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Acculturative Experiences of an Immigrant Faith-Based Community

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Abstract **Original Research Article**

This paper tackled the migration experiences of Filipino members of a Protestant church located in the Northeast part of the United States. Most of the members are nurses who migrated to the United States in the 1980s. Members were interviewed by face-to-face, telephone, and by group discussions. Differences in acculturation strategies were observed between the first-generation (parents) and second-generation (children). Acculturative stressors and adjustments were also discussed. Likewise, the migration waves that brought Filipinos to the U.S. and their cultural background were partly presented. Religiosity, mental health, and ethnic identity were some of the factors cited in the literature to be affecting the Filipino acculturative experiences. Contemporary issues and outlook were also stated.

Keywords: Immigrants, Acculturation, Migration Experiences, Ethic Identity, Religiosity.

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Acculturative Experiences of an Immigrant Faith-Based Community

The Philippine-United States relations began in 1899, when Filipinos were freed from more than three centuries of Spanish rule. However, the brutal Philippine-American war soon broke out, lasting for three years. With the defeat of the local revolutionaries, the Philippines became the only country outside North America continent to be ruled by the U.S. from 1902-1946 (Posadas, 1999). By the time the Philippine Republic was inaugurated in 1946, the influence of the U.S. government on the political and social structures was evident. Until now, the Philippine educational system is patterned after the Americans', and legislations and foreign policies are widely-believed to be affected by the U.S. policies. Significant influences—through trade, foreign aid, and military bases—were continuously exerted (Espiritu, 2003). Under the American regime, significant events happened to the Philippine population. One of these is the migration of Filipino to the U.S. This continuing event continues to shape the Philippines as well as the Philippine-U.S. relations.

The United States remains the top destination of Filipino immigrants (Handbook for Filipino Overseas, 2005). According to the Commission on Filipino Overseas (2003) data from 1981 to 2003, about seventy-one percent of the estimated 1.5 million Filipino immigrants are in the United States. In fact, the rate of Filipino migration to the U.S. has been on a steady rise since 1960, and the 2.4 million population makes them the second largest Asian ethnic group in the country (Barnes & Bennett, 2002).

Migration Waves

The considered first wave of migration to U.S. began in 1902, when a number of Filipinos were recruited to work in sugarcane and pineapple plantations in Hawaii (Yoder, 2003). Once in Hawaii, however, these early Filipino immigrants also find themselves working in orchards, canneries, hotels, ships, bandstands, and in other menial working jobs (Muñoz, 2002). Being a colony of the U.S., Filipinos instantly became American nationals and can travel to the any part of the U.S. without restriction.

The first wave of Filipino immigrants paved the way for the second, from 1906 to 1934, but this time, to California (Muñoz, 2002). Most of this group find themselves in the plantations and canneries. American labor recruiters easily found willing workers to migrate to the U.S. since the

Philippines have yet to recover from the damage done by war that time (Espiritu, 2003). Some 40,000 Filipinos migrated to the U.S. West Coast, with majority in California. *Pensionados* (U.S. government-sponsored scholarship students) were also sent to American colleges and universities. Likewise, thousands of Filipinos joined the U.S. Navy from 1900s to 1930s, after the World War I and shortly after the World War II broke out

After World War II, Filipino migration to U.S. continued on a slower rate (Bandon, 1993). The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 made the Philippines a Commonwealth of the United States. It mandated that ten years after the passage of the bill, the Philippines would be totally independent. However, this Act also established a quota of 100 Filipino immigrants per year. As such, this group of immigrants was very different from the two previous ones. These new immigrants were professionals who were seeking better working conditions. Teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, and lawyers found it easy to migrate in the U.S. since their educational backgrounds were either obtained in the U.S. or in the U.S.-modeled Philippine universities or colleges. A number of American teachers were still in various Philippine schools until 1946. The Nationality Act of 1940 and its later amendments which gave aliens who have served three or more years in the U.S. Armed Forces the opportunity to become U.S. citizens without their having to meet normal requirements such as residence did not match the number of immigrants during the second wave.

Post-1965 Migration

The dual goals of the 1965 Immigration Act—to facilitate family reunification and to admit workers needed by the U.S. economy—have produced two distinct chains of emigration from the Philippines: one comprised the relatives of Filipinos who had immigrated to the United States prior to 1965; the other of highly trained immigrants who entered during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Liu, Ong, & Rosentein, 1991). The families of the group of Navy servicemen recruited from 1947 were among those who benefited from the 1965 Immigration Act.

After the Philippines gained independence in 1946, the Military Bases Agreement was signed a year later which gave the United States the exclusive and free use of naval and air bases in the Philippines (Espiritu, 2003). As a token, Filipinos were allowed to join the U.S. Armed Forces. Filipinos were the only foreigners allowed to join the U.S. Armed Forces and U.S. Navy was the only military branch that they could join. It was halted, however, in 1992, when the Philippine Senate voted to turn over the Subic Bay Naval Station to Philippine government from the U.S. The political situation in the Philippines during the time of Ferdinand Marcos also contributed to the present wave of migration.

During the administration of Marcos (1965-1986), many Filipinos went to the U.S. for economic and political reasons. High growth rate was registered in 1960s when the Philippine economy was tailored for U.S. war efforts in Vietnam (Espiritu, 2003). However, when the U.S. troops pulled out of Vietnam, the Philippine economy suffers from inflation, poor employment rates, debts, and economic infrastructure not suited for local needs. Amidst fears of further economic devastation, many middle-class Filipinos flee to the U.S. When martial law was declared in Sept. 21, 1972, human rights were curtailed, the government controlled the media, and any individual can be arrested by the military. The situation was so worst that even senators, journalists, and other notable individuals against the government were jailed. Under Marcos era, around 300,000 Filipinos migrated to the U.S. Interestingly, however, only about nineteen percent are occupational-preference immigrants while about eighty percent of them came under the family reunification provision.

Realizing the prospect of immigration, overseas employment became an official program of the Philippine government with the signing of the Labour Code, also known as Presidential Decree 442. In 2004, *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* (Central Bank of the Philippines) reported that fifty-six percent of the total $8.5 billion overseas remittances came from Filipino immigrants in the U.S. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (2005) estimated that Filipino immigrants contribute about ten percent on the total Gross National Product. Since the institutionalization of PD 442, an average of 55,000 immigrants leave the Philippines annually (CFO, 2003).

Cultural Background

Deeply rooted in religion, the Filipino culture is a combined system of acquired ways and manners, including personal behavior in social interaction (Bautista, 2002). It includes the Filipino way of customs, traditions, beliefs, values, arts, language, rituals, and attitudes, among others. However, the Filipino character is actually a little bit of all the cultures put together. The *bayanihan* or spirit of kinship and camaraderie is said to be taken from Malay forefathers. The close family relations are said to have been inherited from the Chinese. The piousness comes from the Spaniards who introduced Christianity in the 16th century. Hospitality is a common denominator in the Filipino character and this is what distinguishes the Filipino.

Like any other culture, the Filipinos have both positive and negative values. Among the positive values are, respect for elders and strangers, respect for the feelings of others, unwillingness to complain too much, good humor, reciprocity or sense of gratitude, love of family, which includes willingness to sacrifice for the sake of family members (Bautista, 2003). On the other hand, negative values include "*bahala na*" or fatalism (come-what-may), *ningas-cogon* mentality (leaving unfinished what has been started; short-lived drive, like a grass fire), *mañana* habit (postponing until pressured to cramming to get things done), *gaya-gaya* (copycat) or imitating what someone else has been doing, crab mentality (envy from well-known or successful persons), extravagance, particularly in the forms of numerous festivities, and Filipino time, which means always late.

The Philippines being an archipelago composed of more than 7,000 islands, Filipinos are divided geographically and culturally into regions, and each regional group is

recognizable by distinct traits and dialects: the sturdy and frugal Ilocanos of the north, the industrious Tagalogs of the central plains, the carefree Visayans from the central islands and the colorful tribesmen and religious Moslems of Mindanao. Tribal communities can be found scattered across the archipelago. The Philippines has more than 100 dialects spoken, owing to the subdivisions of the basic regional and cultural groups. Eight (8) major dialects spoken by majority of the Filipinos: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicolano, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinense. Filipino, which is based on Tagalog, is the national language. English, widely used and the medium of instruction in higher education, is the unofficial national language.

The Church

The Church bears the name of the country of its members. This is not to say that only Filipinos are allowed to join the congregation. Some of its members are non-Filipinos, which are either spouses or children of Filipino immigrants. The congregation has approximately 100 members. The Church was founded in 1988, and had changed pastors across the years, and had housed to different places before settling to its present location.

Most of the Church members are nurses who migrated in the 1980s. They were among the at least 25,000 nurses who migrated to the U.S. from 1966 to 1985, based on the estimate of Ong and Azores (1994). As a matter of fact, the Philippines is by far the leading supplier of nurses to the US (Choy, 2003). For example, Massachusetts was one of the states that recruited foreign nursing graduates in the 80s to augment the need for nurses in hospitals. Other Church members work as domestic helpers, bankers, teachers, caregivers, and factory workers. So far, only two generations of immigrants in the Church are evident—the first-generation parents and the second-generation children. Parents aged from 35 to 50, while children are as young as two to as old as 18. Most of the members speak Cebuano, one of the eight major dialects in the Philippines. Others speak Tagalog and Ilocano. In doing this paper, those who live at least 15 years in the U.S. and are at least green card holders were interviewed.

What is a Filipino American? Who is a Filipino American?

With the geographical and regional divisions the Philippines have, it becomes quite difficult to define who is a Filipino. However, Root (1997) said that being a Filipino American is a state of mind. Using this definition, an individual with Filipino heritage can either deny or accept his/her being a Filipino American. That point is precisely one of the issues worth considering in identifying what makes Filipino immigrants different from other ethnic groups in the U.S. Filipino migration experiences can be analyzed using many factors. For example, Filipinos often refer they local ethnicity; they will either refer themselves as Ilocanos, Cebuanos or Tagalog, instead of calling themselves ethnic Filipino. The number of geographical and regional subgroups in the Philippines also makes it hard to fully conceptualize the meaning of a Filipino, much more a Filipino-American.

Acculturation Strategies

Berry (2003) proposed four acculturation strategies: assimilation (high identification with the dominant culture and low identification with the heritage culture), integration (high identification with both cultures), separation (low identification with the dominant culture and high identification with the heritage culture), and marginalization (low identification with both cultures). Gong, Takeuchi, Agbayani-Siewert, and Tacata (2003) that ethnic identity among Filipino immigrants is strongly related with the development context of immigration and the time spent in the U.S. That is, those who migrated in the U.S. at young age or who have lived in the U.S. for a long time can become less concerned with the Filipino cultures, less likely to identify themselves as Filipinos, and less active in involving themselves in Filipino communities. This seems not to be the case among the members of the Church. The first-generation parents show either separation or integration, based on their explicit demand for their children to be "more Filipinos" and their deliberate effort to talk to their English-speaking children in Filipino. Moreover, Filipino Americans are very conscious and passionate about their ethnic identity (Nadal, 2004). Their second-generation children, on the other hand, possess assimilation. This maybe brought about by the lack of knowledge of Filipino culture among the children as most of them were born in the U.S. Gong et al (2003) also found out that English proficiency enhances ethnic identity, which is not the case among these children. Having grown in the U.S., they fluently speak English. But it does not mean that they show sense of ethnic identity. Gong et al's (2003) finding may apply with the first-generation Filipino immigrants, but not necessarily with the U.S.-born immigrants.

Colonial Mentality

David and Okazaki (2006) hinted that colonial mentality could explain the acculturative differences among Filipino immigrant family members. Defined as a specific form of internalized oppression due to colonialism among Filipino and Filipino Americans, colonial mentality are manifested in (a) internalized cultural and ethnic inferiority, (b) cultural shame and embarrassment, (c) within-group discrimination, (d) physical characteristics, and (e) colonial debt. These manifestations explain the attitude of the children-members of Church. Making fun of their parents' thick accent is not only a show of disrespect of Filipino elders, but also a show of the feeling of inferiority of being called a Filipino. Respect for elders was shown by these children. It contrasts the finding of Fuligni (1998) that Filipino American students rated openly disagreeing with parents as being less acceptable. Also, for most children of Church members, they are Americans rather than Filipinos, and Tagalog, a dialect closely-related to the Philippine national language, is a "foreign language". As they live longer in the U.S., it can be argued that colonial mentality of Filipino immigrants decreases as the need for ethnic identity increases.

The colonial mentality that Filipinos possess can be seen as a result of the "Americanization" of the Philippine population through education when the country was under the colonial rule from 1902 to 1946 (Bautista, 2003). Until today,

the Philippine education is patterned after the American system. Looking at the present academic structure, colonial mentality is taught at an early age by using English as the main school language and textbooks written by U.S. authors. Even the government recently expressed concern on the slightly-decreasing English proficiency among Filipinos, an indication that colonial mentality, at least in terms of language use, is deeply-rooted.

The idea that "anything American" still prevails in the Philippines. In a survey by the Philippine-based Social Weather Station (SWS) in 2005, one of every Filipino wanted to go abroad. In the same survey, the United States was the favorite destination. With the proliferation of U.S. products in the Philippines, it is understandable that colonial mentality still exists. Major TV networks used English as the medium while a big number of American TV programs dominate the air waves. Colonial mentality was so deep that even Filipino artists openly express their disgusts on the domination of foreign movies and songs. A law mandating local radio stations to play at least one original Filipino music was even made to address this issue partially.

Ethnic Identity and Mental Health

Linking ethnic identity with mental health has implications for the process of adapting a new culture. Because of migration, ethnic immigrants have long been the topic of research on mental health. On the part of Filipinos, ethnic identity was said to be linked mental health and the stress of discrimination (Mosakkowski, 2003). Filipino immigrants' strength of identification with the cultural heritage is found to be associated with fewer depressive symptoms. It means that, having a sense of ethnic pride, involvement in ethnic practices, and cultural commitment protects their mental health. Having a strong ethnic identity requires being very committed to one's racial/ethnic group by learning about one's cultural heritage, and maintaining a strong sense of belonging to the ethnic community by participating in the cultural practices, such as preparing and eating special food, playing ethnicity-specific music, or doing other traditions (Phinney, 1991). In the case of the Church members, the parents show a strong sense of identity. However, their children do not, as some of them openly dislikes Filipino foods and music.

Religion and Acculturation

Since the Filipino culture is immersed with religion, it is not surprising to find out that Filipino immigrants seek refuge and comfort in their respective churches. Among the Church members, church activities dominate most of their non-working hours. A member summed it all when she said, "I always look forward to our activities. While I am with the Church (members), I know I am with God and I feel proud being a Filipino." Church activities give them a chance to be with fellow Filipinos and show pride in their cultural heritage by talking the same dialect and by interacting with their own race. These reasons also explain why non-Protestant Filipino immigrants become joint-members of the Church. They are after the fellowships, not much about the religious beliefs. Bearing the word 'Philippine" on the meaning of the Church gives Filipino immigrants a sense of identity, at least in religious terms.

Religion is a key social and cultural institution among many immigrants, especially Filipino Americans (Agbayani-Siewert & Revilla, 1995). Arguably, religion is considered a way of life among Filipinos. In terms of acculturation, religiosity and spirituality were associated with lower levels of emotional distress among Filipino-Americans (Abe-Kim, Gong, & Takeuchi, 2004). Interestingly, Church members admit "leaving everything with God" whenever they have problems. This type of religious coping has also been associated with better mental and physical health (Pargament, 1997). An interesting anecdote showing the importance of church happened to a member of the Church. She went to a Middle East country to work for a well-off family, with a hope that her employers will go to the U.S. As she expected, the family she was working for went to the U.S. for a vacation. She went out once with the family, and she took the chance to escape from them. Being Moslems, her employers usually spend five to ten minutes praying on particular time of the day. It took her only five minutes to get away with the family from a heavily-secured mosque. When she sensed that she was away from them, she went to a church and asked for a telephone directory. Upon seeing the telephone number of the Church, she immediately contacted the pastor and that was the start of a new life in the U.S. She shared her story in one of the gatherings of the Church.

Acculturative Stressors

Foods, weather, language context (e.g. accent), homesickness, discrimination, cultural differences were the prominent acculturative stressors among the Church members. These stressors, so to speak, were categorized as a result of interviews with the first-generation Filipino immigrants of the Church. Interviews were done by face-to-face, personal, and group discussions.

"I Can't Last a Day without Eating Rice"

Most Church members expressed disappointment when they have to starve from eating rice upon arrival in the U.S. Rice is the staple food in the Philippines, and Filipinos eat it at least three times a day. During the 80s, there are not much Asian supermarkets where rice can be bought. One of the nurses remembered traveling to another state a couple of times just to buy rice. Not eating rice for about a week can be depressing, as another nurse confided, "For a week, I don't have the energy to work since I have not eaten rice since I arrived in the U.S. I even considered going home at that time." However, this is not anymore the case. Rice can be easily bought from Asian stores within their area.

"I Only See Snow on TV"

Coming from a tropical country, Church members admit that cold weather was also a source of stress. The excitement brought about by the first glimpse of actual snow was easily altered by "winter itch," depression, and cold bites. The situation could not have been worst with what happened to a male nurse. He came in the U.S. in December, and unmindful of the winter, he only brought his usual summer clothes with

him. As a result, it took him two weeks before he could eventually start working in the state hospital as he has to recover from the extreme change of weather. He also attributes his baldness to the weather and to his use of warm water while having showers, when he said, "I began losing my hair almost a year after I arrived here."

"A Walker is Not an Underwear"

The cultural context of the English language is also a source of stress among the Church members. A nurse once mistook a 'walker" for underwear. Back in the Philippines, Walker is an undergarment brand. She only realized her mistake when she found out that walker is a four-legged walking-aid device used in the hospitals. The thick accent of the Filipinos also was a concern for them. All of them experienced not being understood for what they were saying. Most of them were told to speak English, although, they were already speaking English. Until today, they still experience being misunderstood for their accent, but not as bad as during their earlier years in the U.S.

"I Cried Every Night, Thinking of My Family"

Close-family ties being one of the Filipino values, being away from family was the biggest sacrifice Filipino immigrants, particularly when the concept of family is not only limited to immediate family. Extended family household is more of a norm than an exception in the Philippines (Stern, 1989). This means that at least three generations of the family live together in the same house. Having to live independently was a life-changing event for most of the Church members. Basically taken care of their parents with almost everything they needed in the house, they were forced to live by themselves once in the U.S. Those who were not used to cleaning the house, cooking foods, and washing the dishes and their clothes had to learn these things in the U.S. Not only that they cried because of missing their family, but also by doing the things they don't usually do. As a Church member puts it, "In the Philippines, I am the boss. Here, I am a boss no more."

"Nobody Wants to Talk to Me"

Race is a major determinant of social stratification in the US (Williams, 1996). Known for the brown complexion, Filipino immigrants awkwardly found themselves to relate to African-Americans (blacks) and Caucasians (whites). As a result, relating to individuals with the same skin color was hard for the Church members. A nurse said, "I was literally in the middle of the canteen, eating by myself. The whites (are) on my left; blacks on my right." The unfortunate being in the middle is that Filipino immigrants become discriminatory targets of both the blacks and whites. However, strong sense of ethnic identity eases the stress brought about by discrimination (Mosakkowski, 2003). Thus, it was important for Filipino immigrants to have an established sense of identity with the cultural heritage.

The history of Filipinos being discriminated goes back as the earliest Filipino immigrants. There was even concern of the effects on discrimination and racism on the psychological well-being of Filipino immigrants, being an easy target for stereotyped acts. Reports of unfair treatment were associated with increase illness (Gee, Chen, Spencer, See, Kuester, Tran, & Takeuchi, 2006). Types and severity of illness, however, depends on the level of discrimination.

The discrimination experienced by Church members were brought about their economic, educational, or cultural threat to blacks and whites. A Church member who came to U.S. in the early 80s remembered being swayed away by her head nurse, despite her conscious effort to be friendly. She said that the reason was that other nurses in the hospital that she was working for that time felt threatened by her presence. She added that they apparently could not understand why the hospital had to recruit foreign nurses. Discriminatory acts towards most of the Filipino immigrants were aimed at displacing them from their jobs. Instead of giving up, most of them just focused on their jobs, eventually respect from co-workers, and thus reducing discrimination. A few others, however, quit as soon as their contract with their employers expired.

Acts of discrimination, however, brought the Church members to understand the American culture and give them additional knowledge on how to survive the workplace. Originally a quiet and soft-spoken, a nurse said that because of discrimination, she learned how to be aggressive and opinionated. Mindful of the advice that she may receive further untoward acts if she remained "push-over", she began to assert herself. As a result, discrimination was reduced, according to her. She even said that her co-workers now think twice before saying anything against her. Other Church members, on the other hand, did acts of discrimination on a reciprocal basis. A factory worker once recalled calling a white co-worker "fish" when he was called a "monkey". No one among the Church members was engaged in any fistfight, interestingly.

"There is No Sense of Community Here. What You will Hear is "I, Me, Mine!"

Filipinos, like other Asian populations, are collectivist in nature. Okamura and Agbayani (1990) suggested that Filipino Americans prefer emotional closeness and social acceptance. The spirit of kinship and camaraderie is always shown. Moving to an individualistic America, Filipino immigrants found it hard to establish friendships with blacks or whites. Although during the 80s there were also other Asian immigrant groups, language was the concern why Filipinos and other Asian immigrants could not go along well.

Adjustment Factors

The presence of a support system, a Filipino community, previous migration experiences, and the type of migration (individual or family) are some of the factors that Church members identified as helpful in their acculturation experience. Building a support group eases the tensions brought about by migration. Basically starting from scratch, the presence of individuals who can lend help when needed enhances familiarity within the new environment immigrants have to live to. A Church member recounted that one of the first things he did when he met her supervisor was to ask if there are

other Filipinos in the workplace. The presence of another Filipino, he added, boosted his confidence that he is not alone, that there is somebody who can understand him or who he can relate with easily. Most of the Church members have previous migration account, either domestic/local or international. Migrating from one place to another in the Philippines can be as upsetting as migrating from one country to another. With the geographical and regional divisions, domestic migration in the Philippines can also mean learning another language and culture. This somehow helps them to be familiar of what things to expect when Church members migrated to the U.S. Individual immigrant arguably adjusts easier than family immigrants. Being alone, it is her or his own issues that she/he has to confront with. This is not the case with family migration. Often, parents have also to consider their children's adjustments as well as theirs. Finding time between taking care of the children and working can result to emotionally draining experiences. Future studies are needed along this line.

Significant Changes

Changes are the immediate result of migration. Literally, almost all the basic social fundamentals of a Filipino immigrant changed once he/she migrated in the U.S. Among the Church members, they admitted that "everything changed" since they arrived in the U.S. These changes can be either positive or negative. Some of the positive changes include improved economic conditions, material possessions, better health, emphasis on discipline and professionalism, strong need for love of family members, strong sense of Filipino identity, better political situations, and stable jobs. Among the negative changes, on the other hand, knowledge on the current Philippine situation, reduced respect for elders and authority, stained relationships with relatives and family members in the Philippines, discriminatory tendencies, segregation from other Filipino immigrant group, and lack of friends. It was hard to categorize the changes that happened to the Church members; however, looking at it on the research perspective, it brings implications for future studies.

Contemporary Issues

The overrepresentation of Filipino nurses in the U.S. is a source of serious concern (Choy, 2003). With the growing number of Filipino nursing graduates wanting to work in U.S. hospitals, the Philippines is suffering from lack of nurses willing to work in Philippine hospitals. Usually, those who work in hospitals are only after the experience to improve their chances of getting jobs abroad. Once accepted in hospitals overseas, they will soon bolt out of the Philippine hospitals. While migrants can be deemed un-patriotic for leaving the country for greener pastures, they see to it that they become more Filipinos while in the U.S.

Youth members' lack of bi-culturalism is a major apprehension for many of the parents. The erosion or lack of Filipino values will soon take its toll. In the Youth Rally where the author participated, pre-marital sex is a major issue. In a country where virginity is considered a virtue, the parents concern for their children engaging in pre-marital sex in understandable. It does not mean that abstaining from sexual activities would make these children bi-cultural, but the erosion of Filipino value of "being pure" is a concern. Their parents admit that, although, they cannot follow their children's every move, they want their children to uphold Filipino values. However, the source of where they can have knowledge of Filipino culture is also a concern. The mainstream U.S. culture that the children are exposed to is stronger than the narratives and stories about Filipino culture that they hear from their parent Internal ethnicity refers to ethnic subgroups within an immigrant group (Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmehr, & Der-Martirosian, 1993). According to Espiritu (1996), class and regional differences divide Filipinos in the United States. Within the Church, ethnocentrism is very evident. Members who speak the same dialect tend to group together. Indeed, factions within the group are categorized in terms of dialect spoken.

Outlook

The advent of modern technology can help improve the knowledge on the contemporary culture in the Philippines. With the availability of Philippine TV programs through cable networks, it becomes easier for members to be connected with the current events in the Philippines. Although only a few members are not subscribing to The Filipino Channel (TFC), it is expected that the number will increase as the need for information about the Philippines also increases. Also, the institutionalization of Youth Rally as a children program component of the Church will help the children to be familiarized with the Filipino culture. It will be fascinating to conduct a comparative longitudinal study on the immigrant experience differences between the two generations of the Church members.

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