



REVIEWS

Guevarra, Anna Romina. *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2009. 251 pp.

“Marketing Dreams and Manufacturing Heroes” is a catchy phrase that captures the reality of many transnational workers and professionals. The idea alludes to how personal aspirations are framed within the market structure. It points out that the image of nobleness of foreign workers (i.e. as *bagong bayani* or new hero) is a project of the market, the state, and by Filipinos working abroad themselves. Thus said, this book looks into how the market attaches itself to personal values, framing the latter so that people desire being integrated into the global labor force. This process (tenuously) unites personal values (as aspirations and dreams) and market objectives (as profit and productivity). In Guevarra’s book, the reader gets an understanding of the palatability of going overseas for work as it is underpinned by a “moral economy” where migrant workers are made to feel by the Philippine government and society that they are heroes since they contribute to the economic viability of the country and provide for the economic needs of their families.

The book is thematically organized into chapters dealing with the theoretical argument about the “reified” and “idealized” notions of the Filipina worker, the performances of the state, the functions of employment agencies, the Filipina as a transnational worker and professional, and the narratives of Filipina workers, focusing more on nurses in the United States. Each chapter, in turn, starts out with a list

of goals and complementary elucidations of the theoretical points raised in the introduction and proceeds with detailed expositions.

Guevarra describes her research as not only hinged on a feminist discourse but that her work is a discussion of Philippine transnational labor—composed mainly of nurses and domestic workers— as racialized. She also notes that her contribution to the research on the issues and discourses of transnational labor is her focus and analysis of the mechanisms that sustain this labor market system. As such, she provides a nuanced discussion about the role of employment agencies and their engagement with aspiring overseas workers and state policies and programs.

Guevarra also argues that the “capitalist Philippine government” subscribes to the neoliberal global market and together with labor brokers, facilitates the “marketing and manufacturing” of Filipina nurses and domestic workers. She draws from an arsenal of Marxist and Foucauldian concepts and ideas to talk about this labor networks and the global market system. She also writes that the most appropriate description for the Philippines, within the context of her discussion, is a “gendered and moral economy,” although she provides personal caveats. However, in highlighting the issues of global market, state, and broker she contributes more to literature that lays bare fundamental criticisms to market exploitations as well as on power and discipline. Intended or not, the reader is shown a system of control and governance and how this impinges on overseas domestic workers and nurses to behave within a particular set of norms that is formed through the various projects of the state, the sales and marketing pitch of employment agencies, and becomes internalized as a means of self-validation by the overseas Filipino worker (OFW). An encapsulation of her arguments presented above would be:

this Philippine capitalist state [responds with] a neoliberal framework of managing labor migration [underpinned by] a gendered and racialized moral economy of Filipino migrants that link family and nationalism with capitalist ideas of competitiveness and entrepreneurship.

Her work is an addition to existing expositions on female transnational workers and professionals. Guevarra weaved together various arguments to give cohesion to her discussion on the role of the state, employment agencies, and the workers/professionals themselves. She provides an appealing phrasing for “race”-based labor and profession (see for example Xiang Biao 2007).

In writing about transnationalism and labor, Guevarra uses language and style that is more familiar to academic and intellectual discourses rather than to the general reader. What is particularly notable is the richness of the accounts and narratives of nurses in the United States, particularly in Arizona and Texas. Given the book's focus on nurses and domestic workers, one becomes curious about similarly probing and teasing out the experiences and narratives of Filipino domestic workers and wondering if it is the case that the domestic worker's life just cannot be viewed from the same lens of "living the [American] dream". Still, the stories of personal understandings and definitions of empowerment based on achievements and "purchasing power" of the nurses in America are striking and insightful. She presented a well-written account of the lives of nurses abroad showing how communities are knitted, the expectations and norms shared among nurses—both Filipinos and non-Filipinos, and the story of nurses who refused to conform to these expectations.—DINA MARIE B. DELIAS, *PHD STUDENT, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE.*

REFERENCE

Xiang Biao. 2007. *Global "body shopping": An Indian labor system in the information technology industry.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jomo KS, ed. *The Pioneers of Development Economics: Great Economists on Development.* London and New York: Zed Books, 2005. 234 pp.

[Note: The following review was read on the occasion of the book launching entitled "Development Economics in the Twentieth Century," 24 July 2006 at the Balay Kalinaw, University of the Philippines-Diliman. The event was sponsored by the Third World Studies Center, Action for Economic Reforms (AER), and the South-South Exchange Programme for Research in the History of Development.]

The recent period in the growth of economics has witnessed a surprising revival of interest in the problems of development. Many of the profession's "big names"—Stiglitz, Sachs, Barro, Krugman, Helpman, and North, to mention only a few—have lent their names to the rediscovery of a field whose independent existence was denied not too long ago in many teaching departments. With this recently gained