The PHILIPPINES’ “Modern Day Heroes” and Covid-19
What I Will Talk About

Brief on International Migration from the Philippines

COVID 19

Situation of Health Workers (Migrants and Locals)

Government Response

Conclusion
International Migration from the Philippines

Colonial History

1974 Labor Code

Stop-gap measure

Bureaucracy
“Model” Migrant-sending Country
**“You Are Our Modern-day Heroes”**

April 1988

Pres. Corazon Aquino

Before overseas Filipino workers in Hong Kong, mostly domestic workers

Historical and Catholic discourses of “suffering and sacrifice”

Discourse and practices (awards, movies, banks, telecommunications)

Legitimating tool
“Heroes” And Remittances

- Located in more than 200 countries & territories
- US$30 billion
- 8-10 % of GDP
- Estimates of more than 12 million migrants
- Welfare (food, education, health needs)
Politics of Labor Export

Competing state interests in maximizing remittances and the need to be perceived as a “protector”

Inherent contradictions perennial justification

Highly political issue that the government has to skillfully manage.
Crisis-Prone

Life and Death Situations
Conflict, Wars
Diseases (SARS, MERS-COV)
Natural Disasters
COVID-19: Philippines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Cases</th>
<th>31,825</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confirmed Cases</th>
<th>June 23</th>
<th>Recoveries</th>
<th>8,442</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRESH CASES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test results released to patient within last 3 days</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>299 recoveries reported today</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCR: 207, Region 7: 288 Others: 294</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LATE CASES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Test results released to patient 4 days ago or more</td>
<td>361</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCR: 110, Region 7: 32 Others: 219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CONFIRMED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases Reported Today</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>9 deaths reported today</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Of the 9 reported deaths, 7 (78%) occurred in June (June 01-17, 2020). Five duplicates
NUMBER OF COVID-19 CASES AMONG FILIPINOS ABROAD
AS OF 19 JUNE 2020

6,128 TOTAL CONFIRMED CASES
*1,117 DOH IHR verified

2,796 UNDERGOING TREATMENT

2,849 RECOVERED / DISCHARGED

483 DEaths

53 COUNTRIES / REGIONS WITH FILIPINO COVID-19 CASES

www.dfa.gov.ph /DFAPHL @DFAPHL #DFAinACTION
Filipino Nurses

US Colonial experience

Curriculum

World’s top exporter

Emigration to US and Europe to respond to the need of the health systems

“Bamboo ceiling”

Not just wage differentials

## Annual Salary Scale for RNs in different countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHILIPPINES</td>
<td>PHP 183,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>$58,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW ZEALAND</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>$67,930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The values are approximate and may tend to vary with changing norms

Source: inscol.com
Annual Outflow of Filipino Nurses, 2010-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Outflow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>12,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>17,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>15,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>16,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>18,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>22,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: POEA
Background

- Not necessarily poorest of the poor
- Access to surplus income
- Multigenerational household of nurses
- Second generation migrants
- 9 out of 10 are females
Filipino Nurses & COVID-19

Nursing ranks are filled with Filipino Americans. The pandemic is taking an outsized toll on them.

By Usha Lee McFarling / April 28, 2020

Gem Scarp in Queens, N.Y., where he works as a nurse and has been treating Covid-19

High death rates among Filipino nurses in UK now on global radar

By Megan Ford

June 5, 2020

“Heroes” and “Frontliners”

- Lack of PPEs
- Poor working conditions
- Long working hours
- Discrimination
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural pre-disposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De-politicizes the plight of nurses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veers from structural conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race, gender and state policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial selectivity in hiring and recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-skilling due to non-recognition of skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Invisible” Nurses

De-skilling (nurses turned care-givers in destination countries)

BAME in the UK COVID deaths and govt response (undocumented)

Local nurses are de-skilled too

Not in the medical fields (BPOs, spas)
State Policies

- State promotion of nurses
- Demand from receiving states come and go
- “World-class”
- “English-speaking schools”
- State discourses “caring”, “attentive”, “respect for the elderly”
- BLAs (unequal relationship between receiving and sending state)
- Receiving states: cheap labor; submissive due to visa status
Who Cares for the Carers?

Both local and migrant Filipino nurses have long been the frontliners in the health systems of the Philippines and the rest of the world.

Their plights are inter-linked in the global political economy of health governance that usually does not result in a “win-win” situation.
Duterte’s COVID Response

- Ban on deployment of nurses and other health professionals
- Backtracked
- US$200 upon repatriation
- US$20,000 COVID death
- Deployed “heroic” discourse on local nurses for the first time!
- Massive recruitment of local nurses but meagre salary
Finding their voices

Philippine Nurses Association

Unions

Balikbayani in the UK

Because We Are WORTH more than the DOLLARS we send...

-Migrante Partylist
Conclusion

Transnational

Historical, colonial

State practices and policies

“Heroes” and “front liners”

Valuing care work

Intersectionality: inclusive
Maraming salamat!

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Source of Photos

- Flickr
- Creative Commons
- POEA Website
  http://www.poea.gov.ph/
- DFA Website
  https://www.dfa.gov.ph/