do so in matter expected or desired by the governments.

Fourth, they communicate with relatives and family members in the Philippines.

They do this to sustain familiar relationships and to rely more intimate and interpersonal

forms of social networks to allow them to improve their prospect for a better life, thereby

avoiding direct connect with their respective Malaysian, Italian, and US governments.

They use these networks to gain emotional support, get temporary economic resources,

and find informal work.

Fifth, they distance themselves from the Philippine government. They distrust the

Philippine government. In particular, they doubt its desire to protect their human rights,

provide for their social welfare, and improve their economic livelihood. They see the

government pushing them—specifically through its sustain policy of labor export and

economic deprivation through neoliberalism—to committing seemingly irregular and

extralegal forms of living to survive and economic betterment. They understand how the

Philippine government often works in coordination with the Malaysian, Italian, and U.S.

governments to sustain each state's economic and national interests.

Discussion

Globally, the policy and practice of forced removal of Filipina and Filipino

migrants are an emergent aspect in the social and economic development of the

Philippines. While the Philippine government expects greater migrant remittance, and

therefore greater national development, from its gendered labor export policy and its

treatment of Filipina and Filipino oversea workers as commodities embodying labor power, the increasing forced removals of these workers and settlers represent social and political challenge to Philippine national development.

Directly, forced removals *criminalized* this small sector of Filipina and Filipino migrants. Once returned to the Philippines, they then face social stigma as gendered criminals by their friends and the Philippine government. This somewhat negatively affects their ability to take part again in the labor export process. Nevertheless, due to deteriorating economic and political conditions in the Philippines, most become further emboldened to seek out other informal and extralegal mechanisms to improve their families' economic conditions and opportunities.

Comparatively, the varying neoliberalist regimes for Filipino removals exhibit noteworthy national distinctions. Their criminalization has been related to distinct approaches to national security and economic regulation, even while Malaysia, Italy, and the United States suspect Filipinos, in general, as potential terrorists endangering their political, economic, and national interests.

The Malaysian state opts for forced removals of Filipinas and Filipinos to address its own economic uncertainties and gather political gains. The Italian state takes a more moderate stand on forced removals with its enthusiastic political rhetoric and its limited enforcement. In contrast, the U.S. government resolves to weed out undesirables – extending personal irresponsibility to be criminal acts and combining them with those with terrorist intent.

In sum, forced returned migration is becoming an emerging gendered pattern for Filipinos globally since the late 1990s. This new neoliberalist regime needs greater analytical attention, particularly since both Filipina and Filipino deportees and the

deporting states seek to hide their involvement in their respective practices.

This paper has indicated some features of the managed and gendered regime of transnational mass removal for some unauthorized Filipina and Filipinos residing in Malaysia, Italy, and the United States since 2001. The gendered forced removals target typically men who are seemingly young and separate spouses from each other and parents from their children. These undocumented and unauthorized workers evade the system of labor export of the Philippine government as well as the varying enforcement and regulatory systems targeting transnational migrants embedded within the policies and programs of the Malaysia, Italy, and the United States. These general features pinpoints the countervailing forces involving work, belonging, and removal faced by these potential deportees. In addition, they forge new racial-ethnic and diasporic identifications, those that may start to change subtly the meanings of migrancy, citizenship, and transnational diasporas (see Brah 1996; Nyers 2003).

This pattern raises a few crucial issues. For Filipinas and Filipinos facing pending removals, they seek ways to belong somewhere and redefine a sense of belonging that balances state evasion and community formation. In particular, they place new pressures on older forms of community gatherings and politics so that these forms confront this gendered regime of forced removal. Furthermore, for states intensifying their removal practices, Filipinas and Filipinos represent one national grouping among a limited number of other groups that experience greater gendered forms of state-supported surveillance, physical segregation, and social exclusion.

Future inquiries on this topic might explore with significant depth the extent to which Filipinas and Filipinos as a group—exclusively in the social and political spheres —experiences mass removals. These inquiries may instead reject the Filipino

exceptionalism thesis and study the expanding global regulatory and neoliberalist regime affecting select transnational migrants, workers, and residents.

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