

CHANGING THE DISCOURSE ON RETURN MIGRANTS: Cosmopolitanism and the Reintegration of Return Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers

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Recent literature on cosmopolitanism have begun to examine its emergence among the working classes, taking into account their increased transnational mobility in a globalized world. Labor migrants in particular have been seen to acquire cosmopolitan sensibilities in the course of migration as contact zones and cultural exchanges multiply. This paper presents a grounded attempt in approaching the concept of cosmopolitanism as it is negotiated in the return and reintegration of Filipino migrant domestic workers. It highlights the spatialization of cosmopolitanism as returnees find that cosmopolitan identities cannot easily be transplanted in their home countries. Migrant domestic workers are able to practice cosmopolitanism abroad, even within the context of capitalist-labor relations, in their consumption of cultural products and participation in class-based leisure activities within the context of a developed country, and in their cultural learning. However, the practice of cosmopolitanism in return has been constrained by place. Interviewees return to villages and not to cities, and the need to readapt to the norms and values of the community as well as the desire to be reintegrated, have led to a realignment of identities in favor of household and community expectations, although interviewees still construct themselves as more 'modern' and 'foreign' in their ways. This paper argues that the recognition of return migrant domestic workers as cosmopolitan would not only provide a more nuanced picture of reintegration needs but would also harness their ideas for the development of their communities.

Keywords: return migrants, cosmopolitanism, domestic workers, reintegration

INTRODUCTION

This paper is an attempt to explore the concept of cosmopolitanism as it is worked out among a specific group of labor migrants – return Filipino domestic workers. I have decided to use the framework of cosmopolitanism as it allows a different entrypoint and language in talking about female labor migrants that avoids the dualism of current discourses that see them as either heroes or victims (Gibson et al. 2001). In migration, cultural exchanges and encounters multiply, highlighting the significance of place as a site of consumption and cultural learning. The concept of cosmopolitanism could integrate such place-derived identities, new learning, new perceptions of class and status, as well as exposure to more urban ways of life. Using the concept in discourses that involve migrant workers and return migrants could be a key in understanding the migrants' constructions of self and their reconstruction of relationships upon returning to the home country.

This paper makes use of data gathered while I was doing the groundwork for my thesis proposal, and is therefore part of a bigger study on cosmopolitanism and labor migration. Return migrant domestic workers are the subjects of this study because of the Philippines' position as a major source of female labor to the developed world. Considering the gendered and power-laden spaces that women, especially those in domestic work, occupy, as well as the institutional mechanisms that keep women in reproductive occupations, it is important to note how agency is exercised (see for instance Devasahayam et al. 2004; Yeoh and Huang 1998; Law 2001) not only in emigration but also in return.

I started my research by conducting in-depth interviews with Filipino domestic workers in Singapore¹ to look at how life in a different geographical context and increased contact with other cultures, despite being in an occupation that is gendered, racialized, and embedded in asymmetrical power relations, can lead to the acquisition of cosmopolitan qualities. If cosmopolitan identities are assumed, then this would have significant implications on the reintegration of migrants when they return, as it would mean having to negotiate changed identities with the families and communities that they will be returning to, and that have also changed in their (physical) absence.

In the course of prospecting field sites and identifying possible contacts in the Philippines, I was able to speak to migrant domestic workers who have returned from the United Kingdom, Australia, and Hong Kong. These informants² have all worked abroad for more than eight years and are all

over 40 years old. They all consider themselves as heads or breadwinners of their households. Talking to them provided me with some background on how to think of the concept of cosmopolitanism as it has been experienced by those who have already gone back and are trying to establish life in the home country once again.

These migrants leave the country as 'subalterns,' whose marginal positions come from being female members of the working class in a country that is highly class-based, and whose gender is exploited by the government in its attempts to keep the economy afloat primarily through the export of female labor. Thus, many female migrants take on jobs that are considered 'unskilled' and require the performance of reproductive labor in host countries, actions that further subordinate them in the structure of power relations. However, as part of the mobile non-elite, these migrant workers gain, not only the means to raise their level of consumption, but also cultural skills and a kind of awareness generated from a particular engagement with the world. They become in some way, cosmopolitan. In return, migrants go back, not simply to a country, but to homes and communities and to a particular way of life. Based on the interviews, as well as literature on Filipino return migrant domestic workers, I found that while my informants have become more worldly abroad, there are social (and perhaps some economic) constraints to the practice of specific aspects of a cosmopolitan identity in the home country. There is thus a kind of 'silencing' that takes place when they return, which again makes them 'subaltern,' albeit in a different form. Despite this constraint, return migrants do acknowledge that they are changed individuals as a result of varied first hand cultural encounters and the contact zones that they have navigated. The challenge then lies in harnessing the benefits of such cosmopolitan identities when cosmopolitanism becomes spatialized in return.

Cosmopolitanism is an old concept that has resurfaced as societies become reconfigured by increasing transnational flows. Some scholars deem it to be the humanist counterpart of globalization, which is evident in literature that look at the concept as a political term that indicates world citizenship and global governance (Nussbaum 1994; Archibugi 1995; Held 1995; Rorty 1998; Beck 2000). At the same time, the concept has also been used to describe an outlook or disposition of openness to difference and diversity (Hannerz 1990) that can be found among those who journey beyond borders, including companion servants, migrant workers, diasporas, traders, pilgrims, and scholars (Clifford 1997; Pieterse 2006; Hannerz 2007). The concept however, has had much more currency in popular discourse as a neoliberal tool to

promote brands, icons, narratives (Szerszynski and Urry 2002), and cities, neighbourhoods, and lifestyles (Binnie et al. 2006; Soderstrom 2006). As Pieterse (2006: 1247) notes, the “cosmopolitan appeal is part of the factor X that is to attract investors, top talents, visitors, tourists.”

Such capitalist discourses hinge on a class-based notion of cosmopolitanism that derives from the concept’s historical associations with a particular form of class consumption and mobility, as it has been presumed that only those with the requisite cultural and financial capital have the capacity to engage in a ‘multiplicity of cultures’ (Hannerz 1990). Association with the elite has imbued the concept with exclusivity in that places labelled cosmopolitan are those that are ‘Western,’ sophisticated, and worldly, while people labelled cosmopolitan are those who have privilege, education, expensive tastes, and globe-trotting lifestyles (Vertovec and Cohen 2002: 6; Robbins 1998: 248). This leads to the exclusion of the working classes from discourses of cosmopolitanism as it has become counter-intuitive to perceive as cosmopolitan those who have generally been seen as non-mobile and confined to the local (Hannerz 1990).

WORKING CLASS, SUBALTERN COSMOPOLITANISM

Recent years however have seen a growing recognition of cosmopolitanism among the working classes, ‘ordinary people,’ and subalterns (Werbner 1999; Lamont and Aksartova 2002; Gidwani 2006) with the growth of labor migration and the transnational flows of people and products, allowing the otherwise non-mobile to imagine, embody, and consume cosmopolitanism. Working class cosmopolitanism, based on Werbner’s (1999) definition, is less the appropriation of an elite lifestyle and mentality and more the knowledge of, familiarity with, and competence in, cultural traditions other than one’s own, gained primarily through migration and framed by one’s social position. For the working class, cosmopolitanism can come in the form of acquired cultural capital, as Nonini’s (1997) study on Malaysian Chinese working-class men sojourning in Japan and Taiwan show. In the men’s experiences of sojourn, they “acquire new patterns of commodity consumption and desire. They display new forms of habitus for coping with cultural and national differences encountered in their transnational travels. They have new perceptions of business opportunities . . . form new self-definitions . . .” that lead to new subjectivities and identities among working-class migrants (ibid. 221).

Lamont and Aksartova (2002) focused on racial differences and the interpersonal relationships among people of different cultures and 'races' in their definition of ordinary cosmopolitanism. They see cosmopolitanism as comprising the strategies and cultural resources that 'ordinary people' use to counteract racism and bridge boundaries with people different from them. In a similar vein, Gidwani (2006) emphasizes an awareness of location vis-à-vis other people in the world in her discussions on subaltern cosmopolitanism. The notion of the 'subaltern' in postcolonial literature refer to those whose voices are not heard, although as Spivak (1988) mentions, the 'silence' of marginalized groups could also be an indication of their agency and their refusal to speak. Thus, the term has come to denote the ability or the desire for expression or non-expression.

Gidwani's (2006: 18) notion of subaltern cosmopolitanism through her account of an American 'domestic' who has worked in Guatemala and whose

"thinking is grounded in her experiences of places but surpasses their ever-present conservatism by realizing that the places she has inhabited are constituted by and, in turn, transmit their imprint and stain on other places through linkages and flows that crisscross regions, countries and continents"

illustrates the idea that among the working classes, cosmopolitanism also constitutes the awareness of one's location in the global system and the interconnection of peoples and places. At the same time, she notes that while working class cosmopolitans have this sense of shared experience with people in similar positions across borders, they also make "no easy proclamations of solidarity" (ibid. 18). On the same note, Mitchell (2007) points out how actual subalterns do not always use the "important symbolic power of a cosmopolitan identity" to struggle against dominance and injustice and in fact, they might even use it to reinforce parochial identities.

While conceptualizations of working class cosmopolitanism in the literature serve as an initial framework for my paper, changes in the identities of return migrant domestic workers do not necessarily adhere to these definitions. One of the aims of my thesis is to look into grounded, locally evolved notions of cosmopolitanism based on how Filipino domestic workers interface their experiences of the global, in their mobility, with the local, or their particular cultural ways. For this paper, cosmopolitanism as a concept will be interrogated based on how domestic workers themselves define their experiences.

Following Gidwani's (2006) premise on how subaltern cosmopolitans are not necessarily in union with other subalterns, my informants from the UK and Australia revealed that while they know of migrant domestic workers of other nationalities, they have not formed any ties with them. They distinguish themselves by saying that Filipino domestic workers were more valued than others because they are more educated and assertive, a belief that Parrenas (2004) notes, could further their racialization. In Singapore, there was a greater sense of solidarity for migrant domestic workers of other nationalities as my respondents told me that they did make friends with Sri Lankan and Indonesian domestic workers and try to help them out in times of need. This is perhaps due to the fact that domestic workers in Singapore are considered to be doing non-work and therefore not subject to the kind of legal protection that professional workers or even domestic workers in the UK and Australia have. Their time-space is determined by their employers and their bodies are strictly controlled. Perhaps these circumstances have brought about a greater sense of solidarity among those in similar situations regardless of nationality. One respondent mentioned how she would give food to her Indonesian domestic worker neighbor because it seemed like her employer was hardly feeding her. However, as with my informants, it was agreed that Filipino domestic workers were more capable and that poor English language skills, for one, placed domestic workers of other nationalities at a disadvantage. At the same time, nationality-based groupings were still preferred during the off-days.

Changes in the identities of my respondents and informants also reflect, though not entirely, the popular notion of cosmopolitanism that is based on consumption, class, and geographical location. This idea of cosmopolitanism is manifested in the practices of my respondents in Singapore who try to dress well during their off-days and who engage in class-based leisure activities that include travel to neighboring countries when they can. It can also be seen in their geographical imagination of places, where Europe is seen as more sophisticated than Asia and therefore, Filipino domestic workers in Europe would be classier than those in Singapore. In this sense, these domestic workers would probably see themselves as cosmopolitan only insofar as they compare themselves to Filipinos in the Philippines who belong to the same social class as they did when they were still in the Philippines.

Interviews also reveal on the other hand, certain changes in the identities of the respondents in Singapore that give credence to conceptualizations of working class cosmopolitanism in the literature. For instance, a number of

them engage in volunteer work, enroll in self-improvement classes, and are knowledgeable of particular cultural elements such as food and language (e.g., Singlish). They also have notions of equality with fellow Filipinos that are not class-based. They, for instance, feel that they are on equal footing with professional female Filipinos in Singapore despite the differences in occupational categories, because they are all Filipinos in Singapore. Thus, they feel that they should not be snubbed by these 'high-rank' Filipinos.

For the return migrant domestic workers, the popular notion of cosmopolitanism is manifested in 'conspicuous consumption,' in the way they construct their houses, and also in their children's or siblings' education. Because this is the kind of cosmopolitanism that is evident in the everyday geographies of return migrants, it is also what has to be negotiated in the home and community.

COSMOPOLITANISM IN RETURN

Migrants return, not simply to the country of origin but to their households and communities. This means that they not only have to make their skills fit in the labor market, they also have to readapt their new identities to households and communities that have also changed in their absence. Return after all, means a *return to place*, where changing understandings of place and subjectivity are negotiated (McKay 2005). Reintegration is ultimately done at the level of household and community. However, reintegration, particularly its social aspects, has received little attention because it has "generally been considered a minor problem" (Battistella 1999: 215). The failure of reintegration and the lack of opportunities for migrants to make use of their capital can result in circular migration, in which migrants move out again after returning to their communities for a prolonged period of time (McDowell and de Haan 1997).

Constable's (2004) research on Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong illustrates the difficulties of return as migrants discover that "it is not always easy to fit back into their old lives and relationships because they have changed and home has been altered by their absence." The women's experiences abroad trigger questions "about what it means to be a worker, wife and mother, as they carve out new identities and political spaces in Hong Kong" and thus find that return means "'reworking' and 'creating another place [space]'" in their home countries (ibid. 123). Constable adds that while migration brought about new experiences, desires, options, and visions, there has been "no

ready formula for successfully transplanting them" (ibid. 124). An example of such is mentioned by Gibson et al. (2001) as they narrate the story of a return Filipino domestic worker who has been taught by her British employers how to make a good cup of tea. Since returning to the Philippines however, she has been unable to practice this skill because nobody really drinks tea in her hometown. This may seem like a small thing but a knowledge nevertheless that has been gained while performing retrogressive labor abroad.

A number of scholars have mentioned how knowledge creation is intrinsic in the migration process (Kapur 2004; Williams 2005) and can take place not just in the public sphere but also in the private spheres of the home. In the case of migrant domestic workers, Sarti (2006: 14) notes how 'access to the private sphere' of the families gives them an advantage in terms of immersion in local culture. Many of my informants mentioned learning a lot from their employers especially in terms of how the household is run and in the carrying out of common tasks such as cleaning and organizing. One of them noted how her reading habits have changed because her employer in the UK would always give her books to read. Another mentioned the idea of letting her children work for their own money so that they can be independent (as opposed to the notion of child labor in which children work to contribute to the family income). When asked which of the practices abroad would they like to see in the community, one informant replied

"There are supposedly so many things that can be taught to the community, things that I have learned abroad like the proper disposal of garbage, leading the pets to defecate in proper places. Here for example, we burn our garbage which is a no-no abroad but this is a developing country and there are no spaces where we can dump garbage."

All of these show an understanding and appreciation of how people in other cultures do things, even though these cultures may be those of a developed world and perhaps bear some novelty for migrants of a developing country, which may be contrasted to how they view fellow migrant domestic workers from the developing world. Nevertheless, these forms of learning go unrecognized and thus, there has been no structural support for the migrants to apply them. A common observation about Filipinos outside the Philippines is that they tend to be more disciplined than when they are in their own country. This is because in other countries, there are structures that enforce discipline. In the Philippines, concern for remittances tends to overlook the sensibilities the migrants acquire abroad and are thus unable to fully express.

Cassarino's (2004) analysis of the theoretical approaches to return migration discusses the structuralist position that while skills and financial capital shape return experiences, "local power relations, traditions, and values in home countries also have a strong bearing on the returnees' capacity to invest their migration experiences in their home countries" (ibid. 259). In the scale of the home and community, certain forms of social control tend to constrain the return migrants' new identities in order for reintegration to be more fluid. It is not simply an awareness of other cultures that these return migrants bring back but also a different lifestyle, which is negotiated with the expectations of their families and neighbors.

Identity and expectations

Many of the informants said that they have now begun to 'like fine things,' are 'more educated in terms of food and life,' and are also 'mixing' the practices abroad with their own ways in the Philippines. These indicate the learning of a particular 'class' culture through class consumption that members of the working classes in a class-based society can only gain in mobility. An informant said that her self-esteem has been boosted by working abroad, which somehow thwarts the notion of the suffering migrant domestic worker. To be sure, many foreign domestic workers do experience abuse and victimization, but the cultural capital acquired in migrant work gives a different picture of migration and can provide something to be capitalized on. Other traits that return migrants have acquired in their work abroad include being more 'accepting and open-minded about people' exhibiting a greater distance from everyday problems, and being more accepting of the fact that things work differently in different areas.

While there are changes in the lifestyles of migrant domestic workers, they also have to deal with the expectations of the community when they return. In doing so, they have to appear as if nothing has changed about them. One respondent said

"I think members of the community expected that I will change, see myself as superior to them, and thus, will not talk to them because I have been abroad. I think envy also has a hand in it."

This statement demonstrates the politics of envy and the expectations that go with it. If return migrants do not appear to have changed and remain 'simple,' the community will be more welcoming. One way of actually controlling changes in the behavior of return migrants is by calling them

derogatory terms. For instance, a common term for females who have returned from Japan, who put on too much make-up and accessories, and who dress in scanty outfits, is 'japayuki.' This indicates a female who has gained wealth in Japan by working in a questionable occupation and thus has loose morals. Furthermore, when I first came to Singapore, a Filipino friend told me, "You can't miss the Filipinos on Sunday. They're the ones who look like Christmas trees." Migrant domestic workers tend to be faulted for the way they want to articulate their newfound purchasing power as well as draw the boundaries between what they are during the weekday (maid) and what they are outside of their work, which they can only practice during the off-days. If this comes across as too loud, then it is only an indication of their working class (subaltern) backgrounds because as Bourdieu (1986) has said, cultural capital is a disposition of the mind and body that is acquired primarily through socialization and is thus accumulated cultural knowledge. Trying to look good during their off-days, however, is an attempt to show that domestic workers are also capable of 'accessorising themselves.'

Embodiment and presentation of self

In order to be reaccepted, migrants have to reorient their behavior to the expectations of the home and community and one way of doing so is through conspicuous consumption (Cassarino 2004: 260) rather than productive investment. Many of the informants did invest in material goods that would be of benefit to their families such as renovating their homes and buying appliances and nice furniture. But when it comes to the embodiment of what they have learned in the way they present themselves, female return migrants have encountered some restrictions. Añonuevo's (2002: 144-145) account of a returnee who

"complained that her husband noticed her acquired confidence and commented, "*Mayabang ka na ngayon.*" (You are arrogant now.) Her daughter remarked, "*Ma, ba't ganyan ka manamit mas mukhang bagets ka pa sa amin!*" (Ma, why do you dress that way, you look younger than we do!)"

shows a different standard of judgement for women return migrants. Women are still expected to perform traditional gender roles in the family and part of this is knowing how to present yourself as mother and wife, which could inhibit the expression of new socialities and identities. One of my informants revealed that upon return, she had to learn how to humble herself and adjust to members of her family. She said that she finds it "easier to adjust now." At

the same time, there were no restrictions when it came to spending economic resources, as long as this was for the family. As one informant mentioned, because of the financial gains from her work abroad, her household has now become 'a little more harmonious.'

Everyday geographies

If return migrants cannot fully express a cosmopolitan identity in the way they present themselves, then this is conveyed in investments in the home. The most obvious indicator of cosmopolitan consumption is in the way return migrants have constructed their houses. In the town of Alaminos, Laguna, Philippines, a community of return domestic workers from Italy have built homes in the style of Italian villas amidst a rural landscape. This supports a study on Yemeni returnees by Colton (1993) that notes the high expectations of the community for these returnees. These "expectations involve consumption, such as gifts and other expensive purchases, or roles, such as taking a bride, building a house, or starting a business. While migrant work has improved the standards of living of most migrants, the need to reintegrate into the community obliges them to fulfill expectations that do little to change their status upon return" (ibid. 879-880). According to McKay (2005), non-migrant constructions of returnees as economically successful leave very little space for the emotional needs of migrants to be reaccepted into their homeplaces. There is first the real experiences of returnees as opposed to the community's imagined and represented migrant women, who are valued mainly for their economic contributions. As such, little is done to help them adjust to the ways of life in the Philippines, a problem that migrants least expect (Añonuevo 2002: 142).

Most of the return migrants, such as those from Italy, can be found in provinces and villages, not in big cities. My informants from the UK and Australia live in a small town in the province of Leyte, which is in the Visayas region. Coming from developed countries with a fast-paced life and more modern technology, return migrants have to deal with the boredom and restlessness that come with the more laid-back lifestyle in rural communities. They have to adjust to doing everything manually, for instance, the washing of clothes, because of the lack of push-button gadgets (Añonuevo 2002). My informants also mentioned changes in food preference that would have to be incorporated in their diet. One of them said that she usually craves for mashed potatoes, and that this should always come with butter. Another said she has increased preference for salads, hamburgers, wine and tea.

RETURNING COSMOPOLITANS?

Based on the little empirical material provided, it can be seen that return migrants bring back not just memories but also certain ideas and ways of doing things, therefore a particular form of cultural capital. It is thus not only economic remittances that get transported back but non-financial gains as well, although these do not really get fed into discourses on return migrants. The changes in the identities and subjectivities of return migrants thus tend to be overlooked because it is considered a personal thing that the migrant would have to negotiate upon return in order to be reintegrated into the expectations and values of the household and community. In doing so, the return migrants I talked to have had to “silence” particular aspects of their identities in order to be accepted more willingly by their families and communities without the added burden of envy. In order to have more harmonious relations with family and friends, they have to recalibrate being cosmopolitan with the roles they had prior to going abroad, which entails being humble and presenting themselves in a way that would show that they are still the same mothers and wives, but also not being too sparing with their financial resources.

Even though the informants are not as submissive and dependent as before, and although they have a greater sense of empowerment that comes with increased purchasing power and the notion that they have ‘experienced luxury,’ there is a subaltern aspect to their reintegration, which derives, not from still being members of the working class, but from not being able to fully live out their new identities. Cosmopolitanism as shown by my informants, follows both the Western, as well as the working class trajectory. While they have gained new skills and a considerable knowledge of other cultures, these cultures are primarily Western, as this is where they have lived. Their desire for fine things also indicates this elitist aspect of cosmopolitanism.

Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003: 345) see cosmopolitanism as “the (often contested and uneven) traffic and transfer of *techné* between worlds joined in a relationship of difference, by privileged or subaltern groups.” For them, cosmopolitans are able to deploy knowledge and ideas from one world to another in a way that will be advantageous for them, blurring the boundaries of the two worlds. Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan “reject the figure of an international or transnational subject as the standard bearer of cosmopolitanism” (p. 339) and maintain that the migrant is

“someone who transmits through movements in geographic space not just sensibilities and ideas, but also the materials and techniques that enable the production and transformation of the social space of multiple worlds (not merely the social space of the rural, but also of the urban, the regional, the national, and what gets inscribed as the global)” (p.361-362).

The informants I spoke to all conveyed learning new things while they were working as domestics abroad. In this sense, they have all tried to make abroad their home, bringing local knowledge in their intercultural relations with their foreign employers in a foreign land. In trying to recalibrate their subjectivities upon return, they are also deploying cosmopolitan skills to remake a home in the Philippines.

CHANGING THE DISCOURSE ON RETURN MIGRANTS

Based on the idea forwarded by Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003), migrants are capable of producing and transforming the social spaces in which they traverse through the transmission of both the material and non-material products of their movements. However, as ‘subaltern cosmopolitans,’ there are limits to their engagement with the geographic spaces they occupy. Upon return, they often have to ‘silence’ certain aspects of themselves in order to be reintegrated into the communities they have left behind. Whether such silencing is the result of the politics of envy or the decrease in the purchasing power of return migrants, it also does not help that institutional discourses focus on the nature of the migrant’s job and income level. Institutional recognition of human capital, or the skills, knowledge, and competencies that migrants acquire and can bring back in return, has been growing but such ‘brain gain’ initiatives have been applied mainly to those in skilled occupations (Olesen 2002; ADB 2005).

Post-structuralists have theorized on the relationship between discourse, knowledge, subjectivity, and power. Foremost among them was Foucault who said that nothing has any meaning outside of discourse (Hall 1997: 44). Discursive practices are characterized by “a delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories” (Foucault 1977: 199), making it difficult to think outside of discourse. In discursive strategies then, concepts and ideas take “on the property of materiality: the abstraction becomes a real social entity” (Shoenberger 1998: 2) from which practice emanates. Thus, current discourses on return migrant domestic workers as

heroes, victims, low-skilled, low-income workers, or even as “supermaids,” impact on their social reintegration as it affects not only how these migrants are perceived, but also how they perceive themselves to be. In perhaps the same way that the use of the term ‘Japayuki’ has created a bias against Filipino female workers in Japan, discourses that include return migrant domestic workers as cosmopolitan could change the way these migrants are constructed not only by fellow Filipinos but also by members of the international community. Changing the discourse on return migrants could eventually harness what Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003) says is the transformation of social space in terms of enabling the creation of structures that will allow return migrants to incorporate whatever they have learned abroad in home spaces and in the community.

Discourse of course has to be informed. In talking about cosmopolitanism, there is always the danger of furthering elitist notions of the concept. For instance, some domestic workers I interviewed in Singapore believe themselves to be more modern now compared to when they were still in the Philippines, given that they have more spending money and that they are in a more technologically advanced country. When such a disposition (of being more modern, which is based on consumption and class) is seen as cosmopolitanism, it could promote Western, elitist views of the concept and could possibly further certain class divisions between the mobile and the non-mobile. However, insofar as the concept does “capture the sense that certain experiences create people that are open to difference, to novelty” (Glick-Schiller 2007), there is potential for the concept to be emancipatory vis-à-vis traditional discourses on labor migrants. By acknowledging the female subject positions of domestic workers and recognizing the non-financial gains made in migration, a grounded approach to the concept of cosmopolitanism could lead to informed discourses, which could then lead to a better understanding of the dynamics of reintegration.

NOTES

- 1 These interviews were conducted to provide empirical material for another paper.
- 2 This is an anthropological term to denote the subjects of study in an ethnography who have provided anthropologists with information. I will

use the term loosely here to mean the return migrants that I spoke to while I was exploring the field. They are not really my respondents since I did not conduct any formal interviews with them.

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NEGOTIATED HOMELANDS AND LONG-DISTANCE NATIONALISM: Serialized Filipino Identity in Japan*

Jorge V. Tigno

Filipinos are able to recreate the Filipino nation abroad by way of serializing and replicating religious, commercial, cultural, and political practices that they have become familiar with back in the Philippines. This constitutes a process of creating a "home away from home." Revolutionary developments in telecommunications have transformed transborder migration. It is now possible for migrants to continue to maintain meaningful ties and relations with the home country even as they live and work in another. Filipinos have done so in a variety of ways. At least four areas of practical and everyday social and political life are described and explored in this paper. Catholic religiosity, *sari-sari* commerce, Tagalog discourse, and attitudes toward Filipino citizenship are reproduced and serialized in Japan in unique ways that deserve reflection.

Keywords: long distance transnationalism, serialized identity, transmigration

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INTRODUCTION

People who leave their homeland to face a new social terrain are challenged by the adjustments and negotiations that they need to make. The negotiations are made more significant by the fact that these migrants do not arrive *tabula rasa*. With them, they have brought not only their intentions and motivations but also (and most of all) their past memories of the homeland. How these migrants have been socialized in the home country can impact on the extent to which they adjust to life in their new country.

Scholars of transnationalism like Vertovec (2004) have argued that migrants (or transmigrants as they become actors in a transnational setting) continue to maintain links and commitments with their “significant others” in countries and localities other than in the areas where they themselves currently reside. This paper modifies that assumption by contending that Filipinos living in Japan are not only able to replicate the habits and activities they practiced in their home country but are also engaged in a negotiation process as to what it means to be Filipino in the new country.

These patterns of negotiating what it means to be Filipino outside the Philippines can be seen as a kind of “long-distance nationalism” in terms of how the social and political life of migrants in advanced societies has become not only “ethnicized” but has also changed the essential expression of one’s national identity (Anderson 1998). Such negotiation process allows a Filipino to maintain her/his meaningful connection with the home country.

This serialization of identity or the reproduction of myths and national memories outside the “homeland” or country of origin can also act as a kind of countermeasure to feelings and experiences of oppression, discrimination, and “subalternity” as well as their marginalization in social, political, and economic terms in the new country (San Juan 2000). Migrants derive some degree of socio-psychological strength in these memories in that they form the basis for ties of community with other migrants from the same home country.

They derive from assorted childhood memories and folklore together with customary practices of folk and religious celebrations; at best, there may be signs of a residual affective tie to national heroes like Rizal, Bonifacio, and latterday celebrities like singers, movie stars, athletes, and so on. Indigenous food, dances, and music can be acquired as commodities whose presence temporarily heals the trauma of removal . . . language, religion,

kinship, family rituals, and common experiences in school or workplace function invariably as the organic bonds of community (San Juan 2000: 236).

This paper is an attempt to capture the dynamic and complex process of identity negotiation being undertaken by Filipinos who are living in Japan not so much as temporary migrants but as long-term or permanent residents. Filipinos comprise one of the fastest growing migrant ethnic groups not only in Japan but also in other countries throughout the world today. The Ministry of Justice reported that in 2005, out of the two million or so registered foreigners in Japan, roughly nine percent (or around 187,000) are from the Philippines. This makes Filipinos currently the third largest Asian resident group in Japan next to Koreans (599,000) and Chinese (520,000).¹

Essentially, Filipino migration to Japan is remarkable in at least four ways. First, there has been a significant increase in the number of Filipinos entering Japan to work and to settle beginning in the late 1980s. There were only 49,000 Filipinos in 1990. Five years later, the figure increased more than threefold to 176,000. Second, unlike their Chinese and Korean counterparts, the Filipino large-scale settlement in Japan can be described as having occurred more recently – i.e., beginning in the late 1980s (even though Filipinos have been going to Japan to work as early as the 1950s). One of the earliest, post-World War II accounts of Filipinos working in Japan is that of a popular comedian from the Philippines named Dolphy (Rodolfo Quizon in real life) who arrived in 1953. Previous to that, Filipino revolutionaries like Gen. Artemio Ricarte came to Japan as exiles in the aftermath of the Philippine-American War. Third, unlike Brazilian migrants, Filipinos were not considered (at least initially) as “nikkeijin” or people of Japanese descent and hence could only enter Japan as temporary migrant workers. And fourth, Filipino migration to Japan is largely comprised of female workers. Such is not the case for the other large foreign resident groups. The male-female ratio for Filipinos in 2000 was around 1 male to 4.6 females. This ratio is nowhere near that of the Koreans (1 female for every 1.12 male), Chinese (1 male for every 1.3 female), and Brazilians (1 female for every 1.2 male) as well as the national ratio for all foreigners in Japan at the time (1 female for every 1.1 male).

Filipino migration to Japan and other place in the world is accentuated by revolutionary developments in telecommunications which have drastically transformed the phenomenon. It is now possible for migrants to continue to maintain meaningful ties and relations with the home country even as they live and work in another. Anderson (1998) remarks:

The Moroccan construction worker in Amsterdam can every night listen to Rabat's broadcasting services and has no difficulty buying pirated cassettes of his country's favorite singers. The illegal alien, Yakuza-sponsored, Thai bartender in a Tokyo suburb shows his Thai comrades karaoke videotapes just made in Bangkok. The Filipina maid in Hong Kong phones her sister in Manila, and sends money in the twinkling of an electronic eye to her mother in Cebu. The successful Indian student in Vancouver can keep in daily e-mail touch with her former Delhi classmates . . . (Anderson 1998: 68).

The world has now become more compressed and more borderless. But in the flux of these developments, national imaginings continue to stir especially in the minds of countless Filipino migrants. They continue to assert their connection to the homeland. Most Filipinos in Japan (as elsewhere in the world) have this notion that they intend to retire (or at least be buried) in the Philippines. This desire assumes almost the level of a mythology in the sense that no specific timetable is set (or even if ever a time frame is specified, it is nevertheless a movable one). This so-called "myth of return" (Pantoja 2005)² may explain why Filipinos continue to maintain virtual and real ties with the homeland and refuse to seek Japanese citizenship.

At least four areas of practical and everyday social and political life are described and explored in this paper. Catholic religiosity, *sari-sari* (convenience store) commerce, *Tagalog* discourse, and attitudes toward Filipino citizenship are reproduced and serialized in Japan in unique ways that deserve reflection.³ These markers are not the only things that define "Filipinoness" but they are worth examining in the Japanese context for a variety of reasons. Japan appears to make no distinction between nationality and citizenship (as does the Philippines in many respects) so it is important to have an awareness of how Filipinos understand and appreciate their citizenship as they themselves are immersed in an "alien" environment. The Philippines is the only country in Asia with the largest Catholic population. Thus, being Catholic is very much a part of being uniquely Filipino.⁴ The use of Tagalog in the Philippines is one that is embedded in linguistic controversy given the fact that there are at least seven other major languages that are spoken throughout the country. It would be interesting to learn how Filipinos have managed to serialize Tagalog especially in a society as linguistically homogenous as Japan. Retail commercial practices are quite common in the Philippines given the underdeveloped state of monopoly capitalism in the country. At the same time, retail commerce is seen by many Filipinos abroad as a sustainable enterprise in the Philippines, its informality notwithstanding.

How are all these practices and attitudes replicated in Japan? In what ways can they be seen as purveyors of Filipinoness?

FILIPINO RELIGIOSITY REPRODUCED

Nationalist imaginings in the Philippines are deeply embedded in the practice of Catholic religiosity. The country's (albeit nominal) Catholics comprise a substantial portion of the population. The religion was introduced more than 400 years ago by the Spaniards at a time when Catholic religiosity was in its most fanatic state. As a result, religious practice and religiosity are deeply rooted in the national psyche.

The celebration of the Catholic mass plays an essential part not only in terms of providing a social outlet and support network to Filipinos who are lonely and depressed overseas (particularly in non-Christian territories) but also in terms of reproducing their Filipinoness in the process. For some, religion is the only way by which they can return to their roots as Filipinos. Indeed, even before peoples in Southeast Asia could be classified ethnically, they were already categorized along religious lines.⁵ The Philippines was no exception. Hence Catholicism's deep roots. Going to church (even if it is on an irregular basis) and going through the motions of its ceremonies simply becomes the *sine qua non* of being Filipino. Filipino identity is thus serialized and reproduced in religious terms.

Filipinos overseas are likely to have a heightened attachment to their sense of religiosity than their counterparts in the home country. It is not uncommon for special Filipino activities (e.g., national independence day celebrations) in Japan, for instance (or in any other country for that matter), to start the program with either a short prayer or a full-blown Catholic mass. The secular (i.e., national and local-ethnic) part of Filipinoness becomes only secondary to the religious.

Filipinos usually attend English-language masses in Japan. In Osaka, St. Mary's Church celebrates masses in English every Sunday at 2:00 pm while in Kyoto, the mass at Saiin Church used to be celebrated at 3:00 pm (except on special occasions when the mass would be celebrated earlier). The celebration of the afternoon mass is perhaps a concession to the members of Filipino community comprised mainly of those working in the night-time entertainment sector.⁶ Nevertheless, not that many Filipino entertainers take part in these Catholic celebrations partly due to the schedules dictated by their lifestyles and also partly because of the image such lifestyles would

have on the rest of the conservative Filipino congregation. It is not uncommon for entertainers to be singled out during the mass and talked about and “judged” afterwards by the rest of the Filipino (and perhaps even the Japanese) congregation notwithstanding the adherence of the faithful to the values of Christian openness and forgiveness and despite the fact that no Filipino is truly cleared of the “sin” of pragmatism.⁷ This unsurprising development (given Catholicism’s inherent capacity to pass judgment on others) may pose a handicap to efforts to organize the Filipino community.

Recently (i.e., beginning in June 2007), English-language masses were moved from Saiin to the Kyoto Cathedral along Kawaramachi-dori and are now celebrated at 12 noon. The result of this shift is an increase in the number of Filipino students and other professionals attending mass (given the ready accessibility of the church to public transport) and a corresponding decline in the number of Filipino entertainers. This is so partly because the schedule does not appear to conform to homeland practice. In the Philippines, there are no regular Sunday masses celebrated at 12 noon.⁸ Outside Kyoto City, English masses are celebrated only once a month due to the shortage of available priests.

Another way in which Filipino identity becomes serialized in religiosity in Japan is in the appearance of the *manang*. The *manang* or big sister is one who represents the hardcore of the Filipino religious laity. The typical *manang* in the Philippines is a retired or semi-retired civil servant or school teacher, an old woman or old maid who wears conservative (often purple-colored) dress, displays a *stampita* or sacred image around her neck, is almost perpetually in an act of piety and prayer with rosary in one hand and novena pamphlet on the other, and is always in the front row in church masses including holidays of obligation.⁹

The Filipina *manang* in Japan typically has a mobile phone tucked in her pocket or strapped around her neck where a rosary or *stampita* might have been. She is a retired or semi-retired entertainer in her late 30s to early 40s and married to a Japanese. She wears designer jeans and shoes, has long hair dyed brown or blonde, attends mass on a weekly basis, joins the church choir (on account of her karaoke “singing” voice), attends to church activities such as parties, and at times calls on other Filipinos to go to church.¹⁰

The Filipinos’ penchant for Catholic religiosity is partly the means for their organization and efforts to continue to imagine a sense of Filipinoness outside the Philippines. In Saiin after the mass, the members of the

congregation retire to a hall where light snacks (and sometimes heavy meals) are served for free allowing everyone an opportunity for less formal contacts and connections to be made. It is also a means for the prime organization within this congregation—the Kyoto Pag-asa (Hope) Filipino Community—to convince Filipinos to participate in its activities.

SERIALITY OF *SARI-SARI* STORE FILIPINO COMMERCE

The *sari-sari* (literally meaning “various or many or different kinds”) store is a ubiquitous and informal but real part of commercial and daily life in the home country. The store sells a multitude of retail goods from eggs to over-the-counter pharmaceutical drugs to office and even hardware supplies.

Often the *sari-sari* store is also a local eatery (or *carinderia*) selling and serving cooked rice and viands with wooden benches fronting a make-shift table or shelf *alfresco*. The typical neighborhood *carinderia* is also known as a *turo-turo* (literally meaning “point-point”) in which the customer literally points to what she or he would like to eat from an array of *calderos* or cauldrons and pots. Ordinarily, there is no written menu or price list. For drinks, there is the classic *sago’t gulaman* (a refreshing mix of pearl sago, vanilla flavored jelly, and sugar syrup blended with ice water). One simply takes a peek by lifting the lid of the pot and usually a customer lifts every lid in the line-up. Often no credit is given—customers must pay in cash although close acquaintances and neighbors can avail of “IOU” arrangements—and no receipts are issued.

Filipinoness in Japan is sometimes serialized in the existence of the *sari-sari* convenience store/*turo-turo* eatery. There are at least two in the city of Osaka – *Dampa* (literally a shanty or hut) and *Tapsilogan* (a place name derived from the conjugation of a favorite Filipino dish that combines *tapa* or fried beef strips, *sinangag* or fried rice, and *itlog* or egg).

These places look and operate like typical *sari-sari* stores/*turo-turo* eateries. Perhaps this is intentional as a way to attract more Filipino customers who can identify with such place reproductions. Both places are situated inside buildings (*Dampa* is on the third floor while *Tapsilogan* is on the fifth level of another building) and are therefore out of sight from the street in the Shinsaibashi area. Next to a small eating area, there are shelves of grocery items typically found inside stores back in the Philippines such as Head and Shoulders Shampoo, Lorin’s Patis, Chippy chips, Sarsi softdrinks, and even

“authentic” San Miguel Beer (i.e., the kind that is sold only in the Philippines), among many others.

At the eatery, the arrangement is relatively unchanged – peek into pots for your selection of rice and viand, the proprietor takes your orders, and you take your seat and wait to be served. The difference now is that the seats are fully cushioned, the room is airconditioned, and you have a choice of using either chopsticks or spoons and forks. Not surprisingly, these Filipino store operations are owned and operated by a Japanese-husband-and-Filipino wife partnership. Again, as in the Philippines, credit is selectively extended and no receipts are issued.

SERIALIZED DISCOURSE AND NEGOTIATION IN FILIPINO LANGUAGE – JAPAN-STYLE

The affirmation of Filipino identity is manifested in the use of Tagalog (or any one of the Philippines’ eight major and 170 other spoken languages) which serves the function of communicating things and ideas thought to be Filipino. The use of Tagalog (or Cebuano or Ilocano, etc.) conveys Filipinoness among Filipinos. At the same time, English has become a practical medium of discourse especially for the intellectual community and also in communicating with non-Filipinos. However, a trend in the Philippines is the growing popularity of *Taglish* which is a bastardization of both Tagalog and English. The informality of Taglish has apparently caught on especially among the young and also as a kind of counter-culture to the formal versions of Tagalog and English. An even newer trend is the popularity of “textglish” due to the widespread use of short messaging service or SMS or texts sent through mobiles phone today. Textglish abbreviates and conjugates words to the extent that they become onomatopoeic.

It is not unlikely that Filipinos in Japan speak Tagalog and Taglish even as they are also able to speak and understand pure English and Japanese. As in the Philippines, the trendiness of Taglish among Filipinos in Japan has also been observed especially in everyday informal conversations and in electronic fora. Thanks to the availability of cable television, recorded and live feeds of contemporary Filipino programs are directly fed into subscribing Filipino homes and commercial establishments anywhere in Japan 24 hours a day, seven days a week.¹¹ Combined with SMS, Filipinos in Japan have become more informed of everyday Filipino cultural nuances and aberrations.

Filipinos married to Japanese and continue to live in Japan undergo a kind of negotiation process as far as dealing with what language to learn and to use in the household.¹² This has serious implications for the Filipino man or woman in terms of the degree of “Filipinoness” and Japaneseness of the household. In some households, the negotiation ends with the Japanese husband insisting that the wife learn Japanese in order that the latter can adequately adjust to daily living conditions in Japan.¹³ But on the other hand, there are also households where the husband would hold back or impede the desire of the Filipino wife to learn Japanese. This creates adverse consequences as far as adjustment to daily living in Japan is concerned. For about two years since she married a Japanese, C. who is now a (divorced) mother of four and living in Japan for 18 years, knew only basic Japanese because her husband did not allow her to venture outdoors on her own – even for groceries (it was the husband who took care of this chore). What is even more peculiar about C.’s situation is that her former husband also discouraged her from learning Japanese and she literally had to learn Japanese on her own and in secret.

C.’s particular difficulty notwithstanding, most Filipino parents in Japan do not teach their children Tagalog, English or even Taglish. In a sense, they are able to make compromises as to what constitutes Filipinoness for their off-spring.¹⁴ C. has not taught her children any of the major Philippine languages partly because their Japanese father expressly prohibited her from doing so and partly because she thinks they will not survive in Japan without learning Japanese.

Another informant J., who has lived in Japan for almost 12 years, speaks English to his child and allows the off-spring to answer in Japanese – very little Tagalog (if any) is spoken in the home.

Di ko tinatagalog, ingles ang inaano ko sa kanya. Nakakaintindi siya ng ingles. Kaso nga lang ayaw niya magsalita nahihya siyang magsalita ng ingles. Kahit nag-aaral siya sa Japan ng ingles, ayaw niyang mag-ingles. So pag kinakausap ko siya ang sagot niya sa akin hapon . . . Di naming tinuturuan ng tagalog ang anak namin.

I don’t [speak] Tagalog [to her but] English. She can understand English. But she doesn’t want to, she’s embarrassed to speak English. Even though she studies English in Japan, she doesn’t want to speak English. So when I speak to her, she answers me in Japanese. We don’t teach our child Tagalog.

So while most adult Filipinos in Japan are able to reassert their Filipinoness by retaining their facility at least with Tagalog, a growing number of younger Filipino-Japanese children are unable to benefit from this linguistic discourse (whether inside the home environment or outside it). Not surprisingly, they are excluded from the social and cultural terrain that knowledge of Tagalog would allow and this includes participation in Filipino congregation activities.

PRAGMATIC CITIZENSHIP AND SERIALIZED NATIONALITY

Citizenship is a question confronting Filipinos outside the Philippines. For some transmigrants, it is prudent and practical to own a “second passport.” This may essentially refer to a second lifeline to social mobility and material survival. Indeed, it may be considered a form of “citizenship of convenience” (Fritz 1998).

A second or even a third passport has become not just a link to a homeland but also a glorified travel visa, a license to do business, a stake in a second economy, and escape hatch, even a status symbol (Fritz 1998: 1).

Citizenship acquisition/retention is also a pragmatic concern for Filipinos in Japan. However, Philippine citizenship retention appears to be the serialized norm. Filipinos in Japan have a pragmatic attitude towards acquiring foreign citizenship. Long-term Filipino residents prefer to retain their Philippine citizenship partly out of practical necessity and partly in recognition of the reality that they cannot be considered truly Japanese no matter how long they stay in Japan. A Filipino musician who has lived in Japan for 34 years who is identified here only as R. asserts that:

Parang dual lang ako dito . . . pero I can stay here as long as . . . di pa ako citizen. Anytime puwede ako mag-Japanese citizen kung gusto ko . . . kung makaka-stay naman ako rito nang hindi nagja-Japanese citizen eh what’s the use of being a Japanese citizen . . . tsaka kung magja-Japanese citizen ka yung mukha mo you are not a Japanese . . . actually ganon yan eh . . . para sa akin hindi na useful. Ano . . . pupunta ka sa Pilipinas . . . kukuha ka ng visa? Samantalang dito wala akong visa pabalik-balik ako . . . I have visa in Japan . . . I have visa in the Philippines. I’m free to go back and forth.

I am like a dual here . . . but I can stay here as long as I . . . I’m not a [Japanese] citizen. Anytime I can be a Japanese citizen if I want to . . . if I can stay in Japan without becoming a citizen then what’s the use of being a Japanese citizen . . . also, how can I become a Japanese citizen if your face is not Japanese . . . it’s like that . . . it’s not useful for me.

What . . . if I go to the Philippines . . . I have to get a visa [in Japan]? Whereas, here I don't have a visa in going back and forth . . . I have a visa in Japan . . . I have visa in the Philippines. I'm free to go back and forth.

To use Chung's (2002) terminology Filipinos instead opt for "partial citizenship" in Japan where they are granted permanent resident status incorporated with civil and social rights associated with full citizenship but without the corresponding political rights.¹⁵ They are able to enjoy "the best of both worlds" by being in a prosperous country (and in many ways partaking of that prosperity) without the political obligations that comes with membership in the official national community. In a sense, they are acting true to form as economic and practical-minded nomads. There is the accepted reality that Japan will not allow foreigners to assimilate into their society no matter how well they speak Japanese, understand, and accept Japanese culture (Watts and Feldman 2001). In other words, there is a perceived resistance that would allow for the assimilation of foreigners into Japanese society.¹⁶

During one of our lengthy and informal conversations, C. refers to her children as "half-half" (or hafu in Japanese) in reference to children of mixed parentage.¹⁷ She then goes on to say that all her children:

Ang "ano nila" is Japanese pero . . . half sila . . . kahit pagbaligtarin mo pa . . . talagang Hapon na sila . . . sabi ko nga sa kanila . . . pero kahit anong gawin niyo yung dugong Pilipino nanalaytay sa inyo. Oo nga Hapon kayo, dito kayo pinanganak, pero Pilipino kayo.

Their (what's this) is Japanese but they are half. Whichever way you put it . . . they are really already Japanese . . . I told them . . . but no matter what you do, Filipino blood flows in you. Yes, you are Japanese, you were born here, but you are Filipino.

These remarks serve to underscore the nexus between transnational migration, identity, and citizenship. In her statements C. is attempting to make an evident distinction between ethnic attachment (i.e., nationality) and political membership (i.e., citizenship). In her mind, her children are already Japanese by virtue of their place of birth but (in spite of that) they continue to be Filipinos in familial terms.

Thus it may be said that at least three factors may account for why Filipinos do not actively seek out Japanese citizenship. The first is in the nature of the Filipino presence in Japan. Almost all Filipino continue to reside in Japan primarily for economic reasons. As economic migrants, it is not in their

perspective to seek out official political membership. Rather, their pragmatic and economic attitude prevails upon them to evade politics as much as possible.

The second factor is that of the stringent immigration and naturalization procedures involved. Given that (a) many of the Filipinos in Japan are undocumented and (b) it is not likely that Japanese national politics would declare an amnesty for undocumented foreigners, Filipinos are not to be expected to apply for Japanese citizenship in droves.

The third factor that may account for the mild interest in acquiring Japanese citizenship has to do with what Chung describes earlier as an attempt to reassert one's "foreign-ness." It is possible that Filipinos simply refuse to seek Japanese citizenship in order to challenge the "official" myth (i.e., that Japan is ethnically homogenous) by asserting their Filipinoness.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

In his insightful examination of the dynamic process of "social construction of categories of difference" by using the situation obtaining in Japan, Tsuneyoshi (2004) wishes to underscore the importance of how certain minority groups are able to reassert themselves and in the process question the very existence of their minority-ness. The sense of being Filipino being reinforced by the replicated/negotiated patterns described above can and does serve to strengthen the way that Filipinos now negotiate with the new country. Sally Takashima who is a prominent Filipino leader in the Kansai area asserts, "We don't want to be called minorities or minority groups. We want to be called Filipino residents."

Masangkay (2007) who writes for *Jeepney Press*, a Filipino community newspaper distributed in the Kansai area, echoes sense of national strength and hopefulness in the following remarks:

. . . When one loses hope in the things he does, in the life he leads, the end result is most often suicide as is the cases of people here in Japan [sic]. A father fails in his business, he hangs himself and leaves his family to despair. In some cases, he brings his family with him to the door of Death; a girl is bullied incessantly, classmates and teachers are oblivious or aware but silent, until the day comes until the girl chooses to end it . . . by ending her life [sic].

And this is where I feel we Filipinos are different. Although there are still people who may contemplate or have committed suicide, by and large our

people still strive. *Kaya pa, kaya pa*, we can do it, we can make it, we say to ourselves. Our mothers or fathers go abroad, we work 24/7, all for prospects of a better life in the future. We continue to live despite hard times because we have something to hope for [sic]. If we can do this for our own lives, our own families, why not for our country?

This paper is an initial attempt to describe the dynamic process of identity negotiation among Filipinos living in Japan. This is one gap in the terrain of migration research that is not so revealed by available (and largely) anecdotal and ethnographic data. Transmigrants are not “lifeless” or memory-less entities. They arrive at their destinations as fully socialized human beings, i.e., possessing a social program that they were able to internalize in their place of origin. This internal program is what eventually impacts upon their lives as they stay in their new places of residence.

NOTES

- 1 There are currently some 300,000 Brazilians of Japanese descent in Japan. However, their cultural identification is largely with Latin America.
- 2 Jones-Correa (1998b) uses this term to refer to the belief that the migrant will eventually return to the home country. Pantoja (2005) actually looks at Dominican transmigrants in the US and how the conception of this “myth” can mitigate incorporation. His findings indicate that this myth does not exert a powerful influence on a migrant’s intention to incorporate with the new country.
- 3 Vertovec (2004) also sought to examine “perceptual transformations” in the sociocultural, political, and economic spheres, i.e., in the way that migrant transnational practices are able to modify values, perceptions, and perspectives.
- 4 Of course, East Timor also has a sizeable Catholic population but not as large as in the Philippines. In addition, there are also the millions of members of non-Catholic but Christian congregations and Muslims. Nevertheless, the Catholic faith continues to be the dominant determinant of the Filipino character. One only has to visit any (presumably non-sectarian) bureaucrat’s office to find a corner devoted to the images of the Santo Niño or the Sacred Heart.
- 5 Anderson (1998) notes that “colonialists in the 17th and 18th centuries typically classified subject populations according to religion, not ethnicity, because enemies were conceived religiously” (p. 320).

- 6 However, in May 2007, the Kyoto diocese decided to change the schedule and venue of the English-language mass. The reasons for the change are two-fold. There has been a shortage of priests who can lead in the celebration of the mass in English. Also, the change will allow for the Filipino and foreigner congregation to be better integrated into the rest of the Japanese congregation.
- 7 Nicolle Cumafay, a graduate student at Doshisha University who has studied these Church formations in the Kyoto area most extensively, notes that Filipino entertainers are actually "much more afraid of other Filipinos than other foreigners."
- 8 Kyoto Cathedral is in close proximity to Gion which is where most of the night-time entertainers in the Kyoto city area work. Even with such proximity, it is unlikely that Filipino entertainers will flock in droves on Sundays although it is still too early to say given the fact that not that many Filipinos are now aware of the schedule and venue changes. If anything, the likely trend emerging is that more tourists (and other conservative professionals) will attend the mass given also its proximity to the Kawaramachi shopping district. Much of the views expressed herein are owed to the insights of Nicolle Cumafay at Doshisha University.
- 9 The manang's informal role is widely recognized and is mentioned in Philippine literature, as in the novel *Noli Me Tangere* by national hero Jose P. Rizal. Many of the manangs are retired school teachers who were employed by the civil service, the largest single employer in the Philippines. In 2005, half of the civil service employees were public school teachers (PIA 2005).
- 10 The population cohorts are expected. Filipinos in Japan are comprised almost entirely of those who work or have worked in the entertainment sector.
- 11 A Tokyo-based company, Wins International, is the official distributor of ABS-CBN's The Filipino Channel (TFC) in Japan. According to their website, it is said to be "the first channel to cater exclusively to Filipinos in Japan." Strangely, their website also still says that the President of its Board of Directors is Akira Kurosawa who died in September 1998. The company was established on 31 January 2000. See <http://www.wins-tv.jp/profile.html#faq>.
- 12 In some instances, the cultural-linguistic gap is exacerbated by the wide age differential between the Filipino woman and Japanese man. In one particular case, related by Sally Takashima, the woman is 29 years of age while the Japanese husband is 62 years old. This can cause further misunderstandings as the difference is not only cultural or linguistic but also generational.

- 13 Naomi Itsukage's husband, for instance, insisted that she learn Japanese.
- 14 One possible reason for this "compromising" attitude toward the language education of the off-spring is to reduce the likelihood that the child will be bullied in school especially after the fact that the child is "hafu."
- 15 The apparent unwillingness to acquire Japanese citizenship is immediately attributable to the stringent naturalization procedures being applied by immigration authorities. However, for the Korean population at least, Chung (2002) also attributes this to an attempt to question the significance of Japanese citizenship itself. Chung argues that Koreans "have used their foreign citizenship status to challenge the meaning of Japanese citizenship itself, which is presently based on the discourse of cultural homogeneity" (Chung 2002: 6).
- 16 Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) refer to this as "methodological nationalism."
- 17 Incidentally, a number of foreign parents contend that the proper term to use is not "half" but "double" to indicate the double advantage of being part of two cultures. The homogenizing effect of Japanese society precludes this "double advantage" argument.

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FILIPINO AUSTRIANS:

Transforming Identities and Changing Selfhood Under Conditions of Migration

Gisela M. Reiterer

Philippine immigration to Austria began with the first wave of labor migration initiated by the Austrian government in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The specific circumstances of labor migration for Philippine nationals, their educational background, its originally predominantly female character, and the ensuing inter-marriages with native Austrians, have created living conditions that differ significantly from those of other early immigrant groups. Filipino-Austrians of the first and second generations seem to be legally and socially better integrated in Austria than other immigrant groups from non-Western countries.

This paper investigates Philippine labor migration to Austria and shows how the circumstances of early immigrants differ from those who migrated more recently. It argues that these differences can be traced to changes in the labor market and a much stricter immigration law and to the different background of an already entrenched Philippine migrant community in Austria. Further, it deals with everyday negotiations and strategies of Philippine immigrants and their second-generation offspring in coping with migration and—for those already born in Austria—of living and growing up in two cultures.

The paper draws from available studies and data on migration, interviews and from two decades of close observation of the Philippine migrant community in Austria.

Keywords: migration, identity construction, Filipino-Austrians

INTRODUCTION

Filipinos are a highly mobile population. For years, the Philippines has been the second largest labor-sending country in the world, next to Mexico. Thus, Philippine labor migration has become a well-researched topic. Still, what has been unnoticed in this field is Philippine migration to Austria, although Filipinos constitute quite a substantial immigrant group in this country of slightly more than eight million inhabitants.

Philippine immigration to Austria began with the first wave of labor migration initiated by the Austrian government in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, Philippine nationals, came to Austria under circumstances that differed widely from those of other early immigrants. Thus, Filipino-Austrians of the first and second generations seem to have been better integrated in Austria than other earlier immigrant groups.

The paper starts with brief remarks on the beginnings of labor migration to Austria. This is followed by a description of the conditions and circumstances of early Philippine immigration to that country. The paper then discusses recent first-generation Philippine immigrants to Austria when immigration laws had changed and which already had an existing migrant community. Some statistical data are presented, showing the extent of Philippine migration. Since Filipinos in Austria tend to speak about themselves as a distinct community, the paper then proceeds with some reflections on their identity, self-image and background as a migrant community. After this, second-generation immigrants and the roles ascribed to them by their parents are dealt with. Here, some case studies, based on autobiographical interviews with informants chosen randomly, are presented. The paper ends with a concluding analysis.

The paper abstains from an indepth discussion of migration theories. Theoretical issues are kept to a minimum and elaborated only when necessary. And while this study draws on available migration literature, it also owes much to a close observation of the Philippine migrant community in Austria and to informal conversations with community members.

PHILIPPINE MIGRATION TO AUSTRIA: 1960s

Philippine labor migration to Austria started as part of the first wave of labor migration initiated by the Austrian government in the 1960s, when the country faced a shortage of labor. Between 1962 and 1966 the Austrian

government entered into recruitment agreements with Spain, Turkey, and former Yugoslavia. Austrian companies were looking for male unskilled workers employable in temporary, low-paid, menial jobs who were supposed to return to their home country as soon as their contracts expired and when they were no longer needed (Fassmann and Münz 1996: 222). They were eventually granted social security and other benefits to increase the pull factors. Many labor migrants were not officially recruited but came as tourists and acquired a work permit. This practise was finally stopped in 1974 when the Austrian economy went into recession. Besides, xenophobia was on the rise, since migrant workers now decided to stay and petitioned their wives and children to join them (Gächter and Recherche-Gruppe 2004: 31-45). Due to their low income, they settled in areas where accommodation costs were low. Thus, ethnic communities of migrants from the same country, sometimes even from the same village, emerged, forming the basis of a segregation of living quarters.

Although Philippine labor migration to Austria started at about the same time as those from other countries, its circumstances differed significantly from those of other immigrant groups. Early Philippine migration was skilled and female. Filipinas were granted the option to stay upon the signing of their contracts. Prone to “Eurogamy” (Hall 2001) and with practically no choices within their own expat-community many of the early immigrants married native Austrians, blended well into Austrian society and acquired Austrian citizenship. This makes research on second-generation Filipino-Austrians problematic since archival records are not clear on their national origin.¹ Second-generation Philippine immigrants have thus largely become “invisible” in statistical terms.

Owing to favorable conditions in the receiving country and the fact that they possess formal educational training, most early Philippine migrants in Austria, have found secure employment in “skilled” employment categories. They enjoy a better socio-economic status, are concentrated in the Austrian middle class, and have a higher degree of acceptance by the native population compared to other early immigrant groups. They also have a decent standard of living, enabling them to provide their children with advanced education and to send remittances to relatives in the Philippines. Other immigrant groups from non-Western countries—owing to having less favorable educational backgrounds and contract conditions—have to cope with many more difficulties, and are often confined to a much lower socio-economic status.

PHILIPPINE IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRIA: 1970s

In the early 1970s, with the prospect of a United Nations (UN) office to be opened in Vienna, the Philippine government was convinced that an embassy should be established in Austria.² In 1973, to justify this move, a bilateral agreement was formalized between the city of Vienna and the Philippine Department of Labor, under which the Viennese municipal administration consented to admit a number of young, single, Filipina nurses in line with the city's needs.³ The municipal government acceded to shoulder the travel expenses of the nurses as well as the cost of their two-month intensive language training, after completion of which they could begin working full-time as stipulated in their contract. The agreement considered Philippine nursing diplomas equivalent to Austrian diplomas, and provided for three-year contracts, with the assurance that the contracts could be extended and that the nurses could eventually acquire civil servant status like Austrian nurses.⁴ The document, however, did not specify the duration of the effectivity of the agreement nor the number of nurses to be admitted.

The first Philippine nurses arrived in autumn 1973. By 1985, when the agreement expired (without being formally terminated), about 400 Filipina nurses had extended their work permit indefinitely (WKAV 2003). However, the actual number of Philippine nurses in Austria was much higher than the original entrants and also included males since, starting in 1975, many of their relatives had come to Austria. The latter entered with tourist visas but intended to stay and acquire work permits. This did not prove to be too difficult because Austria needed health personnel. Others came to join their relatives and found employment in other fields, very often in relatively menial jobs (Reiterer 2003: 8). The establishment of the UN offices in Vienna in 1979 offered further career opportunities, ranging from professional positions to maintenance and security jobs. The employment of Philippine migrants to Austria became more diverse but was still mainly limited to the tertiary sector. However, early Filipina immigrants, with few exceptions, found better jobs than their male counterparts despite little differences in formal education. Practically all of them were college, or at least high school graduates, or claimed undergoing some kind of formal education which in many cases went beyond high school.

RECENT FIRST-GENERATION PHILIPPINE IMMIGRATION

Recent Philippine immigrants enter the country under highly changed circumstances. Austria has become an immigration country against her will

and immigration laws have become much stricter. In 1992, Austria decided to regulate immigration by enacting the *Residence Law*, a euphemism for *Immigration Law*. In fact, since World War II, net immigration in Austria has always been higher than net emigration. Between 1961-2001 about 620,000 more people stayed in the country than left it. This does not include the offspring of immigrants born in Austria. At present, 10 percent of the residents in Austria are aliens and 17 percent or 1.346 million people have a migrant background (Fassmann 2007: 394).

The *Residence Law*, which has been amended several times, distinguishes between *residence*, under which one's stay is only temporary although longer than six months, and *settlement*, under which one is considered a permanent resident. Labor migration is generally restricted to key personnel. Immigration from non-EU countries has become subject to quotas and is widely restricted to family reunification. Newly-joint family members, however, are only entitled to a work permit after at least one year of residence in Austria.

The naturalization law was also tightened. Citizenship, which in Austria is based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, is granted to aliens after a minimum of ten uninterrupted years of residence, inclusive of time spent out of Austria for studies. Moreover, potential citizens have to prove that they have not been convicted of any crime or been imprisoned in Austria or elsewhere, have sufficient means at their disposal for a secure livelihood, and fulfil the *Integration Agreement* which was passed in 2002 (Schuhmacher 2007: 75). This agreement stipulates that immigrants have to pass a German language test within five years of residence. Only small children, old people and people with a formal education equivalent to a high school diploma or a university degree are exempt from this requirement. Moreover, all applicants have to pass a formal exam on the Austrian political system and history, as well as on some special topics such as those concerning the province they live in (Vogl 2007: 19-41). Alien residents who have resided in Austria for 30 years or longer, however, are entitled to Austrian citizenship without fulfilling these requirements. Spouses and minor children of applicants can be naturalized together with the applicants. Alien spouses of native Austrians can be naturalized after five years of marriage and a six-year residence. Prior to the passage of the Integration Agreement, the requirement was one-year marriage and four years of residence. Dual citizenship is not recognized (Çinar 2007: 41-46).

Reunification of family members is subject to immigration regulations. These family members, however, need not possess any particular

qualifications. Thus, possession of formal education qualifications, for example, is less important for Filipinos joining relatives already in Austria than for the latter who were in fact only able to migrate to Austria because of their educational qualifications. Lack of formal education or diplomas not equivalent or not treated as equivalent to Austrian diplomas together with the less favorable conditions in the labor market means that their job aspirations are often frustrated and they end up in employment far below their expectations.⁵ Even if they have a Philippine university degree, they often work in fairly menial jobs. Most of them can be found in restaurants or hospitals as kitchen hands, cleaners, janitors, bell boys, or in supermarkets as cashiers.

Although they are worse off in the labor market than the early immigrants, they face more favorable social conditions. They can usually rely on their often already naturalized relatives and find an already established Philippine-Austrian community that can provide them with a sense of emotional security. Numerous Philippine associations provide opportunities for socializing. Several Sunday masses, attended almost exclusively by immigrants and their offspring, are officiated by Philippine priests, who also provide spiritual guidance and help when these are sought. Thus the process of integration becomes less pressing but is also slowed down. The Philippine-Austrian community in Austria is still fairly a closed-knit one, with community activities directed towards the Philippines. Native Austrians are rarely found there. Even native Austrian husbands rarely attend them.

PHILIPPINE MIGRATION TO AUSTRIA IN STATISTICAL TERMS

Because they are a small group, Philippine immigrants in official Austrian statistics have long been subsumed under other small immigrant groups under the category "others." With the census of 2001 new kinds of data on migration have become available and have been constantly updated. However, these data only cover migrants born in the Philippines or Philippine nationals who are official residents of Austria, i.e., mostly first-generation immigrants. They do not include second-generation Filipinos born in Austria as Austrian citizens or those born in Austria and became naturalized later.⁶

As of 1 January 2007, Philippine migrants in Austria total 11,623. Of these 7,762 (66.78%) are female and 3,861 (33.22%) are male; 7,254 (62.41%) of them have already acquired Austrian citizenship, of whom 5,230 (67.38%) are female and 2,024 (52.42%) male (Tables 1 and 2). The higher

naturalization rate among women results from, first, intermarriage and second, the lower rate of return by women to the country of origin than men. Women are also involved in more meaningful integration than men. For them emigration is, finally, an opportunity to escape the closeness and stickiness of Philippine society or serious family problems. It is an act of autonomy and self-liberation.⁷

Table 1 People with Philippine Migrant Background

			Country of birth					
			Austria		Philippines		Others	
		%		%		%		%
both sexes	11,623	100	266	2.29	11,346	97.62	11	0.90
female	7,762	66.78	133	1.71	7,624	98.22	5	0.06
male	3,861	33.22	133	1.71	3,722	98.22	6	0.16

Source: Statistik Austria, Information Service. E-mail 7 April 2008.

Table 2 People with Philippine Migrant Background

			Citizenship					
			Austria		Philippines		Others	
		%		%		%		%
both sexes	11,623	100	7,254	62.41	4,257	36.63	112	0.96
female	7,762	66.78	5,230	67.38	2,450	31.56	82	1.06
male	3,861	33.22	2,024	52.42	1,807	46.8	30	0.78

Source: Statistik Austria, Information Service. E-mail 7 April 2008.

The naturalization rate of Filipinos has long been the third highest among immigrants from East, Southeast and South Asia after the People's Republic of China and India but has been decreasing since 2004. Vienna, the capital of Austria, offers the best employment opportunities and has thus become home to 72.28 percent of Philippine immigrants, followed by the adjoining province of Lower Austria with 7.82 percent. Women still comprise the majority of recent Philippine immigrants. State-organized overseas Philippine contract labor is negligible in terms of numbers and has been decreasing.

THE PHILIPPINE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRIA

The first Philippine migrant associations in Austria were founded in the 1970s and were usually organized along regional lines. Most were formed

for social and cultural purposes and objectives. In 1986, after the fall of President Ferdinand Marcos, the first efforts to unify these associations started. These failed due to the personal ambitions of some of the people involved. Migration itself did not seem to be sufficient to overcome the notorious Philippine factionalism. Parochialism had been exported together with the migrants. It is said that Filipino people have always put family, friends and region first before country. Individual career aspirations and ambitions of Filipinos have always been stronger than their dedication to some abstract common good and national unity. But, despite these, in 2000 the Council of Filipino Associations in Austria was established as an umbrella organization. To minimize friction, it was decided that organizations not individual people should take over the leadership. At present, there are 63 registered Philippine organizations in Austria, most of them in Vienna, whose self-ascribed nature is given in Table 3. Twenty of them, all based in Vienna, constitute the Council of Filipino Associations in Austria, but membership is constantly in flux.

Table 3 Filipino Associations in Austria

Nature of organization/association	Number
Cultural	13
Cultural/religious	1
Medical	1
Political	1
Professional	2
Religious	14
Social	16
Social/charity	2
Sociocultural	4
Sociocultural/political	1
Sociocultural/religious	3
Sports	3
Umbrella organization	1
Unstated	1
Total	63

Source: Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Austria 13 April 2008.⁸

The Council's avowed aims are to facilitate Philippine migration to Austria, help recent immigrants to establish themselves in their host country, further their integration, and support Filipino residents in Austria in need. It should not only address financial problems but also try to solve social and legal questions arising inside the community such as the maltreatment of women, drug abuse, or juvenile delinquency to mention only a few. Dealing with

these problems seems especially important in the process of integration, which should not be delayed or disturbed by negative headlines in the Austrian media. While community members are genuinely interested in solving these problems, they are also concerned with “face,” which means that even if they cannot deal with them successfully, problems inside the community are not supposed to surface. Any negative publicity could deal a blow to their self-styled image of a highly professional, well-accepted and badly needed immigrant group.⁹

The Council also aims at implanting Filipino values and culture into the second and gradually growing third generation of Philippine migrants and offspring of mixed Filipino-Austrian marriages who are considered as destined to carry on their Philippine heritage and remember their roots, while at the same time blending perfectly into Austrian society.

SECOND GENERATION – BEARERS OF CULTURE AND TRADITION: WHAT CULTURE, WHAT TRADITION?

For second-generation immigrants, Philippine culture and “Filipinoness” are brief intermittent experiences disconnected from most of the other areas of their lives. Being Filipino is an event, periodic and external (Espiritu 2002: 157). Filipino immigrants have been less diligent than other immigrant groups in transmitting their culture and language to the next generation. This lack of cultural transmission stems from their desire to succeed in mainstream society (Espiritu 2002: 156). Still, Philippine migrant adolescents say that they were brought up according to Philippine standards and tradition, even if their fathers are native Austrians (Reiterer 2007: 152).¹⁰ This means that as far as children are concerned, the households are matrifocal and organized around the mother, who also becomes an active mediator in the process of migration. She is the one who creates a new tradition, a mixture of the two backgrounds, the foreign and the “domestic” (Apitzsch 1999). She is the prime source of nurture, goodness, dependability, learning, and authority. She is considerate, anticipates the feelings of her children and knows what is good for them (Mulder 1997: 30). While she sacrifices herself for her children and somehow becomes their superego, their father is an authoritarian and often distant figure with a great claim for respect. Female and male spheres in life are thus seen to be complementary. While women are the moral agents and caring mothers who shoulder the greatest responsibility in socialization, fathers are the procreators whose main roles are that of providers and disciplinarians

(Medina 2001: 223). The special conditions of migration, however, force them to become more involved in childcare and household chores.

Filipinos tend to talk about their “group culture” (Torres-D’Mello 2001: 60), which means that the individuals are not supposed to define themselves apart from each other but rather as members of a closed group. Successful and smooth interpersonal relations bring reassurance, recognition and rewards. Self-esteem depends on how a person is perceived by others. This experience of “dependent subjectivity” (Mulder 1997: 21) makes people see others as extensions of themselves. This is especially often the case in the parent-child relationship. Parents identify with the failures and successes of their children and regard their behavior as reflective of their upbringing. Obligation to place family first and foremost implies the unquestioned acceptance of parental authority, which is also a form of debt-of-gratitude for the parents’ sufferings and sacrifices for their children, the duty to repay that love through loyalty, obedience, and living up to their expectations (Medina 2001: 219). Children are seen as assets. With the material needs of their immigrant parents virtually guaranteed, they must now tend to their emotional needs (Reiterer 2007: 153). Possessiveness, overprotection, mutual dependence, and traditional gender roles which are still a feature in the education of second-generation Filipino migrants, are apt to create “unindividuated” egos and complicate identity formation (Mulder 1997: 21).

Child-parent tensions often run high but are not supposed to surface in public, though they sometimes do. Second-generation immigrants have to cope with two, sometimes conflicting, sets of socialization: their family and the Austrian school system. They soon learn two different forms of behavior, Philippine and Western, which allow them to get along with their family on the one hand and to be accepted as equals by their native Austrian peers on the other. While boys are granted the liberties they would have in the Philippines even in the area of sexual relationships, girls are brought up with many more constraints. This double standard often leads to fierce rebellion of girls and young women (Reiterer 2007: 154).

While employment of Filipina migrants in Austria is far above average, female employment and formal education rank high in the Philippine value system, especially since it is seen as a precondition for emigration. Education, however, seems to have lost some importance under the conditions of migration. The early diversification of the Austrian education system offers a variety of career paths, but later socio-economic positions are practically

decided by the age of 15 years. Philippine migrants envision some kind of diploma for their children but not necessarily a university degree. In a school system with a highly selective profile as in Austria, it is difficult to climb the social ladder especially when one's mother tongue is not German. Much work has to be done outside the school and students do not get much support in this respect from their family. While second-generation migrants are fluent in speaking German but not in a Philippine language, their reading and writing abilities are often deficient in school. This severely limits their career prospects.¹¹ They rarely go beyond secondary education, end their formal training at vocational schools or enter the dual training system of apprenticeship. Filipino migrant parents often press their offspring to start earning a living early and forego further formal education. For many, the migration project seems to be completed when their children find a relatively secure job (Reiterer 2007: 157).

While socio-economic positioning reflects successful integration, social contacts and networks are other important indicators. Social contacts are closely connected with identity formation and identification with values and standards of the country of origin and the country of residence. While first-generation Philippine immigrants have few contacts with native Austrians beyond family and work, the second generation forms ethnically mixed relationships at an early age, since working parents are forced to send their children to kindergarten and childcare centers. Although intermarriage between Filipinas and white men is common, there is a growing tendency among Philippine migrant parents in Austria to prefer partners for their children from within their own ethnic community. Second-generation immigrants feel divided about this issue. For them exogamic marriage is a chance to escape the constraints of the Philippine value system. When asked about their national identity, majority of them claim to be Austrians but are conscious of their Philippine roots (Reiterer 2007: 158-160).

Case box 1:

Arlene, 40, a farmer's daughter from Northern Luzon, migrated in 1989. She was then working as a high school English teacher in Metro Manila when her cousin asked her to come to Vienna as a domestic helper and nanny for his son. Arlene agreed after serious discussions with her family. While working for her cousin she planned on completing a graduate degree in Austria. She would then return to the Philippines to become a career woman. However, after three months, her cousin's Austrian wife told her to leave since she did not meet her expectations,

even though she has no place to stay, no source of income and no knowledge of German. However, it was a question of honor not to return to the Philippines. Fortunately, she met a Philippine migrant family who took her in and saw to it that she found even a menial job. Arlene eventually got involved with her benefactor's brother, moved into his apartment and married him in 1993, although she did not really love him. When her first child was two years old, she already considered a divorce, but eventually stayed with him hoping that things would change. A second child came, but nothing changed. Finally, when her third child was three, she decided to leave her husband. By that time she had already fallen in love with a native Austrian. When she told this to her parents, who were staying in Austria with her family for about five years, and were taking care of her three children, they immediately left for the Philippines. Even the fact that her sister, who stayed with her, was dying of cancer and was in her last days, did not prevent the the parents from leaving Austria and returning home. Losing face mattered to them more than humanitarian considerations.

Since then Arlene has been heavily dependent on her eldest daughter for the care of her three younger children. As a result, this eldest daughter cannot live up to her full potentials. Having insufficient time for studying, her performance in school is far below average, which causes lots of frustration to her mother.

Looking back on her early years in Austria, Arlene frequently stresses her naivité and her unpreparedness for the challenges of migration. She speaks freely about her search for identity and the changes that she had to make "inside" herself to help her to survive. While she feels at home in Austria now, she admits that at heart she is a Filipina. Still, she does not plan to return since it will take her many years to rework her relationships there. Besides, she enjoys more freedom in Austria than in the Philippines and can never do there what she can do in Austria. She sees migration to Austria as a privilege, especially since she has recently found an interesting and well-paid job at a foreign embassy in Vienna.

Case box 2:

Philip, 45, moved to Austria in 1993. He was born in Antique, the son of a farmer who eventually moved to Manila where he found a job as a construction worker. Philip studied mechanical engineering but did not finish his studies due to his work as legal political activist. He is married to another former political activist, who migrated with him and with whom he has four children. He now works as a kitchen hand in a Viennese hospital, while his wife, who has a degree in business, is a janitor in a Jewish temple. Philip is a member of *Pinoy First*, the only

politically oriented Philippine association in Austria, which is affiliated with the leftist movement led by José Maria Sison.

Philip came to Austria due to personal relationships. In 1973, Philip's third eldest sister moved to Austria. She was not one of the early Philippine nurses. She came with Father Edbert, a Catholic priest from the province of Salzburg. The latter worked in the Philippines as a missionary and on his return brought a number of Filipinas from his parish to Salzburg.¹² Two years later, another sister followed her. In 1993, Philip, then already the father of two daughters, decided to join them. Although migration was never among his plans before, family matters forced him to take this decision since he did not see a bright future for his children in the Philippines. Due to the pressure of his sisters, who feared that his marriage would break up (because he was meeting so many Philippine women in Austria), his wife joined him. His children followed 15 months later.

Philip could not find a job for a whole year. So they lived on the money they receive from his sisters and from the cleaning jobs his wife took on. Philip was desperate and was beginning to question his role as a man and his masculinity. He was willing to return to the Philippines but he eventually joined his wife in the cleaning company until he got the job as a kitchen hand. As a janitor, his wife provides them with a decent apartment.

Philip stresses that he feels much freer in Austria than in the Philippines and that in Austria there are fewer constraints to child education. Besides he claims that their family is not a typical Philippine family since they are more politically aware than the average Filipino and thus discuss a lot more. His children have some say in family matters and are not brought up in an authoritarian way. This means that they are much more aware of discrimination. They are also more active in school life, which is rather atypical for Philippine immigrant parents. Philip talks of his dream to return to the Philippines but admits that this will never materialize since their children will always need them and their future is more secure in Austria than in the Philippines.

Case box 3:

Rose, 28, works for a public relations company and belongs to the second-generation of Filipino immigrants to Austria. She is the illegitimate daughter of one of the early Philippine immigrant nurses and of a Filipino. After spending her first five years in the Philippines with her grandmother, she was finally brought to Austria where in the meantime her mother had married a native Austrian. Her mother's Austrian husband and his parents welcomed and treated her as their

own daughter and granddaughter and she became very close to them. She considers her stepfather as her “real father” to whom she owes, she says, “she is what she is.” It was her stepfather who taught her critical thinking, while her mother was responsible for the more emotional side. She taught her Philippine values and how to be nice, polite and sweet. From her, she learned the importance of smooth interpersonal relationships. However, both of them proved supportive so that she became a critically thinking person. Thus she learned the best of both cultures. Still, she is much closer to her stepfather, although her mother left him and went to the United States when Rose was still a child and left her in his care. Since then, contacts with her mother have been intermittent.

Rose, conscious of her Philippine roots, considers Philippine culture important to her. No longer fluent in Tagalog, she began to learn her mother tongue again two years ago. This is not a form of re-ethnicization but a general interest in her descent. She visits the Philippines for holidays. She enjoys her time there but she does not understand the way of life of her relatives and is disgusted with Philippine politics. In this context she stressed her freedom in Austria. She elaborated that she can do things in Austria she never can do in the Philippines. She is highly critical of the Philippine way of life, the closeness and social constraints of Philippine society and the American orientation of the Filipinos.

As a second-generation immigrant she is not active in the Filipino-Austrian community but is repulsed by the factionalism and showmanship of community members, who, in her opinion, find life in Austria great. She considers herself 40 percent Filipina and, at the same time, feels totally European. She is aware of her skin color and of being a potential victim of racism but thinks she could always play “the Asian card” (“exotic card”) to impress Western men, if she wanted to.

Case box 4:

Rufus, 22, is the eldest son of an early immigrant nurse and a Philippine father, who came to Austria years after his wife. He works for the UN. Rufus spent his first eight years with his grandparents in the Philippines. Together with his younger brother and sister, he belongs to the more successful second-generation Philippine immigrants in Austria. All siblings have graduated from Grammar School and are now enrolled in the university. Rufus studies Economics.

In Austria, he said, he grew up in a very closed environment. His parents, although open to non-Philippine contacts, do not have any.

His mother is not fluent in German while his father does not speak it at all. Being an employee of the UN, his father is not subject to Austrian immigration provisions and never learned German. This severely limits his chances to communicate with Austrians. Rufus claimed that the majority of first-generation Philippine immigrants live in a fairly closed set of relationships and their contacts with native Austrians do not usually extend beyond work and family. However, he has native Austrian friends as well as friends from other immigrant groups. The stickiness of Philippine families in Austria and the gossiping inside the community convinced him not to take part in any community events any longer. He also said that life becomes more difficult and tension with parents increases when children choose their partners. For Philippine parents, partnerships are more pragmatic and less emotional affairs. With more choices inside the community due to a more equal sex ratio, they prefer partners for their children from within their own ethnic group.

Being conscious of his Philippine roots, Rufus stresses that he is probably 80 percent Austrian. This seems especially important to him since his father is rather nationalistic—highly active in the community and never gets tired of talking about the beauty of the Philippines—which causes lots of embarrassment for Rufus. Therefore, disagreements between them is common and usually ends with the question of why his parents left the country when everything is so great and beautiful there.

For Rufus “Filipinoness” is an event, not a substance. Eager to climb the career ladder, he complains about the disinterest of Filipinos in political affairs and feels repulsed by Philippine politics. While his parents plan to re-immigrate he wants to stay since he experiences more individual freedom and better chances in Austria than in the Philippines.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study examined Philippine migration to Austria, the immigrants’ ways of adapting in a foreign country and the construction of identities among first- and second-generation immigrants. The special circumstances of early Philippine labor migration to Austria have created favorable conditions for the integration of Philippine immigrants. Still, migration always means a great challenge for the individual. In the new surroundings, old behavioral patterns lose their importance and validity. When migrants leave their country they produce a fracture with their previous system of values and way of life. Their everyday knowledge and behavior experience a devaluation and thus become

useless. The presence of different cultural groups “makes it imperative for “individuals to recognize themselves as a member of specific nationalities/ ethnic groups” (Calloni 1999: 126), making a connection between ethnicity and collective identity necessary. Migrants have to find their place in their host society and have to adapt to the challenges which means identity work. Integration, identity formation and self-perception are not isolated processes. They are often unreflective or semiconscious negotiations with the given social, political and economic structures. Biography is a form of constant historical self-positioning. The result is a sort of synthesis, a reproduction of “mine” which only makes sense with the acquisition of “theirs.” Filipino-Austrians retain some identification as a particular ethnic group, which is largely symbolic. Their ethnic behavior is “characterized by a nostalgic but unacquainted allegiance to an imagined past” (Espiritu 2002: 149). Tradition is not the return to given ethnic ties but a form of the past which becomes only visible through biographical reflections. Like identity, culture and tradition are not fixed but continually remade “through an ‘internal-external dialectic’ involving a simultaneous synthesis of internal self-definition and one’s ascription by others” (Edensor 2002: 24). Growing mobility and migration create mobile identities and promote the mutation of national identity and culture, which are not only evident in spectacular and refined displays of elite culture but are deeply ingrained in the banalities and unreflexive patterns of everyday life (Billig 1995).

As the study shows, migration is a complex phenomenon. Migration creates new cultures and subcultures, leaves its imprint on both the sending and the receiving country and contributes to changing and restructuring migration practices over time. Philippine migrants are not a uniform, homogenous group of people sharing the same background, motivation, desires, or problems. They are not passive victims of structures and circumstances who sacrifice themselves for their country or their family. Neither are they mere pawns of capitalists, recruiters or employers. They are human agents capable of making their own rational choices which may not necessarily be the best but are at least the most satisfactory ones to them personally. They are social and political actors in a multi-ethnic, multicultural or better, transcultural society who develop a variety of strategies to cope with their situations. Under the given circumstances, most Filipino-Austrians consider migration a privilege. They strive for equality with the native population, but not necessarily for homogeneity. However, as the second generation shows, assimilation is not inevitable. While the first generation

immigrants still talk about *their* Philippines and identify much more with the Philippines than with Austria, for the second generation it is already *their* Austria.

NOTES

- 1 Definitions of the term “second generation” vary widely among researchers. In this paper, it covers descendants of Philippine migrants in Austria, who came to the country before the age of twelve, or who were born in Austria of Filipino parentage or of mixed marriages.
- 2 This should help to promote job opportunities for Philippine nationals in Austria.
- 3 Both cultures—Philippine and Austrian—considered women as apt for this “typical female job,” which shows a gender-bias on both sides.
- 4 Because of the lack of reliable data, this chapter draws heavily on the information provided in an interview given by the then officer-in-charge of the program, Helmut Kempel, on 16 June 2003.
- 5 As one interviewee said, men especially often consider returning to the Philippines because of lack of career opportunities in Austria.
- 6 The third generation is surfacing slowly only now.
- 7 This phenomenon is widespread among different migrant groups. See also: Fassmann, Reeger & Sari 2007: 19-20. Inter-marriage between native Austrian women and Philippine men is very rare.
- 8 There is only one politically active organization, Pinoy First, that has ties to the leftist movement in the Philippines and to the NDF, but it has been listed as “sociocultural” by the Philippine embassy in Vienna.
- 9 As Tadiar states in a different context, any criticism of Philippine migrants abroad is considered to be an onslaught on Philippine dignity and the Philippines at large (Tadiar 2002: 282).
- 10 In 2006 the author carried out a study on self-positioning and belonging among second-generation Austro-Filipinos (Reiterer 2007).
- 11 This was confirmed by an analysis of the PISA survey 2000 (Bacher 2005).
- 12 Salzburg is a province and a provincial capital in Austria.

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BEING INDIAN IN POST-COLONIAL METRO MANILA: Ethnic Identities, Class, Race and the Media

Jozon A. Lorenzana

This paper examines how young Filipinos of Indian origin describe and position their identities in autobiographical narratives and through talk about their experiences with local, global and transnational media. It draws on studies (Gillespie 1995; Madianou 2006) that conceptualize diasporic identities as a positioning in context and media as a symbolic space where meanings of nation, ethnicity and belonging are negotiated. Data were gathered using indepth interviews and content analysis of online personal sites of second generation Punjabis, Sindhis and Filipinos with one Indian parent. Initial findings suggest that participants tend to define themselves based on class distinctions that conflate ethnicity with class. They assert their 'Indian' identity when faced with stereotypes and misconceptions of India and Indians in everyday talk, news and entertainment media. Consumption of Filipino and global media enable them to participate in the local culture, while use of Indian media create exclusive spaces to claim affinity with Indian cultures. This study extends our understanding of the social and cultural dynamics of diasporas in the Philippines, identity politics among Indian diasporic communities in post colonial societies, and the role of the media in these processes.

Keywords: ethnic identities, Indian diaspora, media consumption, nation, belonging

INTRODUCTION

Contrary to the assumption that members of the Indian diaspora identify with a pan-Indian identity, current studies demonstrate that they have complex and plural identifications, constructed in gendered (Radhakrishnan 2008; Warikoo 2005), classed (Bhattacharya 2008), ethnic (Lock and Detaramani 2006) and 'racialized' (Bhatia 2008) terms. These dimensions may overlap and are complicated by individual and migration histories, the diaspora's sense of belonging and identifications, and the specific cultures of the Indian diaspora in the host society. Recent scholarship on the Indian diaspora has explored the roles media play in the lives and identity formations of its members. On one hand, consumption of media from the Indian homeland indicates a process of reterritorialization or how migrants 'recraft a sense of community and cultural identity in new socio-geographic contexts' (Punathambekar 2005: 151). On the other, it suggests identification with the popular culture of the host society (Gillespie 1995). Analyzing the role of the media in the diaspora, Roger Silverstone (2007) suggests that media offer diasporic groups various competing cultural spaces and alternative imaginaries (Silverstone 2007: 95-96). However, in relation to identity and community formations, media's influence is premature as identities by their nature are dynamic and changing (Silverstone 2007: 96). Ascertaining the roles of the media in identity productions of diasporas, without presuming its centrality, indeed needs further investigation. Warikoo (2005) finds that media, among other factors like school and family, affect ethnic identity choices among Indo-Caribbean youths in New York City. In similar vein this paper examines the role of the media in the identity formations of the Indian diaspora who are not in major cities of the global North, where most studies in the field of Indian diaspora studies originate, but those in the global South, like Metro Manila in the Philippines. This study therefore attempts to represent the experiences of the Indian diaspora or peoples of Indian origin (PIOs) in lesser known destinations or host societies and consequently provides evidence for comparisons between experiences of the Indian diasporas in 'First' and 'Third World' contexts.

I focus on the identity formations of young people or second/third generation members of the diaspora. What does it mean to be Indian in Metro Manila? How do the media, if ever, contribute to the meanings of being Indian? Mindful of the debates about identity (more on this below), I used ethnic identity as a spring board to explore the complex identity

formations and practices of this diasporic group. My interest in the role of the media here is not only an attempt to establish the conceptual link between media and identity but also as an empirical strategy to generate evidence for this sort of inquiry. Marie Gillespie's seminal work on television and youth culture among young Punjabi Londoners demonstrates how 'common TV (or media) experiences supply referents and contexts for talk which is explicitly or implicitly about identities and identity positions' (Gillespie 1995: 25).

This study builds on recent works on the Indian diaspora in the Philippines (Salazar 2008; Santarita 2008; Thapan 2002), which give little attention to young second/third generation members, including those with mixed parentage, i.e., Filipino-Indian unions. Instead of looking at consumption of media from the homeland, I turn to this generation's experiences with local and global entertainment media in the host society. During my initial queries and observations, I discovered that these youths were more engaged in either local (Filipino) or global (American) media and less engaged in Bollywood media culture. What enticed me was their constant reference to how Indians were represented in local entertainment media. I decided to take this direction as it presented an opportunity to probe into how Filipinos, at least in Metro Manila, imagine, represent and treat their immigrants. In so doing this study also provides a critique of Philippine society as 'host' to diasporas and its orientations towards ethnic (among other axes of) difference.

I draw on studies (e.g., Ray 2001) that conceptualize identities as a positioning in context (Hall 1990/2003) and a process of defining boundaries (Barth 1969). Media contribute to this process by providing (symbolic) frameworks for inclusion and exclusion (Madianou 2005b; Silverstone and Georgiou 2005) that either weaken or reinforce boundaries. Following this framework, I analyzed how second/third generation members of the Indian diaspora in the Philippines talked about their identities in autobiographical narratives, including experiences with the media. I argue that informants of the study claim multiple affiliations but tend to position themselves based on class and gender. Participants' ethnic affiliations intersect with class and gender positions. Commercial media influence the symbolic environment where these identities are formed. Local entertainment media reinforce stereotypical images of Indian men that promote distinctions between members of the diaspora. Global entertainment media events like beauty pageants provide alternative images that facilitate inclusion in Philippine society especially among females. How these young people positioned their identities could

be traced to other contextual factors like class dynamics in the homeland and Philippine society, historical processes like colonization, the migration histories and trajectories of Indian immigrants and the classed/gendered culture of the Indian diaspora.

THE INDIAN DIASPORA IN METRO MANILA

Metro Manila (hereafter Manila) is a megapolis comprised of 13 cities and four municipalities, including the city of Manila, the capital of the Philippines, and Makati City, a central business district. It has an estimated population of 10 million that include a majority of Catholic Christians from different Filipino ethnic groups and a minority of Filipino Chinese, Muslims, Indians and expatriate communities. The ethnic diversity of the city is masked by the common use of Filipino, the national language, in media and everyday talk, and the strong influence of Roman Catholicism in every aspect of life. Aside from ethnic affiliation, class is the most salient mode of differentiation in Manila or Philippine society as a whole. This could be partly explained by its historical trajectory.

Since independence from Spain in 1898 and the United States in 1946, Philippine governments have embarked on national development and modernizing projects through democracy and capitalism. Evolving from a state-regulated capitalist economy (1950s-1970s) to a liberal market economy (late 80s to present), the Philippines, however, remains a society where economic gains and opportunities are concentrated within and controlled by the economic and political elites, most of them based in the capital. The uneven sociopolitical development in the Philippines is, according to historian E. San Juan Jr. (2008), compounded by Americanization or the lingering influence of the US in schooling, mass media, sports and music. Philippine sociologist Randy David observes that: 'In hierarchical Philippine society, we measure a person's worth by his (sic) family background, his educational attainment, his profession, his connections and visible wealth' (David 2008). This is, in broad strokes, the 'locality' and context where the second/third generation Indians were born and brought up.

People from India have come to Philippine shores as traders in the pre-colonial era, as sepoys or soldiers of the British East India Company during the British occupation of Manila in the 18th century and in the 19th and 20th centuries as traders or migrants 'in search of economic opportunities' (Santarita 2008). The small number of Indian migrants in Manila, compared to other

countries in the Southeast Asia region, could be explained by the voluntary nature of such migration (Thapan 2001) and the historical circumstances of the Philippines during the turn of the century. Manila, then a Spanish colony, had limited contact with the British Empire which populated its colonies in the region (e.g., Singapore and Malaysia) and elsewhere with indentured Indian laborers. During this period a small number of Indian immigrants in Manila worked for branches of Indian or British trading firms.

Punjabis, Sindhis and Indian professionals working in multinational companies and multilateral organizations comprise the present Indian diaspora in Manila. The Sindhis, who lost their homeland Sindh to Pakistan, have established themselves in cities across continents. Consistent with their occupation in Sindh and like their counterparts elsewhere, Sindhis in the country are known as traders and urban dwellers. Early Sindhi immigrants worked for Indian and British trading firms in Manila and other cities of the islands and consequently put up their own businesses. In spite of the legal constraints imposed on foreign-owned entities in the Philippines, Sindhis have set a strong foothold in garments manufacturing, import and export.

The Punjabis, mostly Sikhs of rural backgrounds, are the biggest ethnic group in the diaspora. Driven by a desire to improve their economic situation, most of them have come to the Philippines to either engage in small-scale trading or money lending that usually caters to street or market vendors, working class Filipinos and small scale businesses. Relatives of successful Punjabis would follow them in the Philippines and similarly establish their own business in the same or another area. Money lending has earned them a moniker among the locals: 'Five-six' is the term used to describe the money-lending scheme of Punjabis where a borrowed amount earns 20 percent interest per month. This job entails riding a motorbike and personally collecting debts in the heat of the day. While the terms are perceived as very usurious, Filipinos still resort to 'five-six' because Punjabis do not demand any collateral and are often reliable (Olarte 2007). Unlike majority of Sindhis that tend to live in gated communities in big cities, Punjabis are more integrated into local communities. Majority of Sindhis and Punjabis are residents but not citizens of the Philippines.

Aside from describing the origins and situation of the Indian diaspora in Metro Manila, we also need to think about their condition in conceptual terms to facilitate a critical and complex understanding of the group being investigated. I propose that they are simultaneously ethnic, diasporic, and

transnational. In relation to peoples in their locality, they are considered ethnic groups, defined by Richard Schermerhorn (1978 as cited in Cornell and Hartmann 1998/2001) as self-conscious populations who see themselves as distinct and have common origin or symbol of their peoplehood. Based on my interviews, Indians see themselves as distinct from Filipino citizens and other ethnic groups like the Filipino Chinese and Muslims.

The term diaspora has become problematic and slippery and so I qualify my use of the term. In its original sense, diaspora 'had more to do with migration as colonization rather than with uprooting and deterritorialization' (Georgiou 2006: 47). The present understanding of diaspora not only emphasizes movement from a homeland but also grounding in a host society. According to James Clifford (1994) both displacement and dwelling constitute and characterize diaspora communities: for members of a diaspora '... with varying degrees of urgency, they negotiate and resist the social realities of poverty, violence, policing, racism, and political and economic inequality' (p. 223-229). Clifford's definition not only acknowledges the immigrants 'grounding' in the host society but also paves the way to reflect on the conditions of diasporic groups.

With the increasing mobility of people, goods, capital and ideas through advancements in technologies of transport and communication, migrants and diasporas have become more connected to their places of origin. Thus scholars like Safran, Sahoo and Lal (2008) have argued that 'the transnational context is part and parcel of diaspora.' It is indeed necessary to acknowledge the links or 'social relations formed between the homeland and immigrants' adopted countries' (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992 as cited in Bhattacharya 2008) in analyzing the conditions of the members of the Indian diaspora in Manila.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My approach to identity assumes that it is plural and contextual. Individuals or groups can claim multiple affiliations (across ethnicity, class, gender, etc) which may contradict each other. Although identities could be essentialized under certain circumstances (Madianou 2005b), they are dynamic, transforming through space and time. Stuart Hall's conception of identity is therefore useful for this study. First, Hall (1990/2003) suggests that cultural identities are historical and therefore undergo constant transformation. They are subject to the continuous play of history, culture, and power

(p. 236). Second, cultural identity is 'not an essence but a positioning. Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position' (ibid. 237). This second definition recognizes the power relationships involved in the process of identification. Referring to the inherent diversity and heterogeneity of the diasporic experience, Hall argues that diasporic identities are 'constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference.' Furthermore, they are 'constituted not outside but within representation¹' (ibid. 244-245) or constructed through meanings and meaning systems. In this conception identities are positioned and constituted in and through history, culture, power and representation.

Frederik Barth's (1969) theory of ethnic groups and boundaries becomes relevant here in expanding the meaning of identity positioning. This theory is consistent with the assumption that identities are flexible. According to Barth, ethnic groups define themselves through the maintenance of a boundary and 'not the cultural stuff that it encloses' (Barth 1969: 15). He acknowledges that both cultural features that signal the boundary and the cultural characteristics of the members may change and may be transformed (ibid. 14). Hence for Barth boundary maintenance is a process of self-ascription and ascription by others. Ethnic groups maintain these 'social boundaries' through interactions or relations with others in a process of 'determining and signalling membership and exclusion' (ibid. 15). Indeed, identities are not only positioned and claimed, but also maintained in relation to others.

And so I ask: How do young people from the Indian diaspora in Manila position themselves in autobiographical narratives? Following Taylor and Littleton (2006), I analyzed autobiographical talk—in the context of a depth interview—of these young people to reveal ways they positioned their identities. I looked for self-ascriptions (Barth 1969) or informants' self-assertions (Warikoo 2005), and ascriptions by others or how they are labelled in the host society.

What do media have to do with identity positionings? The link could be established using Hall's proposition that identities are constructed within representation. Media is a practice of representation that uses image, text, symbol and sound. Silverstone and Georgiou's (2005) argument becomes relevant: the media are seen not to be determining of identities, but contributing to the creation of symbolic communicative spaces in which identities can be constructed. Media influence this symbolic space through representations of minority or ethnic groups. Silverstone and Georgiou point

out that minorities often do not appear in mainstream media. However when they do appear they are often represented in stereotypical and alienating images. According to Hall (1997), stereotypes, a form of representation, 'get hold of the few simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characteristics about a person, reduce everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or development to eternity' (p. 258). The media space, where minority groups appear or not, becomes spaces where meanings about them are constructed. Such meanings 'provide frameworks for inclusion and exclusion' (Silverstone and Georgiou 2005). Indeed media contribute to the process of boundary maintenance through representations of minority groups that elicit either inclusion or exclusion (Madianou 2005b).

How groups are represented, whether in the media or everyday talk, relates to Barth's notion of ascription by others. Based on this assumption, I looked for threads about meanings, representations or stereotypes of being Indian and how they talked about these topics in the informants' life and media experiences. Scholars (Gillespie 1995; Madianou 2005a) who have investigated the role of the media in diasporic groups have used talk about media content and experiences as a strategy to examine identities. This approach assumes that informants are treated as media audiences engaged in the consumption, reception and production of media.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative design to data gathering. The main method was depth interviews and it was supplemented by participant observation of events of the Indian community (Diwali celebration in 2006 and 2007), visits to temples (Sikh and Hindu) and to a Bollywood-themed club. As social networking sites and online journals are popular among young people in Manila, I also visited the pages of some informants to know other biographical details.

Most of the informants were recruited through referrals by friends and by the research participants themselves. Ten (five females and five males) youths, between the ages 19 to 24, consented to participate in the study. The main criterion for their selection was that they were born of first generation Indian or Indian-Filipino parentage. The informants belonged to middle and upper middle class households, with occupations ranging from a student, social worker, company executive to an information technology professional.

In terms of ethnic background, three were Punjabis, three were Sindhis and four had mixed parentage (Filipino mothers and Indian fathers) coming from different ethnic or religious backgrounds (Bengali, Konkan, Muslim). All of them knew and spoke Filipino and English. Only the Punjabis could speak the language of their parents. I also interviewed two officials of local Indian trade associations: Gurpreet Sethi, a Punjabi and president of Indian Business of Bulacan; and Ram Sitaldas, a Sindhi and president of the Indian Chamber of Commerce. Table 1 provides some biographical details of the informants.

Table 1 Profile of Respondents

Pseudonym	Age	Occupation	Sex	Parentage	Citizenship
Usha	24	Manager	Female	Sindhi parents	Indian
Preity	19	Undergraduate student (psychology)	Female	Sindhi parents	Indian
Monika	19	Undergraduate student (management)	Female	Sindhi father and Filipino mother	Filipino
Deepa	26	TV writer	Female	Bengali father and Filipino mother	Filipino
Priyanka	22	Computer programmer	Female	Punjabi (Sikh) parents	Indian
Jeet	23	Social worker	Male	Indian father (from Karnataka), Filipino mother	Filipino
Sonny	18	Undergraduate student (integrated marketing communications)	Male	Punjabi (Sikh) parents	Indian
Ahmed	17	Fourth year HS student	Male (gay)	Indian (Muslim) father, Filipino mother	Filipino
Raja	24	Technology consultant	Male	Sindhi parents	Indian
Vikas	22	Sales executive	Male	Punjabi (Sikh) parents	Indian

I identified themes from the interview narratives and interpreted these data based on the framework and related literature. To protect their privacy, pseudonyms were used to refer to the informants' responses. As this work is limited to a specific locality, results are provisional and tentative. Conclusions apply only to this purposive sample.

FINDINGS

Self ascriptions: Class, ethnic and gender identifications and boundaries

Data suggest that informants consciously and unconsciously expressed multiple affiliations and claimed (contradictory) identity positions across dimensions of ethnicity, class, gender and religion. Class was a dominant theme that often intersected with ethnicity and gender. Caste, a relevant identity position in the Indian homeland, was mentioned only twice by two Punjabis. Most of them asserted their ethnicities (being Filipino, Indian, Punjabi, Sikh, etc). However, during the introductory phase of the interviews other aspects of their identities like gender, personal traits and occupation were uttered before their ethnic identifications. Eight of ten claimed more than one ethnic affiliation as part of their ethnic background (e.g., half-Filipino, half-Indian, quarter Spanish) or as a matter of affinity. Informants tended to choose positions, categories or affiliations that have high symbolic power. While informants claimed positions and affiliations they simultaneously drew classed and gendered boundaries between and within their ethnic groupings.

I observed that the informants' understanding of class was consistent with how the term is defined in the homeland, the Indian diasporas and host society. In India 'social class is often considered to be a combination of wealth and occupational status' (Bhattacharya 2008). For Hindu Punjabis in London, it is expressed through 'commodities, housing, travel and preferences for occupation, leisure and lifestyle' (Raj 2003 as cited in Batnitzky; McDowell and Dyer 2008); and for Sindhis in Manila, Hong Kong and Jakarta class is about 'the value of one's wealth, occupational position and lifestyle' (Thapan 2002). According to Thapan (2002) education enhances one's class standing. For Filipinos, class could mean occupation (Kerkvliet 1990); family background, educational attainment, connections and visible wealth (David 2008); lifestyle, behavior, consumption codes and practices, and ethnicity (Pinches 1999). From this review of definitions, Filipinos and Indians generally understand class in terms of occupation, wealth, lifestyle and consumption. Patterns in the personal narratives of informants reflected *combinations* of the meanings of class as: occupation, wealth, lifestyle, performance/behavior, education or family background.

Sindhi informants tended to differentiate themselves from Punjabis whose common occupation, small-scale money lending or 'five-six,' has become a

stereotype of Indians in Philippine society. Not only Sindhis but the rest of the informants pointed out that Filipinos readily assume that either they or their parents do 'five-six' for a living. This assertion came out strongly when I asked them to talk about a locally produced music video about a Punjabi hawker. Preity found the portrayal "funny . . . (and) true, although it's degrading. When I saw it, I was really laughing out loud. I am not Punjabi." Usha and Raja claimed their class position by citing Sindhis' reputation in (large-scale) trading and manufacturing and their contribution to the Philippine economy. Being Sindhi has high symbolic value; becoming part of this community through wealth and lifestyle, as Jeet revealed, indicates a change in class position and social status:

Jeet: When we first came to Manila, we weren't very well off. My parents really worked hard . . . Only now we're doing pretty well financially. We moved to a village (a gated community) that has a lot of Indians. It's only now that we are able to connect with Sindhis.

Punjabi informants mutually distanced themselves from Sindhis not on the basis of occupation but in terms of lifestyle and gendered performance/behavior.

Priyanka: I was brought up in a very simple manner. My mother is simple and she had a hard life before. They were not rich but they were not poor either . . . I know Sindhis are rich. It's automatic. But if you talk about us, we're just simple folks.

Sonny: I always tell my friends that I am different from them, 'Don't ever make the mistake of associating me with Sindhis' . . . They speak English like girls do. We don't speak English at home . . .

Similarly on the aspect of behavior, a female Sindhi informant commented that: ". . . Punjabi guys are not civilized . . . They ogle at you." These remarks suggest that class distinctions between these two ethnic groups also index meanings of femininity and masculinity. Certain classed behaviors which are construed in gendered terms are attributed to ethnic groups. In this configuration Punjabi and Sindhi masculinities have both high and low symbolic value at the expense of being feminine (speaking English like girls do). While acknowledging that their parents are into money lending, Punjabi informants, however, were conscious of the fact that their generation has gone beyond this occupation and is now pursuing other interests. For example, Sonny is a marketing communications student in an Opus Dei-run university and Priyanka is an information technology professional.

Data also suggest that within Punjabi and Sindhi communities distinctions were based on the presence/lack of education, wealth, lifestyle preference and behavior. Sonny perceived newly arrived Punjabis as “not modernized, not conscious of their looks, and not aware of what the world really is because they were from rural villages.” Senior members of the Indian community like Gurpreet Sethi, a Punjabi, and Ram Sitaldas, a Sindhi, attribute such behaviors to the lack of education among newly arrived immigrants. Indeed for the Indian diaspora in the Philippines education is used to distinguish themselves from each other and to counter the ‘five-six’ stereotype. Priyanka’s reaction “Are all Indians who have been educated here five-six?” demonstrates how second/third generation members assert their difference from other members of their ethnic group that still do money lending and trading. For Sindhis boundaries are drawn based on a combination of value of wealth, lifestyle preferences and behavior. Preity distinguished herself from those who “show-off” and “are not rich anymore but still have to maintain their lifestyle.” For Sindhi informants distinctions within their group are about the maintenance of status as signified by a certain level of wealth, lifestyle and consumption.

Informants from mixed parentage drew boundaries in relation to Sindhis and Punjabis and Indian citizens. Aside from the ‘five-six’ label, they usually distinguished themselves from portrayals of Indians in foreign media. Images of poverty attached to Mother Teresa of Kolkata have strong resonance among Catholic Filipinos. Informants with one Indian parent, like Sushmita, pointed out that they have an upper class family background in India: “My grandfather belonged to a landed class . . . all his life he just sat down and servants kept him cool.”

Why would class matter among these second/third members of the Indian diaspora in Metro Manila? Punjabi and Sindhi informants, including those with one Indian parent like Monika, cited their community’s preoccupation with status and reputation. Improving or maintaining one’s (high) class position contributes to their standing (individually or as a family) in the community.

The tendency to draw class boundaries among members of the Indian diaspora is not uncommon. Bhattacharya (2008) observes that participants of her study were conscious of a social class system among Indians in New York City that replicated the one in India (Bhattacharya 2008: 76). I would like to suggest that this class differentiation is as much a reflection of the homeland as the host society’s class hierarchy and relations. Based on their identity discourses, the occupational positions of ethnic groups in the Indian

diaspora loosely correspond to lower/upper class positions in Philippine society. Doing trade for centuries, both in the Sindh and overseas, most Sindhis in the Philippines have set up successful businesses and consequently have identified with Filipino elites which reside in gated communities in Manila. To some extent their historical context—losing their homeland Sindh during partition in 1947—has also contributed to their establishment and settlement in the Philippines. On the other hand, Punjabis, by the nature of their occupation, are more in touch with the Filipino masses, their usual clients, and are indeed identified with them. However, the case of informants with Filipino and Indian parents challenges this suggested binary between Punjabis and Sindhis. Based on these informants' life stories the class/ethnic backgrounds of both or one of the parents consigns them to the class hierarchy in India or the Philippines.

The migration histories and trajectories of these Punjabis, however, provide a way to think about their class beyond their identity positionings. Coming from rural farming backgrounds, first generation Punjabi immigrants, immigrants in the Philippines become money lenders or traders. Since their goal is to achieve financial security they would scrimp and settle for what informants referred to as a 'simple lifestyle.' For those who have settled here, their second generation would acquire education and some job experience. According to Gurpreet Sheti, a senior figure in the Punjabi community in Manila, the Philippines is a transit point for Indian immigrants. For one the immigration and citizenship laws of the country discourage foreigners from taking roots. This is evident not only in the citizenship by blood principle but also in the citizenship requirements for owning businesses and practicing government regulated professions like medicine, law, accounting and engineering. For this reason and the limited economic opportunities in the Philippines educated children of first generation Indian immigrants tend to migrate to wealthier countries. A Punjabi informant, who is now in Australia, calls this an 'upgrade.' This observation reflects a similar trend called 'twice migration' among Indians in countries like South Africa (Singh 2008). It also implies that Manila is just a stop enroute to the final destination, a city in the global North. Although Punjabis, in relation to Sindhis, have less symbolic value because of their group's reputation as money lenders and rural folks, their financial status—assuming their success in the business—in the Punjab or in their localities in the Philippines earn them a measure of respect and adulation. Joefe Santarita (2008) finds that Punjabis in Western Visayas, central Philippines are treated as saviors by the locals more than their kin.

What came out in this study is the salience of class and its intersections with ethnicity and gender among the youth of the second/third generation Indian diaspora. In Metro Manila, class affiliation is not only evident and important, but ethnic relations in the diaspora somehow mirrors the relations between upper and lower classes in the host society and in the homeland. Ethnicity and class intersect to produce new identifications. Gender complicates this process through its relationships with classed performances. At the same time the migration histories, contexts and trajectories provide a way to see the dynamic and fluid positions of the second/third generation members of the Indian diaspora. This is not to suggest that class alone is the primary mode of identification among the participants of the study; generational differences, caste and religion may also come to play. My focus on the theme of class and its intersections with ethnicity and gender is therefore a limitation of the study.

Ascriptions by others: race and the media

In this section I focus on how Filipinos label Indians based on the personal and media experiences of the informants. I examine racialized representations of Indians in everyday talk and the media, and explain how they relate to the informants' positionings. In so doing I ascertain the roles media play in the identity formations of the second/third generation members of the Indian diaspora.

Racialized and pathological bodies

As discussed earlier Indians are labelled based on the occupational stereotype 'five-six' which has low symbolic value in a class and status oriented society like the Philippines. Such stereotype contributes to boundary making along the axes of class, ethnicity and gender among informants. What this study finds equally interesting and revealing is the connotation of another stereotype, *bumbay*. This term is derived from the former name of the Indian city of Mumbai, Bombay. Anita Thapan (2002) suggests that early Indian immigrants during the American colonial period sailed from the port of Bombay and named their stores after the place. Early Filipinos identified these immigrants with their place of origin and shop's name. I argue that *bumbay* and its meanings suggest a 'racialized' and 'pathological' Indian body.

Informants understood their experiences in childhood and school as 'racism' or 'the display of contempt or aggressiveness toward other people

on account of physical differences' (Todorov 1986: 370 as cited in Go 2004). Being physically different was a basis for exclusion (and inclusion) in Philippine society. Participants remembered being called bumbay or five-six by peers and strangers. Floya Anthias (1990/2001) labels such experiences as discursive racism: a set of representations embodied in daily language, texts, and practices. According to Avtar Brah (1996) racisms intersect with other axes of difference, primarily gender. Informants' experiences of racism support this claim.

Half of the informants experienced verbal and physical forms of abuse on the basis of the meanings of their bodies. Jeet observed that: "after 9/11 strangers assume I'm Arab and make terrorist-flavoured jokes." Priyanka disclosed that her schoolmates picked on her facial and body hair and called her ugly. "For a girl this (being hairy) is not normal." Her understanding of how *her* body 'ought' to be illustrates how gendered racism works: ' . . . the female may be represented as embodying 'male qualities' which were thought to set them apart from the gentility of white womanhood' (Brah 1996: 156). This implies that Filipinos also expect female bodies in genteel form. Priyanka felt that people already pre-judged her character based on her physical attributes. She recalled being excluded from working groups in school. Similarly, strangers kept their distance from Jeet.

Jeet: I . . . was swimming in a public pool at around age 8 and seeing a girl about my age drag her two brothers away from me while saying, in a voice dripping with revulsion, '*Wag tayo lalapit dyan, mga bumbay 'yan, ang baho-baho*' (Let's not go near him, he's bumbay, he stinks).

This construction of an abnormal, pathological Indian body takes an overt expression in the experiences of Ahmed and Deepa. When Ahmed was in second grade at a Catholic school for boys his peers chased him over the field, pricked him with a pen and called him "Aids virus." Looking back, he did not expect such behavior and treatment from his schoolmates who come from affluent families. Deepa, who studied in an exclusive Catholic school for girls, had a similar incident:

Deepa: I had this classmate in second grade. We had a letter writing exercise to a relative. I have been writing to my relatives in India . . . to my *ima*, my grandmother, and so my letter was addressed to Mrs. Bakti George.² She grabbed it and said Bakti! Bakti! Bacteria! I was so mad!

Aside from this incident Deepa also got teased by her name which in Filipino means 'not yet' (*di pa*):

Deepa: People also make jokes about my name. Deepa! *Di pa naliligo, di pa kumakain, di pa nagtotooth brush* (Deepa! Haven't taken her bath, haven't eaten, haven't brushed her teeth). I still get it until now . . . Not from people who are close to me.

Being called bumbay, bacteria, Aids virus and ugly, and being bullied in school generated feelings of isolation, rejection and low self-worth among participants. However, in time they learned to deal with these taunts. Incidents of discrimination became rare as they attended the university or joined the workplace. Distance from the experience allowed Deepa to view teasing as a Filipino's way of establishing a connection: "I just know that Filipinos have these images of Indians. This is just what they know. Sometimes people just want to build a rapport with you. They'll just tease you like "You're so fat! It's just a form of that."

How do we account for these racial attitudes of Filipinos and their 'pathological' representations of Indians? Avtar Brah (1997/2001) suggests that racisms have historical origins. Warwick Anderson's (2007) work on American colonial public health and medical practices in the Philippines is instructive in explaining such racial bias among Filipinos. It reveals a racialized and pathological construction of Filipino bodies, which was the basis for the US colonial policy on public health and hygiene. By extension, I argue that Filipinos have internalized these attitudes and prejudices towards other 'races' or peoples.

The colonizers who regarded themselves as 'clean and ascetic' imagined and represented Filipino bodies as 'dirty and infected, open and polluting.' They institutionalized sanitation and hygiene by setting up sanitary commissions, instructing the local inhabitants in personal hygiene, home cleanliness and the care of the sick (Anderson 2008: 117). According to Anderson in order to become 'self-governing subjects,' Filipinos had to be clean and hygienic in their surroundings and their bodies (ibid. 109). Victor Heiser, director of public health during the 1910s, found imitation . . . wherever he went in the colonial Philippines (ibid. 181).³

Filipinos' present preoccupation with hygiene and cleanliness (especially body odor) could be traced to this historical event. To be acknowledged as civilized, modern and Filipino citizen subjects, one has to demonstrate proper hygiene. The case of Preity exemplifies the prevalence and internalization of such attitude: "Some Indians say they are teased because they smell bad. Since my nanny is so particular about cleanliness, until now I have it in me:

(I) brush my teeth after eating, even small things it's just imbibed in me." Preity mentioned that she had an easier time fitting in and befriending Filipino schoolmates compared to *other* Indian girls in school. This finding suggests that attitudes toward 'race' or difference on the basis of the body and physical features could be influenced by colonization. Filipinos' understanding and practice of hygiene, a colonial legacy, has become a means of inclusion and exclusion in society.

Media as agents of inclusion and exclusion

Informants' experiences with local and global media point to classed and gendered representations of Indians that have contradictory consequences. In 2006 Michael V, a popular comedian and gag show host, came up with a compilation of his music videos that make fun of marginalized peoples in Philippine society. Produced by GMA Network, the second largest TV and news organization in the Philippines, each song from the album features Michael V spoofing gays, Indians, ugly people, etc. In the song *VJ Bumbay*, he mimics a male Sikh Punjabi who wears a fake beard and wraps a length of white cloth around his head to resemble a turban. Shot in black and white, and set in rap, the character of Michael V, a hawker, persuades the audience to buy his original but defective wares.

Most informants responded to *VJ Bumbay* as critical audiences. Male informants were particularly affected by this portrayal. However others did not say much about the video and were reflexive of its genre as an entertainment product: "it was funny and not to be taken seriously." Regardless of ethnic background, informants pointed out that the video stereotyped Indians as bumbay, referring to its classed and racialized meanings. Informants debunked this stereotypical image by asserting their class/occupation (owners of big businesses for Sindhis) and changing status (Punjabis taking other professions). They also cited the cultural heritage and achievements of Indians, especially the nation's recent economic performance. As discussed earlier this media representation has reinforced boundaries between Punjabis and Sindhis, and Indians and Filipinos.

Informants also criticized the media organization (GMA 7) for its treatment of ethnic minorities. Jeet deplored how the production, airing and marketing of the music video by a major media organization indicated an institutionalization of racial discrimination. Both Raja and Jeet observed that the music video reinforced the occupational stereotype, especially among

the masses. Jeet, who works with street children, shared that they teased him with the song: "They pick up this message from the media which says that it's okay to make fun of people who are different." Indeed the music video has influenced the symbolic space that is Philippine entertainment media and has become a reference for imagining Indians.

If local entertainment media contributed to the exclusion of Indians, global media, to some extent, influenced the symbolic environment to their advantage. The US-based annual Miss Universe pageant, a media event and contest taken seriously in Philippine society, in Thapan's (2002) observation, has helped boost the image of Indians locally. Held in Manila in 1994, the Miss Universe organization partnered with the Philippines' largest TV network, ABS-CBN, which gave full media coverage for three weeks. Sushmita Sen, an 18-year old Bengali and Indian national, won the crown. Female participant shared how this media event helped change Filipinos' perceptions of Indians, especially women. Deepa, who claimed to be half-Bengali, noticed that people were "remarking how smart they were at such a young age...they sounded like philosophers." She felt proud and identified with the Miss Universe's Bengali identity.

Parameswaran (2004) reveals that Indian print media's representations of global Indian beauty queens are classed and are constructed in the context of a nation that is renegotiating its marginal position in the global economy (p. 346). The female informants' identification with Indian beauty queens reflect not only an affiliation with an Indian identity but also a desire to be recognized as Indians in a privileged class position. The changing image of Indian women in Philippine society, however, was mediated by the symbolic power of a global media event that is owned and produced by an American media outfit. The sudden warmth experienced by Deepa and other female informants suggests that their symbolic inclusion in Philippine society is *still* enabled by American global media, which has the power to reward and create models of cosmopolitan (ethnic) identities. They promote, among others, upper class, English-speaking, achieving women – traits desired by modern Filipinos.

CONCLUSION

This study was premised on the need to investigate identity formations of young members of the Indian diaspora in cities of the global South like Metro Manila, and what media might have to do with this process. Data

suggest that being Indian in this context is not so much about one's ethnic affiliation alone but a combination of class, gender and race. Boundaries among Indian ethnic groups are drawn along class and ethnicity; distinctions between Filipinos and Indians are based on racialized and classed representations. These identifications and distinctions are gendered and thus results into contradictory experiences of difference.

The salience of class could be traced to the influence of the social organization of the host society, class hierarchy in the homeland and the status conscious culture of the local Indian communities. Racialized representations of Indians in popular discourse have historical origins that influence identity positionings and formations. The commercial orientation of local and global media exploits stereotypes and gives ethnic or national identities classed and gendered meanings. These media representations either reinforce or break boundaries within Indian ethnic groups and between Indians and Filipinos. This is how identities of the second/third generation Indian diaspora are formed in the context of postcolonial Manila.

Safran, Sahoo, and Lal's (2008) speak of the Indian diaspora developing 'institutions, orientations and patterns of living specific to the institutional structures and socio-political contexts of the different hostlands.' What this study finds is more continuities than peculiarities in the experiences of young people of Indian origin in Metro Manila, a city in the global South, in relation to other hostlands in the global North. Class identifications and distinctions have become significant among Indians in the UK and US (Bhattacharya 2008; Radhakrishnan 2008; Raj 2003). Peoples of Indian origin, whether from the Caribbean or the subcontinent, are also subject to gendered and racialized experiences (Bhatia 2008; Warikoo 2005; Gillespie 1995) in these cities. In a study of Indo-Caribbean youths in New York City, Warikoo (2005) notices that females benefit from cosmopolitan representations of Indian women and males resist classed and racialized labels like being associated with taxi drivers and Arabs after 9/11.

Indeed my findings only strengthen James Clifford's (1994) argument that the diasporic condition is a classed, gendered, and racialized phenomenon. Informants of the study who are second/third generation members of the Indian diaspora tend to experience contradictory attitudes towards ethnic difference that is constituted by class, gender and race. Such attitudes could be traced to a colonial past that imagined and treated people based on racial hierarchies that privileged white foreigners. On one hand

Filipinos have imbibed the racial prejudices of their American colonizers and have treated ethnic groups such as Indians accordingly; on the other Filipinos have looked up to 'white' Americans and Europeans, and have provided them preferential treatment. The members of the Indian diaspora are both beneficiaries of Filipinos' hospitality and victims of their prejudices. Indeed, the influence of colonization and the symbolic power of the colonizer linger and inform the experiences of the Indian diaspora in Philippine shores.

NOTES

- 1 Hall (1997) defines representation as 'the process by which members of a culture use language . . . to produce meaning' (p. 61).
- 2 I changed the surname to protect the privacy of the participant.
- 3 This is not to suggest that Filipinos had no practices of hygiene during that period. Anderson (2008) notes that Filipino elites who also worked for the colonial health agencies thought that the 'disease stigma more properly belonged not to race but to social class' (p. 192-193). Indeed since the American colonial period class differences and boundaries are already in place.

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CHILDREN WATCHING CHILDREN:

How Filipino Children Represent and Receive News Images of Suffering

Jonathan C. Ong

It is ironic that though much has been said about spectacles of suffering, not much talk has actually centered on how images of suffering are received by audiences, much more by child audiences. Recognizing that children today operate as active seekers of information and creative interpreters of global media messages, this study is concerned about how children perceive “other” children – children afflicted by disease, children orphaned, children caught in the middle of war. Like their adult counterparts, children encounter these images almost exclusively through the prism of news broadcasts. And again, like their parents, we assume that their reactions and responses operate within discursive regimes of us and them, of heroes and villains, of risk and safety – or do they really? How do Filipino children perceive otherness in the media and how do they talk about them? From analyzing their drawings about what they assume to be the “problems” of nearby and faraway children and their media talk about news broadcasts of suffering, this study demonstrates that Filipino children from different socio-economic classes have significant differences in their representation and reception of otherness from both Western and non-Western contexts. Using Silverstone’s (2006) concept of proper distance, I also argue that children weave in and out of a moral relationship with the Other in their varying expressions of proximity and distance. I demonstrate that an interplay between media contexts and children’s socio-economic contexts enables and disables how they describe other children as “too close,” “too far,” and also of proper distance.

Keywords: media and morality, child audiences, news audiences, suffering, the Other, proper distance, de-Westernizing, media studies, Philippines

MEDIA AND MORALITY

In recent years, media studies have witnessed a dramatic moral-ethical “turn” with the forceful writings of Roger Silverstone (2006), Lilie Chouliaraki (2006), and Nick Couldry (2006), among others. I describe this “turn” as dramatic simply because media and cultural studies have had a historically estranged relationship with the word morality. Scholars from the classical social sciences of sociology and anthropology have long derided our field for being “morally cretinous... facile and useless” (Tester 1994: 3-10). In the few occasions where morality is even uttered, the discourse is either characterized by the screech of “moral panics”—subsequently and rightfully silenced (cf. Drotner 1992)—or the modesty of “moral economy,” which later confessed constituted a “discussion of morality with a very small and non-judgmental m” Silverstone (1999: 140).

The new agenda of media and morality, on the other hand, talks about the Other. Capital O, as Silverstone may be likely to remind us. The crucial question being asked is how the media may enable or disable a relationship with the Other based on responsibility, hospitality, and justice. However, much of the recent scholarship relies on textual and phenomenological analyses without actually talking to audiences. Chouliaraki's *The Spectatorship of Suffering* (2006), for instance, examines how Western news media make selective claims as to which peoples are more worthy of attention, compassion and humanitarian action. While some news narratives depict marginalized others with humanity and agency, she cites that a great majority of news clips deny any possibility of viewers feeling any sort of compassion towards the sufferers that they see onscreen. Chouliaraki's textual analysis must be credited for its rigorous exploration and explication of concepts raised in the media and morality debates. But at the same time, these debates can be enriched by empirical audience studies work. Reception research enables us to investigate how audiences make sense of images of otherness in the media by going directly to audiences, and not by speculating from visual or textual analyses.

In this light, this study empirically examines how children relate with distant others in the context of mediation, specifically, through the mediation forced by the narrative of news. From a reception study, it asks how children express perceptions of otherness in relation to distant suffering children that they encounter in global and local television news. And from a drawing exercise, this study explores children's knowledge about suffering others:

how they imagine the problems of children are – whether nearby or in other parts of the globe, and how they learn about them – whether from classroom lectures, family talk, or their active engagement with various kinds of media available to them.

Actual studies of audiences of distant suffering have been few and far between. Cohen and Seu's (2002) study looks at how adults in the United Kingdom engage with humanitarian print advertisements. Problematizing the old compassion fatigue thesis (Moeller 1999; Sontag 2003), which assumes that audiences become passive and desensitized to the repetitive shuffle of suffering and disaster, they expose that individuals have a wide and complex range of emotional responses when confronted with appeals to "do something" about human rights atrocities. They also show how individuals find lines of connections to distant others through religion, ethnicity, and gender. Hoijer's (2004) analysis of Swedish and Norwegian audiences' responses to mediated suffering also discovers various ways by which individuals express compassion for distant others. Furthermore, she argues that compassion is dependent on "ideal victim images" and is expressed differently by male and female audiences – pointing us to the dialectic of media contexts and personal contexts as simultaneously enabling and disabling in the expression of moral responsibility.

CHILDREN AND MORALITY

There have been few recent studies about children's responses to news images of atrocities and disaster, specifically concerning coverage of war. For example, the compilation *Children and Media in Times of War and Conflict* (2007) brings together research about children in the US, UK, Germany, Israel, and The Netherlands as media audiences of the 2003 Iraq War. Using a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods, including a drawing exercise similar to the one used in this project, the researchers highlight the interplay of children's media contexts and everyday life contexts in their understanding of atrocities abroad. A significant finding is that children's talk about the war reflects the larger public discourses available in their society (Lemish and Gotz 2007: 7). In Seiter's (2007) study of American children, she discovered that her respondents initially perceived the war as an individualized struggle between George W. Bush and Saddam Hussein. But this simplistic 'hero versus villain' retelling of the Iraq War was actually a function not of their young age or development stage, as Seiter elegantly argues. Rather, it was heavily influenced by the media publications that the

children had been required to read in school. The media available to children at that time were supportive of the war, loyal to Bush, and grossly unflattering to Hussein. Further, the “protective silence” that the parents and teachers of the children interviewed contributed to misinformation on the part of the children. When follow-up interviews were conducted about a year later, Seiter discovered that the children actually offered more critical and nuanced readings of the Iraq War and its media coverage. Seiter posits then that greater visibility of antiwar positions in the national media may have contributed to this shift in opinion as well as local efforts from a school teacher who had devoted more classroom discussion time about the war and its media coverage. Seiter’s work also intersects with Hoijer’s findings of gendered expressions of compassion above. In the drawings children made of the Iraq War, girls are more likely to illustrate human victims/sufferers than boys, who focus on weapons and technologies of war.

The studies in this volume offer a nuanced understanding of children as a heterogeneous audience of active meaning-makers who draw from their life histories, family values, school lessons, and media content in learning about the world and its many others. In my examination of children’s representation and reception of otherness in the news, I turn to Cultural Studies for a more nuanced framework of mediation, which acknowledges how global (media) and local (contexts) are dialectically intertwined (Buckingham 1996, 2000; Lemish 2007). This perspective is concerned with how children make meanings about what they watch, how they express emotions towards who they watch, and how they talk about themselves and others in the context of media consumption. Adopting Buckingham’s (1996) approach to studying child talk, which asserts that “In discussing what we watch, and in making claims about what we like and dislike, we are making claims about ourselves – who we are, or indeed who we like to be” (p. 57), we consider children as not deficient but different from adults and that they themselves actively draw upon different meanings and frameworks of interpretation from their diverse social contexts.

As regards the media, this perspective acknowledges that media technologies and media representations are not determining but instead enabling/disabling (Silverstone 2006). As Chouliaraki (2006) asserts, news narratives on suffering either invite pity or dismissal from viewers based on their mode of address: “dots-on-the-map news,” for example, reduces suffering others to simplistic icons and numbers that are disabling for audiences’ identification. Moeller, in her (2002) study of how children are represented

in international news, argues that kids are in danger of being commodified, as images of the proverbial “starving innocent child” are routinely deployed to “shape the public’s desires, claim a moral posture, galvanize donors, and capture the attention of an audience” (p. 53). And in the Philippines, Khan (2006) discovers that children have two common faces in the news: “victims of abuse” (and therefore sympathetic) or “in conflict with the law” (unsympathetic). Indeed, it is interesting to explore children’s responses to these images and whether they may develop “critical readings” towards them, or whether these actually evoke pity or even action.

Children, in this study, are individuals between 9 and 12 years of age – an age group recognized by Buckingham (1996) as understudied by scholars on children. By focusing on pre-adolescents, this research project is then able to probe the period wherein people learn how to talk about themselves in relation with others and posit how this talk may or may not challenge adult discourses of “us and them.”

FILIPINO CHILDREN AND THE MEDIA

By listening specifically to what Filipino children have to say about distant suffering, we give voice to children in a non-Western context – a group that finds themselves routinely represented as the Other by news media (Moeller 2002). While dialogues with child audiences in Western countries have been carried out in exploring how Western children perceive the “usual suspects others” of the global South (Heintz-Knowles 1992), there is a significant need to reverse the angle of spectator-/scholar-ship. This project then examines how children in a developing country such as the Philippines perceive their others, who they are, who they consider “better” or “more worthy” others, and how they develop feelings of trust, care, and fear from watching the news. The movement to de-Westernize media studies and children’s studies, recognize, opens us up not only to surprising answers that our fields have long been searching for, but crucially, to surprising questions that we probably would never have considered asking ourselves in the first place.

With 49 percent of the population below 19 years of age, the Philippines today is deeply concerned about the fate of their children. Commentators from the government, the church, and the academe routinely express their anxieties about the changing structure of the household as well as the media’s impact on children’s learning and development. Consequently, this discourse of moral panics tends to underpin academic research, as Lanuza (2003) argues

that studies on Philippine youth tend to be moralistic and emotional and directed for political or religious ends.

Television ratings data reveal that Filipino children are high consumers of the news. Unlike in some parts of Asia (Tudor-Locke et al. 2007)—where viewership of news among children is dwindling— in the Philippines, children are avid viewers of national news programs *24 Oras* and *TV Patrol*, which are among the top 10 overall programs for children 2 to 12 years old (AGB Nielsen Phils. 2006). While this trend in viewership can be partly explained by the fact that most TV households in the Philippines only have one TV set and TV viewing then becomes a communal exercise for the whole family, it is still curious that middle- to upper-class children who have access to more than one TV set likewise have national news programs in their top 10 most watched shows (ibid.). It is highly significant then to identify how children copy or challenge parents' talk about distant suffering in the news.

Access to global news channels such as CNN and BBC has been made possible with the diffusion of cable TV. Since the 1993 launch of SkyCable, broadcasts of these channels have reached two-thirds of Philippine households (Philippine Media Landscape 2003). This figure, however, is disputed to be too modest an estimate because of the widespread phenomenon of "tapping," where one household illegally plugs into the cable broadcast of their neighbors (ibid.).

Another factor to consider would be recent trends in reporting about global events. Because of the increased flow of migration in recent years, news about Filipinos abroad have increased in both television and print media. As 11 percent of the population live abroad, there is great concern about the status of Filipinos in other parts of the world. As such, news about September 11, the civil war in Lebanon, the war on Iraq, and others, captivated the headlines for significant periods, as frequent updates on Filipino migrants "caught in the middle" of conflict are given. Indeed, it would be interesting to examine how the narrative of these news items—which I observe to employ a "communitarian discourse" (cf Chouliaraki 2006) of inviting compassion for fellow Filipinos only ("people like us") and not for the peoples actually involved in the conflict—begin to frame children's sense of which Other is "more worthy" of compassion.

PROPER DISTANCE

The key analytical tool that I use in examining children's representations and reception of otherness is the idea of proper distance. Inspired by

Emmanuel Levinas and Hannah Arendt, Silverstone (2006) describes proper distance as

“the importance of understanding the more or less precise degree of proximity required in our mediated interrelationships if we are to create and sustain a sense of the other sufficient not just for reciprocity but for a duty of care, obligation and responsibility, as well as understanding” (p. 47).

In his book *Media and Morality*, Silverstone places the ethic of proper distance at the heart of cosmopolitan citizenship. Respect and hospitality for the Other, he argues, is the central moral challenge that individuals face in a world characterized by complex connectivity on one hand and increased polarization on the other. The Other, he argues, must be viewed as both “same as us” and “different from us,” and following this, it is then the challenge of global media to represent the Other as “both close and far,” what he calls *proper distance*.

Silverstone uses this concept to critique current media representations of the Other as either too close (celebrities in tabloids, exotic Asians, etc.) or too far (terrorists, Muslims, etc.) (p. 48). Drawing the Other in too close is to annihilate their difference by subsuming the Other to the Self, while to cast the Other as too far is to deny the shared humanity of Self and Other. Though Silverstone does not give any specific examples of media representations that follow the ethic of proper distance, we see his influence in Chouliaraki’s (2006) critique of news narratives of suffering, which explicates Silverstone’s ideas through a rigorous textual analysis. In her book, Chouliaraki develops a typology based of news broadcasts of suffering based on the different moral claims that they make. Adventure news casts the Other as “too far” (*do not help, they are not like you*), ecstatic news draws the Other in “too close” (*help, they are like you*), while emergency news preserves the sameness and difference of the Other in relation to the spectator (*help, they are like you and not like you*) and is thus based on proper distance.

In this study, I use this same concept as a tool to analyze Filipino children’s media talk about suffering others. I examine whether their talk subsumes the suffering Other and denies their difference (*too close*), sees them as beyond care and identification and asserts irreconcilable difference (*too far*), or perhaps have some element of both (*both close and far*). Proper distance, while a powerful tool to critique representations, must also be applied bottom-up in order to see how audiences develop relationships that recognize the Other

as both different and similar to us, and how might the media enable or disable these relationships. Further, by applying proper distance to study child audiences, I aim to tie up the “adult” philosophical debates on cosmopolitanism and the media with bottom-up explorations of how children—perhaps the most unpredictable, creative and even active of all audiences—understand their “others.” How might cosmopolitanism be enabled/disabled by the media and by personal contexts? What are the linkages between cosmopolitanism and media literacy as moral projects? These are some of the underpinning questions behind this media and morality audience study.

METHODOLOGY

As this is an exploratory study, I chose to have a purposive sample of children, 9 to 12 years old, male and female, from different socio-economic backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, this age range is one of the more frequently neglected subjects of research.

As past studies on children using the focus group interview as the primary method of data gathering have found that greater homogeneity and familiarity within the group foster less guarded, more relaxed dialogue among respondents (Wodak et al. 1999), we thought it best to group the children according to their socio-economic classes. However, for this qualitative study, the grouping does not aim to make any causal links to social class. Following Bourdieu (in Rupp and de Lange 1989), the study merely asserts that different social classes have differential access to forms of knowledge controlled by different social institutions, such as the school and the media.

The key indicators of social class used in selecting the respondents were geographic location and the type of school attended (public or private). Personal contacts were used in sourcing respondents from the municipalities of Fairview (middle-income class) and Santa Mesa (lower-income class). At least one week prior to the interview, parental consent forms that explained the topic of the interview were distributed to the parents of the respondents. The interview for the middle-class group and lower-income class groups took place in December 2006 in classrooms at their schools. Interviews were conducted in Filipino but were translated to English for this paper.

Each focus group lasted roughly 75 minutes. The first part of the focus group was the drawing exercise, where the children were made to create their own representations of other children. This enabled us to see which

resources they were drawing from—school, media, family, etc.—as regards their knowledge of distant suffering. More crucially, we got to see their own expressions of sameness and difference from the creative illustrations that they made. Creative methods such as drawing exercises and even video-recording have been used by Gauntlett (1997) and de Block and Buckingham (2007), who argue that these methods empower children to speak with their own voices. Within the context of the drawing exercise however, instead of using the emotionally loaded term “suffering,” we asked the children to draw the “problems” of children in two different parts of the world.

Once everyone had presented their drawings, we asked the children general questions about their news viewing habits and their attitudes towards the news. This provided us with knowledge about their variable levels of interest in the news as well as the contexts of news viewing in each of their households.

The final segment of the focus group entailed showing video clips—from CNN, BBC, and NBC01—to the children to provide further context for their discussion about suffering children in other countries. The video materials were selected from these three international channels, as they are available on Philippine cable television. They were also screened for their relevance to the research topic and their appropriateness to the age group. The clips covered a diverse range of topics: the CNN clip was on homeless children from Hurricane Katrina, the BBC clip showed Iraqi children unable to play outdoors due to the war, and the NBC clip was a case study of a Darfur orphan.

CHILDREN DRAWING CHILDREN

This section discusses the findings from the drawing exercise. Here the children were asked to produce two drawings, as they were asked to draw the problems of children from two different places in the world. They were asked to draw the children’s situation and environment, and then explain the drawings to the rest of the group.

Who are the others?

Interestingly enough, all the children decided to draw Filipino children as their first drawings and another from a different nationality for their second drawings, save for one exceptional case who drew a “Filipino” and a “Bicolano” – a child from a province in the Philippines. This respondent claimed that she was unfamiliar with kids’ problems elsewhere in the world

but knew of the December 2006 Typhoon Reming that killed more than 400 people in the Bicol region and left many others homeless (Aguilar et al. 2006).

Table 1.1 Middle-class Kids' Drawings of Suffering Children (by place of origin)

Filipino children	8 of 8
African children	5 of 8
Arab children	3 of 8

Table 1.2 Working-class Kids' Drawings of Suffering Children (by place of origin)

Filipino children	7 of 7
Arab children	4 of 7
American children	2 of 7
Bicolano children	1 of 7

In terms of the type of suffering that was represented, it is unremarkable that most of the illustrations of the plight of Filipino children were much more contextual and narrativized as compared to their drawings of kids elsewhere. In spite of this, middle-class children showed no outward signs of having difficulty in drawing and talking about their illustrations of children in other countries. Consider Joshua and his drawing of African children:

Figure 1.1 Joshua's Drawing of Filipino and African Kids



Middle-class

Interviewer: Joshua, tell us about your drawing.

Joshua: This is my drawing: the African and the Filipino. The African, they are the poorest country. They build only their house with trees. They are so poor. They have no technology. They only eat animals. They become pity to other people. No one gives them money. No one loves them. No one likes them. Everyone laughs at them when they go to a new country. They are a really poor people. Someone needs to make money for them. [sic]

Interviewer: Why are they laughed at?

Joshua: Because they look ugly; they don't wear clothes like us. They have no technology.

Mae: [emphatically] They're not pangit [ugly]! They're just dark!

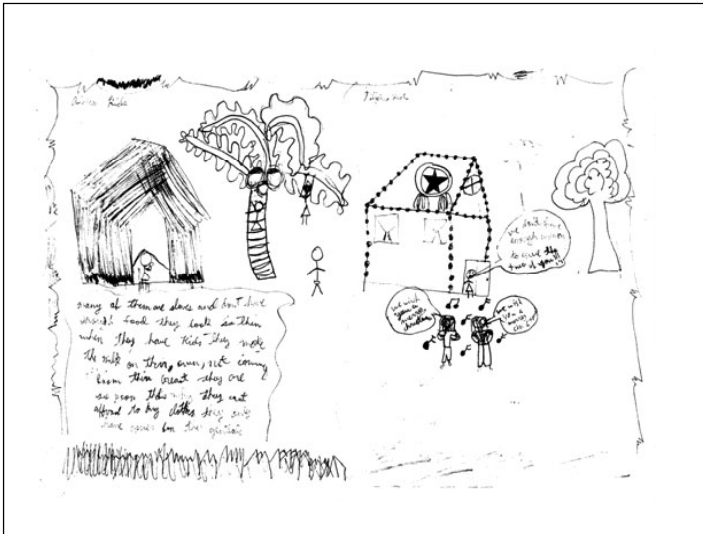
Joshua: Why? Did I say they were pangit?

Mae: Yes, you did! You said ugly!

Though there was strong contestation from Mae in the group, Joshua's conception of Africans as backward "natives" is duplicated in his groupmate Kayeceline's drawing, where we see again depictions of coconut trees and shabby houses and a caption that says, "They can't afford to buy clothes; they only have cover for their genitals." Clearly, this discourse of African barbarianism has long been present in representations in children's schoolbooks and even the news media (Van Dijk 1987).

Among the middle-class children, I also observed that they devoted more time and effort in drawing the plight of foreign others as opposed to Filipino children's problems. While it is too hasty to say that this is indicative of a wider societal "fascination" with the Other, as Silverstone (2006) describes, the more detailed depictions that they have of the suffering of geographically distant others *vis a vis* near others suggest that they do possess symbolic resources of otherness that they can routinely draw from. In fact, reviewing their illustrations on their own (without their accompanying commentary), one can easily make the assumption that the respondents thought that Filipino children are worse off than children in Africa or the Middle East, given that they depicted the African and Middle Eastern settings as more lush and abundant than the barren urban contexts that they situated Filipino children. However, listening to and reading their commentaries, it is evident that they conceived of urban poor children's problems as less extreme than rural poor children's.

Figure 1.2: Kayeceline's Drawing (middle-class group)



Arab children are similarly represented as backwards in the drawings of middle-class respondents. Twelve year old Rodennel drew an Arab child in a guillotine for 'stealing food' and 9-year old Mae drew a child in the middle of a desert. Using the concept of proper distance, we can say then that middle-class children tend to represent the suffering of faraway children as "too far."

Middle-class

Mae: Because in the desert, you can only get water from cactus and there's very little food. And in the mornings it's hot. Very, very hot. But in the evenings it's just the opposite: it's very, very cold.

Interviewer: So is he lost in the desert?

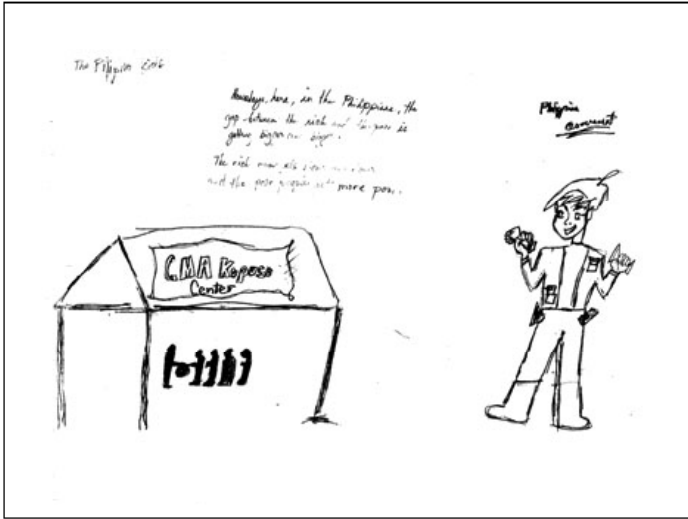
Mae: Yes. And their houses there are different. A lot of the houses are shabby. Because ...

Joshua: They can't find a place to stay. So they're wandering now.

Mae: No, because their process is different. They don't have much technology. That's why they're just poor.

In contrast to children from other countries, they have much thicker, even intellectualized, descriptions of Filipino children's problems, as they are able to link elites and institutions as causes of poverty.

Figure 1.3 Therese's Drawing



The common discourse of elite corruption in Philippine society, present in news features, history books, even religious sermons (David 2004) is present in children's talk, as for instance Therese (11) asserts, "The gap between the rich and the poor is getting bigger and bigger. Rich men get richer and richer and poor people get poorer. They, like, steal from them. They rob money from the poor."

The drawing exercise reaped widely different responses from the lower-income class children however. When the instructions for the exercise were relayed, we were immediately met with hesitant, questioning glances. To make it easier for the kids then, we tried to give them more directed questions, and the responses that we received were surprising.

Working-class

Interviewer: I guess you have seen children from other countries in the news, right? For instance, African children – what do you know about them?

Kids: [no response]

Interviewer: Like, what do you think? Are they fair-skinned or dark-skinned?

Ton: They're white. They're white.

As opposed to the middle-class children who highlighted the differences between Filipino children and children from other countries, their drawings revealed a duplication of problems of kids here and abroad.

Working-class

Rose: This child does not have a family.

Interviewer: Is that Filipino?

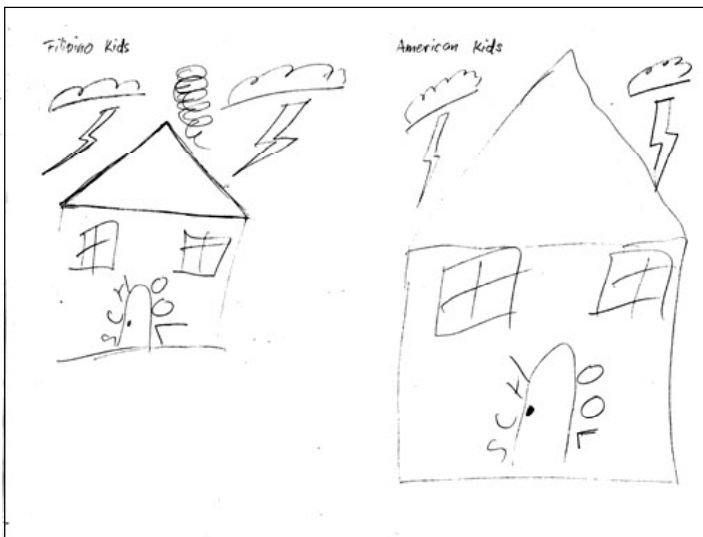
Rose: Yes. Filipino. That's why she's now begging in the streets. Next, the American child, his family died.

Interviewer: Oh okay. So what happened?

Rose: They died when their house burned down. So now he's sick and homeless.

To distant suffering kids, the problems attributed were typhoons, homelessness and the most frequent of all – parents dying. These actually sound like recent headlines of local news media reporting on local issues, as the damage and death toll caused by several supertyphoons between October and December 2006 have been heavily documented in local news, even prompting telethons from major TV networks. Consider this illustration by Ton (10):

Figure 2.1 Ton's Drawing



Working-class

Ton: Here, there's a typhoon in the Philippines. Just this month there was a strong typhoon. And school was cancelled.

Interviewer: Oh yes. And then?

Ton: And the American kids . . . the same thing. Typhoon.

Interviewer: Oh. Where did you see this?

Ton: In the news.

Interviewer: Ahh. Was this the hurricane? Hurricane Katrina?

Ton: That might be it. Yes. [tentatively]

Interviewer: The American school is bigger?

Ton: Yes. America has bigger things. They're a richer country.

From the children's hesitant manner of presenting their drawings and the content of the drawings themselves, it is easy to surmise that these children were guessing about the situation of foreign children. But when asked to describe the problems of Filipino children (they also selected Filipinos as one of their two subjects), they were strikingly more verbose in their storytelling.

Working-class

MJ: My classmate's house burned down. And his parents were left inside the house. What happened was they didn't have electricity. So they were tapping on the electricity of their neighbor's house. But the neighbor was selfish so he cut off their connection. So they ended up using candles for light. So one night the mom of my classmate left the candle burning as my classmate went to the store. When he came back the fire was raging badly. And they were unable to stop the fire. I'm so sad for him. He got saved but now he has no parents.

It is also interesting to note that their representations of Filipinos' suffering were more experiential and more emotional, as compared to the middle-class children. In spite of the repeated instructions to share about what they know from the news, they chose to relate stories that happened to someone they know or see regularly. These images tend to be extremely salient to the point that their most frequently mentioned concept of suffering—the loss of parents or family—becomes their (only) yardstick to judge the suffering of others, possibly creating a relationship with others as “too close” (Silverstone 2006).

In summary, here are two tables to illustrate the most common themes that came out from the children's illustrations of other children's problems in the Philippines and elsewhere.

Table 2.1 Filipino Kids Problems Drawn by Respondents

Filipino Kids' Problems	Middle-class	Working-class
1. POVERTY		
* no money	4	3
* victim of social inequality	4	0
* no shelter	3	3
* no education	2	0
* few clothes	1	0
* no parents	0	5
* no food	0	2
2. VICTIM OF NATURAL DISASTER	0	1
3. VICTIM OF PHYSICAL ABUSE	1	0
4. SICK OF TROPICAL DISEASE	0	2

Table 2.2 Distant Kids' Problems Drawn by Respondents

Distant Kids' Problems	Middle-class	Working-class
1. (EXTREME) POVERTY		
• no food (starvation)	4	2
• slavery	2	0
• no parents	4	4
• no school	2	2
• clothes made out of leaves	3	0
• victim of social inequality	2	1
• child labor	0	1
2. SUBJECTS OF PUNISHMENT		
• child criminal tortured / guillotined	2	0
• child punished by parents for speaking to white people	1	0
3. EXTREME CONDITIONS		
• desert environment	2	0
• jungle environment	3	0
4. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE		
• ugly	1	0
• black	0	1
5. VICTIM OF NATURAL DISASTER	1	4
6. VICTIM OF CRIME	0	1
7. SICK OF DISEASE	2	2

It is curious to note that while the type of suffering that the children most commonly depicted can fall under the frame of poverty, the degree of poverty (poverty versus extreme poverty) as well as its causes (i.e., corruption by elite, jungle environment, etc.) are widely different.

Politics of pity

In both socio-economic groups, there is a shared sentiment of being better off, lucky, and even blessed than both suffering children in the Philippines and abroad. Though one may think that the lower-income children may express strong identification with suffering children in the Philippines, they are quick to point out key differences:

Working-class

Rose: My mama tells me, we are lucky. It's a blessing that we have parents, unlike others. The street children, my mama tells me, 'Look at them. They cannot go to school. You do good in school so that you are able to go far.'

Ton: I don't see myself in [a Filipino street child]. Because I know that my parents love me so much. If I want something, they give it to me most of the time.

As the children were asked to go beyond themselves and talk about Filipino children in general, the national identity that they construct also maintains this status as lucky and blessed, in spite of their knowledge of local suffering. When discussing the plight of children elsewhere in the world, lower-income kids point out that such a situation is unlikely to happen in their country.

Working-class

Ton: I see that they suffer more than we do. Because here [in the Philippines], when you don't have any parents anymore, someone else is able to help you and adopt you. There, you're just alone.

Middle-class kids meanwhile articulate that being a financially wealthy country is not a guarantor of happiness, expressing also the discourse of America as a rich, mean world (Lemish 2007: 127). As Michael (12) says, "In America, even though they're a rich country, it doesn't mean that there is no suffering there. There are a lot of kids there that adopt bad vices and start stealing."

Nonetheless, it is interesting to point out that both groups of children tend to express more “the mode of denunciation” (Boltanski 1999: 115), a discourse of compassion that includes an indignant accusation of perpetrators, when talking about Filipino children rather than children overseas. Perhaps we can attribute this to the variety of narratives about distant suffering that they are able to access. As high-rating investigative news reports such as Investigator (*Imbestigador*) and The Probe Team in local media employ adversarial, accusative tones in their coverage of community issues, Filipino children develop knowledge about widespread social inequality through local media. Coverage of international incidents meanwhile tends to focus merely on what happened, following the structure of “adventure news” (Chouliaraki 2006), which decontextualizes suffering.

CHILDREN WATCHING CHILDREN

This section focuses on how children talk about representations of suffering children in the news.

The who and the what of suffering

After viewing the video clips, the children were asked to recall the content of the news items and share what they believe the problems of the children in the news were. Again there are convergences and divergences in the responses between the middle- and lower-income groups.

The middle-class children displayed excellent comprehension of the content of the news material, as they cited specific sound bytes from the news items. However, rather than focus on the children represented in the news, it is interesting to note that they instead retold the situation represented in the news. In other words, the focus was on what the suffering was instead of who the sufferers were. The children were found to talk about the news items as examples of terrorism, poverty, or natural disaster – situations that they acknowledged might happen in the Philippines.

Middle-class

Interviewer: So what was the news item about?

Rodnel: It's like what happens here with the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) and the NPA (New People's Army). The armies attacked and they don't spare any little thing in their way.

...

Interviewer: So do you think that you can put yourself ...

Rodnel: In the future, maybe. Because life is hard these days. The common news items feature political trouble and secondly terrorism.

Michael: Yes. Because now there are a lot of terrorists that go to the Philippines that detonate bombs in the malls, hotels, cars. That's why I'm afraid because my family might be there when that happens.

Though they expressed sadness and claimed that they identify with the suffering child in the news, their talk centered around how the child's situation can easily apply to them. They saw how world events have become fluid and interrelated. Instead of strongly identifying with the suffering person mediated by the news, there seemed to be stronger identification with the situation that is represented – a situation that they found too similar to local representations of suffering, too close for comfort. One other possible reason for their reaction may arise from how popular news discourse thematizes news items to fall under headings of crime, terrorism, war, etc., focusing on the news event than on people implicated in the news.

The talk of the lower-income group once again highlighted their earlier perception that problems and suffering in general are not national, cultural, or geopolitical issues but they are first and foremost about the family.

Working-class

Interviewer: So what did you understand about the news clip?

MJ: There's a kid who lost his parents. Somebody died . . .

Rose: His mother. Then his father disappeared.

In viewing another news clip on how Iraqi children are unable to play outdoors due to the war, they responded that the Iraqi children were in fact "lucky."

Working-class

Interviewer: So what do you feel about the children? Do you feel sad that they can't play?

MJ and Ton: Yes

Kaye: No. Not really.

Joy: They're actually lucky.

MJ: Yes, blessed.

JM: Yes, because they were not . . . their parents . . .

Rose: Because their parents were not killed.

Interviewer: So you don't think that they have any problems?

Rose and MJ: No, they don't.

Again, it is striking to notice that they judge the suffering of others based on whether they have a complete family or not, perhaps a discourse of the Other that is "too close." We can surmise that working-class children's limited conception of distant suffering children may be a result of their more limited access to representations of distant others, as their social class background makes it less likely for them to access cable television and the Internet. School curricula, particularly in public schools, have also remained Philippine-centric since 1986, when Filipino culture, language and history were re-emphasized after the martial law period.

In contrast the nearby other for them has a face. MJ recounted how they lent money to (fellow respondent) Ton's family. Joy shared that she gave extra slippers to a poor child that she saw on the street. And Kayeceline narrated how their family took in one street child for a few weeks as they searched for his missing parents.

Power and prayer

It is curious that there seemed to be a duality in positioning that children experienced in relation to the news narratives of distant suffering: one of powerfulness and one of powerlessness.

Just as they did in relation to their representations of distant others, many of the kids self-identified as "lucky" (swerte) in their reception of children in the news. Joshua (10), for instance, cites how he watches the news to remind himself how fortunate he was compared to others: "When I am so tired with doing homework, I just turn on the news. It's good that my problem is as small as this!" This recalls Calhoun's (2004) argument that the asymmetry in the process of mediation always makes the spectator realize how fortunate s/he is. And in this context, young people are reminded that they are luckily "normal" compared to the abnormals normalized by the daily rhythm of bad news.

Curiously, this therapeutic quality to watching suffering is transformed when done in the context of family viewing. Parents were often cited to making them feel guilty when they come across images of starving children in the news. For instance, Joy (9) recalled the time when she was complaining

of having to eat sardines yet again for dinner, then immediately 24 Oras flashed a story about an emaciated African child. She said that her mother immediately scolded her for being “ungrateful” that she had clothes and shelter unlike the child onscreen. For Kayeceline (11), it became a scare tactic: “Because before I used to always go out and hang out . . . So my papa tells me, ‘You should watch the news. Look at the children! Look at what can happen to you!’ So starting 5th Grade, I rarely go out because I got afraid.” However ashamed, scared, or unapologetic they may feel afterwards, watching news about suffering nonetheless interpellates viewers, even child viewers, into a position of power.

However, in spite of occupying a position of dominance, they are simultaneously confronted with the impossibility of action. Powerlessness was most often expressed as an inability to do immediate and concrete to help the suffering children onscreen due to issues of age, geography, and educational and financial status.

Working-class

Ton: What can I do for Thomas? I guess nothing, really . . . Nothing I can do right now because I’m too young and I have no money . . . Who’s going to listen to me?

MJ: I agree. I can’t help Thomas. But then when I see a street kid, I can give my [lunch] to him. That way, he can forget about his problems. . . .

Middle-class

Amirabelle: Maybe once I graduate I can help the poor. But for a kid in Iraq on TV, I can’t do much really.

Rodennel: Yes, I plan to build a public school for [street] children too.

Interviewer: But what about now?

Rodennel: No. When we watch and I say I want to help, my parents just say I can help by studying hard and doing well in school.

Additionally, some respondents also expressed distrust over humanitarian aid, claiming that those who donate goods cannot be certain “whether the food or money will reach Africa” because “that’s too far from here,” as Mae (9) said. This curiously agrees with Cohen and Seu’s (2002) study of adults’ perceptions towards humanitarian groups, pointing to how adult cynicism can trickle down to children. This was most evident in the occasion when

Miguel (12) felt “bad” when his mom denied his request to donate in a local telethon for victims of a typhoon because “you don’t know where the money is going” and that it was better to help in the school charity instead.

Reconciling their feelings of being privileged on the one hand and being unable to act on the other, children highlight prayer as a common response to representations of distant suffering. As Catholics (only one of 15 respondents is non-Catholic), the respondents view prayer as a legitimate action and a concrete act of compassion. And although they cite donations or volunteering in school charities as possible ways of acting for other children, the geographic distance between them and foreign children is seen as too great, as well as their own inability to make any substantial change.

Middle-class

Miguel: What I do is pray. After all we’re all the same in the eyes of God. I leave it up to Him to take care of children elsewhere.

Amirabelle: I don’t feel like I can do anything right now. Maybe when I’m older and I have a job I can donate to them. But I can pray for them now.

Michael: I can do good with my studies now. My parents tell me to do good with my studies so I won’t be like them.

...

Working-class

Interviewer: How do you think you are able to help when you pray?

Rose: We help when we pray too because God listens to my prayers. That’s why we should just pray. God loves all kinds of people.

Though the children have varying conceptions of distant others—middle-class children view them from stereotyped lenses as different and primitive while the working-class group have even more limited awareness of them and apply their extensive knowledge of local suffering in perceiving other children’s problems—there is a shared understanding that other children are not too dissimilar from them. They cite that other children, however distant they may be, are cared for by their families, their parents, and God.

LISTENING TO CHILDREN’S VOICES

Children’s voices often sound like whispers amidst the noise and chaos of the wider world. And as we scholars continue our adult debates about

media, morality, and otherness, perhaps it is fruitful to take a humble step back and listen to what children have to say.

Curiously, I find in this study that Filipino children do engage with the issue of global suffering. Though some may have stereotypical ideas about suffering elsewhere (such as most middle-class children) or have more intimate experience of suffering nearby (such as most working-class children), suffering is part and parcel of their everyday experience. It is nearby and faraway, mediated and immediate, eventful and at the same time banal. Their symbolic resources, as we gleaned from the drawing exercise, are varied and plenty: parents' diatribes, religious sermons, school encyclopedia, and of course news media. Ignorance therefore is not the issue.

Neither is compassion fatigue. As we examined from their reception of the news about suffering, children speak in many voices about how they deal with images of distant suffering. Some are utilitarian, actively seeking out images just to remind them how lucky they are. Some are worriers, not about the suffering children that they see onscreen, but about the possibility that events there are likely to happen here. Some are combative, pointing fingers at society's powerful elite for being selfish and corrupt. The media, rather than leaving them exhausted or distraught, at the end of each story, position them in a place of power, where they can at least see how much better things are here at home with one's (complete) family.

But after the talk, what of action? Children, often perceived as innocent and incapable, find themselves wanting to act but are helpless to act. Helpless not (simply) because they're young, but really because of grown-ups who say that there is nothing, nothing that could be done. Grown-up narratives in the media and on the edge of it—in everyday talk—seem to reinforce among children the despair of distance, specifically, the pointlessness and impossibility of action-at-a-distance. Indeed, signs of distrust over humanitarian organizations and communitarian attitudes to help nearby others as opposed to faraway others in children seem to be perceptions that they have come to acquire from exposure to media representations and, perhaps more directly, from parents' media talk in the heart of home. So while the media at certain occasions do expand our moral conscience in presenting atrocities from outside our immediate spheres, the quality of the representation—whether they offer or not points of identification for the spectator—and its intersection with everyday talk—whether parents encourage or not identification with the sufferer—constitute a circuit of compassion by which individuals are enabled or disabled to feel responsibility for distant others.

And here, the notion of proper distance proves essential. As we see in children's talk, they weave in and out of a moral relationship with the Other depending on context. Initially, we saw that the middle-class kids see the Other as too far – too native, too poor, too distant. And lower-income kids practically had no concept of the distant Other. But the discourses of family and religion, salient in their talk, played a significant role in their identification with the distant Other. As strange as foreign children may be for them, Filipino children recognize that they are like them too – cared for by parents and looked after by God. Clearly, it is not purely media discourse that enables or disables the sense of identification with the Other; it is in the coming together of the text and the reader's unique, context-dependent frameworks where the seed of compassion is born.

Future research should delve into how in fact this seed may be further cultivated. A transnational study, for instance, would be extremely helpful to compare how different contexts play a role in how children perceive suffering. Seeing how their Catholic beliefs provided Filipino children with a way of speaking about the Other based on proper distance, it would be interesting to discover other ways in which proper distance is manifest. Also, other studies can further examine how different narrative techniques in news reports may affect children's responses towards suffering others.

Finally, the study's findings suggest a strong codependence between cosmopolitanism and media literacy as a moral project. Cosmopolitanism, as both awareness of otherness and an ethical practice, depends much on the moral status of voice and visibility in the media. As children first get to see the faces and hear the voices of other cultures through their mediations, it is significant that children have access to a wide variety of images and sounds of/by the Other that stress their shared similarities as well as differences.

Further, by giving children platforms—whether in school, home, or youth-specific media—to talk about issues such as global suffering, we equip young citizens with an early awareness of the complex moral dilemmas raised by mediation and globalization. As we have seen here, childrearing philosophy premised on 'protective silence' (Seiter 2007) or communitarian politics (cf Chouliaraki 2006) do little in providing children skill and imagination in engaging with the Other.

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IF I WERE IN HER SHOES, I WOULD DOUBTLESS BE AND THINK LIKE HER¹: Methodological Reflections on Bourdieu and *Testimonio*²

Chester C. Arcilla

Bourdieu emphasizes that intellectuals are not politically neutral and possess cultural and symbolic capital and thus are predisposed to preserving their dominant class position. In light of this, what can intellectuals contribute to the emancipation of dominated classes? Bourdieu suggests reflexivity. This paper critically analyzes how *testimonio* as a research methodology moderates the power of intellectuals by privileging the voice of the narrator and minimizing the social distance between the two as Bourdieu suggests. The cultural and symbolic capital of the intellectual is lent to the narrator so that the bourgeois public may listen to the silenced voices. There is however a limitation to the privileging of the subaltern voice – that which Bourdieu calls objectivation. To limit objectivation, the researcher must reflexively engage the *testimonio* in a manner that aims to understand rather than evaluate.

Keywords: Bourdieu, *testimonio*, reflexivity, methodology, realist construction

INTRODUCTION

*History is inscribed in things – in institutions . . . and also in bodies. My whole effort aims to discover history where it is best hidden, in people's heads and in the postures of their bodies.*³

- Pierre Bourdieu (1980)

Great hope was seen in resurrecting silenced pasts and recognizing silenced presents by listening to the voice. Orality promised recognition and even liberty to the marginalized (Thompson 1988). Originating and imposed by the West, the written is viewed as a tool of colonization and imperialism. Indeed, orality enabled colonized peoples to write their own histories. Most colonized people's particularly Latin American and African began the task to decolonizing their histories after liberation from the West. Coinciding with this task of rewriting national and local histories from the people's perspective,⁴ poststructuralism drawing primarily with works of Derrida and Foucault and their criticism on metanarratives, armed social scientists to embark on projects to listen to the silenced voices of women, peasants, workers, indigenous peoples, gays, and other marginalized groups. This led to the proliferation of narratives based on the perspectives of the marginalized in challenge to the traditional history and social science research based on the written text.

In the early eighties, a unique form of oral history methodology emerged in Latin America in the struggle for human rights. Rigoberta Menchu, a poor Indian woman gave her *testimonio* on the abuse she, her family and her people suffered, endured and struggled against. Her testimony generated international support for the recognition of human rights and put pressure against the dictatorship in Guatemala. In 1992, she won the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition for her human rights struggle. The *testimonio* however became subject of severe academic criticism. A number of intellectuals questioned it on the grounds of historical validity and accuracy. One can imagine Bourdieu doing engaged in the very same criticism – but on the grounds of objectivation. Moreover, such perception on orality, while it has lead to the development and increase of local histories, and the histories of the marginalized and silenced, has meant the continued embracing of the neutrality and power of the intellectual. The intellectual remains the catalysts for those not heard to be heard, for the silenced to be finally listened to. It is only through the lens of the intellectual that the silenced voices are heard. More importantly it presumed that the methodology itself is political, indeed it is, and is adequate politically. Intellectuals only have to privilege the voice, particularly those of the silenced, to be politically associated with marginalized. Those who continue to advocate the primacy of the written source perpetuate the domination of West, white, male, and capitalist class. The intellectual thus only has to choose the method, and easily becomes an ally of the disempowered. Bourdieu questions this very presumption on the intellectual.

This paper explores the possibility of indeed uniting the activist intellectual with the subaltern by looking on the testimonio using the lens of Bourdieu on intellectual and scientific sociology. It critically analyzes how testimonio as a research methodology moderates the power of intellectuals by privileging the voice of the narrator and minimizing the social distance between the two as Bourdieu suggests. The cultural and symbolic capital of the intellectual is lent to the narrator so that the bourgeois public may listen to the silenced voices. Listening however is not enough. Simply listening leads to what Bourdieu calls objectivation. The social scientist must understand. This is the role of social science. This is the role of the intellectual.

This paper first describes the testimonio, including the debates on the issues of validity versus memory and ideology. It then briefly discusses Bourdieu's theory on the intellectual and summarizes the guidelines Bourdieu suggests so that research becomes truly scientific. It concludes by engaging the testimonio as a method and the criticism against it using Bourdieu's theory.

ORALITY AND TESTIMONIO

At the advent of social research methodology inspired by poststructuralist discourses, oral history slowly gained legitimacy against the dominance of the written modern history. Lives of those that did not matter were surfaced and their voices heard. History written from the perspective of the outsider historian, usually white, male, and Western, was challenged and supplemented by history from below using the voice of the local people. Individual lives of ordinary people told from their point of view became sources of history. Within this life history framework, the testimonio occupies a unique space. Like life history, it is a story from a personal perspective. However, the testimonio is always told from a position of marginality, of subalternity. The narrator with the aid of the intellectual interlocutor "offers to bring his or her situation to the attention of an audience—the bourgeois public sphere—to which he or she would normally not have access because of the very conditions of subalternity to which the testimonio bears witness" (Baverley 2000: 556). The testimonio is always a voice of a silenced. It is always an "'emergency' narrative" (Jara as cited in Beverley 2000: 556) involving poverty, exploitation, repression, and survival.

Whereas the usual life history is elicited to gain a greater understanding of the cultural milieu in which the individual is inscribed, the testimonio is always told " . . . in connection with a group or class situation marked by

marginality, oppression, and struggle. If it loses this connection, it ceases to be a testimonio and becomes an autobiography" (Beverley 1992: 103). While the story teller shares her story, her story is also the story of a social class struggling for social justice and human rights. It is narrative of a person struggling, moving with other marginalized for social change. The life story is also story of a social movement.

The defining feature of the testimonio as a life history is "that the voice that speaks to the reader through the text is the form of an I that demands to be recognized, that wants or needs to stake a claim on our attention . . ." (Baverley 1992: 556). It is told and written in the first person. Revealed in the presence of an audience—i.e., the researcher—this I in the testimonio demands attention and recognition of an individual social experience. Thus, the "Testimonio represent an affirmation of the individual subject . . ." (Baverley 1992: 103). Recognizing that the researcher comes from a different social experience and position, the narrator explains her situation in a "snail-like" (Beverley 2000: 556) manner and as Rivero notes ". . . the act of speaking . . . remains in the testimonio punctuated by a series of interlocutive and conversational markers . . . which puts the reader on the alert, so to speak: True? Are you following me? OK? So?" (as cited in Beverley 1992: 556). Like a seasoned teacher explaining to a student, the narrator does this to enable and ensure better understanding of the subaltern suffering and struggle.

Similar to the researcher, the reader is put into a situation where the story of the individual, her suffering and struggle, are impressed into the listener. This recognition demands a response. The testimonio is told "by the one who testified in the hope that his or her life's story will move the reader to action in concert with the group with which the testifier identifies" (Tierney 2000: 540). It hopes to inspire the readers to act against social injustice. It hopes to move the reader toward political action against issues such as torture, human rights violations, social marginalization, poverty and survival. It calls for unity with the subaltern witness.

Memory, history and identity

As the testimony is a reconstruction of past events, its historical value is always suspect. Those who consider life history as a portal to the given past and culture dichotomize between the researcher and the life historian. Within this perspective, the researcher's tasks is to validate the historical accuracy of the life story with other historical sources such as written documents, and is

responsible for the final production of the narrative. The veracity of remembering is tested against presumably more accurate written historical documents. This not only contributes to the silence of the already silenced voice of the subaltern. It reinforces the privilege of voice to the intellectual by bestowing upon the researcher the final decision to decide what is historically true (Tierney 2000).

One of the glaring examples of the divergence of history and memory is on the testimonio of Nobel Prize winner Menchu. Her story entitled *I, Rigoberta Menchu* (1984) was based on a one-week long interview with Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. In it, she testified to the massive human rights abuses—economic, social, cultural and political—perpetuated by the landowning class, and the elite-controlled state and military. Among others, she told of the wretched working conditions in agricultural plantations and recounted her personal experience of seeing her brother Nicolas died of malnutrition, and a second brother tortured and burned alive in public. She detailed how she, her family and her people struggled against these abuses using indigenous knowledge and culture and how they organized successful resistance among the farmers, workers and sympathetic professionals.

American researcher David Stoll (1999) spent almost ten years verifying and challenging the historical veracity of Menchu's story and concluded that "In and of itself, the contrast between Rigoberta's account and everyone else's is not very significant. Except for a few sensational details, Rigoberta's version follows others and can be considered factual . . . The important point is that her story, here and at critical junctures, is not the eyewitness account that it purports to be" (p. 69-70).

Other research later on found more evidence in contradiction with Menchu's story. *New York Times* found Nicolas, the supposed brother dead from malnutrition, alive and well (in D'Souza, 1999). In a reaction to the proliferation of *I, Rigoberta Menchu* as one of the reading materials in American high schools and universities, D'Souza (1999) literally called Menchu's story fraudulent and cites several inconsistencies with her testimony and those of other sources. He claims that according to members of Rigoberta's own family, as well as residents of her village, she fabricated her account of how a second brother was burned alive by army troops as her parents were forced to watch. Menchu herself admitted to incorporating other people's stories into her own and that this was ". . . a way to making her story a collective one, rather than a personal autobiography" (in Baverley 2000: 559).

This critique of the historical validity of testimonio is situated in the criticism to subaltern studies in general as to the availability only of “historical fragments” (Pandey 1997: 28-29). In the study of social violence in India between Muslims and Hindus, Pandey (1997: 19) calls attention that “The knowability and representability of subaltern experience—of its moments of violence, of suffering, and of many of the scars left behind by the histories of domination—is actively suppressed within the time horizon of capital itself, while the subaltern’s spectral partnarratives continue to circulate in often unknowable fashion among more or less reticent subaltern populations.” Within the frame of traditional historiography, subaltern studies including the testimonio thus present necessarily incomplete and insufficient histories running the risk of being considered supplement to modern historiography.

THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF POSSIBILITIES OF THE INTELLECTUAL

The intellectual has a peculiar point of view on the social world, the “scholastic view” made possible by his/her social situation that allows *scholae*, or leisure. Leisure or the time outside the urgency of practical situation, allows the scholar the “neutralizing disposition . . . the bracketing of all theses of existence and all practical intentions” (Bourdieu 2000: 128). The scholar’s point of view is not practical. When intellectuals think and analyze the social world, however, they often leave unexamined their “*epistemic doxa* . . . the presuppositions of their thought, that is, the social conditions of possibility of the scholastic point of view and the unconscious dispositions, productive of unconscious thesis, which are acquired through an academic or scholastic experience” (Bourdieu 2000: 128). This social condition of possibility of the scholastic point of view is upon which knowledge produced is based. Thus knowledge produced is historically contingent.

Within the intellectual field, the *homo academicus* engages in the struggle, against other intellectuals for the capacity to represent the social world, or “symbolic capital” (Bourdieu 1977: 183), which is ultimately valued for its convertibility to economic capital.⁵ This struggle for “worldmaking power” (Bourdieu in Swartz 1997: 89) is masked in the intellectual’s disinterested effort of knowledge production. In the pursuit of knowledge the intellectual struggles to make her scholastic point of view the academically accepted point of view – that is to universalize her scholastic point of view, and make her point of view the dominant worldview. Thus, in her struggle for symbolic capital, the intellectual unconsciously aims to monopolize the universal from

the particular, and “tacitly legitimizing a particular form of experience and, thereby, those who have the privilege of access to it” – that is the intellectual (Bourdieu 2000: 135).

Outside of the academic field, the homo academicus imposes his point of view, born out of leisure, on agents within the social world. Scholars often impose knowledge generated from their particular social position and corresponding to a particular habitus. This reproduces and reinforces the power of the intellectuals, and consequently also their worldview which is consistent with their homologous dominant social positions within the entire field of class domination.⁶ In their struggle for symbolic capital in the academic field, often without their conscious intention, intellectuals reinforce domination through the imposition of their point of view, or what Bourdieu (as cited in Swartz 1997: 89) calls “symbolic violence.” Intellectuals thus in keeping with their dominant position within the field of classes, reproduce the interests of dominant class.

Methodologically, this imposition of the scholastic point of view is translated into research instruments. Interviews, focus group discussions, and survey questionnaires ask respondents to symbolize and analyze their actions within a given social position, that is sociologize their worlds, without the benefit of leisure and the entire habitus necessary for such a task. Upon the prodding of the intellectual, the respondent is suddenly tasked to reflect on their individual lives. This scholastic fallacy pictures “all social agents within the image of the scientist” (Bourdieu 2000: 132-133) capable of scientifically examining their lives. This recognition of symbolic violence poses a very critical question to the progressive intellectual. If the intellectual is predisposed towards the reproduction of class domination in her struggle for legitimation within the academic field, what can she contribute towards the creation of a humane and just society? Is the intellectual, no matter how she struggles, predisposed to reproduce the system of class domination? Is the intellectual forever a servant of domination?

Bourdieu points a way out – reflexivity. Reflexivity or participant objectivation as applied to the social sciences means the “objectivation of the subject of objectivation” (Bourdieu 2003: 282). It “undertakes to explore not the ‘lived experience’ of the knowing subject but the social conditions of possibility—and therefore the effects and limits—of that experience and, more precisely, of the act of objectivation itself. It aims at objectivising the subjective relation to the object which, far from leading to a relativistic and more-or-

less anti-scientific subjectivism, is one of the conditions of genuine scientific objectivity” (Bourdieu 2003: 281-282). The objectivation process is to be carried out in three levels: first, objectification of the position of the subject of objectivation in the overall social space, her original position and trajectory; second, objectivate the position she occupies within the field of specialists; and lastly, objectivate everything that is linked to membership of the scholastic universe (Bourdieu 2004: 89). That is to say, the first level is the sociology within the field of power and classes based on the volume and type of capital; the second, the sociology of intellectual within the academic field in the pursuit of symbolic capital; the third, the sociology of academe and its autonomy within the field of power and class relations.

The reflexive method of Bourdieu is to be applied upon the subject herself, the intellectual. She must critically assess her social position, her possession capital in terms of volume and type, in relation to intellectuals within her academic discipline, to all intellectuals, and to overall dominant class. Bourdieu wields participant objectivation as a weapon against “spontaneous sociology” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1991: 20) to achieve a scientific sociology. The task of science, as Bourdieu argues, is to uncover the social condition of possibilities upon which a particular social experience and practical knowledge is contingent and constrained. Thus expose the limits and applicability of knowledge. He argues that “. . . science cannot be reduced to the recording and analysis of the ‘pre-notions’ (in Durkheim’s sense) that social agents engage in the construction of social reality; it must also encompass the social conditions of the production of these pre-constructions and of the social agents who produce them . . .” (Bourdieu 2003: 282).

Reflexive self-assessment is to be done at all times and must be revealed in public. For reflexivity to lead to science it must be a collective effort of the scientific community. This to finally unearth the “universal logic of practice” (Bourdieu 2003: 286) and “increasing the chances of attaining truth . . .” (Bourdieu 2004: 89). By making the social conditions of possibilities of reason visible, cross-controls, technical critique, epistemological prudence generated from other reflexive scientists can be used to manage factors that prevent the unearthing of objective knowledge, truth. This reflexive method of unearthing of practical science reduces the symbolic violence that intellectuals commit. By sociologically analyzing the social position of the homo academicus, the historicity of knowledge and the social conditions of its genesis and perpetuation is revealed. Through reflexivity, social sciences take itself as its object, “using its own weapons to understand and check itself . . .” (Bourdieu

2004: 89). By practicing reflexivity the intellectual not only contributes to the generation of science, but also advances her knowledge of herself and her unconscious. As she uses her habitus to objectify, she in turn analyses her unconscious to reveal the historicity of the knowledge she has generated. Only then is she able to surmount her unconscious limitations, and her role in the perpetuation of symbolic violence and class domination. "One knows the world better and better as one knows oneself better," Bourdieu (2003: 289) notes. Reflexivity demands the slow and difficult "conversion of the whole person" (Bourdieu 2003: 292).

The development of the reflexive methodology is the personal story of Bourdieu. Being the son of a peasant sharecropper, who eventually got into public service, he was considered outsider by his relatives. Coming from lower-class and provincial origins, he was considered outsider within the educational aristocracy. And moving from philosophy to the then emerging sociology, he was considered outsider by the academe. This 'outsider' experience inspired him to look into his social experience, his social conditions of possibilities, and compare it with those that considered him different (Bourdieu 2004).

Bourdieu in *Understanding* (1999) offers guidelines for a reflexive research. First is the need for "non-violence communication" (Bourdieu 1999: 608-609). To reduce the propensity of the intellectual for symbolic violence on the dominated, she is first tasked to reflex reflexivity, that is to recognize the social distance between the object and the intellectual's social position. The power of the intellectual is evident even during the interview process. At the onset, the accommodation of the intellectual for the interview intrudes in the every life of the participant. It is her who sets up the interview and its implicit rules, its objectives and its projected uses. This initiates an understanding of what can and cannot be said, a form of censorship. This according to Bourdieu "occurs everytime" as the intellectual possesses more capital (Bourdieu 199: 18-19). In this consideration, this is the second, there is an imperative to truly listen. Since it is the intellectual who sets up the game and rules in traditional research, there is a need for "active and methodological listening" requiring "total attention to the person questioned, submission to the singularity of her [the respondent's] life history – which may lead, by a kind of more or less controlled imitation, to adopting her language and espousing her views, feelings and thoughts ... " so that the distance of the subject and the object is minimized. The symbolic violence is reduced as much as possible by a "'non-violent' communication" through

increased social proximity and familiarity of the researcher and respondent ensuring interchangeability and immediate agreement (Bourdieu 1999: 608-610).

Non-violent communication makes research a spiritual experience. When social distance cannot be minimized, the researcher is tasked to "mentally put herself in their [respondents] place," to become "necessarily what they [respondents] are" based on the respondents social conditions. Extensive preliminary knowledge gained through research "could not lead to true comprehension if it were not accompanied both by an attentiveness . . . and openness to [others]." Research thus is journey to forget oneself in order to understand other through "intellectual love" different from the gaze. Only thus can the respondent freely explain themselves and experience the "joy of expression." (Bourdieu 1999: 612-614) In this light, Bourdieu emphasizes that ". . . one knows the world better and better as one knows oneself better, that scientific knowledge and knowledge of oneself and of one's own social unconscious advance hand in hand . . ." (Bourdieu 2003: 289).

ENGAGING THE TESTIMONIO

Minimizing social distance/power: The alliance of the scientist and the subaltern activist

The testimonio offers to the intellectual a methodology that allows for political unity with the subaltern. Through the use of repeated interview/story telling sessions, the intellectual is able to cast doubts on her values and politics and continuously subjects her interpretation to the process of validation and revalidation with the life-historian. Is what she heard correct? Did she understand and interpret it as the narrator intended? The repeated interviews allow the intellectual to engage and verify her understanding, to engage precisely in non-violent communication. Thus, the intellectual's power and authority to determine the truth, her capacity for symbolic violence, which contributes to the silencing of the subaltern, is suspended. This leads to the democratic construction of the witness-narrator's account of the subaltern experience. As such the testimonio is a seriously appropriate form to recognize, listen and understand the silenced voice of the subaltern in the reconstruction of history. Such democratic conditions in its production results to the snail-like pace of the interview process of the testimonio. The subaltern viewing the intellectual as coming from a different social position yet sympathizing with the same politics meticulously explains her social

experience of exploitation so that the intellectual may better understand. Thus the constant need for the “interlocutive and conversational markers” (as cited in Beverley 1992: 556) to verify that a common understanding is reached.

This brings to light information that may not be solicited in a traditional interview. In *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, she demonstrates her empowerment in the resistance to reveal all. Menchu (1984: 247) declares, “I’m still keeping what I think no one should know. Not even anthropologists or intellectuals, no matter how many books they have, can find out all our secrets.” Where the subaltern is capable of filtering information based on her politics and articulating this choice despite the solicitation of the intellectual is testament to the democratic character of the testimonio.

Indeed, subaltern studies upon which the testimonio is one of the methods used “necessarily hesitates before its objects.” Latin American Subaltern Studies Group (Steinberg 2007: 263) claim that subaltern studies “not only . . . new ways of looking at the subaltern . . . but also of building new relations between ourselves and those human counterparts who we posit as objects of study.” Subaltern studies affords agency to the narrator-witness by privileging the voice and suspending the authority of the intellectual. Within this frame, the criticism of Stoll, D’ Souza, and others on the validity of the testimonio as history becomes a question of power. It is as Beverley (2004, as cited in Steinberg 2007: 267) argues “resubalternizing” a subaltern narrative. In the argument between Stoll and Menchu, Beverley (2000: 559) considers it a question on “who has the authority to narrate.” As Menchu reconstructed her personal experience given a political agenda, she refused to accede to the agency of the intellectual like a native informant and to the literacy and literature that the intellectual privileges. She does not simply answer the questions of the intellectual. She asserts herself and her story based on her own social experience and politics. So the authority of the intellectual is suspended. Using Bourdieu, this criticism of historical validity of the testimonio is precisely an imposition of the scholar’s point of view. The testimonio is taken out its practical context – that is outside of the political urgency of generating support for the struggle against the continued oppression and marginalization of the subaltern. It is consumed by the academe from their scholae, their social position and interests falling into the trap of theoreticism and objectivism.⁷ Gegalberger (1996: 14) calls this the “reterritorialization of the testimonio in the institutions of higher learning” and argued that precisely for the renewed historization of the cultural production and

consumption of the testimonio. Instead, the testimonio produces a “reality effect” and that, as Sklodoska (1982) mentions “it would be naïve to assume a direct homology between text and history [in testimonio]. The discourse of a witness cannot be a reflection of his or her experience, but rather a refraction determined by the vicissitudes of memory, intention, ideology” (as cited in Baverley 2000: 557). The text becomes as Baverley (as cited in Tierney 2000: 546) argues, “a site of political struggle over the “real” and its meaning.”

Tierney suggests that like the life history, testimonio “be seen as a personal narrative whose ontological status as a spoken interaction between two (or more) individuals helps create, define, reinforce or change reality” (Tierney 2000: 545). Thus the testimonio, as a life history, not only lets the life-historian and the researcher understand the past, it helps create identities in the past and the present. The testimonio inspires solidarity with transformation of subaltern identities.

And those past identities may be complex, partial and contradictory. Indeed fragmentary. The testimonio as a “personal interpretation of past time . . . [is] often in deep and ambiguous conflict with the official interpretative devices of a culture” (Steedman 1986: 6) since it lies within the “interstices of history and memory” (Kreigger 1996; Steedman 1986). This incomplete, fragmentary and ideological character of testimonios and subaltern studies in general questions the very foundation and continuity of traditional historiography. Since subaltern studies can only be represented through fragments and at the limits of hegemonic discourses, history’s penchant with continuity, totality and objectivity is challenged by their partiality, provisionality and politics. The very reproducibility of the field of knowledge production is questioned and demands a re-evaluation of the knowledge production and its historical and social conditions of possibilities (Williams 2000: 142). Within the context of colonial history and the subsequent project of nationalizing histories, subaltern studies provide the “spectre that hunts, challenges and undermines hegemonic histories from within by upholding the possibility of subaltern reflection and questioning its productivity as a site of argumentation and resolution” (Williams 2000: 139).

Subaltern studies force intellectuals to think of a different history—“to think its fragmented leftovers and the fissures in our critical narratives that they presuppose—in order to open up reflection to the emergence and agency of momentary and partial glimpses into subaltern subject positions—discursive fragments—that arise from the experience (and understanding) of social conflicts, and which also say something about the parameters and

limits of our own understandings as intellectuals and institutionalized thinkers” (Williams 2000: 142). This counter hegemonic capability of the testimonio necessarily raises a pertinent question: is the alliance with subaltern an option available to every intellectual? Is the methodology itself politically adequate to ally with the marginalized?

Using the concept of “structural and functional homologues” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 105) between fields, Bourdieu argues that the dominant within a particular field are more or less dominant within the entire field of power and class relations. Intellectuals thus who occupy the dominant disciplines within the academe such as economics, engineering, business, and the natural sciences, which provide the technical skills and knowledge to capitalism thus have greater symbolic capital, tend to reproduce patterns of domination and will find it extremely difficult to listen to and engage the subaltern. The social distance between the intellectual and subaltern witness-narrator, that is the difference in their symbolic and cultural capital that the interview process makes explicit, is seriously considerable to engage in any substantial communication. These dominant intellectuals are more prone to symbolic violence. These intellectuals may not even recognize the validity of the testimonio, much less is counter hegemonic and ameliorative potential. Within this frame, the testimonio as a social research method is not available to any intellectual if its aim of listening, recognizing and politically uniting with the subaltern is to be preserved. Those who are dominated within the academic field and those belonging to the marginalized disciplines, such as sociology, may be capable to use testimonio as valid research method. Even within sociology only those who are not consecrated into the dominant positivist paradigm may find testimonio liberative. Bourdieu (1987: 85) writes that “those who occupy inferior positions in the field . . . tend to work with a clientele composed of social inferiors who thereby increase the inferiority of these positions.” These intellectual’s social distance relative to the subaltern is thus not as considerable compared to those coming from capital-endowed families. Thus, only those considered outsiders within the academe may opt to ally with the subaltern. Historically, these intellectuals may come from marginalized classes, born of worker or peasant families unable to possess the necessary symbolic and cultural capital necessary to gain access and be consecrated within the more dominant and capital-rewarding disciplines. Or that even with access to the dominant disciplines they find themselves not at home, uneasy to the discipline’s habitus and thus find their homes within marginalized disciplines.

This social distance is critical to the choice of life-historian. Witnessing is an arduous task. Within the subaltern, those that are relatively articulate may be able to tell and represent their and their people's struggles better. Witnessing demands a minimum ability to communicate and rationalize. Moreover, it demands a certain form of legitimacy in the eyes of the subalterns. They must be viewed by their people as credible and one with them in their struggle. Only then can the testimonio be given credibility. And only those who fully appreciate the importance of telling their stories and struggles may be capable of such a task.⁸

The question on whether the methodology itself is politically adequate is addressed by the political prerequisite of the testimonio. A subaltern as a life historian will not share his experience and practical knowledge to those who do not essentially share their politics. The testimonio is shared with the hope that with better understanding of the subaltern position the reader will become like the intellectual an ally to the urgent altering of a wretched situation. The political alliance is an essential prerequisite. The testimonio is the expression of that alliance.

Towards the reflexive testimonio

As the testimonio diminishes the social distance between the intellectual and the subaltern, or to put it more accurately the testimonio requires a familiarity and interchangeability to achieve a nonviolent communication, where the intellectual shares the essential political position of the subaltern, the danger of what Bourdieu calls objectivation becomes serious. The researcher must also be wary of objectivation, or the respondent's attempt to "impose their own definition to the situation" (Bourdieu 1999: 615). By allowing free reign of respondent, the life story may become a "folk theories" (Bourdieu 2003: 289) which the respondent constructs to control the image that she wants the intellectual and others to have of her. In such instances, the data gathering process "becomes a monologue in which the respondent asks herself questions and replies at great length . . . each deceives the other a little while deceiving herself: the researcher is taken in by the 'authenticity' of the respondent's testimony, because she believes she has access through . . . the respondent pretends to play her expected part in this interview . . ." (Bourdieu 1999: 617). When objectivation occurs, the respondent takes over the interview.

From a theoretical standpoint, objectivation is analogous to the trap of empiricism and subjectivism. It records only the prenotions, the subjective

commonsense notions, of the respondents. It also takes the social experience of the witness-narrator as given, and may largely fail to unearth the social conditions upon which these experiences are contingent leading to the false application of this knowledge to realities that have different contexts. In this way, the scientist fails to be a scientist and the sociologist fails to be a sociologist.⁹

In *The Craft of Reflexive Sociology*, Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (1991: 37-38) state:

“When the sociologist counts on the facts to supply the problematic and the theoretical concepts that will enable him to construct and analyze the facts, there is always a danger that these will be supplied from the informants’ mouths. It is not sufficient for the sociologist to listen to the subjects, faithfully recording their statements and their reasons, in order to account for their conduct and even for the reasons they offer; in doing so, she is liable to replace his own preconceptions with the preconceptions of those whom he studies, or with a spuriously scientific and spuriously objective blend of the spontaneous sociology of the “scientist” and the spontaneous sociology of his object. Those who restrict their means of interrogating the real (and of interrogating their methods for doing so) to elements that are in fact created by an interrogation that refuses to admit it is an interrogation, and who thereby deny that observation presupposes construction, inevitably end up observing a void that they have unwittingly constructed.

. . . the sociologist who refuses the controlled, conscious construction of his distance from the real and his action on reality may not only impose questions on his subjects that their experience does not pose them and omit the question that it does pose them, but he may also naively pose them the question he poses himself about them, through a positivist confusion between the questions that objectively arise for them and the question they consciously pose themselves. Thus the sociologist is spoilt for choice when, led astray by false philosophy of objectivity, he undertakes to nullify himself as a sociologist.”

To resist objectivation, and this is the third guideline towards reflexive social research, Bourdieu suggests realist construction, or the reflexive unearthing of immanent structures contained in the conversation via constructive engagement during the urgency of the interview. This is the engaging of the narrator and the narration by accounting for the social, cultural and economic structures that structured and structures the practical knowledge of the life story. To preserve thus the scientific and liberative possibilities of the testimonio, the intellectual must not only listen, she must engage the

narration. She must never simply let the narrator tell her story. Bourdieu argues that "It is precisely by leaving things alone, abstaining from intervention and from all construction, that one falls into error . . . It is only through an active denunciation of the tacit presuppositions of accepted belief that one can stand up against the effects of all representations of social reality to which both researched and researcher are continually exposed" (Bourdieu 1999: 620). Only by unearthing and understanding the immanent structures that act as structured and structuring structures, for both the intellectual and the narrator, can the subaltern and those that ally with her be able to understand these structures. And only thus can the voice of the subaltern be listened to in a way that matters.¹⁰ Methodologically, this means developing a craft upon which the intellectual is committed to "help[ing] respondents deliver up their truth or, rather, to be delivered of it" (Bourdieu 1999: 621). An essential part of this craft is to free the interview as possible of its practical constraints. "By offering the respondent an absolutely exceptional situation for communication, freed from the usual constraints (particularly of time) that weigh on most everyday interchanges, and opening up alternatives which prompt or authorize the articulation of worries, needs or wishes discovered through this very articulation, the researcher helps create the conditions for an extra-ordinary discourse, which might never have been spoken, but which was already there, merely awaiting the conditions for its actualization." (Bourdieu 1999: 614).

During the interview itself, one needs to minimize the social distance by active and methodological listening so that it becomes a spiritual journey. This requires the intellectual to "improvise on the spot, in the urgency of the interview, strategies of self-presentation and adaptive responses, encouragement and opportune questions, etc . . ." (Bourdieu 1999: 621). This implies avoidance of soliciting "opinions," which may be internalized dispositions¹¹ articulated, by the posing of artificial (from the point of view of the narrator) questions by a researcher committed to "neutrality"¹² (Bourdieu 1999: 619-620). It means reflexively analyzing and constructing, in the process of interviewing, the social position of the narrator, his practical knowledge, the interview and language used, and the social position of the intellectual. This is an almost gargantuan task. In fact even in the *Weight of the World*, which is a collection of sociological accounts of social suffering in contemporary society by professional sociologists, Bourdieu et al. had to drop "botched" (Bourdieu et al. 1999: 617) interview, because of objectification. Repeated interviews, which the testimonio requires, affords

the researcher and the narrator more time to reflect, in between the interviews. The researcher reviews the interviews and is able to make notes on issues and concerns that need deeper discussion. The narrator on the other hand is able to reflect on her/his story, and may revise and recreate his/her story on the subsequent round of interviews. Such provides for a greater possibility of realist construction.

Realist construction can only be done if the sociologist has a deeper understanding of the conditions of existence and their effects on the respondent's field. Before the actual interview process, as any good social science methodology book will suggest, the researcher must spend time reading through literature written on the subject and preparatory field work to familiarize oneself with the physical and cultural space. Indeed, Bourdieu (1999) notes that it may require a lifetime (this may even be insufficient) of research to truly understand and mentally share the respondent's disposition. This realist construction must reassert itself even in writing of the interview. In transcribing the interview process, the researcher is constrained to being faithful to the source, being readable to the audience, and able to reveal the social conditions of possibility of this experience and knowledge. Thus the challenge of writing is not only to convey the "revelation" (Bourdieu et al. 1999: 623) of the respondent but also to control the risks of allowing readers free interpretation of the text beyond outside of the sociological interpretation. Exposing the social conditions that contribute to the marginalization of the subaltern enable readers to better understand the subaltern experience, and may lead the way towards liberative political action. In referring to the testimonio, this free interpretation is what Gegulberger (1996) refers to as the commodification, or its consumption by first world and bourgeois readers based on their social position and interests. In fact the revolutionary potential of the testimonio is considered to be seriously undermined because its readers consumed the text and evaluated it based on their positionality. Nance (2001) analyzed how first world readers, reacting to the discomfort that the testimonio brings to their worldview, deny the political action called for by either not reading, denying the witness-narrator credibility, or considering themselves as 'unworthy' addressee either because they view themselves as incapable of political action, an inappropriate addressee or undeserving of the responsibility. Others fuse with the narrator but use her experience to deal with their own personal oppression.

When the testimonio is a story written in conjunction with an underground social movement, the *guerrilla testimonio*, its commodification is seriously

debilitating. In the case of Che Guevarra's testimony derived from his diaries as he was involved in underground vanguard party in Bolivia, the CIA upon capturing these documents used these to launch successful counter-insurgency operations (Olguin 2002). While the cooptation of the information by counter revolutionary forces may not be prevented, the public that have the possibility of political alliance or even sympathies may be inspired towards political action with the sociological understanding of the subaltern testimonio.

Nance (2001: 578-581) noted that in ensuring the solicited response of political action with the subaltern, the speakers/witness narrator must guard against readers' resistance "by explicitly constructing their narratees, and offering precepts, examples, and counterexamples of appropriate reader response. Speakers, for example, ward off listeners' attempts to fuse with them by reminding listeners of their privileged difference and consequent responsibility to act . . . A testimonial speaker may resist the readers' relative self-abasement by insisting on her own humanity, a delicate balancing act since she must remain 'good enough' to merit help without being 'too good' to need it. Speakers thus often deny that they are certain, superhuman, and saintly, emphasizing instead their fallibility . . . stress moments of discouragement, depression, and indecision, as well as conviction and hope . . . Finally, and perhaps most importantly . . . speakers continue to press their case as one of social change, keeping that case contingent, possible, and distinct from the acts of writing and reading." All of these are meant to persuade the reader towards social action. These persuasive speaker's strategies are attempts to distinguish the 'worthy' readers, that is, those who capable of allying with the subaltern as the intellectual-collaborator is. They represent the potential base for political action outside of the subalterns. In this respect the intellectual bears a greater responsibility.

If the testimonio is a democratic creation of the subaltern and the intellectual, the misappropriation of the text by first world readers is a joint responsibility. The burden is not solely on the witness. It weighs heavier on the intellectual. It is the intellectual that has the social experience of speaking and being listened to in a way that mattered. It is the intellectual who is familiar with the bourgeois reader as she herself is bourgeois. It is the intellectual who is afforded credibility.

The intellectual thus must make sure, using the most of her social position and symbolic capital, that the proper response is given. Thus, to write is to rewrite. Bourdieu emphasizes that headings, subheadings and preambles must

accompany interview transcriptions. These must explain the historical, social and political context of the narrator, researcher and the interview without imposing the scholar's point of view. The language used must convey the respondent's point of view, rather than an objectified point of view. Gestures that may sometimes be as important as the conversation itself, so the researcher must use all available tools to convey these bodily movements. The final output is product of the practical knowledge of the respondent and the reflexive sociological analysis of the intellectual. The *Weight of the World* (Bourdieu 1999) provides a template of reflexively writing sociological accounts.

To preserve the political urgency of the testimonio, however, I am suggesting here that the engagement may even explicitly advocate for readers' political participation towards alleviating the subaltern condition – e.g., pointing to particularly repressive policies and politicians.¹³ These political suggestions must be products of the democratic discussion between the intellectual and the subaltern life historian. Realist construction thus requires reflexively learning and understanding from the pre-interview state until the writing and editing of the final text. Beyond these pre-interview preparations and the cautions in writing, the intellectual's habitus is critical to uncovering the tacit understanding of the respondent's worldview. While active and methodological listening may decrease the social distance, the considerable difference in symbolic and cultural capital brought about by largely divergent social position and trajectory is a serious impediment towards realist construction. Thus, I argued earlier that the testimonio as a research methodology is only available to 'outsider' intellectuals.

An important issue, a seeming contradiction, may be raised here – if the testimonio requires the essential political unity of the intellectual with the subaltern, how can she continue to use her point of view that is based on a social condition that precisely affords her symbolic capital? Or by uniting with the subaltern, will she also not be heard and silenced? The production of the testimonio requires the political unity and the symbolic and cultural capital of the intellectual, precisely those very factors that separate her from the subaltern. But what makes the testimonio democratic is that while the intellectual recognizes her symbolic and cultural capital, she refuses to impose her scholastic point of view via reflexivity. She allows the marginalized to make her voice matter to the bourgeois public through the intellectual's symbolic capital. She lends her symbolic capital to the subaltern to wield as weapons for her emancipation.

The engaged testimonio extracts the practical knowledge of the subaltern and uses the theoretical knowledge of the intellectual to produce a sociological account. But one that continues to privilege the voice of the subaltern in an urgent call for social action using the symbolic capital of the intellectual. Avoiding the danger of imposing the scholar's point of view does not mean preventing the intellectual from using her point of view. She should not hesitate "from making use of [her] native—but previously objectivated—experience in order to understand and analyze other people's experiences. Nothing is more false, in my view, than the maxim almost universally accepted in the social sciences according to which the research must put nothing of himself into his research. He should refer continually to his own experience . . ." (Bourdieu 2003: 287-288).

Bourdieu (1999: 625-626) declared, "The sociologist must never ignore that the specific characteristic of her point of view is to be a point of view on a point of view. She can only reproduce the point of view of her object and constitute it as such, through resituating it within the social space, by taking up that very singular (and, in a sense, very privileged) viewpoint at which it is necessary to place oneself to be able to take (in thought) all possible points of view. And it is solely to the extent that she can objectivate herself that she is able, while remaining in place inexorably assigned to her in the social world . . ."

In addition to being an 'outsider' within the academe, the possibility for a realist construction is founded upon the capacity of the intellectual to reflexively look at his social position and experience, and unearth his social conditions of possibility that allows for the construction of the scholar's point of view. This necessarily demands from the sociologist the destruction of the ivory tower, from the high and controlling panopticon, "back to the rough grounds." It demands utmost humility. To be able to practice reflexivity means first admitting that knowledge one knows and generates is incomplete, historically contingent, perpetuates symbolic violence and serves a dominant class interest. That what she utters as truth is true only from her social experience and position. Thus, while the testimonio "displace[s] the centrality of intellectuals" (Baverley 2004: 69) and cancels some of the authority of intellectuals, Nance (2001) argues that it cannot be produced without their intervention – a kind of self-cancellation. She says (p. 570) "Testimonio is the site of intellectual's self cancellation, but in this self-cancellation, a kind of renewal is averred; we both find and lose ourselves reading testimonio." This is the spiritual journey that Bourdieu speaks of in the practice of reflexivity,

that which allows intellectuals to experience the journey of forgetting her power to impose their point of view and recognize the historicity of this point of view, and ultimately know their selves better. Sociology is thus necessarily political as it “attempt[s] to transform the principles of vision whereby we construct, and there may rationally and humanely shape, sociology, society, and ultimately, our selves.” (Wacquant 1992: 59). This in keeping with the sociologist’s primary task “to imagine themselves in the place occupied by their objects . . . to understand that if they were in their shoes they would doubtless be and think just like her” (Bourdieu 1991: 626), so that the truth of domination will be revealed, so that the struggle against it be more forceful.

NOTES

- 1 The feminine pronoun is used to here to refer to both the intellectual and the life historian.
- 2 Being a methodological paper, the theoretical polemics of Bourdieu against the epistemological couples—objectivism/subjectivism and theoreticism/empiricism—are set at the background.
- 4 This is not to say that orality has always produced liberative texts. In the struggle for national liberty, local elite rewrote their history based on their interest and perspective drowning the voice of the marginalized peasants and workers, aptly labeled “internal colonization.”
- 5 Bourdieu considers cultural, social and symbolic capital as “transformed, disguised forms of economic capital” (Bourdieu 1991 in Swartz 1997, p. 80), and are ultimately valued for their convertibility with economic capital. The struggle for symbolic power is also a struggle for ‘disguised’ economic capital in the academic field. Thus, intellectual are predisposed to serving the dominant classes in their struggle to gain ‘disguised’ economic capital.
- 6 While Bourdieu (1988) analyzes the intellectual field, he situates it within the entire field of power and social classes through the volume and type of capital intellectuals possess. Bourdieu notes that “the producers and transmitters of symbolic goods owe their most essential characteristics to the fact that they constitute a dominated section of the dominant classes” (Bourdieu, as cited in Swartz 1997: 223). Belonging to the dominant class, intellectual in their struggle for symbolic capital produce knowledge that reproduce the immanent structures of domination via system of binary

symbols that political function as inclusive-exclusive or dominated-dominant categories. As agents in the social world use their cognitive categories in their everyday interaction, they unwittingly reproduce the system of hierarchical distinction leading the dominated to accept their domination.

- 7 Agents in their everyday interaction are practical in their disposition. Intellectuals taking out social experience outside of this practical disposition leads to what Bourdieu refers to as theoreticism and objectivism. While science requires the first epistemological break with empirical reality and its subjective commonsense representation, for it to proceed it must experience a second epistemological break with theoreticism and objectivism. Objectivism is the false belief that theoretical constructs that are constructed at start of scientific inquiry have a one-to-one correspondence with reality outside of the theoretical frame, and thus acquire a universal character applicable to all reality (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron 1991). Positivist scientists committed to objectivism engage in statistical regularities of the real (Swartz, p58), failing to recognize that these data are only valid within the theoretical position upon their construction. Theoreticism is committed when the intellectual projects her "cognitive and social interests", her frame, "onto the nontheoretical work of practical action" (Swartz 1997: 58). Intellectuals guilty of objectivism interpret these practical actions using their theoretical standpoint, which arises from a different social condition to those of the respondents.
- 8 This may invite criticism that the testimonio in itself privileges the social experience of the relatively articulate witness-narrator. This is true only if the testimonio is not a reflexively constructed. By unearthing the social conditions of possibilities of the narrator, her knowledge and experience is necessarily historicized.
- 9 Bourdieu et al. (1991) brilliantly argues that science must break itself from commonsense only by constructing concepts. This is a necessary and the first epistemological break with empiricism and subjectivism which Bourdieu calls "objectivist moment" (as cited in Swartz 1997: 56). This is the start of all scientific inquiry. These constructs are necessarily different from the subjective everyday representation of agents, their "common sense notions" (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron 1991: 15) as they act in the social world. Further, empiricism considers facts as data, relying on the real to supply categories for theoretical formulation and the relationship between them, and fails to link these facts to larger and abstract macrostructures, "surrendering to the given" (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron 1991: 37).

- 10 The engagement of the testimonio as a methodological tool against objectivation provides for the epistemological break with both the false epistemological couples of subjective/objective and theoreticism/empiricism.
- 11 Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus which is "a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which general and organize practices and representation that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes ... " (p. 53) is an attempt to dialectically bridge structures and agency and avoid the trap of epistemological couples.
- 12 This is a critic to those intellectuals who insist on an objective and neutral position in the conduct of research. As such they pose their questions as if they and all of their respondents share the same language. (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron 1991)
- 13 I am thinking here that methodological reflections, on the journey of the intellectual's forgetting of oneself, may even supplement the main testimonial text as it describes and demonstrates the process of reflexive understanding and unity with the subaltern. It points to the reader that it is indeed possible to sympathize, unite and act against domination.

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A REFLECTION ON SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Virginia A. Miralao

Let me start with a personal word of thanks to Profs. Gelia Castillo and Mercedes Concepcion who were my mentors some 40 years ago. I owe much of my early training in sociology and foundations in the social sciences to them and to my other professors at the University of the Philippines, including Profs. Ofelia Angangco, Fe Arcinas, Belen Medina, Ricardo Zarco and Ruben Santos-Cuguyan of the Department of Sociology; Profs. Felipe-Landa Jocano, Mario Zamora and Moises Bello of the Department of Anthropology; and Profs. Alfredo Lagmay and F.G. David of the Psychology Department.

I trained under them in the 1960s, a time characterized by steady and reasonably rapid rates of economic growth worldwide, and for the Philippines in particular, a relatively upbeat period – signaling the country's fuller recovery from WWII and pointing to bright prospects for national development. Although the 1960s had its own share of economic and political turmoils, it was against a generally optimistic outlook of continuing economic and social progress that I was schooled in the dominant "positivist" orientation of the social sciences at that time – an orientation that placed a premium on the scientific method for advancing knowledge and on the instrumentalist use of scientific knowledge to foster economic growth and promote human welfare.

I got the impression from our conference organizers that for my presentation today, I should perhaps say something about the conference theme, *"Transformations of Social Institutions: Disjunctures, Confluences and Continuities,"* even as I also speak of my own training and work and practice as a sociologist. To help organize my presentation, I borrow from a

broad observation made by Sociologist Neil Smelser towards the close of the millennium articulating his views on the “vast social transformations” occurring in our own contemporary times. Smelser’s view is that vast transformations “. . .develop out of nations’ individual and collective, relatively short-term reactions to their economic and political environments, without very much consideration of their long-term consequences. The longer-term transformations—even revolutions—are most often the unanticipated accumulation of the precipitates of these shorter-term reactions.”¹ In brief, the grand/big changes that we seem to experience over time do not happen in “fits and spurts” but are the result of the “hum drum” – the everyday adaptations that numerous social actors including ordinary individuals and collectivities as families, households and communities, and state and non-state authorities make to their immediate circumstances.

I find Smelser’s view useful in pulling together my own thoughts on the Transformations of Social Institutions based on some of the research that I have done over the last several decades on women’s roles, families and households. Following Smelser’s broad view on social change, I use the researches I have been involved in to illustrate multilevel processes of shifting, adaptations and changes that I have observed in 1) the theoretical perspectives and methodologies that guided my researches on basically the same field or topic over the decades; 2) the social roles of women and men and other institutional practices within families and households as shown by research results; and 3) my own views and reflections on institutions and social transformations and on my journey as a sociologist and more broadly as a social scientist.

So in succession, let me turn to those researches that I have done. Moving to Ateneo de Manila University in 1971, one of my first assignments at the University’s Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) was to oversee a nationwide FP-KAP (family planning-knowledge, attitudes and practices) survey aimed at assessing the role of social workers from the Department of Social Welfare as communicators and motivators for family planning practice.² The research was driven then by the worldwide attention on the rapid population growth of developing countries and which occupied the energies of governments, policymakers and academe. (In 1970, the Philippines was all of 38 million people and growing unsustainably at 3.2 percent per annum). The IPC study I was directing was just one of several FP-KAP surveys of the period, and the findings of which were expected to guide the state in crafting a national population policy and program.

Though the issue was one of population and development, the policy-making part was (then as now) expectedly political. Interestingly however, the greatest opposition to a population control policy in the 1970s did not come from the Bishops and the Catholic Church as we are witnessing today,³ but from left-wing groups which denounced such programs as Western impositions, and pointed to President Marcos' expressed preference for population control to illustrate how much he was a stooge of Western imperialism. But I may have been too absorbed with learning survey methodologies hands on from another eminent mentor, Fr. Frank Lynch, SJ, to be bothered too much with the political and ideological debates on population control. It was a source of satisfaction to me to realize that indeed our survey data yielded results that conformed with expectations suggested by theory: i.e., that women's FP-KAP varied systematically by rural-urban residence, age, education, social class and other determinants. Here I should mention that the theoretical frame of FP-KAP studies drew from demographic transition theory which broadly states that economic progress triggers many other changes that lower death rates initially and birth rates eventually, allowing countries to transition to a new demographic regime and to stabilize their populations at lower levels of death and birth rates. Outside of women's childbearing and -rearing roles and functions, little was said about women's statuses vis-à-vis men's, and much less of patriarchal systems of subordination and control. The interest of our research then was simply and straightforwardly to determine women's desire for family planning and how this might be met by a population control program. And perhaps reflecting the improved economic conditions of Filipino families in the immediate post-war period through the 1960s, FP-KAP studies did show considerable numbers of Filipino women wanting to control their births and to practice family planning. The adoption thus of a national population program in 1970 was soon followed by a precipitous drop in average family sizes from 6 children in the 1960s to 5 children in the 1970s, and a commensurate decline in our population growth rate from over 3 percent per annum to 2.7 percent per annum.

My next related work was my dissertation research and here I divert a little to say that my earlier FP-KAP study actually helped in my admission to the Sociology Department of Cornell University where a senior faculty and social-demographer-specialist of Latin America took me as his advisee. In line with the evolving concerns of the day and the research demands of public policymaking, my adviser, Professor J. Mayone Stycos suggested that I focus my dissertation on the impact of changing women's roles on their

fertility. The International Women's Decade had just been declared in 1975 and a growing feminist consciousness was encouraging research on women by women. And so I returned to Manila in 1977 to begin work on Women's Employment and Fertility⁴ using the data set from the Philippine component of the multi-country Value of Children Surveys undertaken in the Philippines by the Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC) under the direction of a former classmate, Randy Bulatao.

The points I wish to make on my dissertation research are that first on the theorizing side, this was now guided by a theoretical formulation less grand than the modernization/demographic transition theory. This intermediate frame was the "new household economics" first developed by Howard Becker in the 1960s and which was increasingly being applied to test formulations and hypotheses on household decision-making. Briefly, the "new household economics" views households as not too different from firms and postulates that households/families operate to maximize their common welfare. This assumption underpins much of household decision-making, be this in the area of household expenditures and investments, or the deployment of family labor, or the number of children that couples will have. In my dissertation, I used the new home economics to draw attention to the so called "opportunity costs of women's employment" so that the higher the foregone incomes of women from employment, the more likely too, a couple would limit their births to allow wives to engage in paid work outside of the home. While earlier paradigms on women's births or fertility took the traditional gender division of labor in the home as a given, the new home economics sought to capture changing household adaptations and women's realities: that women are not just bound to childbearing and homemaking roles but that in many cases in fact, couples/families opt to have fewer children so wives can work. In contrast with the earlier FP-KAP frames which were simply interested in knowing women's own desires for children, the evolving paradigms implied that wives/women could negotiate their wishes in household decision-making. Hence, there are not just women's perspectives on family planning, but men's perspectives too, and couples' as well.

Suffice it to say, that being a positivist formulation, the new home economics was methodologically translatable to empirical, quantifiable testing. The methodology of my dissertation research was quite quantitative therefore, following multiple regression models. This made me appreciate why social planners and policymakers are more inclined to listen to economists than other social scientists. Through quantification, economists

are better able to point to factors that are manipulable in certain ways to bring about desired outcomes, e.g., as the importance of not just raising women's education, but raising this beyond Grade 5 in order to have a dampening effect on fertility desires.

If the paradigm used in my dissertation highlighted the significance of women's direct contributions to household income/welfare through their involvement in paid employment, a subsequent research I did in 1980-81 meant to surface the invisibility of women's crucial contributions through their homework and child care activities. By this time, the women's movement had advanced to a new level of consciousness raising on the subjugation of women and the undervaluation of their work and worth. The challenge this posed to research then was how to empirically demonstrate this subjugation/undervaluation and by extension, women's marginalization in development processes and outcomes. Under NEDA's Women in Development (WID) umbrella program, we at IPC pioneered in the conduct of time-use studies to determine how much time and effort do female and male family members exert on paid work, housework, childcare, other necessary community activities and rest and leisure.⁵ With data from surveys done in selected Manila and provincial communities, our time-use study results dramatically portrayed women's double burdens and unfair treatment in patriarchal structures. I must add that raising my own two boys at that time, I felt that our study results were describing not only the multiple burdens of other women but also my own.

Our time-use study results were used extensively by women's groups to explain and advance their causes; and by statistical agencies like the National Statistical Coordination Board to press for the periodic collection of time-use data for the valuation of women's unpaid work in national accounts. Though this did not happen (owing to difficulties in arriving at an acceptable formula for housework valuation), the partnership between/among government agencies, women's groups and researchers did much to unpack earlier conceptualizations of women's roles and promote more egalitarian constructions of gender roles and relationships. Towards the end of the International Women's Decade in 1985, the Philippines had attained much in terms of gender equity. Even the women's groups of left-leaning organizations had dropped their resistance to population control programs, realizing that child limitation or birth control is essential to women's emancipation.

Then in 1990-91, I accepted an 18-months' assignment from the International Labour Organization to go to the Maldives and help in the gender-disaggregation of data collected from the Maldives' first modern-day census of 1985; and direct the country's (also first) national survey on women.⁶ Coming from the Philippines where much progress had been made towards gender equity, the situation of Maldivian women in 1990 was like a throwback to ages long past. Owing to its unique geography, culture and history, the Maldives remained isolated and insulated from new trends occurring elsewhere in the globe. Though registering robust annual GNP growth rates, economic development was contained for the most part within the islands' fishing and tourism industries. The fishing export trade was expectedly in the hands of men; while the Maldives' Islamic Code prevented contact between the local population and particularly its women on the one hand, and its island tourist resorts, on the other. Schools were just being established and employment opportunities for women were few, limited only to office jobs in government and some in the private sector. As a result of these and the unique blending of Islamic teachings and an island culture, statistics revealed that Maldivian girl-brides on average, marry before their 15th birthday and by the time they are 52, they would on average, have married and divorced three times and borne five to six children.

To outsiders and the UN and other development agencies, the statistics were shocking and so almost all development aid to the islands were tied to Gender and Development (or GAD) programs. The Ministries of Planning and Women's Affairs were mobilized to do gender-sensitivity training, skills training, livelihood and literacy programs etc. to delay marriages and do away with girl-brides, reduce the incidence of divorce, and bring down women's (and the country's) birth rates.

Though I conducted the surveys and did the tasks expected of me, my own visits to the atolls convinced me that the conditions for changing women's status were not there. Outside the Maldives' capital island of Malé, the schools in the atolls did not go beyond Grade 5 and employment for women were virtually non-existent. When women and men have little to do but sit on sandy beaches under coconut trees and watch the blue sea and sky, and catch a few fish maybe and gather some chillies, it is almost an impossible task to persuade young girls and boys not to get married and not to have children. More feminist researchers and women activists would have been most frustrated by the situation of Maldivian women, but (as Smelser suggests),

I knew that not much change could be expected of the Maldives' marriage and family patterns given that no changes have occurred in women's daily lives. I returned from the islands sobered by the experience and the knowledge that one cannot really force social change to happen. It also dawned on me that social researchers are sometimes called upon to overcome given paradigms and discourses that have become too caught up with their own social advocacies or ideologies, if they are to remain faithful to the task of analyzing existing realities.

I turn now to the last set of work I have been doing since the mid 1990s, after returning from the Maldives. With the declaration of 1994 as the International Year of the Family, I enjoined colleagues to contribute research articles to the *Philippine Sociological Review's* (PSR) special issue on the Filipino family.⁷ Using data from the Family Income and Expenditure Surveys, I also began work on the income and expenditure patterns of female- and male-headed households for a special gender issue of the 1997 Philippine Human Development Report.⁸ In addition, I wrote a paper on the "Family, Traditional Values and the Sociocultural Transformation of Philippine Society"⁹ for a convention on Globalism, Regionalism and Nationalism at Seiki University in 1996; and helped direct studies/surveys on the Filipino youth in 2003.¹⁰ From these, I wish to draw attention to some of the transformations of the Filipino family since 1971, or over the period that I have done research relating to the topic.

As an institution, a first major change in the Filipino family is in its size which as noted earlier, began to decline in the 1970s. The Filipino youth in our 2003 surveys typically have between three to four siblings while their parents had between five to six, indicating that today's families are having some two children less than their immediate parental generation. This reduction in family size represents quite an accomplishment considering that 30 to 40 years is but a short span in historical time.

A second major change in the Filipino family has to do with gender roles. The traditional gender division of labor in the home is now a fading memory to the present generation of Filipino youth who are growing up in families/households where both parents are relatively well educated and employed. For a growing number of Filipino youth in fact, parents are not just working outside of the home; one or both are working abroad. Gone are the notions that it is fathers who bring home the bacon and mothers who stay at home and take care of children.

Third, still relating to gender roles, if we saw a reconstruction of women's roles from traditional to something more libertarian in the last few decades, I think we are witnessing in the current period also a new construction of fatherhood to suit the changing realities of men. Time-use studies today reveal a greater involvement of men in housework and childcare particularly when their wives are also working like themselves. As a result, not a few men are now also experiencing double burdens (including my son who is now raising two daughters with his wife). There may be a move towards what psychologist Allen Tan termed as the "generative-father type" in his 1994 article in the PSR.¹¹ He says that a generative father spends much time with his children and enjoys being with them such that fatherhood becomes an opportunity for his own growth and fulfillment. An expression of this emerging trend may be seen in the appearance of regular column in *The Philippine Star* titled "Kindergarten Dad" where the columnist writes about the travails and joys of fatherhood and family life.¹² A newspaper column like this would have been unthinkable and could not have appeared in the 1970s.

Fourth, research also points to other changes in the form and structure of the family as a social institution. The more obvious of these are the increasing cases of marital separations and family dysfunctions which have given rise to alternative family forms other than the traditional nuclear family (as for example, single-parent families). Like the other changes mentioned earlier—declining family size and changing gender roles— these changes in family structure and form reflect adaptations to modernization/liberalization and today's global changes.

Fifth, despite modernization and globalization however, research also suggests that family ties remain very strong among Filipinos. In her work on the Filipino family, Prof. Medina explains that in our country, there are more extended families in cities than the countryside precisely because urban families absorb their poorer rural relatives when they come to work in the city.¹³ Because of family support, single parent- and female-headed households too, reside in extended households and so do the families of our overseas contract workers. Enduring family ties are also seen in the importance accorded the Filipino elderly by children and kin, making our elderly among the happiest and most content in the Asia Pacific Region.¹⁴

Sixth, in the not too distant future, our 2003 youth surveys point to decreasing marriage rates further delays in the age of marriage and continuing declines in the birth rate in the country. A substantial thirty percent of today's

youth are not sure they want to get married in the future; and those who do, foresee marrying only when they are around 30 years old and having only 2 to 3 children at the most.

Seventh and finally, we can infer from existing work that the Filipino family will continue to change in form, size and structure but that, as a social institution, it too, will endure. Like their forbears before them, the substantial majority of today's Filipino youth see themselves as transitioning successfully to adulthood – hoping to finish school and having their own jobs when they are 25 years old, and marrying and raising their own families some five or so years down the road.¹⁵ Hence, if my grandmother were alive and were to meet my granddaughter today, both would know they come from vastly different times, but I think my grandmother would recognize that the social form my granddaughter lives in is still like a family.

NOTES

- 1 Keynote Address on Social Transformations delivered by Neil J. Smelser at the Second Session of the Intergovernmental Council of the Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST), UNESCO, Paris, 3-7 July 1995.
- 2 The findings of this study are in Miralao, Virginia A., "Evaluation of the Family Planning Services of the Department of Social Welfare. Final Report." Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, 1973.
- 3 Some 38 years after the adoption of natural population program by President Marcos in 1970, a new Reproductive Health Bill which seeks to grant Filipino women/couples improved access to birth control methods is being debated on in Congress. The Catholic Church has come out strongly to oppose this bill.
- 4 My unpublished dissertation was titled "Female Employment and Fertility in the Philippines." Cornell University. Ithaca, New York, 1981.
- 5 Among the author's publications on time-use studies are "Women and Men in Development: Findings from a Pilot Survey," Final Report, Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, 1980; "Time-Use as a Measure of Women's Role in Development," In Papers and Proceedings of the 2nd National Convention on Statistics. The Statistical Advisory Board and the Statistical Coordination Office, NEDA, 1980; and "Methodological Issues in the Collection and Analysis of

- Women's Time-Use Data," Occasional Paper #3. Women's Programme, Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur, 1983.
- 6 My work on the Maldives may be seen in "Women's Status and Development Trends in the Maldives: A survey report submitted to the Department of Women's Affairs and UNDP Malé, and to the Labour and Population Team for Asia and the Pacific, ILO, Bangkok, 1991; and (with Khadeeja Ibrahim) "Women's Status in the Maldives." Report prepared for the Department of Women's Affairs and UNDP Malé, 1991.
 - 7 See Vol. 42, Nos. 1-4 *Philippine Sociological Review*, 1994.
 - 8 See Chapter 5, "Household Expenditure Patterns Among Male- and Female-Headed Households" In *1997 Philippine Human Development Report*, Human Development Network and UNDP Manila. 1997.
 - 9 My paper of the same title also appears in Vol 45, Nos. 1-4 of the *Philippine Sociological Review*, 1997.
 - 10 These studies on the Filipino Youth were undertaken for the 5th National Social Science Congress with the theme "What 's with the Filipino Youth: Perspectives from the Social Sciences" and organized by the Philippine Social Science Council on 15-17 May 2003. The specific growth survey reports include *Filipino Youth in Transition: A Survey of Urban High School Senior Students* edited by Josefina Natividad and *Filipino Youth in Special High Schools* by Virginia A. Miralao. Both were published by the Philippine Social Science Council and the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines in 2004.
 - 11 Allen Tan, "Four Learnings of Fatherhood," in *Philippine Sociological Review* Vol. 42, Nos. 1-4, 1994.
 - 12 "Kindergarten Dad" by Tony Montemayor, is a regular column appearing every Thursday in *The Philippine Star*.
 - 13 See Belen T.G. Medina and Eliseo A. de Guzman "Filipino Families and Households in Three Selected Philippine Areas," in *Philippine Sociological Review* Vol 42, Nos. 1-4, 1994; and also Prof. Medina's own reader/text on The Filipino Family, University of the Philippines Press: Quezon City, 1991.
 - 14 See Michael A. Costello "The Elderly in Filipino Households: Current Status and Future Prospects," in *Philippine Sociological Review* Vol 42, Nos. 1-4, 1994.
 - 15 See the earlier cited 2003 Filipino youth surveys of Josefina Natividad and Virginia A. Miralao, Philippine Social Science Council and UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines.

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Prospective contributors are requested to observe the following guidelines:

1. Standard length of papers is 6000 words (approximately 20 pages typed double spaced with generous margins at the top, bottom, and sides of the page), but shorter contributions are also welcomed.
2. Include a brief abstract of 100-200 words summarizing the findings and at most five key words on a separate sheet of paper (without author information).
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6. Please use The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th ed.
 - a) The following examples illustrate the format for referencing in the text:

(Banzon-Bautista 1998: 21)
(Lynch and Makil 1968)
Zialcita (2005)

For Filipinos, the "outside" world is "a place of power, wealth, cleanliness, beauty, glamour and enjoyment" (Cannell 1995: 223).
Source: Saloma 2001

"After all," he said, "*pinoy* can be seen along national lines."
Source: Saloma 2001

- b) List two or more works by different authors who are cited within the same parentheses in alphabetical order by the first author's surname. Separate the citations with semicolons.
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Newspaper Article

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Article from the Internet

Mershon, D. H. 1998. "Star Trek on the Brain: Alien Minds, Human Minds." *American Scientist* 86, 585. Retrieved 29 July 1999, from Expanded Academic ASAP database.

Cabrera, R. E. 2003. "Renewable Energy Program for Mindanao." Retrieved 26 July, from <http://www.amore.org.ph>.

Book

Berner, E. 1997. *Defending a Place in the City*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Book Article or Chapter

Racelis, M. 1988. "Becoming an Urbanite: The Neighborhood as a Learning Environment." In J. Gugler (ed.), *The Urbanization of the Third World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 219-224.

Conference paper

Sassen, S. 1994. "Identity in the Global City: Economic and Cultural Encasements." Paper presented at the conference on The Geography of Identity. University of Michigan, 4-5 February.

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PREFACE

We had planned on devoting this entire issue of the *Philippine Sociological Review* to migration studies, owing to the still continuing interest on the topic. For various reasons, however, we were unable to put together enough articles on it for an issue. Nevertheless, four of the seven papers that comprise this volume deal with migration. The first of these, Andrea Soco's *Changing Discourse on Return Migration: Cosmopolitanism and the Reintegration of Return Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers* was first presented at the Philippine Sociological Society Annual Conference held at the Philippine Social Science Center in October this year. The next three papers, Jorge V. Tigno's *Negotiated Homelands and Long-Distance Nationalism: Serialized Filipino Identity in Japan*, Gisela M. Reiterer's *Filipino Austrians: Transforming Identities and Changing Selfhood under Conditions of Migration*, and Joson A. Lorenzana's *Being Indian in Post-Colonial Metro Manila: Ethnic Identities, Class, Race and the Media* were all presented at the 8th International Conference on Philippine Studies held at the Philippine Social Science Center in July, also this year.

Andrea Soco focuses on migrant domestic workers who have stayed in Britain, Australia, and Hong Kong for over eight years and have returned to, and are attempting to re-integrate with, their (largely rural) households and communities in the Philippines. Based on interviews with domestic workers in Singapore, Soco finds that Filipino domestic workers have acquired and have been able to practice cosmopolitan sensibilities in the countries where they work. This cosmopolitanism, albeit subaltern, are manifested in their consumption of developed-country or urban cultural products, their participation in (middle) class-based leisure activities, and their acquisition of new knowledge and sophisticated skills. They, thus, return to the home country, communities, and culture with, to a certain extent, a transformed identity. But they find that there are limitations to their practice of cosmopolitanism in the home country which, to some extent, has also changed. Soco, thus, analyzes the concept of cosmopolitanism based on how domestic workers themselves construct their experiences, how they express their agency. She argues and finds that cosmopolitan behavior cannot be fully practiced, nor cosmopolitan identities be easily transplanted, in the home country; constrained by place, cosmopolitanism has to be negotiated. In this process, they employ cosmopolitan skills, suggesting that they are

incorporating knowledge they have acquired from the countries where they worked in their attempt to reintegrate with their community. Soco concludes then that cosmopolitanism is a conceptual tool that could be “a key in understanding the migrants’ construction of self and their reconstruction of relationships upon returning to the home country.”

While Soco deals with re-making home after some home-making abroad, **Jorge V. Tigno** focuses on “making home away from home.” In particular, he looks at how long-term Filipino migrants or permanent residents in Japan “replicate the habits and practices in their home country” and how they negotiate “what it means to be Filipino in the new country.” He terms this process of negotiation “long-distance nationalism” whereby Filipinos are able to maintain “meaningful connections with the home country.” On the other hand, he refers to “the reproduction of myths and national memories” of the homeland “outside the ‘homeland,’” *serialization of identity*. He describes and analyzes “four areas of practical and everyday social and political life ... which are reproduced and serialized in Japan” by Filipinos. These are “Catholic religiosity, *sari-sari* commerce, Tagalog discourse and attitudes toward Filipino citizenship . . .” The serialization and reproduction of Filipino identity in religious terms is manifested in attendance (albeit irregular) at performances of church rituals (e.g., mass). “Going through the motions of . . . ceremonies . . . becomes the *sine qua non* of being Filipino.” Filipino religiosity can also be observed at special Filipino group activities such as Independence Day celebrations which are marked by prayers and/or the celebration of a mass. Finally, the *manang*, an icon of Filipino religiosity, is reproduced in Japan, although now she is dressed not in drab brown but in designer clothes and accessories, and dyed blonde hair. Filipino identity in Japan is also serialized through *sari-sari* commerce, although the *sari-sari* store is now located inside buildings with air-conditioning, cushioned seats, and, where customers, rather than serving themselves, are waited on. But other features are reproduced as they are in the home country: food selections are made by pointing, “credit is selectively extended,” and customers are not issued receipts for their purchases.

The serialization of Filipino identity in Japan, according to Tigno, is also expressed through the use of a Filipino language, primarily Tagalog or Taglish. Thus, Filipino migrants speak Tagalog and Taglish in Japan “even as they are also able to speak and understand pure English and Japanese.” Thus, majority of “adult Filipinos in Japan are able to reassert their Filipinoness by retaining

their facility at least with Tagalog.” However, many “younger Filipino-Japanese children are excluded from this linguistic discourse.” Consequently, they “are excluded from the social and cultural terrain that knowledge of Tagalog would allow,” including “participation in Filipino congregation activities.”

Finally, Filipinos in Japan assert their Filipinoness by retaining their Philippine citizenship, although they may for various reasons possess a second or even a third passport. It is interesting to note that, unlike Filipino migrants to countries in the global north, Filipinos in Japan do not actively seek the acquisition of Japanese citizenship, for which Tigno offers three reasons. The first is that Filipinos are in Japan for economic reasons and it is not in their best interest “to seek out official political membership.” “Stringent immigration and naturalization procedures” also discourage Filipinos from acquiring Japanese citizenship. Finally, retention of their citizenship is a way Filipinos by which they re-assert their Filipinoness. Tigno concludes his paper by arguing that Filipinos have internalized “a social program . . . in their place of origin. This internal program is what eventually impacts upon their lives as they stay in their new places of residence.”

Similar to Tigno’s exploration of how Filipinos negotiate their Filipinoness in Japan, **Gisela M. Reiterer** analyzes how Filipinos deal with the everyday realities of living as migrants in Austria – in the paper *Filipino Austrians: Transforming Identities and Changing Selfhood under Conditions of Migration*. Reiterer begins by contrasting two “waves” of Filipino migration to Austria: the first wave in the late 1960s/early 1970s and the second wave consisting of Filipinos who left for Austria more recently, i.e., from the mid-1970s. Reiterer notes that the first wave of Philippine migration to Austria was a response to the need of Austria for workers. However, unlike workers from other countries, those recruited from the Philippines were skilled – primarily health personnel such as nurses and therefore – gendered. As there were few Filipino men in Austria at this time, many of these Filipino nurses married native Austrians. They adapted well to Austrian life and acquired Austrian citizenship. Although the recruitment of skilled health personnel continued until the mid-1980s, starting in the mid-1970s Filipino migration to Austria became more diverse. And less favorable labor market conditions force more recent migrants to take up employment far below their expectations. Thus, even if they possessed university degrees, they often land in menial occupations. They however, Reiterer notes, “face more favorable social conditions” compared to the early migrants as they now have these

early migrant relatives who can provide them with “emotional security.” There now too are Filipino associations that offer spaces for socializing as well and Filipino priests and religious functionaries who attend to their spiritual needs. Still, Reiterer rightly observes, migration always poses a challenge to individual persons and she presents case studies that describe in detail the migration experiences of four Filipinos from the different “waves” and from different generations. The challenge posed by migration is particularly acute among second generation immigrants. For, “while the first generation immigrants still talk about *their* Philippines and identify much more with the Philippines than with Austria, for the second generation it is already *their* Austria.”

The fourth paper dealing with migration in this volume focuses not on Filipinos who have returned to the home country nor with Filipinos living in other countries, but on foreigners who have come to live in this country. **Jozon A. Lorenzana**, in *Being Indian in Post-Colonial Metro Manila: Ethnic Identities, Class, Race and the Media*, looks at the experiences of people of Indian origin, particularly on the identity formations of young people or second and even third generation members of the Indian diaspora, not in a country of the global north but in the south – that is, as indicated in the paper’s title, Metro Manila. Lorenzana asks two major questions: “What does it mean to be Indian in Metro Manila?” and “How do the media . . . contribute to the meanings of being Indian?” Much of the data for his study come from interviews with five males and five females aged 19 to 24 who are children of first generation Indian or have Indian-Filipino parents and belong to middle- or upper-class households. Lorenzana argues—and finds—that these young adult Indians claim multiple affiliations (Filipino, Punjabi, Sikh, half-Filipino, half-Indian, one-fourth-Spanish, etc.) but they “tend to position themselves based on class and gender. . . ethnic affiliations intersect with class and gender positions.” Joson also asserts that the symbolic context in which these identities are formed are influenced by commercial media. “Local entertainment media reinforce stereotypical images of Indian men”—e.g. *bumbay*—that promote distinctions between members of the diaspora” – Sindhis, Punjabis, etc. On the other hand, global entertainment media that broadcast shows such as beauty pageants, can make inclusion particularly of women of the diaspora into Philippine society easier. Lorenzana cites how the airing of the Miss Universe beauty pageant where an Indian (Bengali) won the title resulted in a positive change in the Filipino’s perception of Indian women. Finally, Lorenzana suggests that in addition to the intersections among ethnicity, class, and gender, the way young adult Indians in Metro Manila locate their identities

are influenced by several other “contextual factors like class dynamics in the homeland and Philippine society, historical processes like colonization, the migration histories and trajectories of Indian immigrants, and class/gendered nature of the Indian diaspora” itself.

Children Watching Children: How Filipino Children Represent and Receive News Images of Suffering, is one of the two papers in this volume not dealing with migration. In this piece, **Jonathan C. Ong** explores “how children relate with distant others in the context of mediation, specifically, through the mediation forged by the narrative of news.” He investigates “how children express perceptions of otherness in relation to distant suffering children that they encounter in global and local television news.” And from the images that children drew, he delves into “children’s knowledge about suffering others: how they imagine the problems of children . . . and how they learn about them . . .” Put in another way, Ong investigates selected Filipino children’s perception of “their others,” asking who these others are, “who they consider ‘better’ or ‘more worthy’ . . . and how they develop feelings of trust, care, and fear from watching the news.” In exploring the representations made by children and their “reception of otherness,” Ong uses the concept of *proper distance* whereby he categorizes children’s talk as either *too close*, *too far*, or *both close and far* – that is, respectively, their talk “subsumes the suffering Other and denies their difference . . . sees them beyond care and identification and asserts irreconcilable difference . . . have some elements of both . . .”

For his study, Ong chose a limited, purposively chosen sample of 15 male and female children, aged 9 to 12, from middle-class and working class households. The children were divided into two groups (working-class and middle-class) and interviewed each in a focus group session lasting an hour and fifteen minutes. The children were asked to draw and talk about their drawings and then they were asked “to talk about their representations of suffering children in the news.” Based on the data collected, Ong finds that children “engage with suffering;” that is, suffering is part of their daily life. Their engagement with suffering, however, differs according to class and “proper distance.” Children’s ideas of distant suffering are also varied. “It is nearby and faraway, mediated and immediate, eventful and . . . banal.” Finally, children too have varied ideas about the images of distant suffering presented to them; they can be “utilitarian” . . . “worriers” . . . “combative.” Ong concludes that adults “seem to reinforce among children the despair of

distance." Children acquire their perceptions "from exposure to media representations and . . . from parents' media talk in the heart of home."

The other non-migration paper in this issue is **Chester A. Arcilla's** *If I Were In Her Shoes, I Would Doubtless Be And Talk Like Her: Methodological Reflections on Bourdieu and Testimonio*. As the title itself indicates, is a methodological paper. Testimonio is a form of oral history, a story told from a personal perspective. It is different from other kinds of personal history in that the *testimonio* is always told from a position of subalternity, of marginality. Intellectuals have, however, questioned the historical validity of the method. Thus, from the perspective of traditional historical methodology, the picture that *testimonio* paints is incomplete and insufficient. The paper discusses these debates (validity versus memory and ideology) surrounding the testimonio. It then explores "the possibility of indeed uniting the activist intellectual with the subaltern." Arcilla sees this possibility in Bourdieu's theory on the intellectual and scientific sociology which suggest that "the cultural and symbolic capital of the intellectual (be) lent to the narrator so that the bourgeois public may listen to the silenced voices. " But doing this results in a limitation – objectification, to limit which, "the researcher must reflexively engage the testimonio in a manner that aims to understand rather than evaluate."

Finally, **Virginia A. Miralao's** essay *A Reflection on Social Transformations and Social Institutions*, was delivered as one of the addresses at the plenary session, *Transformation of Social Institutions: Processes, Reflections and Narratives*, which opened the 2008 PSS Annual Conference (at which Andrea Soco also presented her paper). The conference organizers invited noted sociologists—in addition to Dr. Miralao—Gelia T. Castillo, Mercedes B. Concepcion, and Maria Cynthia Rose B. Bautista) to this session to talk about their training, work, and practice as sociologists – from whom the organizers believed younger sociologists could learn much. Thus, in this transcription of her address, Dr. Miralao reflects and presents her views on her work on societal transformations and social institutions, injecting into it a narrative of her own personal journey as a social scientist, over the last forty five years.

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