

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

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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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