

PROACTIVE MIGRATION POLICY AND WELFARE BUREAUCRACY:

The Role of Frontline State Bureaucrats in Qatar/ the GCC Region

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Context & Rationale

‘Structures don’ t move, people do.’

- Calavita (1992)

Context and Rationale

- *“Powerless Rule Takers”*

This is a hard, complicated and underpaid job. If you favor Arab employers, then you'll look bad to Filipinos and in the local Filipino communities. They accuse you of just sitting in the office and not helping Filipinos, or even corruption. They don't know what's happening here and if they want to criticize us, we might as well switch chairs so they'll see exactly how hard this job is. If you favor Filipinos, it will affect our relationships with the employers. Then what should I do? (Personal interview, Doha, Qatar, December 22, 2011).

Outline

1. Philippine Migration Context in the GCC Region (Institutions, Flows, and Policies)
2. Theoretical Framework: State As A Unitary Actor?
3. Methodology
4. Philippine State and Its Proactive Migration Protection Policy
5. Structural Constraints in the GCC Countries
6. Informal Migration Governance as Coping Mechanisms?
7. Conclusions

Theoretical Framework

- State-centred approach, treating the state as a unitary actor in international relations: (Rodriguez, 2010; Solomon, 2009, Lindio McGovern, 2004; Gamlen, 2008, 2014)
- Disaggregation of the State Approach: Calavita (1992), Lipsky (1980), Block (1987)
- “The domestic, multi-level struggle sovereignty over what those interests are not only in the economic sense, but also in the realm of their political and ideological interests” (Keohane and Nye 1987; cited in Fitzgerald 2006).

Theoretical Framework: Philippine as a State

- Labor brokerage state (most commonly known as “labor export policy model”) (Rodriguez, 2010)
- *Deterritorialized state* that seeks external legitimacy for its functional imperatives (Solomon 2009)
 - Modern day heroes rhetoric
- Philippine state’s neoliberal economic behavior
 - Inherent contradiction rooted under the RA 8042 The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995
 - symbolic move to legitimize the caring nature of the Philippine state (Bach and Solomon 2008; Battistella 1999)

Methodology

- Between 2011 and 2016:
 - 60 semi-structured interviews with Philippine frontline state bureaucrats in the GCC were conducted
 - 35 Filipina domestic workers in the GCC, particularly in Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait
 - 5 Filipino civil society leaders in the GCC

Filipina Domestic Workers in the GCC

Figure 1: Filipina Domestic Workers in GCC - New Hires



Filipina Domestic Workers in the GCC

Figure 2: Domestic Workers from the Philippines - New Hires

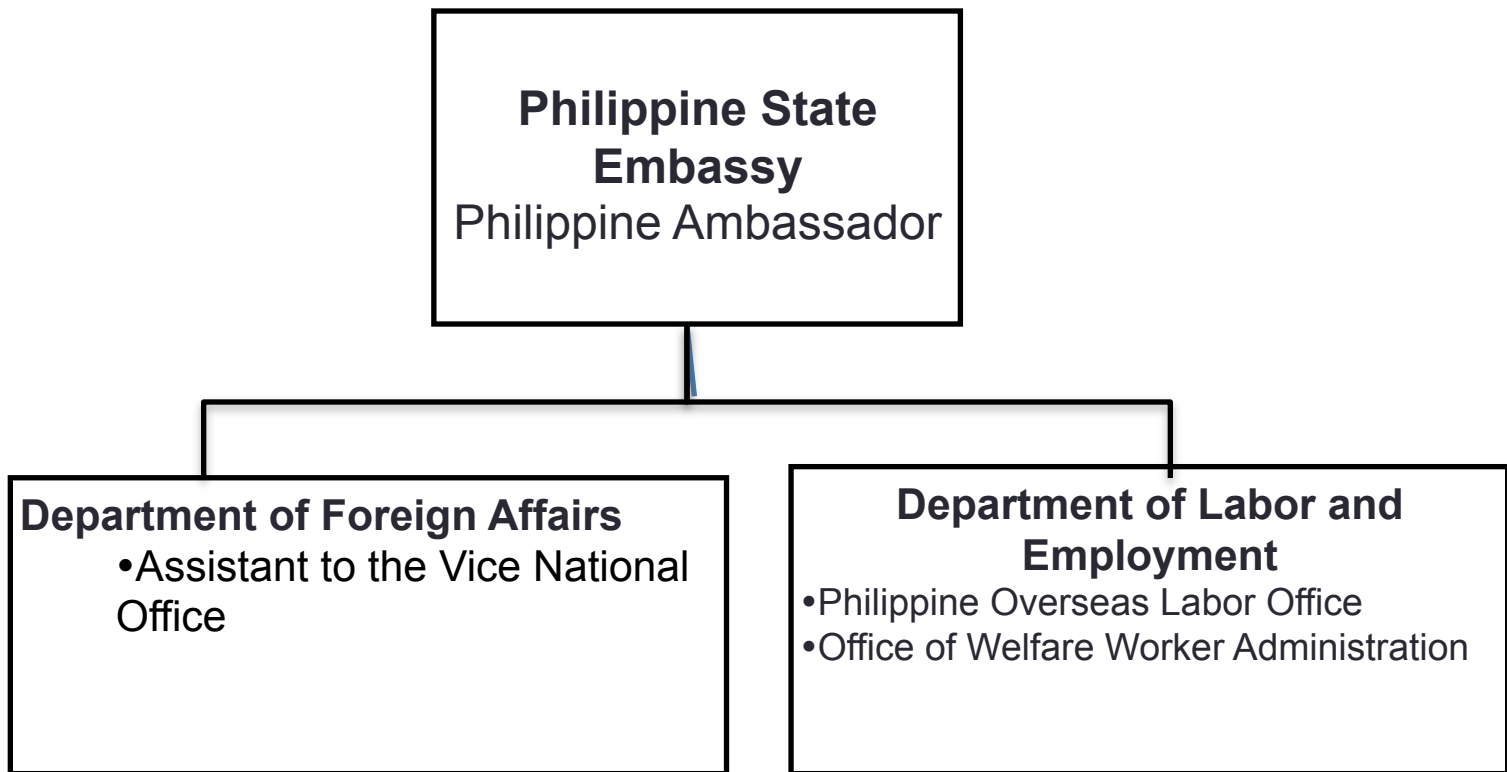


Domestic Workers Cases: POLO Reported Data

	2013	2012	2011	2010
GCC Countries	8, 421	8, 487	13, 225	8, 540
% of Share of Cases Globally	71.2	78.39	75.62	80.76

Philippine State and Its Proactive Migration Policy Approach in the GCC

Philippine's One Country Team Approach



Structural Constraints in the GCC: **Legal**

- Legal (i.e. bilateral agreements etc)
 - “How can ILO conventions make a difference if it is non-binding?” (Marcos, Personal Interview in Kuwait, 14 August 2016)

Structural Constraints in the GCC: Legal

- “We have to mediate at the Philippine embassy and consulates and then when a maid calls for a rescue, we have to drop everything and go to the employer’s villa to help her. In some cases, we go to the morgues, hospitals, and even remote desert areas to extend protection. If you don’t help them, they complain and bash us on Facebook or Twitter. It’s a chaos.” (Personal Interview, UAE, 18 August 2015)
- “We are not allowed to directly contact the employer and this is a big problem for our operations.” (Personal Interview, Qatar, 18 August 2015)

Structural Constraints in the GCC: **Political/Diplomatic**

- “We are not rich country, so we are always at the mercy of the host country. So, you have no choice but to increase the strengths of your institutions and relationships to make it work. The government is unrealistic in its own expectations, but we are still mandated to deliver at all times.” (Personal Interview, Kuwait, 19 March 2014)

Structural Constraints in the GCC: **Institutional**

- Limited ratio between frontline welfare officers and OFW populations.
 - Few Arabic speaking welfare bureaucrats or diplomats
 - Multiple cases in various locations, labor courts, mediation offices, immigration, detention, morgues, OFW rescues within villas (mostly illegal)

Sample Cases

- Case #1 Love Case
- Case #2 Labor/Employment Case
- Case #3 Labor/Employment Case

Case #1 Love Case



Case 2 Labor/Employment Case



Case #3 Labor/Employment Case



Informal Migration Governance as Coping Mechanisms?

- Labor Mediation as a Diplomatic Tool
- Rise of Administrative Procedures
- Informal (Wasta) Networks as State Tools (i.e. 'qadama diplomacy')

Conclusions

- Bound to fail due to weak legal framework and ineffective institutions in the GCC countries
- Informal migration governance as burden shifting and burden sharing approaches to offset power asymmetry
- Political accommodation rather than a confrontation approach as a diplomatic negotiation strategy

Recommendations

- Better Data Governance (i.e. collection, analysis systems, sharing/coordination)
- Strategic distribution of resources in the GCC countries (i.e. research, language training for bureaucrats)
 - More Arabic speaking lawyers
- Make PAOS mandatory