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https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.12.1.06

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A Qualitative Analysis of the Lived Experiences of a Small Group of Filipino Immigrants

Abstract Demographers have forecasted that the U.S. is rapidly moving closer to becoming a majority-minority country, this fact and the politically divisive nature of recent debates and attempts at immigration reform have fostered increased conversations about citizenship, diversity, assimilation/s, and other im/migration discourses. Often these dialogues surround boarder-crossings and the political, economic, and social implications of im/migration. One unfortunate outcome is frequently the perpetuation of stereotypes and the "othering" of many migrant groups to which this research offers a counter narrative. This counter narrative is built on the lived citizenship of a small group of Filipino im/migrants in the U.S. The paper demonstrates that—contextually—working abroad is common practice in the Philippines; this phenomenon is woven into the political, social, and economic jurisdictions of the country. This research fills one gap in im/migration studies as it chronicles the stories of these Filipino im/migrants while examining their perceptions about their identity, sense of belonging, right to place, and the legitimacy of their citizenship socio-culturally. The paper places these and other narratives from this group of im/migrants within the theoretical framework of Critical Theory, hence offering a voice to a group of individuals not frequently heard in academia.

Keywords Lived Experiences; Citizenship/s; Belonging; Im/migration; Filipino Immigrants

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Globalization has rendered geo-political borders fluid and penetrable. International migration for the purposes of economic opportunity and talent transfer is not new and has been cited as a major propellant for global expansionism ranging from imperialism to neo-colonialism and neoliberalism (Pottie-Sherman 2013). In today's world, the prevalence of cross-border movements largely facilitated by home governmental policies aimed at supporting a less *transient home* population has given rise to notions of talent mobility (Pricewaterhouse-Coopers 2011). Nowhere is this phenomenon more common than among Asian countries, which have seen the mass movement of skilled workers, entrepreneurs, and professionals among nations (Chang 2006; Xiang 2006).

This article is a synthetic piece drawing broadly upon Critical Theory (CT) as an epistemological framework for discussing the lived citizenship experiences of a small group of Filipino immigrants in the U.S. Subsumed within the broad process of im/migration are the critical discourses of global, transnational, and flexible citizenships, identity/s, assimilation, belonging, rights to place, and real, as well as perceived, power relations. Hence, CT allows for the framing of this piece around themes related to obligatory-cultural-citizenship/s independent of legal political citizenship. This paper argues that the quest for economic prosperity, followed by some form of citizenship that draws many Filipino im/migrants from the global-south (in reference to poor/third world/underdeveloped/less developed countries) to the global-north (in reference to first world/more developed/developed countries), has given rise to an economic and political system of dependency in the Philippines. This dependency is the result of mainly voluntary flows of money and goods from im/migrant workers, also known as *balikbayans* and overseas Filipino workers (OFW), to their home-country. Prior to the passing of Republic Act 8424, also known as the Tax Reform Act of 1997, that granted tax exempt status to OFW (Republic of the Philippines Professional Regulation Commission 2014), many im/migrants were of the perception that, in exchange for the taxes they pay the government on their overseas earnings, they would gain access to physical mobility between the Philippines and the country within which they live and work. Critical Theory (Littlejohn 1992; Seiler 2013) thus offers a framework for explaining these im/migrants' sense of cultural-group-identity that keeps them grounded to their desired Filipino citizenship/heritage/traditions/culture. This paper presents nuanced perspectives, which demonstrate that the talent transfer process in this country has given rise to other forms of citizenship outside of legal status tied to Asian Americans histories (Ching Jen 2011).

For the purposes of this paper, hybridity and flexible citizenship refer to the im/migrants' simultaneous nationalist commitments/obligations, alongside their economic motivations for im/migration, assimilation/s, and capital circulation (human-economic, social, and cultural) (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). These factors are used to underpin the three-fold argument of this paper. The first that the Philippines has a specific socio-political context that allows for the export of educated and skilled labor, which has given rise to the *balikbayan* society. The formal and informal support for talent transfer in the Philippines forms the fundamental economic and socio-cultural

core, which is ideologically and normatively placed within neo-coloniality, dependency, and neoliberalism. The second argument—many Filipino immigrants who arrive in the U.S. do so under a quasi-points-based system enacted through liberalist U.S. government policies around im/migration, the Hart-Celler reforms, which allowed for increases in H, J, and family reunification visa categories. Some of these visa categories give im/migrants the option to become permanent residents and to become U.S. citizens within 3-5 years after permanent residence is obtained. The third argument—and the core of this paper—is that as im/migrants attempt to settle and assimilate, their lived-citizenships evolve into a hybridity that makes their citizenship not only global and transnational but also flexible, as they assume and re/produce hegemonic-type identities and practices that are based on power relations that disadvantage racialized minorities. As a result, they struggle with systemic institutions and agents that label/perceive/treat them like most other identifiable im/migrants as forever foreigners and prompt questions about the legitimacy of their citizenship and sense of belonging.

As the piece presents discussion on this third argument, it does not "naively celebrate migration, remittances, and transnational engagement as self-help development 'from below'" (de Hass 2008:2). While acknowledging the importance of these phenomena, this piece attempts to theoretically correspond with the views of de Hass (2008), which note that the transnationality of many international migrants is, in fact, rooted in structural constraints and the role played by many States, which results in the reciprocity of social, economic, political, and developmental depravation in some global south countries that propel migrants out while simultaneously accepting the return flows from the out-bound migrants that lift living standards and economic well-being in the migrants' home country/ies. Hence, while CT allows this paper to present an optimistic view of transnationality of the small sample of migrants it focuses on, the piece is also situated within the broader discourse surrounding dependency and State-centrist and neoliberal perspectives and influences. This piece uses as a fundamental theoretical underpinning the neo-classical equilibrium perspective, as purported by Ravenstein (see: de Hass [2008]), which states that migration and development are inseparable, and most migration is, for economic reasons, often connected to the supply of and demand for labor. Extending from this neo-classical perspective, it is assumed that the out-bound migrant is a rational being who chooses his/her migration destination based on the availability and potential for maximum economic outcome. Critical Theory allows this research to take this neo-classical perspective on migration and add an individualistic-storied perspective on how these migration decisions are made, the outcomes in terms of expectations, and actual experiences of the migrants by presenting critical micro-level voices, while giving a nod to the importance of the historical-structural theory through discussions about the role of dependency in the migration moves under study.

Filipino Context

Background on Migration

Many economically advanced societies, including Canada, Denmark, and Australia, have a supply driven immigration policy under the PBS (Pottie-Sherman 2013). In the Philippines, however, talent export is both supply- and demand-driven. Supply-driven because of an excess of educated and skilled labor coupled with a globally non-competitive labor market and salaries/wages. On the demand-side, overseas employers seek employees with English proficiency and skills training crafted to suit their needs (Hassan and Talib 2013; Horverak et al. 2013; Pottie-Sherman 2013). An estimated 10.5 million of the Philippines 96 million people work and live abroad (Commission on Filipinos Overseas 2012). According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census,[1] Filipinos constitute the third largest im/migrant group following Mexicans and Chinese. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (2012) confirms that approximately 3.5 million documented Filipino im/migrants live and work in the United States. The paucity of information about Filipino immigrants in the U.S. has fueled the notion of "forgotten Asian Americans" by writers such as Cordova (1983), Cimmrarusti (1996), and David and Okazaki (2006) because little is known about their im/migrant experiences.

Balikbayan and overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are two terms used to broadly categorize Filipinos living and working outside the Philippines. According to Rafael (1997), the term *balikbayan* describes Filipino emigrants who have permanent resident status or citizenship with prospective economic contributions to the national economy. They historically held white-collar jobs. On the other hand, OFWs are often temporarily contracted workers, who travel overseas on work visas that do not offer any citizenship options. These OFWs are frequently called the nation's "new heroes" because of the financial contributions they make to the country (San Juan 2006).

The most notable influx of Filipino im/migrant to the U.S. occurred after World War II—in response to migration policy, as well as labor shortages overseas. In 1965, the U.S. replaced the 1924 National Origins Act with the Hart-Celler Act. This 1965 immigration act facilitated admittance of Latin American, Caribbean, and Asian im/migrants/nationals under a visa system (Tullao 2006). Wiley (2012) notes that the neoliberal immigration policy shift of 1965, emphasizing family reunification, lead to exponential growth of Filipino immigrants in the U.S. while simultaneously eroding that country's human capital.

Filipino Government and Institutional Policies on Talent Transfer

The political rhetoric of the Filipino government with regard to its labor force is that human capital is an exportable commodity. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration ([POEA] 2011) cooperates with local and international recruitment agencies and potential employers to process and facilitate job placement for about 44,624 OFWs and *balikbayans* daily (Wiley 2012:22). Wiley (2012) notes that the POEA handles prospective OFWs in two ways. First, it facilitates private employment through "tripartism" via local agencies and prospective overseas employers. Second, it facilitates public sector employment in health and other services directly with foreign governments. Statistics from POEA (2011) indicate that OFWs and *balikbayans* prefer the

[1] See: http://www.census.gov/. Retrieved September 01, 2015.

U.S. as their destination. Prospective OFWs and *balikbayans* are evaluated based on a quasi-PBS, focused on their education, language ability, age, occupation, and work experience.

Migrant Contributions to the Filipino Economy: *Balikbayan*/OFW Nation

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (2013) notes that the contributions of cash remittances from Filipino im/migrants point to economics as a primary push factor in the large sustained numbers of *balikbayans* and OFWs. Thus, this country's im/migration policy enacted through POEA is a nation-building strategy (Pottie-Sherman 2013). There is also a heavily contested view that this talent transfer policy is steeped in neoliberal ideals and dependency. According to Cassidy (2004), remittances to this country typically support the daily housing, education, and health needs of those dependent on *balikbayans* and OFWs. Such remittances, according to San Juan (2006), arrive through both formal and informal channels, and in 2010, they contributed USD 8 billion or 9.4% of the Philippines' GDP (Bayangos 2012). According to Bayangos (2012), the country's 2010 remittance contributions to GDP represented a 4.2% growth over that of 2009. Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (2013) adds that in 2013, remittances amounted to USD 20.8 billion or 10% of the Philippines' GDP. It was further noted that of the 2013 remittances, 42% came from *balikbayans* and OFWs in the U.S. These figures are contextualized by the USD 41 billion dollars that exit the U.S. annually in the form of remittances (Goldberg 2008). Remittances have become an important cash flow to the Philippine populace and government and are critical for the survival of many families (Tullao 2006; Lopez 2013; Teves 2014).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Theory

Critical Theory (CT) is rooted in critiques of social constructions. It expands Marxist criticism of capitalist, eco-political systems by proposing strategies for social emancipation through conscious, self-reflective understanding of society and criticizing notions of ideology. Therefore, according to Littlejohn (1992), it determines an individual's consciousness while simultaneously creating their subjective understanding of lived experiences, which allows their understandings to transcend the ideological and normative. In this research, the superstructure includes the economic system and neoliberal policies that dictate the immigration and visa processes, as well as the educational, media, and religious systems the Philippines inherited during and after colonial-type occupations.

A nuanced view of the narratives of Filipino im/migration shows that the superstructure uses various forms and modes of communication to normalize the dominant socio-cultural and socio-political ideologies that are then lived through individual citizenship experiences. As the dimensions of the superstructure tug internally and externally to maintain dominance in society, Littlejohn (1992) notes that it provides a conceptual framework for making sense of our lived, material conditions, while its inherent ideology re/produces our culture, as well as our consciousness of who we are. "Critical Theory moves precisely in between the contingency of objectified non-critical factual reality and the normativity of utopian idealizations, that is, within the so-called 'theory/practice' problem" (Ingram 1990:xxiii). Key to CT is the unmasking of past injustices rooted in socio-political power relations. It argues that individuals should be capable of achieving cooperative forms of self-actualization only if freed from coercive mechanisms of domination.

Critical Theory recognizes the importance of the lived experiences of individuals, thus providing an interpretive dimension that focuses on societal oppression through the lens of societal symbols and acts. It also provides an explanatory framework for how many im/migrants re/create their identities within their home country—preparing them for the possibility of moving to the global-north for employment, within their im/migrant, socio-political settings and within the context of the voluntary and obligatory transnationalism. Penelope (1990) and Seiler (2013) suggest that segregated groups should assume the power to name their own experiences in ways that reflect their meanings, and this is achievable by positioning their experiences outside the dominant discourse, which is historically masculine and in need of change. This research is attempting to allow a small group of im/migrants to narrate their citizenships, guided by CT.

Dependency and Neo-Coloniality

Dependency theory put forward by theorists such as Rodney (1981) provides the explanatory framework for the rampant underdevelopment seen in several countries in the global-south. According to this theory, development in post-colonial societies is dependent on the economic and physical infrastructure, as well as the socio-political systems established during colonization. This, they assert, is reflected in international trade patterns. Hence, the contemporary growth and development experienced by many global-south countries are fragile because these are suffused in capitalist power relations and neo-coloniality. Such relations are fueled by local demand and consumption practices, but controlled by hegemonic structures in the global-north (Wallerstein 2004).

Dependency theory suggests that the economic, political, and social fragility of the development of post-colonial societies cannot be overcome without the poor countries extricating themselves from the global economic system that re/produces their dependency. In the context of this piece, which examines the experiences of individuals from one global-south country that has systematized talent transfer, questions about who reaps the ultimate benefits from such economic practices prevail. Dependency theory, in concert with Wallerstein's (2004) World Systems Theory, offers a conceptual framework for the emergence of such narratives. Within this piece, Dependency and World Systems Theories are closely tied to global neoliberalism/neo-coloniality. Neoliberal policies of liberalization, privatization, open-markets, and open-competition serve to reinforce patterns of economic, political, and social exploitation globally (Klak and Myres 1997; Onyeiwu 2006; Timms 2006; Walsh 2006). These have confirmed World Systems' categorization of the world into core, semi-periphery, and periphery States, based on patterns of consumption, production, economic achievements, and poverty. Within the context of dependency,

World Systems Theory, and neoliberalism/neo-coloniality, commodification of all factors of production, including labor, leads to the sustained dependence of many global-south/periphery States. This paper asserts that it is the re/production of this dependency in the Philippines, coupled with local histories, geo-economic and socio-political conditionalities, that has resulted in this country's reliance on labor export/talent transfer as a means of supporting local economic needs.

Positioning the Theory in the Philippines

The presence of Filipinos in the U.S. is historically tied to the colonial occupation of the Philippines by Spain between 1565-1898 and the U.S. in 1898-1946 (Francia 2010). The colonial background of this country accounts for the predominance of Roman Catholicism, as well as the labor export industry that brought Filipinos to the U.S. via the slave trade (Cordova 1983; Espina 1988). Filipinos were the first Asia group to establish im/migrant settlements in the U.S. in 1763 (Espina 1988). The subsequent waves of Filipino immigrants to the U.S., however, were not results of slave trade, but resulted from the U.S. occupation (1898-1946) under the Treaty of Paris (Francia 2010). Scharlin (2000) notes that the Filipinos were admitted as U.S. nationals and seasonal farm workers (*sekadas*), as well as U.S. educated im/migrants (*pensionados*). During the post-WWII period, new and varied categories of im/migrants from the Philippines began entering the U.S., and by the 1960s, these groups were lead by workers in the health industry (Wiley 2012). For this latter group, training in health and educational system that reflects American values and ideals, coupled with English proficiency prior to relocation, gave them an advantage over other ethnic groups competing for the same jobs (Bautista 2002); the Philippines is plagued with a form of colonial mentality due to the archipelago's history of occupation that left it with colonial institutions and infrastructure. Such ideas have found a home in Rodney's (1981) and Wallerstein's (2004) Dependency and World Systems Theories respectively. This mentality reinforces the reliance on the global-north for employment/economic, social, and cultural support. David and Okazaki (2006) note that this prolonged "Americanization" led Filipinos to cultivate an attitude of self-hate (cultural apathy), seeing the U.S. as possessing a way of life that is superior (Rodney 1981; Banks and McGee Banks 2004; Wallerstein 2004; Horverak et al. 2013).

Methodology

Data Collection

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the methodological framework for studying the lived experiences of Filipino im/migrants in the U.S. Using a combination of self-selection convenience and snowball sampling, we contacted approximately 35 Filipino immigrants living in Chicago and the Detroit metro area. At the end of the data collection phase of this research, fifteen individuals had consented to be interviewed, with whom in-depth, individual, face-to-face interviews were conducted (see: Table 1). The participants were asked questions under the following themes: motivations to migrate, transnational networks, concept of home, and right to place and movement (physical, economic, and social mobility [see: Appendix 1]). All questions were open-end, and participants were given the themes and asked to talk about their lived citizenship experiences pertaining to the themes. The themes are broadly situated within categories of capital circulation and are delineated as economic-human capital and socio-cultural capital. The data collection process was guided by Fairclough's (1989; 1992) three-dimensional CDA model that examines the interrelationships and connectivity/s between social and political inequalities manifested through institutions, agents, cultural products, other social structures, discourses, and narratives. The interviews were transcribed and entered into NVivo for the purpose of data analysis.

Table 1. Study Participants.

	PSEUDONYM & AGE	OCCUPATION	CITY OF RESIDENCE/ EMPLOYMENT	REASONS FOR MIGRATION	LENGTH OF INTERVIEW
1	June, 28	Janitorial	Ann Arbor, MI	Family	2h 23 min
2	Carol, 32	Nurse	Ann Arbor, MI	Job *Recruited	2h 25 min
3	Casey, 34	Nurse	Ann Arbor, MI	Job *Recruited	2h 23 min
4	Joan, 34	Nurse	Ann Arbor, MI	Job *Recruited	1h 40 min
5	Andrea, 53	Store Clerk	Chicago, IL	Family	2h 10 min
6	Amalia, 52	Self-employed	Detroit, MI	Family	1h 10 min
7	Linda, 52	Lawyer	Lancing, MI	Family	2h 50 min
8	Mary, 36	Nurse	Saline, MI	Job *Recruited	2h 25 min
9	Alma, 51	Nurse	Saline, MI	Job *Recruited	1h 27 min
10	Grace, 42	Janitorial	Southfield, MI	Family	1h 20 min
11	Michelle, 45	Store Clerk	Southfield, MI	Job	1h 55 min
12	Cheryl, 53	Store Clerk	Southfield, MI	Family	1h 38 min
13	Ruby, 56	Unemployed	Southfield, MI	Family	2h 20 min
14	Pamela, 29	Nurse's Aide	Ypsilanti, MI	Job	2h 23 min
15	Arlene, 45	Self-employed	Ypsilanti, MI	Job	1h 42 min

Source: Self-elaboration.

Data Analysis: Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a three-dimensional model that focuses on text, discursive practices, and social practices, and how these define individual and group descriptions, interpretations, and explanations about their experiences (Cui and Kelly 2013; Hassan and Talib 2013; Qiu 2013). In establishing a bridge between the Filipino immigrants' narratives and social practices, this piece uses the descriptions from Fairclough (1989) to examine the storied citizenship experiences of the Filipino immigrants, in terms of what Qiu (2013) perceives as their use of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) through linguistic devices and concepts. Here, we begin by identifying the components of this group's im/migrant/lived-citizenship featured most prominently in their conversations. In total, fifteen individuals were interviewed, this yielded eighty-four pages (11 point font, single spaced) of transcribed data that were rich in individual perspectives. All the interviews were analyzed to identify and report on the dominant themes, perspectives, and findings of this study. During the data coding and analysis process, the researchers realized that the narratives of the participants were consistent and showed very little variation from one participant to the next; therefore, the decision was made to focus the small stories used as exemplars in the piece to a limited number of participants. Given that the primary aim of this piece is the presentation of the participants' narratives, the researchers removed biases from the participant small stories chosen to be included as exemplars in this paper by taking a standardized approach, hence three interview transcriptions were selected using the length of the conversations (see: Table 1) (Silverman 2001) for this phase of the study. The longest interview was Linda's. She is a 52-year-old attorney who was born in the U.S. to Filipino parents on H1B visas. When her parents' first H1B visas expired, they returned to the Philippines, where Linda lived with them from the age of 5 until the age of 15. The median interview is Andrea's. She is a 53-year-old former administrator in the Philippines, turned store clerk in the U.S. She was raised and educated to the Bachelor's degree level in the Philippines, and migrated in 2012 through the family reunification visa, when her husband filed for her and their children's permanent residency status. The shortest interview was with Amalia. She is a 52-year-old college graduate, living in the U.S. since 2000. Amalia worked in a government agency in the Philippines, and is currently a self-employed small business owner in the U.S.

All fifteen interview transcripts were stripped to represent only the responses the interviewees gave to the questions and themes presented to them. The next stage in the data analysis was to tally the number of times key words and phrases were used (Fairclough 1992) (see: Table 2), for the tallies for the three interviews used as exemplars in this piece. The words and phrases were derived from the dominant themes in the existing body of knowledge on im/migration and citizenship experiences, and related theories and questions pertaining to these were embedded in the interviews[2] (see: Appendix 1). For the second dimension of Fairclough's (1989; 1992) CDA model, the Filipino immigrants' discursive practices, in terms of theirs and the researchers' construction of "the relationship between the productive and interpretative discursive process" were established (Qiu 2013:1879). This was done using the narratives of these individuals, contextualized by how they internalize and reproduce (verbally and socially) hegemonic constructions around race and ethnicity, self-identifications/identities, and intra- extra-group social interactions. This required the extraction of small stories (Georgakopoulou 2006) and an examination of the main idea/s that were present and how these, within the context of the literature, offer an interpretation of the lived citizenship of this group of migrants.

The third and final dimension of Fairclough's model deals with social practices. Social practices, according to Qiu (2013) and Cui and Kelly (2013), are an explanatory configuration that allows one to examine the relationships between the discursive processes and the social processes as manifested through social practice. Here, we attempt to explain how the "discursive practices observed are a reflection of the participants' socio-cultural perspectives" (Qiu 2013:1881).

Methodological Limitations

The primary limitation faced in the collection of data for this study was identifying Filipino immigrants—mainly—in the Detroit metro area. The researchers contacted known Filipino immigrants in their personal and professional communities for recommendations about other individuals who might have been interested in participating in the study. This process of snowball sampling yielded the names and contact information (telephone numbers and/or email addresses) for more than twenty persons who were initially contacted by the researchers. In addition, despite being contacted, no male Filipino immigrants consented to be interviewed, thus all the study participants are female.

A second limitation faced during the data collection process was positionality. Many of the individuals interviewed willingly volunteered information about their motivations for migrating, their professions, and educational and work experience in the Philippines, the recruitment process that brought them to the U.S., and their lived cultural identities and citizenship. However, they were less forthcoming with more personal information and perceptions about race, class, assimilation, and legal citizenship status. This limitation was more apparent when the non-Filipino researcher was the one conducting the interviews. This led the researchers to conclude that this researcher was perceived as an outsider, hence probing and redirecting was often used during these interviews to gain more nuanced responses.

The positionality limitation generated several interview answers/conversations that were vague, generic with sparse personal details. Hence, the positionality limitation influenced the researchers' decision to select exemplars based on the length of the interview to represent the narratives of the lived experiences/citizenship/s of the participants in the research finding and discussion sections, since there were no significant variations in the narratives of the individual participants.

[2] Some of these words and phrases include: belong/ing-citizenship/s; home—America/the Philippines; migration policy/economic/visas; *other/ing* and race identification—white, people of color/blacks/brown; obligation/obligation to home/family; identity—I am; language—English/Tagalog/accent/s; cultural networks (Banks and McGee Banks 2004; Cui and Kelly 2013; Horverak et al. 2013; Qiu 2013).

Findings

Table 2: Count of Pros From Dominant Themes and Examples of Usage Context.

Words/Phrases	Linda 2h 50 min	Andrea 2h 10 min	Amalia 1h 10 min
Belong/ing	6	9	5
America/n in Reference to Citizenship/s	16	26	10
My identity—I am	57	30	4
I belong to the Philippines, but I belong to America, too, but most times I feel I am neither Filipino nor American. Deep inside we are still Filipinos. To me, it is only papers [legal-political citizenship] that changed, but we still speak the language [Tagalog] and our identities still revolve around our culture. (Amalia) I belong to neither. When I go to the Philippines, I can tell that I live in America because of my Tagalog, and here [in America] I feel like I belong to both sides because I am not white … in the real world, I am not white because people will ask me where am I from. My friends who are on a student visa or work visa we call ourselves legal alien because that is what is stamped in our passports, even though we view it as pre-citizenship, yes, at that time we are aspiring Americans. (Linda) For Andrea, 14 of the 30 times she used the term "I am" or referred to her identity it was a specific reference to citizenship status.			
Migration policy—Visas	21	2	0
There was a time when Filipinos were taxed whatever they earned here because they were still Filipino citizens, and that is what happened to my parents. They needed their American citizenship, or at least to become resident alien so that they could get out from under that because as a H1, you could go back to the Philippines, but you do not know if you could leave the country if you did not pay the taxes to the Filipino government. With the H1 visa, you were tax obligated to the Filipino government. (Linda)			
Philippines—As Home	52—32 (84)	21—6 (27)	11—11 (22)
I have a lot of art, and once a friend said, "You don't have any Filipino art here," so I went to my parents' house and I got a water buffalo wood carving … because I felt like I had to pay homage to my home, it indicates that I am Filipino because … (Linda) I do not want people to mistake that I am other things. (Andrea)			
Obligation/Send or Give Money/Help	38	13	7
My dad used to send a lot of money and give stuff away. He went home with boxes and boxes of stuff, too! This is the *posaloba* and the *balikbayan* culture, and even when he could not go home because he had overstayed his visa, he would send *balikbayan*-boxes [any cardboard container, for example, pampers boxes packed with stuff like Kellogg cereal and other food and personal items]. (Linda) Today, *balikbayan*-boxes are very good business, there are shipping company that provide you with containers that you pack with the stuff you are sending home, and they will collect these or you drop them off and they are shipped to the Philippines. (Amalia) Back home, they expect you to send them these things. They are looking for their little bounty! (Andrea)			
Other/ing—Race	4	6	1
White/Caucasian	17	0	0
Colored/Blacks/Brown	16	0	0
The ideal Filipino beauty will never be my skin color, they will be a little bit fairer, I am with affirmative action, but even then the graduation of your skin color, it is better to be brown than black, like café au lait, or dark chocolate, dark … back home, there are soaps and creams to keep your skin white or make it whiter. There, what is valued is the whiter your skin is the prettier you are, even though your features are mestizo. There, darker skin people (*Kayumanggi*) are considered lower class … beauty and complexion is also tied to your social class. (Linda) You shade yourself and you do not tan. When you go outside, you have our umbrella, or you do not go outside much. (Andrea)			
English/Tagalog/Accent/s	24/5/9	4/0/1	4/1/0
We look Asian so using the language is a way to signal to those around me that I am not Taiwanese or Chinese. (Andrea [and Linda]) If I am in public and I think someone is observing me or may want to start a conversation with me on account of an assumption they made about my heritage, where I am from, I will start talking to my daughter in Tagalog, even though I know she does not understand me [I married an American so my kids do not speak Tagalog, I did not teach them that language), but that gives me the opportunity to gauge their response to me. (Linda) If you have an accent, you are definitely at a disadvantage, even though if you are attuned, you can tell what someone is trying to say, but most people in the Midwest are not accent-sensitive so they will make negative comments. (Linda) American companies like us because we hardly ever have any accents [because of colonialism–education]. (Andrea [and Amalia])			
Cultural Networks	18	6	4
Interviewer: Did your family or a local Filipino community influenced where you chose to migrate to? Amalia: Ah, ok. His mom and sister live in Michigan. Practically, all his family members are in Michigan. I have a sister in Michigan, too. So, it was important that we stayed in Michigan. I really feel good and connected. Like I said, Filipinos are growing in number here and it is really a good thing for the sense of support that I, we feel from and for each other here.			

Source: Self-elaboration.

The Filipino immigrants' right to place begins with the visa process that takes them to America. Visa is the normative process of border enforcement by the U.S. For the im/migrant, it is tangible because without it they cannot enter the U.S., and it immediately signals how long they can stay, if they can work legally, and what category of aspiring American they fall into. Hence, the use of the term visa, or reference to it, is important in these conversations. Theorists on the notions of right to place focus on an individual's perceptive ownership and subsequent actions within a given place (Carmalt 2007). Within the context of this research, these immigrants' perceptive ownership begins within the neoliberal structures of border control, through the application, on to the issuance process of a visa (Ching Jen 2011).

One significant finding in this study is the notion that an individual—by adapting an identity assigned to them through a legal process—has made their visas tangible. Their visas then become a point of contestation—because it is a primary determinant of how much they identify with perceptive ownership as they move through the im/migration process (Ching Jen 2011). For example, the holder of a temporary visa (B1/2 or even J2), which does not allow the holder to work full time, own property, or even remain within the issuer's borders for more than a limited amount of time, is less likely to feel any obligations to the issuing country, even after remaining in this country for extended periods of time. Whereas a visa that signals a path to long-term stay or citizenship elicits more desires to invest in and become attached to the issuer's system (Giuliani 2003; Pottie-Sherman 2013). This was clearly evident from all the interviews conducted with this group, and is simply stated in the quote that shows how individual immigrants identified themselves, or the number of times an immigrant felt the need to reaffirm his/her identity through statements such as the exemplars represented in Table 2. So, for them, place/space are ready constructs, both normatively and physically, and how much access they are allowed to have within and to this place prompts their attachments and space ownership (Carmalt 2007). This is notwithstanding the tensions exuded when individuals are unable to juxtapose their legal-political citizenship with their cultural citizenship and cultural adequacy because they are unable to view their membership within these categories as mutually exclusive (Ching Jen 2011).

With Filipino im/migrants, unlike with many other immigrants to the U.S. from the global-south, prior to the Philippines passing the Tax Reform Act of 1997, there were non-voluntary obligations to their country of origin. An example is presented in Table 2 under the migration policy—visa category. Here, the speakers talk about their mobility and how, in the past, this could have impeded their ability to return home and possibly travel out of the Philippines if they did not adhere to the legal obligations to pay taxes on their U.S. earnings, which they thought they were obligated to report to the Filipino government. This was a conditionality of the talent transfer facilitated by the government. In 2004, the Philippines Ministry of Finance attempted to repeal the tax-exempted status of the OFW, as an attempt to increase government revenue (Republic of the Philippines Professional Regulation Commission 2014), this measure failed.

Table 2 also provides examples typical of all the study participants when reference to the term "home country" is made. In this instance, it was represented as a place of obligation, somewhere they needed to travel to, give to, pay homage to, and a place that is attached to their identities. This finding contravenes traditional notions of home, which see it as a physical and social structure of convenience, and points to the socially constructed nature of these immigrants' identity, connectedness, and attachments (Owusu 1998; Giuliani 2003), as well as the neo-coloniality and social-geography that compel them to rearticulate the concept of home. This ties back to the colonial mentality (David and Okazaki 2006) and dependency (Rodney 1981; Wallerstein 2004) of this *balikbayan* society and how obligated these individuals feel, given the number of times these three interviewees used as exemplars stated that they felt obligated to the Philippines (see: Table 2).

One may argue that this colonial mentality and sense of identity carry over from their country specific socialization/social-geography (Owusu 1998). Note the number of times the three exemplars make reference to race, on the basis of racialized minorities in Table 2; this is typical of all the participants in this study. Here, the im/migrants carry with them cultural practices that are rooted in their country-specific colonial past. Many of these cultural practices surround race and color, and are also reinforced by the racialized nature of the U.S. (Lieberson 1963; Owusu 1998). Similar to other visible minorities who migrant to the U.S., the Filipinos in this study are more inclined to align themselves with whiteness (Ching Jen 2011).

Discussion

The Tensions of Citizenship: Small Story 1

> My parents were recruited as healthcare professionals in the 1950s. They had a 5-year H1B visa … I was born here, and then, when I turned age 18 or 21, I filed the papers for them to become American citizens. My other 6 siblings who were not born in the U.S. had to come under their own visas. My two sisters and my youngest brother came under my parents'. Now, for me, using the word "home" in reference to the Philippines … It is my subconscious because I think I am more American than Filipino … I am divided, I am like a Caelian, and so it is situational. At one point, I did not feel I was American, and that is common to Filipinos who immigrated here as adults, like my parents. (Linda)

> I still want to be a Filipino citizen, but our friends advise that my benefits will be limited if I stay a permanent resident. But, if there is a dual citizenship, I will go for it. My Filipino citizenship is now getting fuzzier. I feel like my being a Filipino is halved now that I am a permanent resident. (Andrea)

> I feel like I am pulled in two directions. Deep in my heart I am still a Filipino. (Amalia)

> When I become a U.S. citizen, I think I would feel like a full-fledged American and my being a Filipino would cease! I don't know really. It is confusing. Well, if I pledge to the flag of the U.S. during oath taking, isn't it a form of denouncing your being a Filipino? Your status as a Filipino diminishes since you will follow the rules and regulations in the U.S., but not all of us follow the rules. (Andrea)

> Many Filipino im/migrants come here on visas, and when they go out of status, some of them go underground, but then they cannot get a job, they have to work under the table. For example, our housekeeper came from the Philippines. But, when my parents overstayed their visas, she becomes a deportable alien. She went underground, and then in 1980-something, Reagan did the amnesty, she met the requirements for citizenship. But, a lot of those who went underground had no documentation to show how long they had been here, and so they did not want to come forward. Our housekeeper, she ended up moving from place to place, so we did not know her address so we could not direct the FBI/INS to her when they came to our house to find her because they were going to deport her. But, she did not want to go home, her family there would be destitute because the money she was sending, they needed it. If the government deports her, she would not be able to come back. I do not even think she thought about citizenship, she just wanted to be able to send money home and she liked it here, she actually put a lot of her nieces through school while being illegal here in America [TNT or Tago Ng Tago]. I do not know of any undocumented Filipinos, there is an ocean between the Philippines and America, we cannot take a little boat to cross it, we all come here on papers, documents. (Linda)

"In the neoliberal knowledge economy, citizenship is an instrument of competitive advantage, with the targeting of talented migrants as paramount" (Brown and Tannock 2009 as cited in Pottie-Sherman 2013:558). A government uses its immigration policies to regulate more than just who is operating within which sets of circumstances or who is allowed to cross its geographic and political borders. Using the criteria for admittance, stay, and exit, the immigration policies present newcomers with an ideological view of citizenry, setting the standards against which the im/migrant must/should be accepted as a citizen. As the im/migrants measure themselves against these idealized standards, they effectively become *othered* (Pottie-Sherman 2013). How an im/migrant measures up to the idea in this *othering* process later operates to legitimize or delegitimize their legal-political citizenship, as well as foreshadows their lived citizenship/s. Pottie-Sherman (2013:561) supports this point by noting that, "entry into the nation by no means guarantees full citizenship, and external exclusions often operate in tandem with internal ones."

Therefore, according to Smith (1997), national boundaries are socially constructed, except in the context of this research, where the social construction goes beyond the criterion for admittance and stay within a country. Small story 1, through recounting the specific narratives of the three interviewees included, represented the perspective of all study participants. They all freely talked about the visa process to enter the U.S. and their citizenship identities, but were more reluctant to talk about issues of undocumented Filipinos. As demonstrated by the speakers in small story 1, the longitudinal impact these admittance and stay criterion have in concert with existing value systems and cultural products moves the speakers' perceived citizenships outside the realm of political status to that of how they act-as-citizens/lived existence (Ching Jen 2011). Herbert (2009) added that this exclusionary approach to immigration is colonialist in nature because it assumes that the immigrant will be

temporary, taking more from the country than they are likely to contribute.

As small story 1 suggests, even when one measures up favorably against the ideal and meets the criteria for legal citizenship, there is still the reluctance to self-identify as American. This is even apparent in speaker (Linda) who was actually born in the U.S., but by virtue of the fact that she was raised by non-American parents and spent a long portion of her formative years in the Philippines, she sometimes struggles with citizenship belonging that is measured against a structural border enforcement policy. For Pottie-Sherman (2013:559), these critical narratives represent the juxtaposition of the "huddled masses" and the exclusionary policies aimed at keeping the "undesirables" out. The speakers in this small story are neither members of the huddles masses nor the undesirable, yet they are unable to see a distinction between their cultural citizenship and their legal status because their narratives are nuanced by the visa construct.

Sleeter and Delgado Bernal (2004) note that Critical Race Theory (CRT) examines and uses shared and individual experiences of race, class, gender, immigration status, language, and sexuality in education. As small story 1 evolved, CRT demonstrates the role of lived social indicators in the narrative rule breakers (aspiring Americans) in this Filipino im/migrants discourse. Here, an aspiring American is identified (Brazil—pseudonym), and an exploratory framework for her actions that qualifies her as an undesirable within U.S. immigration policy is immediately presented. In the process of portraying their narratives and actions, the speaker then justifies Brazil's role in the undesirable action (economic reasoning) and negates herself of wrongdoing ("did not know her address"), while simultaneously exonerating Brazil by pointing to the fact that she subsequently removed herself from the undesirable category by qualifying for legal citizenship. The speaker succinctly spoke and acted within the context of the dominant social structures, while giving a nod to her within-group dynamics, this was common among all the study participants. Hence, for Francia (2010), the characteristic/s that are ascribed the label of within-group cultural trait/s, connected to verbiage exemplars such as "no undocumented Filipinos," effectively removing their group from dominant negative rhetoric related to immigration in the U.S. today. In fact, the statement—*There are no, or I do not know of any undocumented Filipinos*—was a common rhetoric among the study participants.

Language, Social Identification, and Talent Transfer: Small Story 2

> I had an interview and I was asked what weaknesses I had and if there is anything I would improve. I told the interviewers that I need to improve my English, my accent. The interviewers all told me that I should not worry because I can communicate in English. One of them asked why Filipinos could speak English. I said, because it is our medium of instruction in the Philippines. We use English in schools, businesses, and everything else alongside our own dialect. I made sure the interviewers understood that I want to improve my diction, intonation. What is the other term? Oh, pronunciation, too. The interviewers were all laughing. (Andrea)

> I feel we have a better advantage over others because of our ability to speak and write in English. (Amalia)

> When we first moved here, it was assimilate, assimilate … so we did not respect a lot of our culture. We did not speak Tagalog at home and so, eventually, we lost it. I speak English, but I did have an accent so some of my pronunciations were totally out so it was hard to understand me. Once I went to a store and I did not say hAngers … I said hOngers and she did not know what this thing is and I had the hardest time trying to get her to understand me. So, my goal became figuring out how to speak like an American. (Linda)

> Siempre [of course], you have to adjust, I told my brother that he needs to send his children to take nursing or health related education and send them to America. (Andrea)

> Many of us come because of the opportunities in America, part of it is economic, and another part of it is the language and culture because we feel more connected to the American culture. (Amalia)

> If economic was the only factor, we could have gone to another Asian country. (Linda)

> There is no problem with the language itself, the accent is there, but we blend well and our education system is similar to America's. Today, they are recruiting nurses CPAs, teachers, and cruise ship workers, as well. I was talking to one of my classmates, he is a doctor. He said his wife is going to nursing school because they are planning to apply to im/migrate. He knows he cannot get in as a doctor, but nurses are in high demand, so he is taking the nursing boards, as well, with the hope that he will come here. So in the Philippines, you have the possibility of being exported elsewhere because of the education and the skills that you have. (Linda)

> I also think some employers take advantage of Filipinos because they know they are relying on this visa. I have a friend who worked for company that does a lot of embroidery, she was sponsored because of her special skills, and sometimes she felt like her employer was holding it over her. Once you have your sponsor, there is nothing keeping you from going to some other company. Yes, you have a contract, but after that ends, they cannot make you stay, but sometimes you feel indebted, obligated because these people sponsored you. To ensure your loyalty to them, some employers, sponsors will try to keep your passport. This happens in many other countries, where we are working, too, and you may find that you cannot go home. (Linda)

> And it does not even have to be an American who does this to you, it can be your own countrymen, the ones with the attitude that they paid their dues, so you have to, too. (Andrea)

> My friend is not unique, I hear a lot of those stories from people I know. (Linda)

One would argue that the cultural apathy exhibited in the narratives above is a re/articulation of neo-colonial patterns of dominance and control that are embedded in long-standing feelings of inferiority of one's own cultural value (Banks and McGee Banks 2004). Counter arguments from Raza, Beaujot, and Woldemicael (2013) point to a correlation

between higher human capitals among im/migrants who speak English at home, suggesting that there is a synergy among economic, cultural, and social capital. Therefore, among all the participants in this study, it was apparent that their im/migrant goal-seeking behavior is paradoxically divisive as it separates them from their ethnic-culture, while concurrently increasing their potential human capital values. Added to this is the fact that higher status jobs often correlate with higher incomes, so within the *balikbayan*/OFW, categorizing two things are important—first, the dimension of one's aggregated ability to contribute financially to one's home country's economy, and second, one's visa status determines which of the groups you belong to. Berry (1980) and Raza, Beaujot, and Woldemicael (2013) reference this as a bidirectional individualist acculturation strategy that allows the im/migrants to engage in multiple approaches to cultural assimilation that facilitate their economic integration. This is tempered, however, by the fact that these writers have found strong correlations between visible minority statuses and earning disadvantages.

Combining the forgoing with the discourse on language assimilation strategies that emerged in small story 2 (that typifies all the participants in this study) and the notions of social capital as possessing a transferable value tied to resources, institutional, and social networks, as well as shared identities (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Nakhaie and Kazemipur 2013) offers a useful micro-level explanatory framework. Nakhaie and Kazemipur's (2013:420) micro-level explanatory framework on social capital suggests that participation in a social network that consists of both formal and informal groupings can positively impact "productivity, economic prosperity, job acquisition, social mobility, health, and happiness" among im/migrants, as it re/affirms their individual and group identities. One of the chief constraints on individual expression is language (Seiler 2013), so, for Ching Jen (2011:180), the assimilationist assumption that "acquisition of the dominant language customs and cultural values is the key process through which immigrants become Americans" is problematic. This is because English language use is a source of educational discrepancy among immigrants as it attempts to normalize American identity to the detriment of their transnational immigrant identity. All the study participants, like the exemplars in small story 2, normalize English as a part of their own identities, which is connected to their colonialist history, while at the same time, they attach real value to it, as it gives them the competitive edge in the global competition for talent. Therefore, the speakers effectively create their own critical narratives around English language use by mostly embracing its role in the dominant, not competing ideologies.

The above highlights the importance of education and specific training and skills in the migration of Filipinos; this was particularly true among the nurses who participated in the study. The health services, particularly nursing, were singled out because of the transferability of this qualification between some countries. Here, nurses who were interviewed were all recruited for their positions here in the U.S., and all their training, credentials, and licenses transferred, so they were not required to do any retraining once they arrived in the U.S.

The Situated Learning Theory posited by Jacobson (1996) (also see: Van Kleef and Werquin 2013) argues that influences of history, biology, and culture socially construct the process of learning thereby impacting cross-cultural transition and adaption. They note that a new culture takes an individual into unfamiliar meaning systems, so their ability to make meaningful decisions may be impaired. This is an important argument because, in the context of Critical Theory, the immigrant is able to transfer his/her skills and training to new socio-cultural settings more seamlessly. Correspondingly, the speakers in small story 2 suggest that despite the cultural differences, the educational context of training professionals in the Philippines is modeled off some aspects of the American educational system. Thus, this degree of similarity in educational context and the "deliberate, mindful abstraction of skill/knowledge" (Van Kleef and Werquin 2013:658), coupled with the im/migrants' willingness to immerse him/herself into the new socially constructed dynamic, allows the Filipino im/migrants a more seamless transition; this was the case among all the employed participants in this study, irrespective of their occupational category. The only obstacle becomes licensing in the U.S. It is at this juncture that the narratives of the im/migrants diverge from Jacobson (1996). All the study participants, like the speakers, note that as Filipinos, they are socialized to seek employment abroad. They also expect the socio-cultural settings to be different. As a result, they are more willing to re/negotiate their identities (professional/work and social) to fit the new settings. This, according to Van Kleef and Werquin (2013:656), would fall within the realm of "legitimate peripheral participation" because these im/migrants are actually engaged in a reciprocal process of adapting to and changing the characteristics of their new communities. Hence, incremental normalization occurs.

Balikbayan Society and Transnationalism: Small Story 3

> They are called foreign workers, overseas foreign Filipino workers [OFW], and they work all over the world now. They are so important that at the airport there is a special line for them at immigration. The Filipino economy would probably collapse without OFW … our big product there is the export of labor. There are millions of dollars that go to the Filipino economy from OFW. (Linda)

> I do not know if the Filipino government tracts what we earn … I don't think they have a way of knowing how much comes into the country. When the person picks up remittance money, it is probably not taxed, but this is good for the Philippines because the recipients of the remittances spend the money there in the country. (Andrea)

> I think Filipinos are taxed based on their earning overseas, the government is vigilant during the first five years to make sure the OFW pay their taxes because there is a rule. You have to provide the Filipino government with proof of your overseas income. They facilitate the visa and travel process, so the taxes are a requirement, plus, we send home *balikbayan* boxes. (Amalia)

> So, when I go to the airport and I see people with these boxes, I know they are Filipino and they are *balikbayans*, although many back home would prefer

the dollars instead because with the currency fluctuation, they think they can get more with the cash, which is now USD 1 equals 42 pesos. But, then you have to figure out what you can get for that in the Philippines because it sounds great, but maybe a soda is 3 pesos. (Linda)

When we were still living there, there were guys who broke into our house because they thought we have lots of money, my husband was an OFW for four years. People tend to think you have lots of money if someone in your family is working abroad. (Andrea)

I also get the feeling that because we are in America, they think money grows on trees, you know, they think we work hard, but we get paid so well, why can't we share the wealth. In the past, when we go home, they would be grateful for what we bought. Now, they ask for Levis jeans, Estee Lauder. So if you bought them something from a dollar store, they are not going to be happy and think you are cheap. (Linda)

They expect us to take something for them. (Amalia)

Balikbayan culture does that. (Linda)

Every time we go on a trip, we have *pasalubong* [gift to individual], it's a remembrance and you bring it for everyone. So, like this past Christmas, I was the "Santa Claus," we had to send help to our families and disaster victims. (Andrea)

I helped by sending money for building their houses and provide for basic needs. That is what I want to do, and also they expect us to help out. (Amalia)

Small story 3 represents a complex mixture of sub-themes that emerged among the study participants. The first is that the speakers in this small story use the terms *balikbayan* and OFW interchangeably; this was a common practice among all the interviewees. They do not acknowledge the distinctions that the Filipino government policies ascribe to these two groups of migrants. The im/migrant's assertion that the Filipino perceived connection to the U.S. goes beyond the need to meet economic expectations is crucial. According to Van Kleef and Werquin (2013:657), "the connections that link communities may be intentional or circumstantial," they reflect normative and physical boundaries that construct the intersectionality of the im/migrants' identities and all the social components that allow them to "reify shared understandings of practice." This corresponds with Cui and Kelly's (2013) notion of the essentialization of ethnic culture over structural constraints/systems as an explanation for individual social behaviors. This is not withstanding the findings of researchers such as Nakhaie and Kazemipur (2013), which note that contact with ethnic-social networks, in many cases, does not yield positive employment and earning outcomes for many migrants (see: Sanders, Nee, and Sernau [2002] studying Asian immigrants in Los Angeles; Warman [2007] studying gender differential among immigrants; Beaman [2011] studying refugees in the U.S.; Nakhaie and Kazemipur [2013] reporting on black im/migrants). Notice how these studies, while supporting small story 3, also correspond with the last discourse that emerged from small story 2, which points to the consequences of inequality that are likely when im/migrants interact with some of the social and economic institutions and agents in the host country. Additionally, the neoliberal policy context allows for dollar devaluations and more liberalized socio-political systems, and the appeal to engage in talent transfer multiplies. This is because the purchasing-power-differentials between the U.S. dollar and the Filipino peso give the OFW the expectation that their labor/skills will be worth more if they migrate. The communal norm in this emerging discourse on *balikbayan* society is one of dependency rooted in the individual and collective goal-seeking behavior of the im/migrants (Raza, Beaujot, and Woldemicael 2013).

Im/Migrant Identity, Equal Citizenship, and Forever Foreigners Narratives: Small Story 4

When I lived in the Philippines, I was special because I was American and my hair was light [brown, not black], so they called me *Kana 'yan*, which is the shortened form of American. Here, when people ask me where I am from, I would go, are you curious about my heritage or are you asking me where I live? I do not come right out and say I am Filipino because are you questioning me about what I look like or are you questioning me about my speech patterns? It is not that I am uncomfortable, but I just think I want to focus on the fact that my parents are Filipino because a part of their question is related to my skin color. So, I sometimes say I graduated from Greenville HS Pennsylvania and both my parents are Filipino, and that answers their question if it is about where your parents are from and not where I was born and raised. So, for me, when asked that question, it conjures up race, ethnicity, education, belonging, and it ties into identity, and this is not necessarily just for you, me, but for other Filipino immigrants, too. (Linda)

I am reconstructing my identity of sorts. Maybe I just need to nurture my American identity and I need to work out or learn more about America. I am still new here so I need to find out the culture, what I am here, how I would function effectively, and sort of live my life as an American, while deep inside I am an established Filipino … I think. (Andrea)

I think that even though we are American, there is always the subtle discrimination, and you will never be as good … yes, we are like second class citizens because of our skin color and speech patterns. (Linda)

We tend to adapt our citizenship to suite the situations we are in … it's easier. (Amalia)

For example, when my birth certificate said White, I was not disappointed, I feel like I would have been disappointed if it had said Black because of segregation back then. But, when I first saw my birth certificate, I said to my mom, we are clearly brown, and I felt bad, and this was in New York, and back then, you could only be black or white. Why can't they make a category for brown, we are not white. There are categories for South Asian or Pacific Islanders, I could check the Hispanic aspect because of our heritage, but I couldn't because I do not have the commonality of language. (Linda)

I am Asian as opposed to Pacific Islander. (Andrea)

One time, we were at a social occasion and my husband intimated that I was from the Philippines, and

> they assumed that because I am Filipino I married to become an American citizen, to me, that is very pejorative. So, I said no, we met in college. It is irritating to me when such assumptions are made … I am torn about that because my family is lucky that they were here, I am lucky that I was born here. In the Philippines, you are Filipino by heritage, in America, you are American because you were born here. (Linda)

The storied citizenship experiences of this group of immigrants are not assumed to be transparent, but are the sources of multiple layers of meanings embedded in Gramsci (1971) hegemonic intellectual and moral discourse. In small story 4, the speakers' "knowledge is not neutral but is highly related to the social, economic, and political contexts in which it is created … it is rooted in and shaped by specific interests and social arrangements" (Banks and McGee Bank 2004:230). The speakers in this small story, like several of the other study participants, contextualize the power relations that play key roles in their lived citizenships. These power relations juxtapose notions of forever foreigners and visible minorities with the im/migrants positionalities. In concert, these factors force them to decide if they will align themselves with racialized minorities similar to them in appearance, or will they attempt to "pass."

Jo (2004:36) reports that among "many non-white immigrants, legal citizenship status does not make a difference in their daily lives … they feel alienated and are treated as foreigner or other by fellow citizens despite their status." This prompts Jo's (2004:36) questioning of what then makes one a "true citizens of the U.S." This leads to what Van Kleef and Werquin (2013) see as the complex process of social interaction inseparable from the construction of knowledge and individual identity. Hence, it is the im/migrants' attempts to access new social settings that prompt their re/negotiation of their identities (Jacobson 1996). Critical Theory puts forward the notion of antideology, which, according to Hall (1997), is a set of ideas that construct how a group perceives reality and the world. The im/migrants in this piece are operating within the realm of CT's antideology, but instead of re/affirming their identities outside of the dominant socio-political structures, they have adapted practices that suggest they are moving more towards dominant norms. Essentially, Filipino im/migration has been construed as a process resulting from a form of internalized oppression among Filipinos and Filipino Americans before and after migrating to America (David and Okazaki 2006; Wiley 2012). The extent to which colonial mentality represents a general explanation of Filipino im/migration deserves closer scrutiny as research in this topic is still sparse and existing studies are limited in their methodological approaches, generalizability, and representations (David and Okazaki 2006).

According to Cui and Kelly (2013), the us/them division results in a forever foreigner identity of racialized minorities. This represents the lived truth of the speaker in small story 2, who talked about the disadvantage she saw in the use of a foreign accent. However, as mentioned earlier, the bidirectional assimilation strategy of many im/migrants may serve to counter, to some degree, this effect. In fact, in the forever foreigner narrative above, some of the speakers attempted to mediate this by re/negotiating not only their identities, but also how they assert their lived experiences within the context of assumptions made about them. Assumptions that they perceive to be steeped in negative stereotypes about im/migrants.

Cui and Kelly (2013) pose the question, are all citizens equal regardless of race, ethnicity, and country of origin? In answer to this question, these writers suggest that there needs to be an exploration of the ideological and hegemonic function in constructing social identities and social relations in order to raise people's consciousness of race and ethnicity. This point is significant within the context of Filipino immigrants because it immediately compels an explanatory distinction between inter and intra group dynamics. Outside of their group, like other Asian immigrants in the U.S., the speakers in this piece are more inclined to identify with white/ness, a direct outcome of hegemonic influences in im/migrant self-identification (Ching Jen 2011).

The question then is why does this group of Filipino im/migrants reject the notion of *colored* in racial and ethnic classifications and gravitate away from established minority grouping *colored folks*, even when they are not first generation immigrants? Here, the imperatives of CRT challenge "conceptual models of U.S. citizenship in the context of intersecting dimensions of differences and present citizenship as a set of social and cultural memberships and exclusions beyond just political rights and legal status" (Ching Jen 2011:159). Henceforward, the articulation of identities is a product of social-geographies and socio-political circumstances. Subsumed in this is the notion that among this group of Filipino migrants, they think their citizenship is more legitimate than *other* immigrant groups because of their ideological existence that translates into lived citizenship (Kang 2002). An exemplar comes from speaker (Linda) who expressed her feelings about being labeled White on a U.S. birth certificate, while connecting this to assumptions made about how she arrived at her U.S. citizenship once her ethnicity is identified. Her response suggests that she rejects being *othered*, thus consciously and deliberately narrates her citizenship so as to legitimize her legal status while still identifying her heritage.

Conclusion

Not all the critical discourses that emerged from the interviews with this group of Filipino im/migrants were included in this piece. Critical Discourse Analysis, along with Critical Theory, Dependency, and Neo-Coloniality, were apt analytical lens for the narratives that emerged from the interviews. Fairclough (1992:9) notes, "the link between socio-cultural practice and text is mediated by discursive practice." Hence, the analysis of the lived citizenship experiences of Filipino immigrants in the U.S. is embedded in the institutional frameworks that influence social relations. This points to the need to give more voice to their nuanced lived citizenship perspectives.

In concluding, we are compelled to focus on only two of the discourses that emerged—because of what a friend said to us. A Filipino friend read the first draft of this paper, when she was done reading, she said, "Racialized minorities? Don't you think that term is a little too strong to describe Filipino im/migrants? Forever foreigners, I have never heard us

being referred to as forever foreigners." These comments are instructive to say the least. Critical Discourse Analysis points to the use of discourse/narratives to re/produce social constructs. The Filipino im/migrants' narratives about race and skin color indicate that they do not identify with other minority immigrant groups of color because they are able to mask their accents and are able to pass as non-im/migrant citizens. Drawing parallels with notions of possessed territory (Cui and Kelly 2013), the legal political citizenship/status acquired/obtained/earned by many Filipino migrants and international migrants in general imparts a simplistic, un-layered perspective on the experiences of migrants in the U.S. This perspective delegitimizes how, for an immigrant, citizenship is multidimensional and ultimately embedded in their citizenship acts/lived experiences. For many immigrants, all these perspectives are legitimate, right, and are indicative of their veracity, hence calling into question notions of equal citizenship. We, like Cui and Kelly (2013:158), pose the questions, "are we equal citizens regardless of race, ethnicity, and country of origin," and how do our answers to these questions influence our thoughts, feelings, and actions? If that is the case, does this not then make their citizenship flexible—a form of hybridizes of their lived experience/existence? And if so, are all first generation immigrants forever foreigners within the context of institutionalized metanarratives (see: Banks and McGee Banks 2004)? And if the concept of forever foreigners is applied, what then is these Filipino im/migrants right to place?

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Appendix 1. Filipino Immigrants Lived Citizenships. Interview Questions

Please read the statement below. If at any point during this interview you become uncomfortable with the line of questioning, we will stop.

The theoretical focus of this research is notions of citizenship. Here, citizenship is multidimensional and include the legal, political/nation-state, social, cultural, educational, economic, connectivities, global, and transnational component of a migrant's lived experiences. This research is not about whether or not you are legal, illegal, or have or have non-sworn in as a citizens of the U.S. The focus is on your perceptions, feelings, and acts of citizenship that define your existence as an immigrant in the United States. To maintain the integrity of your experiences/voice, I will attempt to tell your story as verbatim as possible. You will not be identified in any way in the published work. If you wish, I will send you a complimentary copy of the final document.

Open-Ended Questions/Themes for Interview With Filipino Immigrants

Motivations to migrate and recruitment

- Why did you migrate?
- To what extent do you think you had a choice about migrating to the U.S.?
- Describe the social and economic condition in the Philippines that may have influenced your decision to migrate.
- Why did you choose the U.S. and the current city you live in? Describe the extent to which friends, family, or a local Filipino community/organization influence where you chose to migrate to.

- If you had a choice, would you have chosen to migrate to another country/city (elaborate)?
- What role does language play in your decision to migrate and some of your migration experiences? Tell us stories about some of the examples of your experiences.

Transnational networks and the concept of home and the right to place

- How do you remain connected to your Filipino culture (language, foods, stores, restaurants, religion, networks, local communities, etc.)?
- How do connections to these networks make you feel?
- When the term "home" comes to mind, what is the first thing you think of? Why? How does this influence how you feel about living in the U.S.?
- Describe some of the experiences you have had that made you feel uncomfortable around Americans who are not immigrants. Why do you think this situation/s made you feel uncomfortable?
- To what extent do you feel like you belong to or do not belong here in the U.S.? How do you handle these feelings? How does it influence how you feel about your home country?
- Do you return to the Philippines for any reason? Elaborate and give examples. How does this make you feel?
- How do you give back to your relatives and friends who still live in the Philippines? How does this make you feel? Does it make you feel like you want to give more and why? Did the need to support your friends and family back home influence your decision to migrate? What role do you think the government of the Philippines played in your migration? If the government facilitated your migration through their policies, does that make you want to give back to your country?
- Would you assist family members and friends to come to the U.S.? Why? What are some of the advise you give to individuals in the Philippines about the migration process?

Identity

- As an immigrant, what does citizenship mean to you?
- How does living and working in the U.S. make you feel about your Filipino citizenship?
- Describe how you have had to reconstruct your identity: (a) since you migrated? (b) as you earn more and improve your social and economic status? (c) relative to the social setting you find yourselves in?
- To what extent do you feel like your identity and actions are dependent on where you are and whom you are interacting with? Give some examples.

Concerns about enforcement, detention, and deportation

- Do you know of anyone who had to return to the Philippines because his or her visa expired? Have you kept in contact with them? What is their story and how are they coping now? Do you feel obligated to assist them?
- Have you at any point been concerned about deportation (related to people you know or just Filipinos in general [illegal immigrants])? Elaborate on your reasons.
- Describe how you think you would cope if you had to return to the Philippines to live and work. What would be the reason/s you would have to return?

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