

SOURCES OF STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS AMONG FILIPINAS IN WEST GERMANY AND HOLLAND*

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The study describes the various problems and coping mechanisms of Filipinas in West Germany and Holland. It discusses these coping mechanisms in the light of the Filipina's sociocultural background and delineates the possible areas of intervention.

Data were obtained from both primary (participant observation, interviews, focused group discussions) and secondary sources (newspaper articles). The subjects were Filipinas who went to Europe to work, to marry, to tour, or to join their husband.

INTRODUCTION

The literature on stress and coping and on cross-cultural contact hardly deals with Filipinos in Europe, be they legitimate migrant workers, tourists turned migrant workers, wives of Europeans, trainees or mail-order brides. At best, there are accounts of psychological distress and adjustment of Southeast Asian refugees (Nicassio, 1985) or of Asian students studying in Europe (Furnham and Bochner, 1982; Bochner, 1982).

The present study looks into perceived sources of stress of Filipino women living in Germany and Holland. It also discusses their different responses and coping mechanisms. Lastly, coping mechanisms are examined in the light of the Filipina's sociocultural background. Possible areas of intervention are identified.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents: The Filipina respondents can be divided into several types, according to their reasons for going to Europe: (a) those hired to work in the 70s and 80s as nurses in Germany or sewers in Holland; (b) those who came through the marriage bureaus; (c) those who came as tourists, either from the Philippines or from some other foreign country who decided to stay

illegally or marry a European, so they could legitimize their stay; (d) Filipinas who met their husbands in the Philippines or in some other foreign country and have followed their respective husbands; (e) Filipinas who came through friends who matched them up with Europeans (f) students or trainees who met their husbands in Holland or who found jobs which enabled them to stay; (g) "cultural dancers"; and (h) former employees of Philippine embassies who have stayed on in Europe.

Procedure. This being a descriptive study, the case study was utilized. Contacts to the Filipino community in Germany were made through various means: through a student in the German university where the author was a visiting professor; a Filipina who had been living in Germany for some 10 years and who had a wide circle of contacts; in Church after Sunday Mass, through small get-togethers, or in other public places (e.g., restaurant, supermarket, bus stop, or on the street). The author was also referred to a social worker in Cologne who knew other Filipinas.

Contacts made in Holland were made through a Filipina friend who was an officer in one of the Filipino organizations. A lecture

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given by the author. Their study weekend also opened the door to many contacts and led to a focused group discussion on problems of adjustment, adaptation and coping in a new culture. Subsequent visits were made to the homes of FGD participants and to their Christmas party.

Other sources of data were newspaper articles, published in both countries, a questionnaire¹ given to contact persons for distribution, and interviews with key persons in the Filipino communities. The data discussed are those gathered by the author from the questionnaires, get-togethers, one-on-one discussions, and participant observation during the four months spent in Germany.

Limitations of the Study

Data were not easy to obtain for many reasons: (1) some Filipinas were busy, (2) others avoided any interview, (3) some could not be reached, (4) the author's schedule did not jibe with theirs, and (5) some were wary about saying anything to a Filipina, for reasons to be explained later in the paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sources of Stress. Living in a foreign country presents a whole new set of situations which may become stressful because one does not have the appropriate or necessary skills/resources to deal with the situation. The difficulties identified by the respondents were divided into the following types:

1. sociocultural,
2. financial,
3. physical environment,
4. family life in foreign country,
5. legality of their stay,
6. work opportunities and working conditions,
7. personal and emotional,
8. perceived expectations of family in the Philippines, and

9. distrust among Filipino community and rumor mongering

Sociocultural Stressors. Sociocultural stressors were of three types: a) language problems, b) differences in values, attitudes and behavior, and (c) discrimination.

Language problem. This is one of the major initial difficulties encountered by the Filipina in a foreign country. For some, the problem arises because they do not have enough time to learn the language formally, as they must stay at home and care for the children.

Not being able to communicate in a common language can be frustrating for both the Filipina and those she interacts with. The Filipina is left out in conversations, getting included only when someone tries to translate what is going on. For those around her, they are unable to convey what they want in a language she will understand. The German or Dutch husbands, most of whom do not speak the wife's language, complain that Filipina wives chatter away in Tagalog, leaving them out of the conversation.

Impatience on the part of the German partner was also observed. Remarks comparing the wife to others who learned the language much faster or telling her to "just say it in English" were discouraging for Filipinas who were trying to learn German.

One of the respondents, Vangee whose husband was fluent in English and who spoke to her in English, found it initially advantageous. Later, she realized she was making little progress in her knowledge of German.

At the beginning of her stay, the Filipina develops a certain dependency on the English-speaking partner. In Evelyn's case, unable to communicate with her in-laws and acquaintances in English, she calls up her husband in the office every time she wants something.

Corinna noted how discussion of topics seemed superficial because of one's limited knowledge of the language. In gatherings, Nilda

and many others laughed when others around them laughed, even though they really didn't know what everyone was laughing about.

From these examples, it is clear that proficiency in the language could have very well "reduced the impact of acculturative stressors" and could have very well acted as "a stress buffer in the new cultural environment" (Nicassio, et al., 1985:22).

Differences in Values, Attitudes and Behavior. There is a whole range of differences that can be discussed. The following discussion focuses on a few that are seldom discussed and/or are characteristic of the Filipino culture: personal hygiene, personal habits, technologically-influenced behavior, behavior in public places, the role of the family in one's life, and the "extended family."

One Filipina's mother-in-law complained that she was using up too much water by taking a shower everyday. Another wondered why the Filipina changed her underpants everyday when there were "slips" that could be used. Still another learned to use the same shirt twice or thrice in a row, without washing. All these personal hygiene practices are influenced by the climate and physical conditions in the respective countries. In the Philippines where the climate is warm and humid, the roads dusty, and the pollution from the exhaust of vehicles quite heavy, a daily shower and change of clothes are quite understandable.

Other habits that were carried over from the Philippines were: removing one's shoes before entering a house, a Filipino custom often seen in the provinces where the houses are made of bamboo; putting nail polish on one's fingernails and toenails; rinsing plates and glasses even after soaking them in detergent and hot water.

Mowing the lawn with heavy lawn mowers can be an ordeal for the petite and light-weight Filipina. One Filipina who worked as a "Putzfrau" (a cleaning lady) related how she lost

control of the floor polisher as it "dragged her and flew out of her hands."

Automation can be quite perplexing for the Filipina who is not familiar with it. For example, in public toilets, where instead of faucets, there is a tube under which one puts one's hands and water flows automatically, some Filipinas, leave the public toilet without washing their hands. Another Filipina set the temperature of the washing machine too high and ended up with a shrunken pullover.

"Saving face" is a key rule in Asian cultures (Argyle, 1982:73), including the Philippines as well. Delia's husband berated her in the supermarket when she made a mistake in choosing what he requested. Embarrassed by the public attention drawn to her, Delia walked home instead of riding with her husband who did not realize that by telling her off in public, he made her lose face.

The family, for the Filipina, is *top priority* (Torres, 1989). One clear indicator is the sense of responsibility that the Filipina carries when she goes abroad. Cynthia, whose father is a *barangay captain*² in their province, comes from a family of ten children. She supports her brother who is studying to be a priest. Although it is a drain on her own finances, she sends money home regularly to cover his tuition, board and lodging, and pocket money. Another Filipina sent her Christmas bonus to her mother; still another bought her less well-to-do brothers and sister apartments where they could live and not have to worry about the rent. Corinna, a nurse, has been separated from her family for 19 years. Her goal is to see her two children finish their education in medicine and nursing in the Philippines. She intends to go home after they graduate.

The Filipina would also call for a sister, brother, parents, or some relative to come over for an extended visit, if not permanently stay in Europe. This was how Myrna went to Holland. Being poor and having lost her father, the bread-

winner of the family, she stopped her university studies to go abroad to work. She stayed with her auntie who wanted to help them out but who also needed a babysitter. She received free board, lodging and ₱250 for pocket money.

Filipinas have now become matchmakers for their female relatives/friends and European males. Their reason is they want to help their relatives or friends have a "better life."

In the Philippines, there is always room for one more at the dinner table. If by chance people drop by during dinner time, they are invited to join the family. At parties, one always cooks for more than the number of invited guests. In Germany and Holland, appointments must be made. In Holland, when invited to a birthday party, Lina learned "EFTC" (Eat First, Then Come).

Discrimination and stereotype thinking can be seen in many forms. There are incidents where Filipinas are blatantly accosted, harassed, or publicly berated. There are also cases where innuendos are made or questions phrased in such a manner that certain stereotypes are assumed.

Some examples are: (1) the stereotype that all Filipinos are poor as reflected in the question of Nilda's mother-in-law as to how they managed to buy their house in the Philippines; (2) downgrading of one's educational achievement as shown in the suggestion of Nilda's mother-in-law that Nilda work in the hospital kitchen as a potato peeler. She felt that her mother-in-law did not value her education; (3) downgrading of one's ability to speak the language. At the post-office, Corinna was addressed by the teller in "broken German." Corinna called her attention and told her to speak to her in "straight German"; (4) confrontation regarding one's status. An elderly German told Nina, a secretary, "Aren't you ashamed of what you are doing? Here you are, a foreigner, taking a position that can be filled by a German!" Sherif (1970, as cited in Bochner, 1982) explains such hostility as due to competition for scarce resources; (5) physical

harrassment. On her way home one evening, Nina was encircled by a group of young men, harassing her until a male passer-by told them not to bother her. But the "good Samaritan" also wanted to visit her afterwards. Arlene, on the other hand, was accosted by four black men who took her money and molested her; (6) discrimination because of one's race. Arlene, while walking down the street, was spat at by a man. Mistaking her for a Chinese, he called her a "little Chinese." Nina and other foreigners living in her building were charged by a couple of harrassment. None of them knew this couple; (7) avoidance, as noted by Iris who observed that in the tram no one would sit beside her; (8) feeling of superiority. Felisa, a flight stewardess and wife of a Dutch national, had a neighbor who volunteered to teach Felisa how to use a radio. Iris, on the other hand, noted the supercilious tone with which shopkeepers and bank tellers addressed her.

Making friends can also be difficult. Nina ate alone as her female co-workers never invited her to eat with them in the canteen. In an attempt to be friendly with her neighbors she greeted them wherever they met. One of her neighbors, a man in a wheelchair, knocked on her door one night, asking if they could talk. It being quite late, she requested that he come back another day. He responded with "how much was her company" as he was willing to pay. This was clearly a case of an individual being judged by a group's reputation (Brown, 1988).

Sometimes, the bias comes from the media. Questions like "Do you also live in a house made of boxes, just like in Smokey Mountain?" were asked. Corinna deplored the fact that Germans showed only the bad side of countries. She noted that "in such programs as *Weltspiegel* or *Auslandjournal*, they showed the worst things about other countries." She said even the police warn Germans to be careful about Filipinas, who will marry Germans and leave them after a years just so they can get a residence permit.

Some questions showed a lack of knowledge of the Philippines. For example, "Do you celebrate Christmas in the Philippines?" "Do Filipinos wear 'outfits' like those of Adam and Eve?" Rowena went to the butcher's one day to buy fresh pig's blood to make *dinuguan* (a Philippine soup cooked with vinegar and meat). The butcher asked "Do you drink that?" She countered "Yes, don't you eat Blutwurst?" (sausages from pig's blood).

The above examples support findings that differences between groups, however small they may be, can be very noticeable to members of each society, to a point where they can be exaggerated and distorted to provide a mutually negative image or stereotype (Allport, 1954; Katz and Braly, 1933; Campbell, 1967 as cited in Bochner, 1982:11).

Financial Difficulties

One of the main reasons why Filipinas go abroad is to earn more (Paganoni, 1986). For example, *Aling* Editha, a *tindera* selling fish in the market, had 10 children and a husband who was jobless, given to drink and played around. Her only son had polio. She went to Holland to work as a domestic helper. *Aling* Conching, a dressmaker in the province, had four children and a husband who had tuberculosis. She earned P2.50 (\$.08)/dress which took her a day to make. If it was a rush order, she earned P10.00 (\$.32)/dress. To pay for her ticket, she mortgaged one of the land titles of her family.

Tessa had no intentions of going abroad as she was about to finish her degree. But since her brother incurred a big debt of P40,000 (\$1428), she had to find a way to help him out. She took the job offer of a priest to work in a Dutch textile factory for three years.

Although many were jobless or underpaid, some gave up their jobs in the Philippines. Marina, who gave up a challenging and interesting job to marry a German, now lives on welfare with her husband who is physically in-

capacitated. They live in a very small one-room apartment. She works part-time in a gasoline station as a helper, doing odd jobs around the station. She sends her family money despite her meager earnings.

Neneng works part-time in a fast food chain but finds it difficult to meet her family's financial needs in the Philippines on her husband's salary as a railway worker. They are deep in debt and are not eligible to make any loans. Ironically, Neneng still plays *mahjong* with her Filipino friends and loses quite a lot of money in one night.

The situation gets worse when family members ask for financial assistance or costly *pasalubong* (gifts). Requests range from items like coffee-maker, electronics, to more costly ones like a new house or a diamond ring.

Physical Environment Difficulties

Weather. Difficulty with the cold weather is one of the major sources of stress. Not used to very cold weather, the Filipina's first winter is usually quite stressful.

Housing. For Filipinas who are in Europe illegally or who have husbands who are not earning well or are on welfare, the housing situation can also be a source of stress. Living quarters, often a one-room apartment, are cramped.

When the Filipina leaves her husband, her first problem is a roof over her head. Her alternatives are either staying with friends or in a *Frauenhaus* (shelter for women). Pina was but a few months in Germany when she decided to run away from her husband who beat her up. This was also true of Alice who sought help from the Philippine Center in Cologne. Two others, Rissa and Lilia, had no other place but the *Frauenhaus* to go to.

Family Life

Difficulties with the husband. There are various difficulties ranging from very minor ones, such as differences in food preferences to

major ones, like alcoholism and violence. After a misunderstanding, Rita often got beaten up by her husband and locked out of the house. Each time this happened, she stayed in a center for women (*Blijv van mijn Lijf*). She left her child at home since her husband barred her from bringing him along. After being in the center three times, the center later found out that she had died from poisoning, supposedly a suicide. The matter, however, could not be investigated because the husband had her body cremated immediately.

Tessa was raped by her suitor and consequently became pregnant. She asked him to marry her but he refused, claiming he had no money. She paid for the wedding. Her husband controlled the household finances. He took her monthly earnings (€1000), gave her only half of this and even asked her for gambling money. If she refused, he hit her until she bled.

Despite their divorce, he still used her for his sexual needs. He threatened to kill their children when she refused. He woke them up from their sleep and brought them out even during winter. She thus gave in to his wishes.

Nina's husband also beat her up when he was stone-drunk. Being a big man, he took Nina, a lightweight at 40 kg. by her ankles, turned her upside down, swinging her and banging her head against the wall. It took all of four years before she had enough courage to escape.

Difficulties with the in-laws: One of the main setbacks in these cross-cultural marriages is the opposition of the in-laws to their daughter-in-law. The Filipina is seen as an unworthy partner for their son. Although this may also be true in same-culture marriages, the plight of the Filipina is aggravated by the fact that she is physically far from her family.

Oftentimes, differences in the way things are done cause conflict in the home, especially if the couple live with the man's parents. For example, at the birthday celebration of Nilda's daughter, her mother-in-law reprimanded her for inviting

friends to the celebration since their practice was to invite only family members.

Sometimes, it is the sheer dislike of having foreigners in the family. Christine's in-laws simply refused to invite her to their home. Even in her presence, the mother-in-law would address only her son.

Difficulties with the Children. Opposition from the children of the husband's previous marriage is understandable. Initially, the children feel threatened by the Filipina's presence. They do not know how to react to her. They're usually hostile and make life difficult for her. Evelyn's husband had a son who was three years old when she arrived. He would always answer her "You can't tell me anything; you are not my mother!" The situation was aggravated by his grandmother who supported this attitude.

Problems with one's own children usually arise from the differences in values between the Filipina's culture and that of the European husband. For example, in the Philippines, children follow their parents without "arguing" or giving their own opinion. In Europe, children "speak up" and "stand up for their rights," expressing their own opinion about what their parents want them to do. In the Philippines, this would be construed as "answering back" or the child being "pilosopo" (a smart-aleck).

Legality of Stay in Holland or Germany

Official statistics in Germany show that there are some 18,000 Filipinos. However, rough estimates of real figures put it at 60,000. For every Filipino living in Germany, there are about three others living there illegally.

There are several ways one can become an illegal migrant. First, one can have an expired tourist visa. Second, one can leave one's spouse. Since one's permit to stay is dependent on the fact that one is married to a foreign national,³ once the Filipina leaves her husband, she is forced to leave the country or to go "under-

ground." Third, one can have an expired working contract with a foreign embassy.

Before May 1989, Filipinos could go to Germany without a visa (Samonte, 1990). Germany was often used as a stepping stone by Filipinos who wanted to work in Italy or in Spain (Salazar, 1987). Since it was easy to get into Germany, one could also stay and work. However, employers who hired illegals had to pay a huge fine. Because of the risk they take, employers can impose their own working conditions on Filipinos, usually underpaying them since they know these Filipinos will accept such conditions just so they can stay on in the country. Illegals are prone to exploitation.

In Holland, the situation is very similar. Myrna was able to stay on in Holland by working as a housekeeper for a counselor in an embassy. Myrna, who had no idea how much the average salary (f1000) of a housekeeper was given only a fourth (f250) of what she could have earned.

Work Opportunities and Working Conditions

In Holland, "women have (a) lower participation rate in the labor market when compared to men ..." (Quindiagan, in Samahan, 1989). They have

"always worked in order to augment the income of the men. They do mostly part-time jobs or work with 'uitzendbureaus.' Or they work at home, like folding cartons and stitching garments together. This means that they have no permanent income and are not entitled to fringe benefits. They are paid by the hour.

The reason why most women work this way is that the Dutch society has always envisioned women to do the housework and care for the children. Due to this vision, most women in Holland have had very low education, marrying when they are young and having children right away ..." (Ibid).

At the very start, women in Holland are already disadvantaged. This situation is worsened by the fact that Filipinas are migrant workers.

"Migrant women have a different position in the labor market. Many are unemployed due to discrimination and due to lower education, or education that is not accredited by the Dutch system. Their knowledge of the Dutch language is not enough for them to take on a better position in the labor market ..." (Ibid.)

Because of these givens, Filipinas find the quickest ways to find a job: in the diplomatic communities, which assures them of a residence permit or as baby sitters, cleaning women or domestic help of locals, in the entertainment business or as prostitutes.

Working conditions can be quite severe. The Stichting Regionaal Centrum Buitenlanders (RCB, 1987) and Dutch newspapers documented such exploitation in 1987. For example, Rita's working hours in the home of a diplomatic family from the Middle East were from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. of the following day. Sometimes, when the family had parties, she would get to eat her dinner only at 1:00 a.m. or 2:00 a.m. Her "body had adjusted to this schedule." Rita has no insurance nor benefits. Compared to other domestics in Holland, her salary is relatively high, f2000.

Inday's story was similar. Her working hours were from 8:00 to midnight or 1:00 a.m. She was not allowed to use the phone. She would get a day off in the week, only if the family did not need her services.

Myrna says she was "treated like a slave." Her employer counted every fruit she ate, measured the detergent she used and even scrimped on her insurance. It was only when she had an accident that she discovered her employer had stopped paying for her insurance.

Lulu, a domestic helper in one of the diplomatic families, tried going to school twice a week to improve her Dutch. However, due to

the dinner parties and receptions given by her employer she missed her classes and stopped schooling altogether.

The difference in the educational systems in the Philippines and in the European countries makes it difficult for Filipinas to practice their profession in their new country. They usually settle for something less than what they are used to. For example, Gina who had a middle management position in the government planning agency in the Philippines had to settle for a typist's job in Holland.

In Germany, work opportunities for foreigners are also limited. Filipinas usually work as cleaning women, baby sitters, waitresses, attendants in *kurs* (health farms), old people's homes, and restaurants. A number of midwives and nurses recruited in the 70s have stayed on in Germany. In certain areas such as Hamburg, a major tourist city, Filipinas work in the entertainment business.

There are Filipinas, as in the cases of Cynthia and Remy, who have been used to working and earning their own money in the Philippines. But because they have to care for their small children and their husbands' expectations that they stay at home, they are unable to work. Angie, however, worked part-time, even if she had to give most of her salary to the baby-sitter. She still had some pocket money for herself.

Personal emotional Difficulties

Loneliness, homesickness, conflict between choosing to live abroad and going back to the Philippines are continually felt by these Filipinas. They miss the social support, their family, their friends, the way of life, the security of being able to express what they want in their own language, the food, the beaches, the life in the province, the closeness of people to one another, the concern of people for one another.

Cecile, an only daughter, wanted to go home when she found out her mother was ill with cancer. Cecile still felt a vacuum in her life,

despite a good job, a loving husband, and a comfortable life. She still regrets being unable to give as much of her time to her family of origin.

This is also true of Arlene, an only child who feels that it is her duty to care for her mother. It breaks her heart to hear of family problems which could easily be solved, if her family only had the money to pay for the services.

Filipinas miss the "life in the streets." As Evelyn put it, "Back home, the streets are filled with people, something I had gotten used to. At the start, I was so lonely here (Germany). And I thought, this was not the life I had imagined." Corinna feels this disparity acutely during the Christmas holidays. In Germany, she says: "Christmas is a family affair but only the immediate members of the family, unlike in the Philippines, where the extended family partake in the family celebration. The streets are so empty, it gives one such a feeling of desolation."

She describes Filipinos as being *makasao*, where people reach out to and empathize with people in their daily lives. This is something she misses in Germany. Many a Filipina has described the Germans to be "cold." Corinna finds it difficult to fathom them. "Today they're okay, but the next day, they act as though they do not know you." She doesn't sense any sincere interest in her and her welfare. "Gusto lang nila praise... praise mo lang sila, masyado silang egoist, mayabang, akala mo sila lang ang tama, sila lang ang magaling ..." (All they want is praise ... just praise them. They're very egoistic, proud, they think they're the only ones who are right, that they're the only ones who are good ...)

They miss the life in the Philippines, especially having household help. In Germany, the life is too hectic. "Kung hindi ka kikilos, hindi ka makakakain. Kung hindi ka maglaba, wala kang isusuot." (If you don't work, you can't eat. If you don't wash your clothes, you won't have anything to wear.)

There are four choices, all intertwined with one another, which confront the Filipina:

1. The choice between being in one's own country or staying in a foreign country;

2. The choice between devoting one's life to one's family of origin or to one's own family;

3. The choice between the values of "old" and the "new" values; and

4. The choice between pursuing one's career or devoting one's life to one's family.

The mere fact that she has chosen to follow her husband and live in his country triggers off the other three choices. Her being in a foreign country keeps her from being with her family of origin, exposes her to new values which may be at odds with the ones she has held, and necessitates a change in her life style.

She is separated from her family and is torn when she hears of events happening in the Philippines and she cannot be a part of these events or feels helpless that she cannot be there to help out. Her children have acquired the values of her husband's culture and she is caught in between, trying to rear her children in two cultures, with some values opposed to each other. She is limited to staying at home or doing part-time jobs which are unrelated to her previous training in the Philippines.

Such conflicts are seen in the cases of Anita, Gina, Marina, and Vangee which have previously been described. Pearlin (1983) calls this conflict, *role captivity*, "the inescapable obligation to be and do one thing at the very time the individual wants to be and do something different." However, it would seem that despite such difficulties, if the consequences of one's efforts to learn the new role are favorable, the psychological distress can be minimized (Thoits, 1983:81). If after persistent efforts and trials, the environment is still unsupportive and negative, then self-esteem and feeling of self-efficacy can decrease. This can be seen in such cases where there is a disparity between the mother's knowledge of the foreign language and that of her children. Children pick up the lan-

guage faster than do their mothers. Nina went to school to study German formally but still found it difficult to help her child with his homework. Cynthia spoke three languages with her children but her elder child still spoke unintelligibly. Evelyn wanted to bring up her three children in three languages but found it difficult. In all three cases, some anxiety and frustration were expressed.

Some Filipinas express regret that they went to Germany or Holland. When asked, if given another chance and knowing that this was what they had to go through, would they still go to these places, their answer was "no." But for them, there was no turning back; they just had to bear with it.

Perceived Expectations of Family in the Philippines

The closely-knit Filipino family has a tightly-formed network of responsibility. Parents try their best to give their children, especially the eldest child, a good education. When the elder children finish with their schooling, they help their parents in sending younger brothers and sisters to school.

The exodus of Filipinos abroad is but one means by which Filipinos try to improve their lives and that of their families. There are certain expectations which pressure Filipinos to staying abroad even under intolerable conditions: (1) that one has "arrived" by being abroad, (2) that returning home is a sign of failure, (3) that going home for a visit is good when one can bring with him lots of foreign currency, (4) that being abroad is tantamount to being wealthy or, at least, financially secure, and (5) that regularly sending home sums of money is a must.

Going abroad has its prestige value. Anyone who can say that she has been abroad is looked up to. Studying, working, or even living abroad is always viewed as better than just staying in the Philippines. It is not surprising then, that many Filipino families have at least one relative living

abroad. Consequently, one must exert all effort to stay abroad. Coming home before the appointed time or without having achieved one's goals is considered a sign of failure. One of the goals of Filipinos going abroad is to help improve the condition of their family. There is the notion that people who work abroad earn a lot of money and can afford to live it up or send considerable amounts of money to their family. There was the case of Angie whose mother felt insulted when she sent home US\$20. Her mother expected more. This was why she was determined to save up enough money to buy a house and lot for her mother. She also planned to go home for the Christmas holidays. For this trip, she had already stocked up on perfumes, appliances (coffee-maker, oven toaster, microwave, etc.) and gifts for her nephews and nieces (toys, chocolates, and clothes). She made sure that she bought name brands as she did not want to be ostracized by her recipients. Lyn makes sure that every time she went home to the Philippines, she has at least P100,000 for a one month stay in the Philippines. When she was in the Philippines, Nina paid for the bill everytime her family went out. She also paid for the marketing and grocery bills. In short, there was the perceived expectation that much, if not all, of the financial responsibilities of the family were to be shouldered by those who were living abroad. There was also the expectation that those who were better off must help those who were in need (*tumulong ang mas nakaka-angat*). It was perceived as an obligation, even if it meant sacrificing their own needs.

Distrust Among Filipino Community and Rumor Mongering

The author upon entry into the Filipino community in these countries was warned about co-Filipinos who were "chismosas" (rumor-mongers), advised to choose one's friends and avoid certain people in the community (e.g., "mail order brides," those who engaged in such

businesses, those who were so-called "chismosas" and the leftists). "Gossip served to remind members of the community of the importance of its norms and values" or on the negative side, to punish those who transgressed and at the same time, to warn everyone else not to transgress, lest they be shunned as well" (Levin and Arluke, 1987: 125). It was used as a "powerful mechanism of social control." It was also a reflection of the level of distrust among the Filipinos. Rumors engendered ill feelings between people, aggravated by the non-confrontational manner of Filipinos.

Instead of a united Filipino community, Filipinos in these countries tend to be divided. Several Filipino organizations had overlapping objectives. In one city in Germany, Filipinos could not come up with one organization because certain subgroups wanted to put up their own candidates for key positions. Once one was identified with a certain group of Filipinos, it was very difficult to be accepted by the other groups of Filipinos.

Jealousy was also not uncommon among these group. The more successful members of the community were pulled down by others who were less successful. Rumors were spread about them by certain individuals that aimed to destroy their reputation.

Getting together and talking about the latest developments among Filipino community members was a regular pastime to keep abreast of what was going on. By being "in" on the latest developments in the community, one gained entry into the "in-group." Those who did not do so belonged to the out-group.

Although gossip was perceived as a problem, this was perhaps a way by which people coped with their situation. Be it for social control or for creating a sense of belonging, it could have well been a way of responding to these felt needs. Torres (1991) noted that one of the pastimes of parents with their children was "kuwentuhan"

(exchanging stories). This may have been a carry-over of a childhood pastime.

Gossip is also said to thrive in situations where the "facts are undetermined or in conflict, where there is uncertainty about present and future..." (Ibid.: 51). Living in a foreign country can be quite anxiety-provoking. A newcomer looks for the familiar and seeks to belong. By turning to the "town gossip" one begins to find some roots in a new country.

Coping Mechanisms and Strategies

Various coping mechanisms and strategies were utilized. These were:

- a) problem-solving
- b) cognitively-mediated strategies
- c) spiritual
- d) social
- e) maintaining Filipino values and practices
- f) distancing from co-nationals
- g) emotion-oriented strategies

Problem-Solving

Language Learning. To solve the language problem, Filipinas learned the language either formally or informally. "I decided to learn German. And that was okay. After a month, I could understand a bit and also speak. Then I attended a course for three and a half years and, at the end, I received a certificate. Now I can handle German, perhaps, not perfectly, but I can write and read." (Translated from an interview conducted in German.)

Another Filipina, Nilda, learned conversational Dutch in 1 1/2 to 2 years. She also trained her eyes to get used to Dutch words by leafing through the dictionary and trying to read Dutch newspapers. She even learned Dutch formally. She attended *moeder mavo* (high school for mothers) and took the national level exams. This gave her confidence as she was able to express herself and understand what was going on. Now she could laugh at the right time and at

the right place and *know why*. She could also start "fighting for herself," i.e., she could speak up and express her opinion instead of sitting in a corner.

Discussions with People Concerned. One of the more difficult lessons learned by Filipinas was talking about their problems or issues with the persons concerned. In the Philippines, intermediaries are often used to discuss problems. Nilda, when slighted by her husband, would keep quiet, refuse to eat and not talk about what was upsetting her. It took a while before she tell him *verbally* why she was upset.

Discussing with mothers-in-law was another lesson learned by Filipinas. Oftentimes, daughters-in-law accede to the wishes of their mothers-in-law to maintain peace and harmony. Not only is obedience a strong value in the Philippines, it is also difficult for the Filipina to discuss without the language facility. Fe, however, from the start, made it clear to her mother-in-law that she could not cook and did not know how to iron clothes. Expectations were clarified and there was division of work.

Seeking Out Co-Nationals. To deal with the loneliness, Filipinas went to places (e.g., Churches, parks, shopping centers) where they could meet other Filipinos, especially on weekends.

Josie would usually smile and approach a Filipino-looking Filipina and ask whether she was Filipina. If so, she engaged her in conversation and arrange for a second meeting. The Filipina would usually introduce her to other Filipino friends, thus enlarging her circle of Filipino acquaintances. Sometimes this led to a formalization of the group, giving birth to a Filipino organization (See discussion on this).

Referrals were also done. In the case of Mely who wanted to go to Holland but did not know anyone, the name of Tessa was given to her by a friend. So upon her arrival at the airport, she called Tessa, introducing herself and requesting for assistance.

Learning Cultural Norms, Ways, Practices:

There was a whole range of behavior that were learned in order to adjust to the new culture. These were from very minor behavior (e.g., how to peel potatoes, wash dishes, greet people, etc.) to major ones, such as child-rearing practices (leaving the child to sleep in his own room), choice of meals, etc.

Nilda learned to cook her husband's favorite Dutch dishes. Christine also learned to prepare German dishes as well as German cakes and desserts. Others learned how to knit.

Greeting people may be a very minor behavior but it is one of the first behaviors learned. In Holland, people greet each other by kissing the person three times on both cheeks. They also took leave by saying "Dag!"

The Dutch home usually has a calendar hanging in the bathroom, indicating birthdays and other occasions. This was a practice observed in Nilda's house.

Both in Germany and in Holland, Filipinas have adopted the "coffee trinken" habit. This phrase was coined by them, referring to the common practice of Germans and Dutch to chat a while over coffee and cake.

Finding a Job: After tackling the language problem, or sometimes, because of this, one looks for a job to practice one's knowledge of the language or to try to approximate one's sense of work competence as experienced in the home country. In the Philippines, Josie was a Training Coordinator for an international organization. In Germany she found a part-time job as an assistant to a professor. This kept her in touch with the academic setting. And a few nights a week, she would help out as a waitress in the cafe opposite their house. This gave her an opportunity to practise her German. Even though she was paid only DM30 marks for four hours (DM7.5/our, lower than the average rate of DM13/hour), she was quite satisfied.

Angie, an accounting graduate, worked part-time as an *Aushilfskraft* (temporary help) at McDonalds.

Cognitively Mediated Strategies

Self-reminders Regarding Objectives: Bella and Corinna, who had been in Germany for more than 20 years, reminded themselves that they had children in college. They would tell themselves "Sandali na lang ..." (Just a little while more) and this is how they managed to get over the 20 years.

They were clear about their objectives. Corinna wanted to continue practising her nursing profession in her province and help her own people who were poor. Angie wanted to raise the money to buy a house for her mother, at least enough to pay the deposit. Bella, on the other hand, wanted to see her two children finish college.

Cognitive Redefinition. As Moos and Schaefer (1986) defined it, cognitive redefinition "covers cognitive strategies by which an individual accepts the basic reality of a situation but restructures it to find something favorable." Such an individual selectively enhances himself. Taylor, et al. (1983) described five ways in which such self-enhancement could be achieved: comparing oneself with others who are less fortunate, focusing on personal attributes that make one appear advantaged, creating hypothetical situations that are worse than those one has experienced, identifying the normative standard of adjustment that would make his own adjustment appear outstanding and construing benefits from the victimizing event.

"Maski ganito ako, puwede akong mubuhay kahit saan. Proud ako, marunong akong mag-basa ng Aleman, marunong pa ako ng Inggles, Espanol, lenguahe namin, dialekto ko pa ... Kayo (mga Aleman), hindi kayo makalabas sa bayan ninyo." (Even if I am like this, I can live anywhere. I'm proud. I know how to read German, I know English, Spanish, our language, even my dialect. ...

You (Germans) you can't leave your country.)

In her statement above, Corinna saw her knowledge of languages as a very valuable asset that enabled her to live anywhere. She contrasted herself with the Germans who could only speak German and who may be at a loss in a non-German speaking country. Jaspars and Hewstone (1982:153) underscore the value of "discounting in enhancing the observer's social identity along positively valued dimensions."

Several of the respondents agreed Filipinos, when compared with Germans, fared poorly economically but in terms of being *makatao* (person-oriented) they had an edge over them.

Counterattack (Schlenker, 1987) was another method employed. They cited, e.g., one's brown color, not needing to go sunbathing in order to get a tan; one's happy nature, in contrast to the German's serious mien. This is similar to Wills' (1987) *downward comparison*. Such downward comparison was seen in two general directions: (1) vis-a-vis one's compatriots in the Philippines. Filipinos at home were seen as having a more difficult time politically and economically than they. Moreover, even if they missed their families, there were positive things about their stay in Germany, e.g., having a big house, a beautiful daughter (with blonde hair and blue eyes), being able to afford "PX goods" to bring home to family and friends in the Philippines; (2) vis-a-vis the host nationals, Germans were seen as worse off because, e.g., they were smelly and their personal hygiene left much to be desired. As one respondent put it, "Mabaho sila, madungis." (They are smelly and dirty.) "They don't change their clothing and some even wear the same attire for a whole week." According to Corinna, Filipinos were better off because they knew how to deal with other people (*marunong makipagkapwa tao*), to empathize and show concern.

Strong Faith and Hope in God: Corinna had entrusted her life in Germany to God, that He

would help her see things through. Such a belief was accompanied by complementary behavior such as daily prayers and attending Mass.

Use of Defense Mechanisms: such as projection, denial and rationalization. Filipinas who warned Filipinos about gossiping Filipinas were doing precisely what they warned others against.

There was defensiveness about being in a *Frauenhaus*, possibly because of the stigma that went with it (i.e., family life not going well). Friends of a Filipina confronted the author concerning her purpose in interviewing her. At another time, the author was told by another Filipina that she just "parked her things in the *Frauenhaus*." She had left her husband but she did not want people to know that she was living in the *Frauenhaus*. Another Filipina who had also lived in the *Frauenhaus* was likewise quick to brush aside the possibility of an interview.

Socially-Focused Coping Strategies

There were also strategies which were basically social and cultural in orientation. These were primarily done to maintain linkages with one's family and Filipino social circle.

Visit to the Philippines: Filipinos visited the Philippines during the holidays. However, visits were planned only when they had saved up sufficient funds, not only to pay for the plane fare, but also to bring home presents that were comparatively costly. Doing this not only gratified social needs, but also served as an ego-booster, to say they had "arrived."

Visit by Relatives: In case they were busy or could not take time off from work, they brought over relatives, parents, brothers, sisters, even nieces and nephews. These relatives stayed for the summer or for a few weeks/months, not just a few days. Considering the expenses incurred, it was more advantageous for relatives to stay for a longer period.

Telephone calls: Overseas calls were made, particularly during special occasions. This was

facilitated by the direct dialing service. Moreover, calls were preferred over letters because the social rewards were immediate. However, the disadvantage was the considerable expense.

Even local calls added up to a huge sum. Nilda, being a key officer in one of the Filipino organizations, talked to her Filipino friends in various cities in Holland, her way of keeping tab of the latest developments in the Filipino community. She paid for her telephone bills with her own salary.

Letters: Letters were also much awaited. The disadvantage was that though they received letters, many Filipinas were too busy with their work, they had no time to write back.

Social Network: Depending on the circumstances surrounding their being in Europe, Filipinas who were in Germany or Holland, had either (1) no Filipino friend or (2) one or two or even a whole group of friends they could contact. Mail-order brides who went in groups seem to have more contacts. For example, in Angie's group, there were eight of them who were brought over as "members of the Institute of Heinrich Kramer" (name has been changed). These eight women see each other every now and then.

In Germany, there are now six (6) Philippine centers for Filipinos to meet other Filipinos. There are some 30 Filipino organizations with various objectives which may be work-related, sociocultural in orientation, political in inclination. In Holland there are some fifteen (15) organized Filipino groups, a majority of which work towards helping Filipinos, especially women and workers in protecting their rights. Some organizations, however, compete with each other.

Organizations also serve as an alternative source of rewards (Moos and Schaefer, 1986). By being involved in a cause, e.g., helping out Filipinas in distress, they not only divert their energies to a socially worthy endeavor, they also

get positive feedback from the host society. Such action raises self-esteem and gives the Filipinos a rallying point behind which they can act in solidarity. Through their cultural presentations they are able to assert their identity and cultural heritage. To make a social statement, one of the organizations in Holland even created a socio-cultural play, interweaving cultural background with motivation and life of a migrant in Holland. This has engendered much enthusiasm among the players, not only to improve the play, but also to pursue activities that would support the statement they had made in the play.

This organization even gained recognition, both locally (in the documentation of exploitation of migrant workers, as published by the Regional Foundation and Center for Foreigners) and internationally (as a member in the Advisory Council for Ethnic Minorities) to the European Parliament, particularly on the issue of migrant workers.

Study groups, *kapihan* (discussion forum), and newsletters give them a chance to discuss more serious issues and problems concerning the Philippines as well as the Filipinos in Holland.

Picnics, Christmas and Valentine's day parties, anniversary celebrations are occasions for Filipinos to gather and enjoy each others' company, speaking the native language, eating Filipino food, and dressing up for the occasion. Filipino bands provide the music to complete the Filipino atmosphere.

There are also bowling, tennis and volleyball tournaments (*Munting Nayon*, 1989) where medals and trophies are given to the winners.

The social network of Filipinos is basically monocultural (i.e., consisting of co-nationals with whom they can share a common culture). This is supportive of the study of Bochner, et al. (as cited in Furnham and Bochner, 1982a) which shows sojourning overseas students having a primary network of compatriots.

Maintaining Filipino Values and Practices: In more ways than one, Filipinos living in Ger-

many and Holland still maintain a number of Filipino values and practices in the areas of religious practices, food habits, personal hygiene, entertainment, organizational structure, status indicators, and social relationships.

Filipinos attend Mass and have their children baptized choosing godparents from among the Filipino community. Filipino homes had such items as: *patis* (fish sauce), *bagoong* (shrimp paste), *tuyo* and *daling* (dried fish). There was usually someone in the community who made such native fare as *longganiza* (Philippine sausages), *tapa* and *tocino* (cured meats) which they sold to other Filipinos. There were also those who made native rice cakes and the like. They managed to find the ingredients in Chinese or Korean stores around their area.

In Germany, a couple opened up a small business importing goods from the Philippines (such as noodles, seasonings, vegetables, even "Skyflakes," a kind of crackers). Despite the relatively high prices, orders continued to pour in.

Some Filipinos still ate with their hands. For a number, the standard was still Coca-Cola, even in winter. Rice, not potatoes, was still the staple food. When one invited only two people, one cooked for more. Food was the main focus of get-togethers and activities. Even rehearsals for cultural presentations were complete with the usual *merienda* (snack).

Providing entertainment was not a problem. There was always someone who could sing or dance and who could teach others to do the same. This was how Filipino singing groups and dance troupes were organized in Holland and Germany.

Organizations were managed by a set of officers, elected by the body, from the President to the PRO (Public relations officer). There was also an Advisory Council, another way by which more people could be given a position, especially those who had formerly occupied key positions in the organization.

Personal hygiene practices such as daily shower and change of clothes were still followed, even in winter when one did not perspire too much. Filipinos were also quite particular about wearing freshly-ironed clothes. They took care in presenting themselves in public. For example, for a wedding, most if not all the invited Filipinas bought a new dress. As noted in the study on Filipino values (UPS-CE-NCRFW, 1989), Filipinas place a high value on looking beautiful and smelling good.

One of the status indicators is ownership of electronic appliances. In Filipino homes, this would mean having a television, a VCR, and a stereo. There would also be albums and mementos of one's travels for people to see that one has travelled.

Social relationships is probably one of the areas where Filipino values are strongly manifested. Such values as *damayan* (empathy), *pakitikama* (going along), *utang na loob* (reciprocity) were important measures of conduct and behavior. Those who fell short of such standards were ostracized.

Distancing From Co-nationals

Upon entry into the Filipino community, a Filipina would generally be evaluated by her compatriots, word would spread that she was around. People would ask about her background and how she came to Germany or Holland. However, warnings about certain Filipinas would also be given by the "town gossip." To avoid being talked about or having to engage in such talk, some Filipinas preferred to stay away from Filipinos.

Christine was warned about Filipinos who engaged in such talk, who mingled only with the rich, who took on airs after living a while in Germany. This prompted her to choose the Filipinas she befriended.

There were factions, groups that were labelled as "sosyal" (fond of mixing with the rich and famous), the *Putzfrau* (cleaning women), the

"prosti" (prostitutes), the Embassy people, and the like. Within the Filipino community, there were also in-groups and out-groups.

Emotion-focused Coping Strategies

As noted by Moos and Schaefer (1986), there are three types of emotion-focused coping: (1) regulation of one's emotions, (2) ventilation of one's anger and frustration, and (3) acceptance of one's situation. These were also seen among the Filipinas encountered.

Initially, everything being new, the Filipinas were apt to observe, listen, work out feelings of inadequacy quietly, on their own. Sometimes it took as long as five years. However long it may take, the Filipina, according to one respondent, knows how to fight (*Marunong lumaban*). She has strong survival instincts and would not be put down by others.

There were those who ventilated their anger to co-nationals. But this anger was usually expressed in the form of jokes, disparaging the Germans or the Dutch. There were those who acted out and went against Filipino social norms, becoming relatively more promiscuous, talking on lovers, living in, engaging in pre- or extra-marital sex.

But a good majority were accepting of their new life. "This is my life now. I just have to make the most out of it." They were strongly aware of their roles, to support the family since they were better off. (*Ako na ang mas nakataangat. Sino pa ang tawag sa kanila kung hindi ako?*) The acceptance of their role was marked by the endurance of the loneliness, the negative experiences, the difficulties.

Coping Mechanisms in the Light of the Filipina's Sociocultural Background

The coping mechanisms of these Filipinas emanate from their sociocultural background highlighted the following:

Economic values (UPS-CE-NCRFW, 1989)

1. The Filipino woman's most valued traits are being "industrious, hardworking and patient." Her role as the alternative breadwinner is highlighted. Although the Filipino male is the acknowledged breadwinner, the Filipina is also tasked with finding ways of providing her family a better life. This goal gives her a purpose for which she must endure the hardships of living in a different culture.

2. Prestige value attached to (a) marriage (b) living abroad (c) being fair-skinned (ibid.: 196-197). Filipinos put a high premium on marriage. Moreover, working and living abroad are also highly prized. Having mestizo children, preferably with light-colored hair and eyes is a plus factor. These three values motivate Filipinas to marry foreigners or work abroad, despite warnings regarding the risks and difficulties. Living abroad is a mark of having gone up the socioeconomic ladder. Thus, some Filipinas still choose to stay despite the miserable conditions under which they live. Moreover, the Filipino woman, though she sets high aspirations for herself, is likely to do so within the context of her roles as "wife and mother" (Ibid.:204). It thus becomes very difficult for her to leave husband and child(ren) even when she is maltreated and exploited.

Religious values

The Catholic tradition in the Philippines has imbued the Filipina with a strong belief in a God who will be by her side, especially when the going gets rough.

Personality traits

Optimism, an existentialist stance, a gambling spirit. More and more, these are seen in the migrant women who leave the security of their homes and work abroad and those who marry foreigners, sometimes knowing very little about their future spouses. Corinna put it this way. "Kung magpapalit ka lang sa problema mo, walang na-gyayari ... dapat aliwina mo ang

sarili mo" (If you let your problems get the better of you, nothing will come out of it... You should be able to amuse yourself, find something engaging).

There is also the here-and-now orientation, where one takes each day at a time. This way, one can address oneself to the more pressing issues of the day. One often hears the Filipino say, "Bahala na," often misinterpreted as "fatalism" but, in fact, it is an action accompanying a realistic appraisal of the situation, and allowing for a margin of luck and chance, as well as belief that God is on her side.

There is also flexibility and openness to new situations. In Tagalog, it is "pakikipag-sapalaran" (trying out one's luck). In English, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." For the Filipina, it seems to be more of a mixture of the romanticized ideal of living abroad, the daring, gutsy, independent spirit and the wish that things will all work out for the best.

As Menaghan (1983), Moos and Schaefer (1986), Houston (1987) and many others have stated, coping responses and efforts (covert or overt) differ according to the domain and situation but are used for the purpose of reducing psychological stress or reducing the problem level. The variety of strategies used by the Filipinas in coping with their new environment can be divided into two general categories: (1) those behavior that are directed towards assimilation in the host culture, and (2) those that try to maintain one's cultural heritage and identity. The respondents used both types. Towards assimilation were those that were focused more on problem solving (e.g., language learning, seeking information regarding norms and customs, learning social skills such as assertiveness and being expressive, learning new roles). Those that focused on maintenance of one's identity and cultural heritage were more cognitive and emotion-oriented (self and country enhancement, reminding oneself of objectives, trust in God, and acceptance of one's new life).

Suggested Areas of Intervention

Bochner (1982) emphasized the importance of cross-cultural orientation programmes, citing those suggested by Brislin (1979) such as self-awareness training, attribution training, behavior modification and experimental learning exercises. However, he underscored the need to direct such training towards the "everyday, mundane social encounters of the popular culture." This study looked into such down-to-earth experiences, in order to provide content material for possible training programs. Cognitive training, particularly regarding differences in culture, way of thinking, and expression of opinion and beliefs could help migrants in dealing with the culture shock.

An understanding of the process of adjustment and adaptation to a new culture, delineating the areas of difficulty encountered by Filipino migrants and the coping mechanisms utilized could provide guideposts if not alternative ways of coping. Adaptation can be facilitated by a culture learning and cross-cultural competence program (Furnham and Bochner, 1982). Agencies such as the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, which provide orientation programs for migrating Filipinos, could take note of these.

What was useful for the group in Holland was the processing of their experience, explaining possible theoretical underpinnings such as culture shock, U-Curve of Adjustment, types of social network, the social psychology of cross-cultural relations (e.g., in-group/out-group, stereotypes, attributions) and outcomes of cultural contact, both on the individual and group level (Bochner, 1982). It had a catalytic effect on the participants, bringing much relief to those who were still trying to make sense of their experiences and reactions in the new culture.

In conjunction with this, a self-awareness training, where a clarification of the cultural bases of Filipino behavior is done. Much of the problems encountered by Filipinos could be seen

in the differences in social relations. Germans and Dutch were seen to be more direct and verbally expressive. Filipinas preferred the more indirect ways, and the use of nonverbals, giving emphasis to "saving face." The system of reciprocity and the centrality of the Filipino family in one's life became the causes of misunderstandings and friction between the Filipino wife and the foreign partner. Negotiation skills and possibly greater understanding of such values could help such couples deal with the issues more satisfactorily.

It goes without saying that language training is a very important preparation for life abroad as

knowledge of the language facilitates and enhances social contact with the host nationals.

Assertiveness training, on the part of the Filipina, would be helpful. Assertiveness directed towards problem solving was seen to restore self-confidence. In Gina's workplace, her boss was asking her to do more than what her job description required. She told him quite frankly that if he wanted her to do more things, he should pay her more. This worked to her benefit.

What have been presented are initial steps. More research, preferably prospective in nature, would be required to substantiate intervention.

NOTES

1. Patterned after Furnham and Bochner's questionnaire in *Cultures in Contact*. Stephen Bochner (Ed.). Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980.
2. Barangay captain is the head of the smallest political unit in the Philippines.
3. In Germany, a Filipina cannot be entitled to German citizenship until eight years of uninterrupted stay in the country. In Holland, a Filipina is entitled to Dutch citizenship only after five years of uninterrupted residence in Holland.

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