

**FILIPINO WOMEN AND THEIR CITIZENSHIP IN AUSTRALIA:  
IN SEARCH OF POLITICAL SPACE**

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree

*Doctor of Philosophy*

from

**UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

by

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School of History and Politics  
2003

## CERTIFICATION

I, Glenda Lynna Anne Tibe-Bonifacio, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor Philosophy, in the School of History and Politics, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referred or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

GLENDALYNNA ANNE TIBE-BONIFACIO

26 August 2003

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APA	Australian-Philippine Association
BIMPR	Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research
BIR	Bureau of Immigration Research
CFI	Club Filipino Illawarra
DIEA	Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
IFWG	Illawarra Filipino Women's Group
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background

## ABSTRACT

This research examined the meaning and practise of Australian citizenship in the lives of migrant Filipino women in Australia. It utilized the life story approach and participant observation in Sydney and Wollongong. The narratives were analysed using a combination of feminist theoretical models of women's citizenship to underscore the different ways they construct a political space in negotiating their subject position as wives, mothers, paid workers, volunteers, electors, and members of community groups.

Filipino women have a high valuation of Australian citizenship. Their motivations to become Australian citizens are not only based on the practical benefits derived from that status *vis a vis* retaining their Philippine citizenship but also the idea of belonging to the Australian community. They have employed their understanding of Australian citizenship to empower themselves in their personal and professional lives.

This research explored three spaces where Australian citizenship is practised – the home, the workplace, and the community. Women in both Filipino homes and bi-cultural homes have made use of their knowledge of Australian citizenship in their relationships with their husbands and children. Those undertaking paid work have actively sought to participate in the economic benefits of citizenship although their entry into the labour market has been marked by structural and social constraints such as non-recognition of overseas qualifications, racism and sexism. In the community, the women are engaged in citizenship practice as volunteers in local schools and in community associations. Their participation in varied activities is mutually beneficial - enhancing their personal confidence and potentials and at the same time contributing to the needs of others.

Filipino women have dual identities- a Filipino identity and an Australian identity as citizens. These two identities coexist in their lives. A Filipino identity is directed towards a particular social unit, the family; while an Australian identity is directed towards an abstract state perceived to be multicultural. They embrace an 'Australian' identity through shared experiences such as language and democratic practices.

In a racially structured society, Australian citizenship offers a common political identity by which immigrant Filipino women equalize their racialised status with 'white' Australians. Becoming an Australian citizen provides them with the means to become active agents of change in their own way.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Wollongong through the International Postgraduate Research Scholarship has made this research project possible. But, completing it in a span of three years is a collective enterprise.

I am greatly indebted to my supervisors, Rebecca Albury and Catriona Elder, for their untiring support and guidance without which this thesis would not have found form. My sincere gratitude to Kathleen Weekley for reading and commenting on the draft thesis; to the staff of the Faculty of Arts, especially Robyn Foster whom I incessantly approached for technical and administrative assistance.

This research owes its depth to the Filipino women in Wollongong and Sydney for their ideas on becoming Australian citizens. I am most thankful to Lilia McKinnon for her warmth in welcoming me to their community activities.

Undertaking an academic project in another country is doubly hard without the support of family and friends. I am fortunate to have found new friends and family relations in Australia who have made both research and leisure a possibility. To the group of Efleda and Nelson Logro, Susan and Edwin Villanoza, Dorie and Gordon Gifford, Zenaida and Brian Mardon, Rogee and Ed Pe-Pua, and Pat Carter – for the wonderful memories.

I am grateful to my friends, Emlou Tansingco and Leizl Sagliba somewhere in the Philippines for their help in confirming some library sources. Also, a million miles away, I am privileged to have Professor Emeritus Josefa Saniel and Dr. Carolyn Sobritchea as mentors in the University of the Philippines with whom I owe my research ‘abilities’ and interest on women’s studies; that even after formal years of instruction they have never failed to write a recommendation.



To my family in the Philippines, my parents, Dr. Samuel Rogelio P. Tibe and Lourdes Bercero Tibe; my parents-in law, Engr. Walderico Bonifacio, Sr. and Balbina Ruiz Bonifacio; other members of the clan, Charito and Francisco Uy; Yoyoy and Joy Bonifacio; Butch and Adelfa Bonifacio; Gemma Lour Tibe-Nayra, Geraldine Joy Tibe and Edna Espos for their encouragement and invaluable assistance in our sojourn to Australia.

To my own family in Australia without whom I would not be able to undertake this research: my husband, Ike, and the little women in my life whom I noticed have grown so much since I started writing the first sentence of this research – Charmaine, Czarina, Charelle, Czyna and Charithe – for helping and bearing with me through the days and nights.

Lastly, up above the heavens, is the spirit that guides me.

To all of you, thank you.

G.L.A.T.B.

## I

## INTRODUCTION

Being a woman, a migrant and a citizen is to hold a complex subject position in today's world. It is complex, first, because women in this situation embody multiple roles and identities. Each role is quite distinct from the other yet interrelated. Second, the often-differing social, political and economic conditions in their country of origin and the host society affect migrant women. The shape of the role of women differs in the different countries and migration, therefore, entails what Linda McDowell calls the 'renegotiation of gender divisions.'<sup>1</sup> Third, emigration does not involve one act but an on-going process of negotiation between the individual and the adopted country.

This study explores the interrelationship between women, migration and citizenship by analysing the experiences of a group of first-generation Filipino women in Australia, particularly their perspectives and attitudes towards acquiring Australian citizenship and how it affects their roles as wives, mothers, workers and members of community organizations as well as their identity as Filipinos. These analyses in acknowledging the multiple subject positions extend knowledge of Filipino women as Australian citizens beyond their stereotypical construction as mail-order brides and victims of domestic violence.<sup>2</sup>

**A. Background of the Study**

This thesis poses the question, what is it to be a citizen of another country?

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<sup>1</sup> McDowell, *Gender, Identity & Place*, p 2.

<sup>2</sup> A 'mail-order bride' is a woman contracted for marriage through a catalogue or by mail run by introduction agencies. Domestic violence is the most publicised social issue affecting ethnic women in Australia. Kathleen Maltzahn and Chat Garcia report in their study that violence mars the experience of migrant fiancés or spouses, particularly Asian women. It has been widely publicised that Filipina spouses are 'more likely to be killed than Aussies.' In the absence of reliable figures, it is estimated to be six times more than that is attributed to Australian women in general. See Maltzahn and Garcia, 'Mail Order Brides in Australia,' *Women in Action*, Spring 1993, pp 37-40; 'RP Wives More Likely to be Killed than Aussies,' *Philippine Daily Inquirer* 30 October 1996, p 7; Kakampi, 'Forum Tackles Violence Against Filipinas in Australia' <http://www.philsol.nl/of/Kakampi-australia-feb00.htm> [15/1/02]; Alcorn, 'How Filipino Brides for All Seasons Finish Up in Shelters,' *Times on Sunday* 8 November 1987, p 27; Dempsey, 'Filipina Brides,' *Sun Herald* 14 July 1991, p 12; Kennedy, 'Probe Plea on Killings,' *Sunday Herald Sun* 15 August 1993, p 10.

Countless reports have indicated that immigrant Filipinos, generally, have high valuation of citizenship with higher than average adoption rate.<sup>3</sup> However, this high uptake of citizenship has not been examined in the context of women's lives. Tomas Hammar comments that 'the complexity of the many factors which are involved in individual decisions to apply for naturalization is seldom analysed.'<sup>4</sup> This study fills the gap in knowledge through its exploration of the meanings attached to Australian citizenship and the factors involved in changing political allegiance amongst a group of Filipino women. The granting of naturalization appears to be the ultimate goal of many immigrants regardless of gender and, when citizenship is acquired the integration process in the host society is complete. I argue that becoming citizens in the adopted country not only involves complying with the formal requirements of naturalisation but has subjective implications, especially in daily life. I take the view of citizenship from within the personal experiences of immigrant Filipino women rather than the conventional premise of citizenship from the state to the individual. By looking at the meaning of Australian citizenship at the personal level another aspect of integration into the new adopted country is added to understandings of citizenship. Because citizenship is the embodiment of political belonging, Filipino women try to carve for themselves a place in their new country, in my term, a 'political space' where, by virtue of their understanding of Australian citizenship, they situate themselves in relation to other citizens and the larger community.

In analysing this search for a political space, the original status of Filipino women as citizens in the Philippines has a significant bearing on how they negotiate their newly acquired citizenship in Australia. Hence, this research contrasts and explores their former status in the Philippines and their citizenship status in Australia. I argue that Filipino women share the same democratic ideals promoted in Australia although they may have a different cultural orientation. I argue that a shared democratic tradition allows the Filipina to negotiate her space as an Australian citizen by drawing on familiar institutions and ideas

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<sup>3</sup> The citizenship acquisition rate of Filipinos in the United States was 63 per cent while in Australia it was 93 per cent in the 1990s. See 'Asians Led the Citizenship Boom,' *Forecast* 17(12), December 1997, p 8; 'The Philippines-Born Community,' Australian Immigration Statistics, <http://www.immi.gov.au/statistics/infosummary/textversion/philippines.htm> [10/10/02].

in the Philippines such as rights and obligations. Following Chantal Mouffe's 'positive' idea of human liberty, I argue that the use of Australian citizenship by immigrant Filipino women allows them to negotiate their position as the racial 'Other' and so reflect their individual capacities of participation in the social life of the community.

### 1. *Objectives of the Study*

In documenting the experiences of a group of first-generation immigrant Filipino women as Australian citizens this thesis has specific aims. First, it seeks to identify the motivations for adopting Australian citizenship. Second, to analyse the practise of citizenship in Australia and determine its limitations in the context of race and gender. Third, to determine the role of Filipino associations in Australia in terms of their relevance in the lives of Filipino women as Australian citizens. Lastly, it examines the perspectives of Filipino women on their identity as Filipinos while at the same time being Australian citizens.

### 2. *Significance of the Study*

Studies on migrant Filipino women tend to revolve around important but limited negative themes, like exploitation, trafficking, abuse and violence.<sup>5</sup> For example, in Australia, Filipino women immigrants are analysed in terms of the stereotypical image of the mail-order bride.<sup>6</sup> Their commodification in all sorts of packages has captured the

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<sup>4</sup> Hammar, *Democracy and the Nation State*, p 85.

<sup>5</sup> See 'The Plight of Filipinos Working Overseas,' *Review of Women's Studies* 11(1), 1991, pp 61-86; de Guzman, 'Filipino Overseas Contract Workers' in Paganoni, *Migration From the Philippines*, pp 134-138; 'Out Into the Dangerous World,' *The Economist* 30 September 1995, p 35; Shenon, 'For Filipinos, A Symbol Dies in Singapore,' *New York Times Current Events Edition* 18 March 1995, p A3; Batnag, 'Trafficked Women,' *Philippine Graphic* 28 June 1993, pp 6-9; 'The Lost Daughters,' *The Economist* 11 May 1996, p S7; Ortego, 'Prejudiced View on Filipinas,' *Philippine Panorama* 24 April 1994, pp 16-17; Skolnik and Boontinand, 'Traffic in Women in Asia-Pacific,' *Forum for Applied Research and Public Policy* 14(1), Spring 1999, pp 76-80; Wallace, 'Filipina Workers Abused Abroad,' *Minneapolis Star Tribune* 07-04-1995, pp 04B; Rosca, 'The Philippines's Shameful Export,' *The Nation* 17 April 1995, p 522; 'Philippines: Women Bearing the Cross of Globalisation,' *WIN News* 24(4), Autumn 1998, p 62; Chin, 'Walls of Silence and Late Twentieth Century Representations of the Foreign Female Domestic Worker,' *The International Migration Review* 31(2), Summer 1997, pp 353-385; Centre for Philippine Concerns, *Confronting Sexual Exploitation*; San Juan Jr, 'The Symbolic Economy of Gender, Class and Nationality in Filipina Migrant Worker's Narratives,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 7, 1998, p 20.

<sup>6</sup> See Maltzahn and Garcia, *op cit*; Robinson, "Of Mail-Order Brides and 'Boy's Own' Tales," *Feminist Review* 52, Spring 1996, pp 53-68; Mowatt and Wall, *Dealing With the Media*; Morden, 'Humanism vs. Racism in the Mail-Order Bride Issue,' *Pilipino Magazine* 4(6), December-January 1990/91, pp 7-14;

attention of the media, bureaucrats and academics alike. This study moves beyond this narrow focus, analysing another, in fact a positive, aspect of Filipino immigration - the adoption of citizenship.

This research contributes to the body of literature on Filipino female migration, which is largely concentrated on temporary labour migration to many countries except Australia.<sup>7</sup> By focusing on permanent migration of Filipino women to Australia, this study provides another aspect of settlement experience using perspectives on citizenship. In addition, migration and citizenship amongst immigrant women from Asia are rarely given scholarly attention. There is a dearth of materials on citizenship practice in Australia of minority or racialised immigrant women from Southeast Asia. The methodology employed in examining the subjective view of citizenship that intersects across gender, race, and migration fills a gap in migration studies in the Asia-Pacific region. This study provides an insight into the ways immigrant Filipino women make meaning on their newfound citizenship in a country they wish to call their own.

Furthermore, as a result of the massive post-war migration, the meaning of citizenship is the subject of ongoing critical analysis in Australia. The contribution of ethnic communities, particularly Filipino women, in shaping the meaning of Australian citizenship is significant in such an ethnically diverse society. This research, therefore, is a pioneering effort in the study of the exercise of citizenship amongst Filipino migrant women in Australia and seeks to understand women's citizenship.

## **B. Review of Related Studies**

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Pendlebury, *Filipino Brides in Remote Areas*; Saroca, 'Filipino Women, Sexual Politics, and the Gendered Racist Discourse of the Mail-Order Bride,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies* 2(2), November 1997, pp 89-103; Bailey, 'Filipino Brides,' *Sydney Morning Herald* 8 February 1986, pp 6-9; Ungson, 'Filipino Brides,' *Asian Bureau Australia Newsletter* 68, April 1983, p 3.

<sup>7</sup> See Yukawa, *Migration from the Philippines, 1975-1995*, pp 1-35; Chant and McIlwaine, *Women of a Lesser Cost*, pp 33-34; Tyner, 'The Global Context of Gendered Labor Migration from the Philippines to the United States,' *The American Behavioral Scientist* 42(4), January 1999, pp 671-689; Bello, 'Increasing Feminisation of Labour Migration,' *We!* 4 May 2002; Cheng, 'Labor Migration and International Sexual Division of Labor' in Kelson and DeLaet, *Gender and Immigration*, pp 43-54; Campani, 'Labour Markets and Family Networks' in Rudolph and Morokvasic, *Bridging States and Markets*, pp 191-208.

There has been no study conducted of immigrant Filipino women and their practise of citizenship in Australia. However, there are related works in the English language, which are important in this study. One group of studies concerns Filipino women and migration and the other on migrant women and citizenship.

### 1. *Filipino women and migration*

The majority of the published studies on Filipino women migration are concentrated on labour migration and the issues surrounding their deplorable situation.<sup>8</sup> Some studies approach female labour migration differently, focusing on ideas of agency and gospel. In this approach, agency refers to the negotiation of women migrants and their family members in transnational social practices.<sup>9</sup> The fate of Filipino women migrant workers is also viewed in terms of how the Christian gospel empowers them to change power- relationships.<sup>10</sup> Other studies emphasise the effect of Filipino women's migration on their families in the Philippines.<sup>11</sup>

There has also been a recent interest in the settlement experiences of migrant Filipinos in the United States, Canada and Australia. These studies provide, in general, a

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<sup>8</sup> See Battistella and Paganoni, *Philippine Labor Migration*; Catholic Institute for International Relations, *The Labor Trade*; Beltran and Rodriguez, *Filipino Women Migrant Workers*; Medina et al, *OCWS in Crisis*; Tigno, 'Migration, the Market and Society,' *Philippine Social Sciences Review* 51(1-4), January-December 1993, pp 57-78; Flores, *Problems and Coping Behavior of Filipina Domestic Helpers in the Middle East*; 'Combating Racism Against Migrant Workers,' *Women in Action* 1, 2000, pp 28; Pratt, 'From Registered Nurse to Registered Nanny,' *Economic Geography* 75(3), July 1999, pp 215-236; San Juan, Jr. 'Interrogating Transmigrancy, Remapping Diaspora,' *Discourse* 23(3), 2001, pp 52-74; Medel-Anoñuevo, 'Feminist Reflections on the International Migration of Women,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 1, 1992, pp 42-49; Tacoli, 'International Migration and the Restructuring of Gender Asymmetries,' *The International Migration Review* 33(3), Fall 1999, pp 658-682; Samonte, *Sources of Stress and Coping Mechanisms Among Filipinas in West Germany and Holland*; Constable, 'Filipina Workers in Hong Kong Homes' in Ehrenreich and Hochschild, *Global Woman*, pp 115-141; Mydans, 'Philippines Trying to Regulate One of its Most Profitable Exports,' *The New York Times* 12 May 1988, p 6; Parrenas, *Servants of Globalization; Filipino Migration to Europe*, <http://www.philsol.nl/of/country-profiles.htm> [15/1/02]; *Filipino Migrant Agenda in Europe*, <http://www.philsol.nl/of/MigrantAgenda-nov97.htm> [15/1/02]; Rispens-Noel, *Philippine International Migration*, <http://www.philsol.nl/fora/FFON97-summary.htm> [15/1/02]; Hogsholm, *Forum on Philippine International Migration*, <http://www.philsol.nl/fora/FFON97-editorial.htm> [15/1/02].

<sup>9</sup> See Barber, 'Agency in Philippine Women's Labour Migration and Provisional Diaspora,' *Women's Studies International Forum* 23(4), 2000, pp 399-411.

<sup>10</sup> See Corpuz-Brock, 'Gospel, Cultures, and Filipina Migrant Workers,' *International Review of Mission* 85(336), January 1996, p 63.

<sup>11</sup> See Cohen, 'Mom is a Stranger,' *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal* 32(3), Fall 2000, p 76; Parrenas, 'Mothering from a Distance,' *Feminist Studies* 27(2), Summer 2001, pp 361-390; Nicodemus, *Separated by Opportunity*, <http://www.philsol.nl/F-OFFamilv-nov97.htm> [15/1/02].

descriptive account of the immigrant Filipino community and are useful in putting into perspective the location of Filipinos in the host society. Most of these studies, however, pertain to the Filipino community in America, their traditional destination since the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>12</sup> The Filipino-Americans are also studied as part of the collective Asian-Americans, usually in comparative perspective.<sup>13</sup> In Canada, Anita Beltran Chen in *From Sunbelt to Snowbelt* discusses the profile of Filipino-Canadians in contrast to those in the United States including the issues confronting different Filipino social groups. There are a number of studies on Filipino immigrants in Australia. Like their North American counterparts, these studies provide a basic understanding of the Filipino community; an important phase in the development of future research agenda. A number of these studies discuss the settlement and profile of Filipinos in Australia.<sup>14</sup> A demographic study by Richard Jackson and Ester Revilleza Flores, *No Filipinos in Manilla*, highlights the different characteristics of Filipino settlement between those married to Filipinos and those in mixed marriages. Mixed marriages are said to have contributed to the high citizenship adoption of Filipino women in Australia. A study by Fadzilah Cooke and John Western, *Filipinas and Work*, emphasises the non-recognition of Filipino women's overseas

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<sup>12</sup> See Almirol, *Ethnic Identity and Social Negotiation*; Posadas and Guyotte, 'Filipinos and Race in Twentieth Century Chicago,' *Amerasia Journal* 24(2), 1998, pp 135-154; Bonus, *Locating Filipino Americans*; Okamura, *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora*; Card, 'Assimilation and Adaptation,' *Philippine Sociological Review* 32, 1984, pp 55-67; San Juan, Jr, *From Exile to Diaspora*; Espiritu, *Filipino American Lives*; Brainard, *Philippine Woman in America*; Haas, 'Filipinos in Hawaii and Institutional Racism,' *Philippine Sociological Review* 32, 1984, pp 41-52; Yu, 'Filipino Migration and Community Organizations in the United States,' *California Sociologist* 3(2), Summer 1980, pp 76-102; Soriano, 'Filipino Hawaiian Migration and Adaptation,' *Social Process* 29, 1982, pp 163-179; Root, *Filipino Americans*; Francia and Gamalinda, "Flippin" ; Cruz, 'Filipino-American Community Organizations in Washington, 1900s-1930s' in Chan et al, *Peoples of Color in the American West*, pp 235-245.

<sup>13</sup> See Mangiafico, *Contemporary American Immigrants*; Fong, *The Contemporary Asian American Experience*; Gardner and Wright, 'Female Asian Immigrants in Honolulu' in Fawcett et al, *Women in the Cities of Asia*, pp 323-346; Matsuoka and Ryujin, 'Asian American Immigrants,' *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 18(3), September 1991, pp 123-133; Azuma, 'Racial Struggle, Immigrant Nationalism, and Ethnic Identity,' *Pacific Historical Review* 67(2), May 1998, p 163; Chu, *Assimilating Asians*; Colmeneras, Jr., 'Recent Filipino and Korean Immigrants to the United States,' *Asian Migrant* 3(4), October-December 1990, pp 113-117; Fan, 'Asian Women in Hawaii,' *NWSA Journal* 8(1), Spring 1996, p 70; Becker, 'Dying Away from Home,' *The Journal of Gerontology* 57B(2), March 2002, pp S79-S95.

<sup>14</sup> See Jackson, 'Recent Migration to Australia from the Philippines' in Iletto and Sullivan, *Discovering AustralAsia*, pp 136-155; Cariño, 'Filipino Immigrants to Australia,' *Asian Migrant* 7(2), April-June 1994, pp 58-65; Balaba and Roca, 'A Socio-Economic Profile of the Filipino Community in Australia Based on the 1986 Census Data' in Coughlan, *The Diverse Asians*, pp 55-83; Khoo, *Community Profiles 1996 Census*; Ang, 'The Filipino Settlement Experience in Australia,' *Asian Migrant* 8(2), April-June 1995, pp 42-46; Channell, *Filipinos in Adelaide*; Carvana, *Filipinos in Western Sydney*; Kruizinga, *The Filipino Speaking*

qualifications and their employment patterns in Brisbane.<sup>15</sup> Some studies on Filipinos in Australia have presented other aspects of settlement such as family relationships, community networking, and child-care arrangements.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the scholarly work available on Filipino women in Australia is concerned with the mixed-marriage phenomenon.<sup>17</sup> Fadzilah Cooke in *Australian-Filipino Marriages in the 1980s: The Myth and the Reality* conducted an extensive study on Filipino-Australian marriages, mainly addressing the reasons for marriage and the personal characteristics of the Australian men and Filipino women. Desmond Cahill in *Intermarriages in International Context* undertook a worldwide study on intermarriage of Filipino women with Australian, Japanese and Swiss men.<sup>18</sup> Related to inter-racial marriages is the issue of violence towards Filipino woman in Australia.<sup>19</sup> These works reinforce my assertion that representations of Filipino women as immigrants in Australia

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*Community of the Illawarra*; Elberich, *Profile of the Filipino Community*; Owen, 'The Role of Filipino Migrants' in Filipino National Conference, *Filipino-Australian Relations Vision 2000*.

<sup>15</sup> See also Garcia-Ruivivar, 'Filipino Migrants and their Issues and Concerns' in Filipino National Conference, *op cit*.

<sup>16</sup> See Soriano, 'Filipino Families in Australia' in Hartley, *Families and Cultural Diversity*, pp 96-120; Powson, *Filipino Australian Families*; Zubiri, *ANI Selected Writings of Filipino-Australian Elderly*; Juanta, 'As Filipinos Treasure Their Elderly,' *Ethnic Communities Council of South Australia Newsletter* 2, April-June 1990, pp 18-20; Morrissey et al, *Community Networks in the Western Sydney Regions*; D'Mello and Esmaguel, *The Filipinos*.

<sup>17</sup> See Smith and Kaminskas, 'Female Filipino Migration to Australia,' *Asian Migrant* 5(3), July-September 1992, pp 72-81; Carmichael, *With This Ring*, p 86; Boer, *Are You Looking for a Filipino Wife?*; Tapales, 'Women, Migration and the Mail-Order Bride Phenomenon,' *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 34(4), October 1990, pp 311-322; Scaramella, *The Situation of Filipino Brides in Northern Areas of Western Australia*; Ramilo and Droscher, *Filipino Women*; Guanio-Bartels and Pe-Pua, *The Development of a Radio Information Package for Filipino Women*; Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *Marrying and Migrating to Australia*; David, *Stereotype of the Filipina*; Roces, 'Filipino Women in Central Queensland,' *Northern Radius* 3(3), December 1996, pp 13-15; Vogels, *An Analysis of Some Studies Made on Filipino Women in Australia*; Chuah et al, 'Does Australia Have a Filipino Brides Problem?' *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 22(4), November 1987, pp 573-583; Wall, 'Filipino Brides,' *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 18(3), August 1983, pp 217-220; Watkins, 'Filipino Brides Revisited-A Reply to Robinson and Wall,' *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 18(1), August 1983, pp 221-222; Sadleir, 'The Problems Faced by Some Filipino Women Married to Australian Citizens or Residents,' *Immigration News* 13, January-February 1998, p 8; Iredale, 'Patterns of Spouse/Fiancé Sponsorship to Australia,' *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 3(4), 1994, pp 547-566; King, *Filipino-Australian Cross Cultural Marriages*; Perdon, *Brown Americans of Asia*, pp 19-30.

<sup>18</sup> See also Samonte, *Filipino-Japanese Couples*.

<sup>19</sup> See Cunneen and Stubbs, *Gender, Race and International Relations*; Iredale et al, *Serial Sponsorship*; Kakampipi, *Forum Tackles Violence Against Filipinas in Australia*, <http://www.philso1.nl/of/Kakampipi-australia-feb00.htm>[15/1/02]; RP Wives More Likely to be Killed than Aussies, *op cit*; Tan and Davidson, 'Filipino-Australian Marriages,' *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 29(3), 1994, pp 265-282.



more often focus on issues of the women as mail-order brides or victims of domestic abuse and serial sponsorships without much recognition of their personal autonomy and the complex processes of migration.

## 2. *Migrant women and citizenship*

Immigration and citizenship are intrinsically linked to the idea of membership in the nation-state so that most studies on citizenship have been focused on the formal aspects of becoming citizens amongst different types of immigrants. There has been a reinvigorated interest in citizenship and migration in the 1990s as a consequence of the creation of the European Union, the increasing number of displaced peoples brought about by war, political instability or economic slumps. These studies, generally, focus on the legal status, rights, identity and participation of immigrants.<sup>20</sup> Other works on immigration and citizenship emphasise the transnational character of migrants. These are good sources for examining Filipino immigrants and the ways they continue to make connections with their homeland.<sup>21</sup> Some studies on migration and citizenship examine its implications on the existing plurality of cultures in modern nation-states.<sup>22</sup> Another study is about the

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<sup>20</sup> See Fieldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship*; Juss, *Immigration, Nationality and Citizenship*; Pickus, *Immigration and Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century*; Aguilar, 'The Triumph of Instrumental Citizenship,' *Asian Studies Review* 23(3), September 1999, pp 307-336; Evans, 'Citizenship and Human Rights in the Age of Globalization,' *Alternatives: Social Transformations and Humane Governance* 25(4), October-December 2000, p 415; Hammar, *op cit*; Jacobson, *Rights Across Borders*; Benhabib, 'Citizens, Residents, and Aliens in a Changing World,' *Social Research*, Fall, 1999, pp 709-744; Poy, *Citizenship and Immigration*; Thurnton, 'Citizenship,' *European Review of History* 7(2), Autumn 2000, pp 291-292; Kerber, 'The Meanings of Citizenship,' *Dissent* 44(4), Fall 1997, pp 33-37; Castles, *Challenges to National Identity and Citizenship*; Pearson, 'Looking Both Ways' in Ward et al, *Women and Citizenship in Europe*, p 7; Rea, 'Social Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities in the European Union' in Martiniello, *Migration, Citizenship and Ethno-national Identities in the European Union*, pp 179-198; Habermas, 'Citizenship and National Identity,' *Praxis International* 12(1), 1992, pp 1-19; Buendia and Tigno, 'The Resurgence of Nationalism and Ethnicity in Post-Industrialism,' *Philippine Political Science Journal* 20(43), 1999, pp 127-159.

<sup>21</sup> See Bauböck, *Transnational Citizenship*; Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*; Werbner, 'The Place Which is Diaspora,' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28(1), January 2002, pp 119-133; Laguerre, *Diasporic Citizenship*; Bader, 'The Cultural Conditions of Transnational Citizenship,' *Political Theory* 25(6), December 1997, pp 771-813; Labelle and Midy, 'Re-reading Citizenship and the Transnational Practices of Immigrants,' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 25(2), April 1999, p 213.

<sup>22</sup> See Dunne and Bonazzi, *Citizenship and Rights in Multicultural Societies*; Bauböck, *Blurred Boundaries*; Carens, *Culture, Citizenship and Community*; Gustafson, 'Globalisation, Multiculturalism and Individualism,' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28(3), July 2002, pp 463-481; Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*; Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*; Vertovec, 'Multicultural Policies and Modes of Citizenship in European Cities,' *International Social Science Journal* 50(2), June 1998, pp 187-199; Rogers, 'The Spaces of Multiculturalism and Citizenship,' *International Social Science Journal* 50(2), June 1998, pp 201-213; Kalin, 'Ethnicity and Citizenship Attitudes in Canada,' *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 1(3), 1995,

differences in naturalisation acquisition in immigrant-receiving countries.<sup>23</sup>

In Australia, there are numerous studies on immigration and citizenship that utilise a policy-oriented approach.<sup>24</sup> Some studies particularly trace the development of Australian citizenship from a racially exclusive conception to an inclusive multicultural model.<sup>25</sup> Other studies on immigration and Australian citizenship emphasise its implication to national identity formation and political belonging.<sup>26</sup> These studies are significant in analysing the subject position of non-Anglo immigrants, like Filipinos, in Australia.

Recent studies on immigration and Australian citizenship signal new readings in a diverse society. A study by Stephen Castles views the social citizenship of ethnic minorities as 'underclass or exclusion' through unemployment, poverty, sexism or

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pp 26-44; Wikan, *Generous Betrayal*; Miron et al, 'Transnational Migrants, Cultural Citizenship, and the Politics of Language in California,' *Educational Policy* 12(6), November 1998, pp 659-681; Parekh, 'British Citizenship and Cultural Difference' in Andrews, *Citizenship*, pp 183-204; Anthias, 'Anti-racism, Multiculturalism and Struggles for a Multicultural Democracy' in Roche and Berkel, *European Citizenship and Social Exclusion*, pp 247-259.

<sup>23</sup> See Bloemraad, 'The North American Naturalisation Gap,' *International Migration Review* 36(1), Spring 2002, p 193; Janoski and Glennie, 'The Integration of Immigrants in Advanced Industrialized Nations' in Martiniello, *op cit*, pp 11-39; Fontaine, 'Immigration and Citizenship in Canada and Belgium' in Martiniello, *ibid*, pp 93-102; Bouvier, *Embracing America*, Center for Immigration Studies, <http://www.cis.org/articles/embamer/embracing.html> [15/1/02].

<sup>24</sup> See Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*; Morrissey, 'Migration to and From Australia' in Brownlee, *Migration and Citizenship in the Asia Pacific*, pp 1-14; Zappala and Castles, *Citizenship and Immigration in Australia*; Jordens, 'The Legal and Non-legal Aspects of Immigration and Citizenship' in Rubenstein, *Individual Community Nation*, pp 84-91; Jupp, 'British and Non-British Immigrants' in Rubenstein, *ibid*, pp 92-98; Betts, 'The Character Bill and Migration Rights,' *People and Place* 6(3), 1998, pp 39-53; Ecumenical Migration Centre, *Citizenship and Human Rights*; Pryles, *Australian Citizenship Law*; Galligan and Chesterman, 'Australia's Citizenship Void' in Davidson and Weekley, *op cit*, pp 73-86; Thornton, 'Legal Citizenship' in Hudson and Kane, *Rethinking Australian Citizenship*, pp 111-120.

<sup>25</sup> See Goldlust, *Understanding Citizenship in Australia*; Davidson, *From Subject to Citizen*; Jordens, *Redefining Australians*; Jupp, 'Citizenship, Social Justice and Ethnic Diversity' in Davis, *Citizenship in Australia*, pp 89-112; Rubenstein, 'Australian Citizenship and Multiculturalism' in Davis, *ibid*, pp 113-141; Galligan, 'Reconstructing Australian Citizenship,' *The Social Educator*, April 1999, pp 50-58; Jordens, 'Australia's Journey Towards Multicultural Citizenship' in Davidson and Weekley, *op cit*, pp 119-133.

<sup>26</sup> See Castles, *Challenges to National Identity and Citizenship*; Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration*; Castles, 'Citizenship and the Other in the Age of Migration' in Davidson and Weekley, *op cit*, pp 27-48; Castles, 'The Future of Australian Citizenship in a Globalising World' in Rubenstein, *op cit*, pp 119-134; Sturgess, 'Citizen, Customer, Community' in Rubenstein, *ibid*, pp 170-184; Jones and Smith, 'Diversity and Commonality in National Identities,' *Journal of Sociology* 37(1), May 2001, p 45; Hage, *Arab-Australians*; Goldlust and Batrouney, 'Immigrants, Australian Citizenship and National Identity,' *INFOCUS*, Autumn 1997, pp 16-19.

racism.<sup>27</sup> Filipino women in Australia also experience these structural and cultural constraints. In another helpful study, T. K. Oommen categorised non-Anglo-Celtic European immigrants, apparently, including Filipinos, as 'sojourner national citizens.'<sup>28</sup> Oomen argues that this type of immigrant is still in the 'process of relocating their attachments to Australia from their ancestral homeland.'<sup>29</sup> A sojourn also implies the negotiation of identities as, in the case of Filipino immigrants, Australian citizens and Filipino nationals.

The 1990s also witnessed scholarly attention being given to immigrant women as citizens. Most of these studies are concentrated in Europe and North America<sup>30</sup> and examine the forms of social and political exclusion of women migrants as well as the disparity of social rights from entitlements to actual enjoyment of these rights. The experiences of migrant women in these studies reveal that the exercise of citizenship is not equal to or similar to women belonging to the majority population.

In Australia, studies on immigrant women and citizenship have recently gained scholarly interest. Some studies, which are significant to this research, include those of Jan Jindy Pettman, Christina Gillgren, Margot Clifford and Cheryl Lange. Jan Jindy Pettman in her article 'Second-class Citizens? Nationalism, Identity and Difference in Australia' examines the conditional citizenship of women in Australia, including white, Aboriginal and ethnic women, in the context of changing social conditions. She posits the 'diasporic quality' of multiple identities of migrant women as viewed from their transnational linkages between the homeland and the adopted country.<sup>31</sup> This finding applies to Filipino migrants because they use various means to connect with their country of origin such as

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<sup>27</sup> Castles, 'Underclass or Exclusion' in Vasta, *Citizenship, Community and Democracy*, p 40.

<sup>28</sup> Oommen, 'Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity in the Context of Globalisation' in Rubenstein, *op cit*, pp 135-149.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, p 143.

<sup>30</sup> See Kofman and Sales, 'Migrant Women and Exclusion in Europe,' *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 5, 1998, pp 384-394; Knocke, 'Migrant and Ethnic Minority Women,' *Social Politics* 2(2), Summer 1995, pp 225-238; Fikes, *Santiaguense Cape Verdean Women in Portugal*; Manuh, *Migrants and Citizens*; Coll, *Motherhood and Cultural Citizenship*.

<sup>31</sup> Pettman, 'Second-class Citizens' in Sullivan and Whitehouse, *Gender, Politics and Citizenship in the 1990s*, pp 13-14.

regular visits, constant exchange of communication, money transfer, and gifts through courier services. Christina Gillgren in her article 'Aliens to Ethnics' argues that 'ethnicity matter[s]' in citizenship and presents the case of Italian and Croatian women in Western Australia. She raises the question of relating immigrant experience to the construction of identity and citizenship as well as motivations for taking up citizenship that is similar to this study.<sup>32</sup> Margot Clifford conducted a study on the process and practise of taking up Australian citizenship amongst Polish migrant women.<sup>33</sup> This study has parallels with my research as it also utilises oral evidence from thirty women in Western Australia. The Polish women appear to have similar reasons for taking up Australian citizenship with Filipino women - for employment and access to social rights.<sup>34</sup> The practical benefits offered by Australian citizenship are important considerations for changing citizenship amongst 'first wave' Polish women and, in this study, of Filipino women.<sup>35</sup> Clifford also emphasises the effect of these women's experiences prior to settlement in Australia that contributes to their decision in becoming Australian citizens.<sup>36</sup> First-generation Polish women comprise the children or teenagers deported from Poland with their parents to forced labour in the Soviet Union who then came to Australia. They became Australian citizens to secure civil rights and freedom.

Cheryl Lange, in 'Anglo-Centrism in Multicultural Australia,' explores the intersections of ethnicity and gender in terms of women's citizenship using three migrant group samples: Italian, Yugoslav, and Vietnamese women.<sup>37</sup> Lange, thus, shows the gendered aspects of Australian immigration policies and the use of language as exclusionary tool. This study reveals the common experiences of non-English speaking immigrants in Australia and the abject condition of these women as compared to men in terms of employment. Lange's work is a useful resource for this study because, for the first time, Asian women, the Vietnamese are included in the discourse of Australian citizenship.

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<sup>32</sup> Gillgren, 'Aliens to Ethnics' in Crawford and Skene, *Women and Citizenship*, p 142.

<sup>33</sup> Clifford, 'You have to Make Some Sort of Commitment' in Crawford and Skene, *op cit*, p 155.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, p 157.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, p 158.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, pp 161-162.

<sup>37</sup> Lange, 'Anglo-centrism in Multicultural Australia' in Crawford and Maddern, *Women as Australian Citizens*, p 178.

Although no study has so far been conducted on immigrant Filipino women and Australian citizenship, there are a few studies that relate citizenship and Filipino migrant workers. For example, Abigail Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis in 'Making the Match: Domestic Placement Agencies and the Racialization of Women's Household Work' explores the status of citizenship of Filipina domestic workers in Canada and the structural inequalities between First World white female citizens and Third World non-citizen 'women of colour.'<sup>38</sup> Another study by Rhacel Salazar Parrenas examines the condition of 'partial citizenship' of Filipina domestic workers around the world.<sup>39</sup> These materials all refer to migrant Filipino women as workers and the effect of their non-possession of citizenship in the host countries. Studies on Filipino communities in America, Canada and Australia are concerned more about the adaptation process and settlement problems. These studies relate to the immigrants' status as citizens in terms of their right to work and how they negotiate this right in workplace conditions and other issues they confront such as racism. Even so the Filipino women's explanations of their motivations for adopting citizenship and how they understand its meaning in their daily lives have not really been given emphasis.

### C. Methodology

Choosing a topic that is of particular interest to me not only as an academic scholar but also as a woman did not come easily. First, browsing through the accessible English literature on women in politics seems a mammoth task in the eyes of a researcher unaccustomed to an extensive array of electronic databases. Second, the quest for an original contribution to social science research on a topic that sustains my interest is far more challenging amidst the sea of knowledge. From the last forty years of the twentieth century and on towards the new millennium, there has been an explosion of women writing around the globe. Distancing myself from the western scholarly tradition, yet grateful for its intellectual spark, and introspectively looking at my position as a Filipina temporarily

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<sup>38</sup> See also Bakan and Stasiulis, 'Negotiating Citizenship,' *Feminist Review* 57, Autumn 1997, pp 112-139; Stasiulis and Bakan, 'Flor Contemplacion,' *Public Policy* 3(2), April-May 1999, pp 19-41; Bakan and Stasiulis, 'Foreign Domestic Worker Policy in Canada and the Social Boundaries of Modern Citizenship,' *Science & Society* 58(1), Spring 1994, p7; Blomley and Pratt, 'Canada and the Political Geographies of Rights,' *Canadian Geographer* 45(1), Spring 2001, pp 151-166.

<sup>39</sup> Parrenas, 'Transgressing the Nation-State,' *Signs* 26(4), Summer 2001, pp 1129-1154.

based in Australia provided the solution for the topic in question.

Given the focus of this study on documenting the experiences of Filipino women in the exercise of citizenship in Australia, the use of the limited life document approach gives particular voice to a specific aspect in the lives of these women, long the subject of enquiry as hapless victims.<sup>40</sup> The choice of the life story method is premised on the idea that 'knowledge is grounded in the everyday, common-sense world, and in the constructions and explanations members of that world use to describe their reality and actions.'<sup>41</sup> Specifically the life story approach is a very appropriate technique in migration studies because migration experience is personal and individual.<sup>42</sup> Adaptation to the new social, economic, political and cultural environment is experienced at the individual level.<sup>43</sup>

The life story strategy draws out the voice of women long silenced in political discourse and academic research. Consistent with the feminist aim of making women visible, the experiences of Filipino women told in their own voices serve as a major aspect in this study. Their narratives allow a discursive space in the production of knowledge on citizenship in Australia. As Marianne Marchand argues, the 'life history provides the perfect model' as 'it allows the anthropological subject to speak herself, and to represent her own society.'<sup>44</sup> Feminist epistemology demands that, in the words of Diane Fowlkes, 'we listen to storytalk' in order to understand Filipino immigrant women crossing between cultures and their appreciation of a limited political space in the exercise of their Australian citizenship.<sup>45</sup> In this way, I am in partnership with the respondents in theorizing citizenship as practised by Filipino immigrant women in Australia. And heeding the call of Stanley and Wise that 'future research should be on women and for women and should be carried

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<sup>40</sup> Plummer, *Documents of Life*, p 108.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted from Jones in Illo, 'Understanding Sexuality Through Life Histories' in Guerrero, *Feminist Research Experiences*, p 13.

<sup>42</sup> Boyle et al, *Exploring Contemporary Migration*, p 53.

<sup>43</sup> Life histories provide 'balance' in the different factors involved in deciding to migrate. See Lewis, *Human Migration*, p 182; Bedford, 'The Questions to be Asked of Migrants' in Pryor, *The Motivations of Migration*, p 31.

<sup>44</sup> Marchand, 'Latin American Women Speak on Development' in Marchand and Parpart, *Feminism/Postmodernism/Development*, p 66.

<sup>45</sup> Fowlkes, 'Feminist Epistemology is Political Action' in Falco, *Feminism and Epistemology*, p 4.

out by women,' I took up the task of reflecting a 'corrective research' concerning migrant Filipino women.<sup>46</sup> The women's experiences constitute a lived reality that forms the base from which I infer the meaning of citizenship in Australia.

In contrast, I did not see that Positivist methods could accomplish the goals set for this type of feminist research. A random survey delimits the value of women as mere 'objects' of research rather than as active participants in the research process. Structured questionnaires and the rush to obtain answers deny women their capacity as 'knowers' whose experiences are rich sources for legitimising knowledge or understanding particular societies. During one of my interview sessions with a married Filipina in Wollongong, her husband preferred the questionnaire to be answered jointly. This is the kind of situation I wanted to avoid because the questionnaire becomes the tool for possible control by someone in the household. The voice that really matters in this research may not be reflected in the final output. Thus, I chose to personally interview these Filipino women alone, though in some cases the husband was called upon by the respondent Filipina to the interview area for some points related to her answer. I allowed this situation to happen and analyse it in terms of who dominates the discussion.

As Filipinos, generally, are not a 'writing' people, the use of narratives in this research is congruent with their traditional practice of passing on knowledge through oral tradition. As May Joseph contends in her work on colonial and post independence Trinidad where storytelling is the primary mode of communication, the use of oral narratives function as 'informal knowledge, local knowledge' and is a 'powerful vehicle for unmapping space' between relations of colonial subalterns and colonizers.<sup>47</sup> Although not a colonised subject of Australia, the use of oral narratives is useful in 'mapping space' for postcolonial immigrant Filipino women. The stories of Filipino women about their exercise of citizenship bring under scrutiny their involvement in the Australian polity. Personal narratives become important in exploring the practise of citizenship amongst racially defined immigrant women. As Eloise Buker notes in *Storytelling Power*, 'personal narratives not only refer to events but also constitute reflections about the events

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<sup>46</sup> Stanley and Wise, *Breaking Out Again*, p 30.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph, *Nomadic Identities*, p 101.

themselves.’<sup>48</sup> This means that even if Filipino women in Australia are not represented in mainstream political institutions, the stories form the bases from which to examine their participation as Australian citizens. Since Filipino women in this study traverse two cultural frames, that of the Philippines and Australia, the humanistic method underscores the changes in their practise of citizenship. The narratives provide views on Filipino women’s practise of citizenship outside their home country.

Another method employed in this research is participant observation. According to Paul Boyle, Keith Halfacree and Vaughan Robinson in their book *Exploring Contemporary Migration*, participant observation is the ‘main’ ethnographic technique where the researcher plays an established role in the studied scene.<sup>49</sup> In this case, I share with my respondents the experience of migration itself albeit temporary. While others in the participant observation strategy ‘observe migrants at the destination’ maybe outside from them or with them without necessarily experiencing the same migratory movement, I have the insight of coming from the same country as my respondents.<sup>50</sup> But having the same national origin also has its drawbacks. My position as a researcher from the university reflects the class cleavages in Philippine society. Some respondents seem to present only the better part of their migration experience and leave out, possibly, the bitter memories. Their hesitation to reveal these experiences suggest that as a Filipino I may know their stories too well. While the method of participant observation is considered ‘least intrusive’ it nonetheless allows a glimpse of the Filipino migrant community as a whole and validates their personal narratives. It entailed observing the activities of the Filipino community in Wollongong and Sydney whenever possible, including attendance at formal and informal gatherings participated in by Filipino women, who provide useful insights into understanding the locale and life of the respondents in Australia.

Secondary data for this research includes the record of activities conducted by selected Filipino associations located primarily in New South Wales. Data for other

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<sup>48</sup> Buker, ‘Storytelling Power’ in Falco, *ibid*, p 34.

<sup>49</sup> Boyle et al, *op cit*, p 52.

<sup>50</sup> *loc cit*



associations are culled from reports in the Filipino newspapers published in Sydney. Useful also is the research undertaken on Filipino immigrant women in Australia by scholars of Australian and Filipino origin. Most of these show how Filipino women are constructed in Australian discourse.

### 1. *Research Instrument*

The life story approach relies on in-depth personal interviews with Filipino women in Australia. An interview, according to Ann Oakley, is a 'specialised pattern of verbal interaction' used to find out certain aspects of peoples lives.<sup>51</sup> It is essentially a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee with the aim of collecting data. I personally handed out letters of invitation with a list of open-ended questions and a consent form (see Appendix A). Although the interview schedule prepares the respondent for the type of questions to be asked during the interview session, it was not followed sequentially because some of the questions were spontaneously answered.

The Filipino women responded to the research and the interview instrument in different ways. Some respondents did not trust researchers at all. They felt that there have been many studies on Filipino women and some of them who had participated in earlier studies felt betrayed by those researchers for revealing their identity. Explicitly outlining their rights in the research and urging them to call my supervisors or the Ethics Committee of the University of Wollongong to ascertain a legitimate academic project eased their initial fears. The consent form is a very effective instrument in outlining their rights in the research process. Some respondents kept a copy of the list of questions during the course of the interview. One respondent insisted that we go through it in the order in which the questions appeared in the list. Others simply marked those questions they have already answered. The idea of a natural conversation in a collegial atmosphere of trust did not always happen. Perhaps the idea of documenting an aspect of their life in Australia by a Filipino coming from a university created a certain distance. Considered also as a stranger in their midst, the sheet of paper outlining the questions became the source of bond at the

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<sup>51</sup> Oakley, 'Interviewing Women' in Roberts, *Doing Feminist Research*, p 33.

time of the interview.

Another concern for the Filipino women in this study was the '*ano*' (what) of the research topic. The usual 'what about' comes after reading the letter of invitation. Some Filipino women felt comfortable if we stuck to the topic outlined. There seemed to be some apprehension about the possible digression from the topic or of revealing too much information, which might jeopardise their status as immigrants in Australia or affect their husbands although the subject of citizenship is fairly well regarded as 'not controversial.' Some of those who rejected my invitation gave a flat response of '*wala akong alam diyan*' (I don't know anything about it). Or, their participation was dependent on the use of a pen instead of a tape recorder. Leaving them with a piece of paper to answer and retrieve later seemed safer than having their voice recorded. One even offered that her husband to do it on her behalf. I did not proceed to interview these women because of their aversion to recorded interviews and the apparent 'voice' in the household is that of their husbands.

The presence of technology (i.e. the tape recorder) in the course of the interview served as a deterrent for a smooth conversation. The technical instrument made the Filipina self conscious, unsure or nervous of what to say, a sort of fear to be herself. Again, a reminder of her rights in the interview and that she controlled the session calmed most of the women. The interviewee controlled the recording by switching the tape recorder on and off anytime during the session. One respondent purposely swayed her body away from the tape recorder; another spoke softly. My knowledge of English, Pilipino and the Visayan dialects facilitated the flow of communication. I simply followed the natural inclination of the respondent on what language she was most conversant. Most often, their responses were a combination of English, Pilipino and Visayan. Although this switching caused difficulty in translating their responses into English I exercised utmost care in the transcription and translation of data. Their responses are integrated in the discussion and appear in italics.

The Filipina respondents also controlled the data used for this study. A final transcription of the interview was sent through the mail or hand delivered for their

approval. This allowed the Filipina respondent to comment on the resource material, clarify their thoughts at the time of the interview or even add something they missed out. As laid down in the consent form, their approval was required before the data could be used in the research. I assigned code names in the use of the material and they needed to affix 'OK' with their initials in the transcription. This arrangement was fairly acceptable to the respondents. Those who were unable to send back the transcription within the allowable time were given reminder letters and were called by phone for a follow-up. The majority affixed their initials on each page of the transcription. Some did not bother to sign but informed me in writing or by phone that they approved the material as is.

The transmittal process was a hurdle. Although the Australia Post is efficient in times of delivery, the mailing from the end of the Filipina respondent was beyond my control. Time was theirs to bide and mine to wait. A few changed residence without leaving a forwarding address. I was able to track them down through mutual acquaintances. One disheartening case of withdrawal from the research project occurred when the husband took hold of the transcript. The Filipina informed me by phone that her husband became furious over sharing her story and they had a 'terrible' fight. Giving the choice between a threat to break the marriage or continue her involvement with the research, she opted to withdraw. Incessant pleas and guarantees of her anonymity and confidentiality were to no avail. I respected her decision and removed her story for this study.

## **2. *Research Locale***

Australia is a big country in which to undertake a full-scale study on Filipino immigrant women. Due to time and budgetary constraints, the research was confined in New South Wales, a state with a large Filipino population. In 1996 there were 47,215 Philippine-born in New South Wales which represented 51 per cent of the total Filipino migrant community in Australia. Of this number, 28,842 were women. The Philippine-born population increased to 52,241 in 2001 making it the third fastest growing Asian

community, after the Chinese and Vietnamese, in New South Wales.<sup>52</sup> There are two areas of migrant concentration in New South Wales - Wollongong and Sydney. The Philippine-born is one of the eight largest groups in the Sydney region since 1996.<sup>53</sup> About 80 per cent of Filipinos in New South Wales live in the Greater West Sydney area.<sup>54</sup> In the Illawarra region, the local government area of Wollongong has a high concentration of non-English speaking migrants with 15.9 per cent.<sup>55</sup> These places were chosen for two reasons. Sydney and Wollongong represent a contrast in social environment; Sydney is a metropolis while Wollongong is a major regional city. Another is Sydney and Wollongong characterise two groups of the Filipino community. Sydney has a large number of Filipino women married to Filipino men while Wollongong has a high population of Filipino women married to Australian men.<sup>56</sup>

### 3. Respondents

Thirty married Filipino women and six key informants served as respondents for this research. The married women represent the two types of Filipino community in Australia: fifteen Filipino women married to Filipino men and fifteen Filipino women married to Australian men. This identification is usually heard in social gatherings as '*puti ang asawa niya*' (her husband is white) or '*Pinoy ang asawa niya*' (her husband is Filipino). Their marital status is quite significant because it draws out the enabling and constraining effects of different life decisions such as marriage. Aside from marital status, I also required that respondents had been Australian citizens for at least five years because by this time they have exercised the right to vote as well as gaining a more sufficient understanding of what Australian citizenship entails. All respondents profess the Christian faith, mainly Catholicism.

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<sup>52</sup> See *The Health of the People of New South Wales*, [http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/chorep/toc/chorep02s3\\_2.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/chorep/toc/chorep02s3_2.pdf) [24/2/03]; *Resource Handbook for Chief Executives and Senior Managers*, [http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/publications/resourcehandbook/appendix\\_2.htm](http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/publications/resourcehandbook/appendix_2.htm) [11/4/03].

<sup>53</sup> Thompson and Dunn, *Multiculturalism and Governance*, <http://www.international.metropolis.net/events/Israel/papers/thompson/thompson.htm> [6/2/02].

<sup>54</sup> Bigornia, 'Selebrasyon 2001,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 8(1), January 2001, p 1.

<sup>55</sup> *Resource Handbook for Chief Executives*, *op cit*.

<sup>56</sup> Sorenson, 'Wives Forbidden to Speak Own Language,' *Illawarra Mercury* 23 February 1998. Cited in Pe-Pua, *Towards Full Participation in Australian Society*, p 29.

In researching an aspect of women's experience, the most important consideration is the subjective interpretation and meaning of the idea rather than its numerical validity.<sup>57</sup> There is no guideline as to how many women should participate in a research using life history.<sup>58</sup> Drawing on the experiences of thirty ordinary Filipino women about their understanding of Australian citizenship in this study does not require the observable patterns in large samples. Mary Maynard notes that there is 'legitimacy of women's own understanding of their experiences.'<sup>59</sup> Each narrative is distinct in the context of their personal circumstances and motivations for becoming and being Australian citizens. Filipino women's understanding of Australian citizenship comes out in their own experience of migration and settlement in a predominantly 'white' society. Through their voices, the study frames the collective experience of racialised immigrant women in Australia and elsewhere,<sup>60</sup> particularly their subject position as the 'Other.'

Key Filipino women informants also added insights on the practice of citizenship in Australia. These women have varied involvement with the Filipino community as social workers and community leaders. Social workers, by nature of their work, handle cases involving Filipino women. But these cases are never filed as such in the community centre because assistance rendered to Filipino women is usually through informal conversations or in their private capacity as friends outside their working hours. The community leaders, most often women, are directly involved in the affairs of the Filipino associations participated mainly by Filipino women, especially in the Illawarra.

Contacting the Filipino women was easy enough. I used the local network of Filipinos in Wollongong and Sydney. It is a common practice amongst Filipinos to know

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<sup>57</sup> Maynard, 'Methods, Practice and Epistemology' in Maynard and Purvis, *Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective*, p 11.

<sup>58</sup> Diane Reay interviewed thirty-three women for her doctoral research. See Reay, 'Insider Perspectives or Stealing the Words Out of Women's Mouths,' *Feminist Review* 53, Summer 1996, p 57.

<sup>59</sup> Maynard, *op cit*, p 23.

<sup>60</sup> See Alarcon, 'Chicana Feminism' in Kaplan et al, *Between Woman and Nation*, p 71; Minh-ha, 'Not You/Like You' in McClintock et al, *Dangerous Liaisons*, p 417; Ng, 'Sexism, Racism and Canadian Nationalism' in Gunew and Yeatman, *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*, p 207; Mohanty, 'Women Workers and the Capitalist Scripts' in Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, pp 3-29; Johnson, 'Occupying the Suburban Frontier' in Blunt and Rose, *Writing Women and Space*, p 143.

other Filipinos living in certain suburbs in Australia. 'Who's who' in the community is public knowledge. This indirect method of identifying respondents is consistent with the way Filipinos get acquainted. Some Filipinas who accompanied me on their own volition found it an excuse to see a friend. Subsequent referencing or use of 'snowball effect' determined other respondents. There is a sense of comfort that I am a Filipino with shared ethnicity. Having the same nationality as my respondents and being married to a Filipino within the same cultural perspective that shapes our daily lives I can identify with the women married to Filipinos in some ways. Despite these shared features, however, I do not wish to speak on behalf of the immigrant Filipino women. Rather, their voices can be heard through this research.

#### 4. *Short Biographies*

The following section provides a brief profile of the Filipino women and they are identified only by their names I assigned to them.

**Anita** is an accountant in Sydney who came from Mindanao in the Philippines. She has been living in Sydney for the past fifteen years with her Filipino husband and two children.

**Asuncion** lives in Wollongong with her Australian husband whom she married in the Philippines. They have two children. She emigrated nearly twenty years ago from Luzon. She works as a full time housewife but occasionally accepts casual work.

**Bituin** is a high school graduate from the Visayas who married her Australian husband in the Philippines more than fifteen years ago. They have one child. She helps her husband operate his own business.

**Camuning** was a medical practitioner in the Visayas before getting married to a Filipino in Australia. They have two children and have been living in Sydney for the past six years.

**Carla** met her Australian husband in Manila as a customer of their family's export business. They were married in the Philippines and lived with her family in the Philippines until the birth of her first child. She now lives in South Sydney with their four children.

**Carmina** is a nurse in Manila and has registered to practice her profession in Sydney. She is married to a Filipino with two children.

**Dama** is a college graduate from Luzon and considers herself one of the pioneer Filipino women in Wollongong. She is married to a Filipino with four children.

**Dayday** is a high school graduate in the Visayas and has lived in Wollongong for the past twenty years with her Australian husband whom she met in the Philippines. They have two children.

**Donita** is a nurse in the Philippines who met her Australian husband working on a development project. She lives in Wollongong with their three children.

**Eva** is a nurse in Luzon who immigrated to Australia through a family reunion program. She petitioned her fiancé in the Philippines and they were married in Australia. She lives in Wollongong with their child.

**Filomena** is a teacher in the Visayas who worked hard for the recognition of her qualification for six years. She now works as a teacher in Sydney with her Filipino husband and three children.

**Hana** is a professional in Luzon and came to Wollongong through family sponsorship. She petitioned her fiancée in the Philippines and they were married in Australia. They have three children.

**Hiraya** is an accountant in Sydney who is married to a Filipino with four children.

**Jamila** is a nurse in Wollongong and lives with her Filipino husband and their four

children.

**Lakandiwa** was a professional in Manila and met her Australian husband through correspondence. She came to Australia on a holiday to meet him and shortly afterwards, they were married. They live in Wollongong and have no children.

**Ligaya** was a professional in Mindanao and has been married to an Australian in Wollongong for the last ten years. She has two children from a previous marriage in the Philippines.

**Linaw** is a teacher in Luzon and works in manufacturing in Wollongong. She is married to an Australian with one child.

**Liwayway** is a high school graduate in the Visayas and met her Australian husband through a mutual friend. They were married in the Philippines and lived there for a few years with their two children until 1986.

**Lorna** is a community worker in Mindanao. She is married to an Australian and lives in Wollongong with no children.

**Luningning** is a college graduate in Manila. She has two children with her Australian husband in Wollongong.

**Magdalena** is a social worker in Sydney. She met her Australian husband in the Philippines through the organization they both work for. They have no children.

**Maria** is a nurse in Sydney but lives in Wollongong with her Filipino husband and two children.

**Mirasol** is a college graduate in Manila and has worked in various offices in Wollongong and Sydney. She is an active community leader in Wollongong.



**Monica** has lived in Wollongong for the past fifteen years and is active in the Filipino community association. She is a college graduate in the Philippines and has worked in the manufacturing sector in Australia.

**Natividad** is a college graduate in the Philippines who met her Australian husband during the course of her work assisting migrants. She filed for divorce after three years of marriage. She has a child from a previous marriage in the Philippines and now lives with him in Wollongong.

**Nora** is a high school graduate from the Visayas and met her Australian husband in her work as a waitress in the Philippines. She is separated from her husband after living together for seven years. She has five children from a previous marriage and lives with them in Wollongong.

**Pilar** is a vocational graduate in the Philippines who came to Wollongong fifteen years ago with her Filipino husband after getting a work contract. They have three children. She has completed a licensed course and works in a hospital.

**Rajah** is married to an Australian and lives in Wollongong with their two children.

**Rama** is an active volunteer in Filipino organizations. She came to Australia with her Filipino husband and lives in Wollongong with their three children.

**Ramona** is married to an Australian who sponsored her on a fiancée visa. They live in Wollongong with their three children.

**Rosa** was a professional in Manila and migrated to Wollongong with her Filipino husband and two children.

**Sagisag** is a high school graduate from the Visayas who met her Australian

husband through her sister. She lives in Wollongong with their three children.

**Sally** is a college graduate in the Visayas who came to Australia as a sponsored migrant. She petitioned her fiancée in the Philippines and got married in Australia. They live in Sydney with no children.

**Salome** hails from the Visayas region; she worked in Manila before meeting her Australian husband through a mutual friend who introduced them by correspondence. They live in Wollongong with their child.

**Tamana** is married to an Australian whom she met through a friend. She lives in Wollongong for the past twenty years with their children.

**Yasmina** was a doctor in the Philippines and studied in Australia to become a registered nurse in Sydney. She is married to a Filipino with two children.

#### **D. Chapter Summary**

This study is organised into seven chapters. Chapter 1 presents the background, objectives, significance, related literature and methods of the study. Chapter II discusses the theoretical framework of this research particularly the theories of feminist political thinkers on citizenship, gender and race. Chapter III provides a historical overview of the social construction of Filipino women that shapes the practice of citizenship in the Philippines and in Australia. This includes the pre-colonial and colonial status of Filipino women, emphasising the cultural fusion of the East and West, which is significant in analysing their participation as citizens in the contemporary Philippine polity as well as their easy adoption of Australian citizenship. In Australia, the development of the idea of citizenship from a racially exclusive model to an inclusive multicultural model sets the framework to explore the subject position of immigrant Filipino women. Chapter IV highlights Filipino female migration to Australia and discusses the significant factors in shaping the practise of Australian citizenship. Based on the narratives of a group of Filipino women, this chapter also presents the reasons and motivations for taking up

Australian citizenship as well as its perceived attributes in comparison to Filipino citizenship. Chapter V explores the meaning and practise of Australian citizenship at home, especially its effects on relationships between husbands and children. An awareness of being Australian citizens influences migrant Filipino women in negotiating their subject position as wives and mothers. Chapter VI examines the exercise of Australian citizenship amongst women in paid employment in the context of their racialised status. There are significant issues which shape their practise of Australian citizenship at work. These include the recognition of overseas qualifications, racial and gender constraints. Chapter VII presents the civic engagement of Filipino women as voters, volunteers and members of community associations. The practise of Australian citizenship in the community underscores the limited political spaces of participation open to non-white immigrant women. Chapter VIII explores the relationship between the women's Australian citizenship and their Filipino identity. This explores the perceptions of the Filipino women in terms of their political and cultural identities in Australia. Crossing between two cultural frames that of Australia and the Philippines enable the women to experience dual identities that are not at odds with each other. Having a Filipino cultural identity and a political identity as Australian citizens is viewed as complementary. The two ideas are seen as enhancing their migration experience. Finally, Chapter IX presents the summary and conclusions of this study.

## II

## THEORETICAL PREMISES: GENDER, RACE AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship, according to Desmond King, is a 'concept with several dimensions - political, legal, social and cultural.'<sup>1</sup> However, citizenship is viewed differently by theorists across these areas and there is 'no easy consensus' in the literature on citizenship about what the term means.<sup>2</sup> In a world of permeable boundaries, citizenship is associated with formal membership or, in the words of Judith Shklar, 'the legal recognition, both domestic and international, that a person is a member, native-born or naturalized, of a state.'<sup>3</sup> But citizenship is not just a mere legal identity. Debates on this concept centre on the nature of membership. The conventional idea of citizenship is that it is associated with activities that take place in the public sphere including political participation,<sup>4</sup> rights and obligations. This is male defined and gendered.<sup>5</sup>

From the days of the Greek *polis* until the mid-twentieth century, women were generally excluded from citizenship.<sup>6</sup> Aristotle's citizen is a male who has a vote in the

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<sup>1</sup> King, 'Citizenship as Obligation in the United States' in Vogel and Moran, *The Frontiers of Citizenship*, p 1.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph, *Nomadic Identities*, p 4. See also Ellison, 'Towards a New Social Politics,' *Sociology* 31(4), November 1997, p 697.

<sup>3</sup> Shklar, 'The Liberalism of Fear' in Rosenblum, *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, p 4. See also Hammar, *Democracy and the Nation State*, p 4.

<sup>4</sup> In the traditional model of political participation, citizens engage in the following hierarchically-arranged activities: 'holding public and party office; being a candidate; soliciting political funds, attending a caucus or strategy meeting; becoming an active member in a political party; contributing time in a political campaign; attending a political meeting or rally; making monetary contributions to a party or a candidate; contacting a public official or a political leader; wearing a button or putting a sticker on the car; attempting to talk another into voting a certain way; initiating a political discussion; voting; and exposing oneself to political stimulus.' See Rimmerman, *The New Citizenship*, p 5.

<sup>5</sup> According to Susan James, the democratic liberal conception of citizenship has excluded 'all that is traditionally female.' See James, 'The Good Enough Citizen' in Bock and James, *Beyond Equality and Difference*, p 48. See also Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman*; Jones, 'Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity,' *Signs* 15(4), pp 781-812; Lister, 'Women, Economic Dependency and Citizenship,' *Journal of Social Policy* 19(4), pp 445-467; Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*; Mazurana and Bonds, 'A Hostile Reception,' *Peace and Conflict* 6(4), pp 326-328.

<sup>6</sup> Oliver and Heater, *The Foundations of Citizenship*, pp 72-73. See also Evans, *Introducing Contemporary Feminist Thought*, pp 8, 25.

*ekklesia* (assembly) and partakes in civic affairs.<sup>7</sup> Rousseau's social contract excludes women because they have no capacity to reason.<sup>8</sup> The main argument propounded in the history of western political thought is that women and men have different natures; women are weak, emotional and destined for reproductive roles while men are strong, rational and are constructed for productive work in the economy and politics. Social relations are likewise divided into the public and private spheres corresponding to the domain of man and woman, respectively.<sup>9</sup> This dichotomy is significant in the development of liberal political theory in its relegation of the particular and private needs to that of the universal public realm of the state.<sup>10</sup> As a result, citizenship has traditionally been expressed in terms of male values and power. As Kathleen Jones states,

*The dominant conceptualisation of citizenship displaces women their work and the values associated with that work from the culturally normative definitions of objectivity, morality, citizenship and even of human nature.*<sup>11</sup>

The feminist challenge to the universal conception of citizenship has come a long way since the 1990s; the beginning of the period of renewed interest on the subject of citizenship. It has especially developed in the area of the 'politics of difference' involving minority rights.<sup>12</sup> Iris Marion Young points out that the 'universal citizen' is not only male but also 'white and bourgeois.'<sup>13</sup> This new theorising indicates, as Anne Phillips notes, the

<sup>7</sup> Gouldner, 'The War between the Cities' in Turner and Hamilton, *Citizenship*, pp 332-333. See also Benhabib, 'Citizens, Residents, and Aliens in a Changing World,' *Social Research* 66(3), Fall 1999, pp 709-744.

<sup>8</sup> See Axford et al, *Politics*, p 212; Marso, 'The Stories of Citizens,' *Polity* 30(3), Spring 1998, p 435; Thompson, 'Women and Political Rationality' in Pateman and Gross, *Feminist Challenges*, p 99; Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 6.

<sup>9</sup> The division of social life into private and public is a central discourse in the feminist criticism on liberal theory and practice. See Blunt and Rose, 'Introduction' in Blunt and Rose, *Writing Women and Space*, pp 2-3; Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 4, pp 118-140; Houle, *Women and the Public Sphere*.

<sup>10</sup> The liberal tradition assumes that all citizens are equal regardless of 'differences in wealth, ability and social standing.' See Glenn, 'Citizenship and Equality,' *Social Problems* 47(1), February 2000, p 1. See also Baker, 'Risking Difference' in Baker and Doorne-Huiskes, *Women and Public Policy*, p 5; Bryson, *Feminist Debates*, p 91; Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, pp 43-49; Spinner, *The Boundaries of Citizenship*, pp 3-8.

<sup>11</sup> Jones, *op cit*, p 801.

<sup>12</sup> Kymlicka and Norman, 'Citizenship in Culturally Diverse Societies' in Kymlicka and Norman, *Citizenship in Diverse Societies*, p 5-41.

<sup>13</sup> The modern conception of the civic public, until recently, has excluded Jews and working-class people in Europe. The Red and Black peoples in the United States were excluded from citizenship by the republican founding fathers like Jefferson. See Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, pp 110-111.

'multiple axes of identity organised around sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, language and culture.'<sup>14</sup> Globalisation and the rapid dispersal of peoples with different ethnic origins to welfare state regimes like Australia have also focused more discussion on the meaning of citizenship and belonging.<sup>15</sup> Whereas in early feminist theorising the focal point was the western 'white middle class women' citizenship is now also central to the burgeoning discussion relative to racialised women, particularly immigrant women. Postmodern feminist analysis or the so-called 'Third wave feminism' is diacritically aligned to citizenship discourse. As for other non-white women, modernity's universalising view on human nature as a unified subject is not appropriate for Filipino women in the context of their historical specificity and migration experience.<sup>16</sup>

The transformation of nation-states and the rise of welfare states in the post-1945 era necessitated a reconceptualisation of the nature of citizenship from mere rights of political participation to other aspects such as the nature of membership.<sup>17</sup> Social liberalism was the foremost theory on citizenship during this period amongst liberal democracies in the western world.<sup>18</sup> This theory presumes that each individual in a state

<sup>14</sup> Phillips, 'Feminism and the Politics of Difference' in James and Palmer, *Visible Women*, p 14.

<sup>15</sup> Davidson, *From Subject to Citizen*, pp 5-6; Sturgess, 'Citizen, Customer, Community' in Rubenstein, *Individual Community and Nation*, pp 177-178; Castles, 'The Future of Australian Citizenship in a Globalising World' in Rubenstein, *ibid*, pp 119-133; Castles, 'Citizenship and the Other in the Age of Migration' in Davidson and Weekley, *Globalization and Citizenship in the Asia-Pacific*, pp 43-44; Castles, 'Globalization and Migration,' *International Social Science Journal* 50(2), June 1998, pp 184-185; Frost, 'Migrants, Civil Society and Sovereign States,' *Political Studies* 46(5), December 1998, pp 871-874; Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration*; Tilly, 'Citizenship, Identity and Social History' in Tilly, *Citizenship, Identity and Social History*, pp 1-17.

<sup>16</sup> Mack-Canty, *Woman and Citizenship*, pp 61-62.

<sup>17</sup> The major oppositional concepts in citizenship are communitarianism, civic republicanism and neo-liberalism. Communitarianism emphasises responsibility towards the shared community. Civic-republicanism emphasises political participation and public virtues. Neo-liberalism emphasises individual equality and freedom. See Voet, *Feminism and Citizenship*, p 49; Kymlicka and Norman, 'Return of the Citizen,' *Ethics* 104, January 1994, pp 361-362; Vogel, 'Is Citizenship Gender-specific?' in Vogel and Moran, *The Frontiers of Citizenship*, pp 68-70; Turner, 'Contemporary Problems in the Theory of Citizenship' in Turner, *Citizenship and Social Theory*, p 1; Kane, 'Communitarianism and Citizenship' in Hudson and Kane, *Rethinking Australian Citizenship*, pp 217-227; Dagger, *Civic Virtues*; Waltman, 'Citizenship and Civic Republicanism in Contemporary Britain,' *The Midwest Quarterly* 40(1), Autumn 1998, pp 93-106; 'Citizenship and the Nation-State,' *Migration World Magazine* 20(5), November-December 1992, p 34; Goldberg, 'Social Citizenship and a Reconstructed Tocqueville,' *American Sociological Review* 66(2), April 2001, pp 289-315; Miller, *op cit*, pp 53-57; Squires, *Gender in Political Theory*, pp 168-170; Carter, 'Women, Military Service and Citizenship' in Sullivan and Whitehouse, *Gender, Politics and Citizenship in the 1990s*, p 107.

<sup>18</sup> See Voet, *op cit*, p 1; Janoski, *Citizenship and Civil Society*.

enjoys 'equal and full citizenship' incorporating civic, political and social rights. These encompassing characteristics of citizenship draw inspiration from the classic work of T. H. Marshall. He argues in 'Citizenship and Social Class' that citizenship is 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community.'<sup>19</sup> As status, citizenship includes the three kinds of rights. He states,

*The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom- liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, and the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice... By political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such body...By social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in society.<sup>20</sup>*

Citizenship as a status, thus, undeniably begets rights. J. M. Barbalet affirms that the relation of rights and status is 'not accidental' and argues that the 'political importance of rights derives from the social nature of status.'<sup>21</sup> This status, Marshall argues, is equal in terms of rights and duties.<sup>22</sup> His evolutionary conception of citizenship based on the British historical development and the abstract citizen, amongst others, has resulted in a number of critiques.<sup>23</sup>

Feminists have argued that citizenship conceived as status with a set of rights and obligations classifies women as 'second class citizens' because they become citizens only

<sup>19</sup> Marshall, 'Citizenship and Social Class' in Turner and Hamilton, *op cit*, p 17.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, p 9.

<sup>21</sup> Barbalet, 'Citizenship Rights' in Turner and Hamilton, *op cit*, p 227.

<sup>22</sup> Marshall, *op cit*, p 17.

<sup>23</sup> For example Claire Wallace notes that Marshall's idea of citizenship assumes its development from a unitary direction when citizenship rights could be withdrawn or bestowed by legislation. See Wallace, 'The Concept of Citizenship in Contemporary Sociology,' *Sociológica* 25(3), 1993, pp 22-23. Bryan Turner argues that the social conception of citizenship is contingent upon time and place. See Turner, 'Outline of a Theory of Citizenship' in Turner and Hamilton, *op cit*, pp 468-471. There are other sources for a summary of contemporary debates on citizenship. See Andrews, *Citizenship*; Bulmer and Rees, *Citizenship Today*; Beiner, *Theorizing Citizenship*; Yuval-Davis, 'Women, Citizenship and Difference,' *Feminist Review* 57, Autumn 1997, pp 4-27.

through the male-breadwinner in taxation and social welfare.<sup>24</sup> Ursula Vogel argues that Marshall and other social liberals have popularised the universal male breadwinner who 'claims rights and discharges responsibilities not only for himself but also on behalf of other citizens.'<sup>25</sup> Where women are considered dependents of men in patriarchal societies they cannot be of equal standing with men. Saddled with the primary responsibility of caring, women remain invisible in the public sphere. Carole Pateman, in *The Disorder of Women*, argues that women did not become 'free and equal democratic citizens' despite the use of a 'gender-neutral' language in citizenship.<sup>26</sup> The argument for the gendered nature of citizenship is now firmly established in feminist theory.<sup>27</sup> If citizenship is gendered then what does it mean to be a woman citizen? There are many answers to this question. But, the major dialogue concerns the conflict between the concepts of gender-differentiated and gender-neutral citizenship. Gender-neutral citizenship provides women with equal citizenship with men in the public sphere whereas gender-differentiated citizenship recognises the specific concerns of women and place value on their domestic responsibilities.<sup>28</sup>

One contribution to the development of the concept of gender-differentiated citizenship is the so-called maternalist thinking which attempts to include women in the citizenship paradigm. This view was mainly developed by Sara Ruddick and Jean Bethke Elshtain. Ruddick argues that 'maternal thinking' is cultivated by motherhood which produce its own truths centred around 'attentive love.'<sup>29</sup> There are three types of 'maternal work' which include preserving the lives of children, nurturing children and training children to adhere to socially acceptable norms.<sup>30</sup> The feminine values in the private sphere are used to include women in the citizenship paradigm. Elshtain argues that motherhood is

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<sup>24</sup> See Oliver and Heater, *op cit*, p 40; Phillips, 'Citizenship and Feminist Theory' in Andrews, *Citizenship*, pp 76-88; Squires, *op cit*, p 173.

<sup>25</sup> Vogel, *op cit*, pp 66-67.

<sup>26</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 14.

<sup>27</sup> See Walby, 'Is Citizenship Gendered?' *Sociology* 28(2), May 1994, p 379; Summers, *Women and Citizenship*; Lister, 'Dilemmas in Engendering Citizenship,' *Economy and Society* 24(1), February 1995, pp 1-40; Skjeie and Siim, 'Scandinavian Feminist Debates on Citizenship,' *International Political Science Review* 21(4), 2000, pp 345-360; Benhabib, *Situating the Self*.

<sup>28</sup> See Lister, *Citizenship*, pp 92-93; Vogel, *op cit*, p 78.

<sup>29</sup> Ruddick, 'Maternal Thinking' in Meyers, *Feminist Social Thought*, pp 595-596.

<sup>30</sup> Sarvasy, 'Social Citizenship from a Feminist Perspective,' *Hypatia* 12, 1997, pp 54-74.



a site for politics of compassion necessary to reconstruct the political sphere. The family becomes the 'reconstructive ideal of the private' that allows the internalisation of empathy, pity and compassion for future citizens.<sup>31</sup> The citizen-mother's role is at home to educate her children on public virtue.<sup>32</sup>

Another approach is the 'sexually differentiated citizenship' of Carole Pateman. She contends that the 'sexual contract' has been an important element in the construction of citizenship.<sup>33</sup> Pateman theorises a citizenship of 'woman as woman' that is 'autonomous, equal, yet sexually different.'<sup>34</sup> Pateman argues that women have distinct characteristics from men; they should be citizens in their own right. In another essay, Pateman outlines the contribution of women as citizens in the 'private, unpaid welfare in their homes.'<sup>35</sup> She avers that if motherhood represents the exclusion of women from citizenship then motherhood should be constructed as a political status.<sup>36</sup> Like the duty of men in public and in war, women have their share, albeit unnoticed, of political obligation. Pateman argues that women's obligation is 'motherhood, to give birth for the state, and, if nature so decrees, to give their lives in creating new life, new citizens.'<sup>37</sup> Her view of a 'sexually differentiated citizenship' contemplates the political relevance of motherhood in

<sup>31</sup> See Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman*, pp 322-329; Elshtain, *Power Trips and Other Journeys*, pp 55-56.

<sup>32</sup> Mary Dietz rejects Elshtain's 'social feminism' since it 'distorts the meaning of politics and political action' with a singular view of 'women as creatures of the family.' Dietz asserts that women will fail to understand the implication of politics in their lives if they do not venture beyond the family or practices beyond mothering. It is outside the family relationships that women discover citizenship. Maternalism implies a poor conceptualisation of citizenship predicated on the intimate bond between mother and child. Citizenship, Dietz argues, is a political bond amongst citizens. Dietz proposes a citizenship based on the 'virtues, relations, and practices that are expressly political and, more exactly participatory and democratic.' Such a conception diverges from both the liberal and maternal model because it focuses on the 'collective and participatory engagement of citizens' in determining community affairs. Judith Squires interpolates that Elshtain is grounded on 'moral insights' while that of Dietz is on 'feminist political practices.' Anne Phillips also rejects the maternalist position because citizenship is inherently public and gender-neutral. She argues that '[b]eing a good citizen is not the same as being a good mother.' See Sarvasy, *op cit*; Dietz, 'Citizenship with a Feminist Face,' *Political Theory* 13(1), February 1985, pp 20-31; Dietz, 'Context is All' in Phillips, *Feminism and Politics*, p 390; Squires, *op cit*, pp 178-179; Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, pp 86-87.

<sup>33</sup> For example, a marital contract presupposes the voluntary renunciation of women's independence and their subordination to men which is essential to men's citizenship or their political participation. See Evans, *Introducing Contemporary Feminist Thought*, p 3; Vogel, *op cit*, p 75.

<sup>34</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 14.

<sup>35</sup> Pateman, 'Equality, Difference and Subordination' in Bock and James, *Beyond Equality and Difference*, p 23.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, pp 18-19.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*, p 24.

defining citizenship.<sup>38</sup>

A third approach is that of feminist theorists like Chantal Mouffe who advances a gender-neutral conception of citizenship.<sup>39</sup> Mouffe in *The Return of the Political* argues that Pateman's 'sexually differentiated' conception of citizenship is inadequate because, like the maternalists, it 'never deconstructs the very opposition of men/women.'<sup>40</sup> Mouffe proposes a different view of citizenship 'not by making sexual difference politically relevant to its definition but by constructing a new conception of citizenship where sexual difference would become effectively irrelevant.'<sup>41</sup> Although Mouffe agrees with Pateman in her critique of universalist liberal citizenship, she contends that sexual difference 'should not be a valid distinction.'<sup>42</sup> That is, the political value of motherhood is inadequate in democratic citizenship.<sup>43</sup> Mouffe proposes a 'radical democratic citizenship' which suggests a 'form of political identity that consists of identification with the political principles of modern pluralist democracy.'<sup>44</sup> In her view, the public/private dichotomy remains but is constructed differently. Mouffe contends that the aim of a radical democratic politics is the 'construction of a common political identity' which requires the transformation of existing subject positions.' A single individual has multiple identities which could be dominant in one relation while subordinated in another.<sup>45</sup> New identities have to be created by different oppressed groups in order for them to articulate their

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<sup>38</sup> Uma Narayan raises some concerns about motherhood as a 'citizenship activity': 'first, characterising childcare as the "rearing of future citizens" opens the door to severe state monitoring and regulation of this activity; second, raising children as "service to the state" is likely to run against claims that the state does not want this service from citizens who lack independent resources for raising children, which could be used to justify current proposals for punitive measures against women who have children while on welfare.' Narayan provides an additional reason for resisting Pateman's view because 'it fails to challenge the assumption that welfare rights should be grounded in an individual's "contributions" to national life' and may 'exclude and marginalise groups of individuals in the national community who are unable to render those contributions.' See Narayan, 'Towards a Feminist Vision of Citizenship' in Shanley and Narayan, *Reconstructing Political Theory*, pp 51-52.

<sup>39</sup> Voet, *op cit*, p 15. Mouffe's theory has recently been classified as an example of a 'gender-pluralist' approach to citizenship. See Hobson and Lister, *Citizenship*, pp 39-40.

<sup>40</sup> Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, p 82.

<sup>41</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>42</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>43</sup> Squires, *op cit*, p 181.

<sup>44</sup> Mouffe, *op cit*, p 83.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, p 77.

demands around the principle of democratic equivalence.<sup>46</sup> Mouffe believes that it is more useful to understand the various discourses on the subject's subordination instead of reducing it to one single position, whether class, race or gender.<sup>47</sup> Citizenship becomes a 'common political identity' where individuals with different identifications are bound by a 'set of ethico-political values.'<sup>48</sup>

Amidst the theoretical currents between a gender-neutral or gender-differentiated citizenship, Ruth Lister attempts to combine these two approaches. She argues that 'a feminist reinterpretation of citizenship can best be approached by treating each of these oppositions as potentially complementary rather than as mutually exclusive alternatives.'<sup>49</sup> Lister advances a 'critical synthesis' between the civic republican and liberal conception of citizenship that incorporates both status and practice, particularly 'informal politics in which women are more likely to engage.'<sup>50</sup> The 'synthetic approach' encapsulates the notion of human agency which characterises individuals as 'autonomous, purposive actors, capable of choice.'<sup>51</sup> Carol Gould in *Rethinking Democracy* refers to human agency as 'becoming the person one chooses to be through carrying out those actions that express one's purposes and needs.'<sup>52</sup> The idea of human agency is significant in women's citizenship. Using Gould as a basis, Lister writes,

*if each human being is regarded as agent with capacity for free choice and self-development, there can be no grounds for one gender to have greater right to exercise this capacity than another and domination of one group by another constitutes a denial of the conditions*

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, p 86.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, p 88.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, pp 83-84. Anne Phillips also argues for maintaining the difference in the private and public political life. She notes that 'politics is a particular kind of activity' implying that what goes on in the private sphere is different from what transpires in the public sphere. Hence, 'being a good citizen is not the same as being a good mother.' Phillips theorises that having the same rights and responsibilities as citizens with men, women have more avenues to exercise citizenship to include their roles as consumers and workers. This, Phillips observes, falls into the political element of feminist pluralism that recognises the plurality of political arenas. See Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, pp 86, 142-245; Siim, *Gender and Citizenship*, p 36.

<sup>49</sup> Lister, *Citizenship*, p 92.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*, p 196.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*, p 36.

<sup>52</sup> Gould, *Rethinking Democracy*, p 47.

*of equal agency.*<sup>53</sup>

Human agency, Lister explains, is in 'dialectic relationship with social structures' and in social relations.<sup>54</sup> Within these frames individuals develop their true potential, thus, becoming 'full and active citizens.'<sup>55</sup>

This synthetic approach to citizenship is most helpful in exploring the citizenship of Filipino women. A gender-neutral conception of citizenship recognises the culturally sanctioned public roles of Filipino women. But relying on the gender-neutral conception of citizenship alone denies the particular position of Filipino women in the family and maintains their invisibility in the public sphere as the measures of political participation are confined to formal processes still dominated by men. On the other hand, a gender-differentiated citizenship suggests that the primary concern of Filipino women is mothering and the political duty of nurturing future citizens. Simply applying this view alone also denies the participation of Filipino women in the community. Hence, combining these two approaches through a 'critical syntheses' offer a more useful analytical tool in this study.

Citizenship as status explores the reasons and motivations for becoming Australian citizens; citizenship as practice examines the way Filipino women in this study exercise their Australian citizenship at home, at work and in the community. The 'maternalist' and 'sexually-differentiated' conception of citizenship is particularly employed in the practise of Australian citizenship at home. In this space I added a personal or subjective dimension to the understanding of Australian citizenship as status. This focuses on the perceived rights of Australian citizenship in the Filipino women's relationship with their children and husbands. In terms of the two public spaces, workplace and in the community, I take Mouffe's view of a 'common political identity' of Australian citizenship amongst Filipino women in relation to other Australian citizens. Through this political identity, the racial or ethnic identities of Filipino women become integrated in their quest for equality within a

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<sup>53</sup> Lister, *op cit*, p 37.

<sup>54</sup> *loc cit*.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, p 38.

multicultural yet Anglo-centric society. This is shown in the practise of Australian citizenship in the workplace. Mouffe formulates equality and liberty as principles in a pluralist democracy where citizenship becomes a mechanism for belonging to a political community.<sup>56</sup>

I argue that Mouffe's idea of political association is similar to the multicultural framework of Australian society. Mouffe's 'ethico-political bond' implies 'commonality' or a 'linkage among the participants in the association.'<sup>57</sup> The members of a political community abide by the 'language of civil discourse' or the prescribed rules of conduct and, in doing so, create a common political identity.<sup>58</sup> In Australia, this political bond is achieved through citizenship that embodies 'common commitment to democratic institutions and the rule of law' amongst a diverse group of people.'<sup>59</sup>

I refer to multiculturalism as a state practice of ethnic accommodation which respects the 'values, beliefs, aspirations and lifeways' of culturally diverse groups in Australia.<sup>60</sup> Multiculturalism provides an inclusive framework, unlike assimilation, for migrants to define their own communities within the bounds of law. I use this social premise to explore the participation of Filipino women in community associations and other groups. Multiculturalism enhances their involvement in meaningful activities in the community such as volunteering. On the other hand, I also use the idea of multiculturalism as a critical basis to examine the subject position of Filipinas in a predominantly 'white' society.

The practise of Australian citizenship in the community within a multicultural framework implies the opening of spaces for immigrant women to define their participation outside the formal political arena. The involvement of Filipino women in

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<sup>56</sup> Baykan, 'Issues of Difference and Citizenship for "New Identities,"' *Innovation* 10(1), 1997, p 63.

<sup>57</sup> Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, p 66.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*, p 67.

<sup>59</sup> This is part of the phrase in a letter of Jerzy Zubrzycki, Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Task Force, to Hon. John Hodges, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs on 10 September 1982. See Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, *National Consultation on Multiculturalism and Citizenship Report*, p iv.

<sup>60</sup> Birrell, 'Migration and Dilemmas of Multiculturalism' in Birrell and Hay, *The Immigration Issue in Australia*, p 134.

their own community associations is consistent with Mouffe's 'ethico-political bond.' In a radical democratic conceptualisation of citizenship, Mouffe avers that different groups recognise their common concern towards a collective political identity as citizens albeit 'engaged in many different purposive enterprises.'<sup>61</sup> Involvement in community groups does not alter the commitment to the principles of liberty and equality. Rather, such involvement reflects respect of individual liberty.

The idea of 'common political identity' is also useful in drawing out the shared democratic orientation between the Philippines and Australia which allows Filipino women to identify with Australian citizenship upon migration and settlement in Australia. While this concept of common political identity reflects the status of Filipino women as Australian citizens in relation to other citizens, it does not provide a comprehensive framework to explain their particular status as immigrant women from Asia in a society where the socio-cultural criteria of belonging to the nation-state has been historically defined by racial affinity. In this context, Nira Yuval-Davis' conception of citizenship as a 'multi-tier construct' is most helpful in exploring the status of the group of Filipino women in this study. The 'multi-tier' model of citizenship suggests that citizens are members of 'a variety of collectivities - local, ethnic, national and transnational.'<sup>2</sup> An individual is usually a member in more than one specific community; that is, ethnic, racial, religious or regional.<sup>3</sup> Citizenship in this case, Yuval-Davis argues, should be examined 'in relation to multiple, formal and informal citizenship in more than one country.'<sup>4</sup> Yuval-Davis posits the view that women's citizenship should not only be contrasted with men's but also with 'dominant or subordinate groups, their ethnicity, origin and urban or rural residence.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Mouffe, 'Feminism, Citizenship, and Radical Democratic Politics' in Nicholson and Seidman, *Social Postmodernism*, p 325.

<sup>2</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 68.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p 91.

<sup>4</sup> Yuval-Davis, 'National Spaces and Collective Identities,' *Nivedini- A Sri Lankan Feminist Journal* 7(1), June 1999, pp 20-26.

<sup>5</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 91. Iris Marion Young argues a similar view on the subject position of marginal groups in her critique of the liberal conception of citizenship based on justice as impartiality. Young proposes a 'group differentiated citizenship' where historically excluded groups would be incorporated in the polity as individuals and as members of a particular group. Young asserts the principle of a 'democratic public' which provides a mechanism 'for the effective representation and recognition of the distinct voices' of oppressed or disadvantaged groups. Members of oppressed groups need to have separate organizations that

Drawing from this perspective, the national and transnational collectivities situate the status of Filipino women and their practise of Australian citizenship. The national collectivity suggests the positioning of Filipino women as the racial 'Other' in Australia which influences their negotiation for equality amidst social constraints such as discrimination. Race becomes the 'structuring principle' in the national collectivity.<sup>6</sup> The transnational collectivity indicates that the acquisition of Australian citizenship is compared to the international position of Filipino citizenship. Yuval-Davis states,

*...people are not positioned equally within their collectivities and states, collectivities are not positioned equally within the state and internationally, and states are not positioned equally to other states.*<sup>7</sup>

Citizenship is viewed in terms of the 'different positioning' amongst states as well as amongst individuals and groups within a state.<sup>8</sup>

Aside from these multiple levels of membership, Yuval-Davis also argues for the recognition of various 'social attributes' which affect the 'specific positioning of people within and across communities in certain social categories.'<sup>9</sup> The determinants of citizenship include, amongst others, 'gender, class position, religion, her coming from the city or from a village, her ability, her stage in the life cycle.'<sup>10</sup> These factors associated with women's citizenship are useful in analysing the practise of Australian citizenship by a group of Filipino women in this study. There are commonalities and differences in their socio-economic and regional background that influence their understanding and exercise of Australian citizenship. Like Lister, Yuval-Davis also emphasises the idea of autonomy in the exercise of citizenship in relation to families, civil society organisations and state agencies.<sup>11</sup> The individual's relationship with these social institutions, minus the state agencies, is explored in Chapters V and VII.

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do not include those from the privileged groups. See Young, 'Polity and Group Difference' in Beiner, *op cit*, pp 184-189; Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, pp 96-121, 167.

<sup>6</sup> Anthias and Yuval-Davis, *Racialized Boundaries*, p ix.

<sup>7</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 91.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, p 75.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, p 91

<sup>10</sup> *loc cit*

Membership in a collectivity suggests a person's identification based on shared attributes and experiences. Following Mouffe's idea of multiple identities<sup>12</sup> and Yuval-Davis' multi-collectivities, I explore the political identity of Australian citizenship and Filipino identity of migrant women in Chapter VIII. These identities are social constructs which exist in 'specific social circumstances.'<sup>13</sup> In this study, the identities of Filipino women based on, but not limited to, race and gender are intermeshed with their political identity as Australian citizens.

I use the terms 'race' and 'ethnicity' interchangeably for immigrant Filipino women in this study because race constructs them as different from the 'white' majority and ethnicity defines their culture, language and religion separate from other Asian immigrants in Australia.<sup>14</sup> These terms have significant meanings in the lives of Filipino women. Most of them have developed referential standpoints on their subject position as non-whites in Australia. Being the 'Other' in relation the 'White,' either European or Anglo-Australian, is quite a clear signifier of difference. Taking into account the development of the usage of ethnicity in Australia, Filipinos are categorised as 'ethnic' which, as Jim Harvey notes, is 'imposed from the viewpoint and theorising of the dominant group.'<sup>15</sup> In more specific context, the derivation of 'ethnic' has come to refer to non-white immigrants or, as Ghassan Hage points out, the 'Third World looking people.'<sup>16</sup> From the narratives of Filipino women, the idea of being 'ethnic' often relates to their race. They position themselves through descriptions like *iba ang kulay natin* (we have a different colour) which implies a form of racial identification. Within the Filipino

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p 83.

<sup>12</sup> Although the idea of multiple identities is now widely accepted, theorists are contesting the significance of the ascribed characteristics and the social form which defines identity. See Davies, 'Ethnicity' in Krause and Renwick, *Identities in International Relations*, p 80.

<sup>13</sup> Renwick, 'Re-reading Europe's Identities' in Krause and Renwick, *ibid*, p 155.

<sup>14</sup> Race and ethnicity are contested concepts. There are three potential positions between the two. The first position argues that race and ethnicity are analytically distinct with race being biologically determined. The second position argues for the same distinction but maintains the view that race and ethnicity overlaps. The third position disputes these distinctions and argues that ethnicity is the 'overarching term' with race as its subset. It is generally agreed, however, that race is a social construction. See Kivisto, *Multiculturalism in a Global Society*, p 14. See also Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship*, p 14; Jenkins, 'Rethinking Ethnicity' in Stone and Dennis, *Race and Ethnicity*, pp 59-67; Rattansi, 'Just Framing' in Nicholson and Seidman, *Social Postmodernism*, pp 252-259; Wade, *Race, Nature and Culture*, p 4.

<sup>15</sup> Harvey, 'Different Starting Points' in Collins, *Contemporary Racism in Australia, Canada and New Zealand Vol 2*, p 213.



community, ethnicity is a significant category of identity in reference to regional origin or ethno linguistic belonging in the Philippines. Ethnicity also marks Filipinos in relation to other Asians in Australia. Stuart Hall refers to ethnicity as positionality where individuals place themselves in constructed identities.<sup>17</sup> Because the concepts of race and ethnicity are fluid in the experience of Filipino women in Australia, the terms are used interchangeably as a mark of difference in relation to 'white' Australians. Similar phrases like 'women of colour'<sup>18</sup> and 'non-white' are also used with the same meaning.

Furthermore, the word 'racialised' denotes the primordial role of this difference in citizenship status. According to Avtar Brah, the process of racialisation is experienced differently by groups in society. She conceptualised four ways of 'differential racialisation' through experience, social relations, subjectivity and identity.<sup>19</sup> These ways of experiencing difference are integrated in the daily lives of immigrant Filipino women in Australia.

This research on the citizenship of first-generation Filipino women in Australia draws on a combination of theoretical tools: Lister's 'critical synthesis,' Mouffe's 'common political identity' and Yuval-Davis' 'multi-tier construct.' Combining these analytical tools provides a useful framework for examining the different spaces of citizenship - home, work, and the community - in the lives of Filipino women in this study.

Having set the theoretical premises of this research, the historical specificity of Filipino women needs to be established. The next chapter outlines the social construction of Filipino women in the Philippines which contributes to their practise of citizenship. It also traces the development of Australian citizenship and its racial and gender biases and the way that they contribute to the subject position of Filipino immigrant women.

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<sup>16</sup> Hage, *White Nation*, p 18.

<sup>17</sup> Hall, 'Ethnicity,' *Radical America* 23(4), 1991, pp 18-19. Hall argues that all people are 'ethnically located'; that they 'speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture.' See Hall, 'New Ethnicities' in Alcoff and Mendieta, *Identities*, p 94.

<sup>18</sup> See Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs' in Meyers, *op cit*, pp 507-520; Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle' in Mohanty and Russo, *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, p 7.

<sup>19</sup> The concept of 'difference' involves several modalities, 'each constitutive of and embedded with the other.' See Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, pp 3-15.

### III

#### STRUCTURING CITIZENSHIP: PHILIPPINES AND AUSTRALIA

Exploring the interplay of migration, women and citizenship in the lives of Filipino women in Australia requires an understanding of the historical specificity of Filipino women. The social milieu in the Philippines contributes to the creation of political space amongst immigrant Filipino women in the exercise of their Australian citizenship. Although this study concerns immigrant Filipino women in Australia, it is vital to examine the historical antecedents that inform their cultural identity. Understanding the particular cultural make-up of Filipino women is essential in determining the kind of participation open to them in the Philippines. Only by beginning with this premise could their exercise of citizenship in Australia be properly explained.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part traces the development of the idea of Filipino womanhood from the pre-colonial to the post-independence period. I argue that the idea of Filipino womanhood constitutes a peculiar mix of cultural influences from the East and West that contributes to their ease in adapting to western democratic precepts like citizenship. The discussion is limited to women influenced by Catholicism. This is an important aspect of Filipino cultural identity because all the respondents in this study profess the Christian faith. The second section discusses the development of Australian citizenship in the context of migration. By establishing the location of non-white migrant women, like Filipinos, in the discourse of Australian citizenship, I set the parameters from which to analyse the exercise of their adoptive citizenship in Australia. I argue that the racial and gender biases of Australian migration and citizenship policies contribute to the marginal status of migrant Filipino women in Australia and to their exercise of citizenship.

##### **A. Construct of Filipino Women: East-West Paradigmatic Mix**

Contemporary Filipino women's experience of citizenship is shaped by cultural influences that extend from the pre-colonial period to the present day. This section examines the social construction of Filipino women and their citizenship status in the

Philippines.

### 1. *Women in Pre-colonial Philippines*

One of the main sources for understanding the status of women in pre-colonial Philippines is the myths and legends handed down from one generation to the next. No written accounts by people in this period can be traced primarily because writing was not the usual method of record keeping.<sup>1</sup> If there were written accounts, these are alleged to have been destroyed by Spanish authorities.<sup>2</sup>

Oral accounts of Philippine cultural history portray women in a prominent place in society. Foremost is the mythical story of creation, *Malakas at Maganda* (literally, the strong and the beautiful), that tells of a man called *Malakas* and a woman named *Maganda* emerging from a split bamboo.<sup>3</sup> This version of creation gives a semblance of equality between the sexes because the symbolic splitting of bamboo reveals two distinct beings. The *babaye* (woman) is, in the words of Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, a ‘whole person, separate from, yet born together with *lalaki* (man).’<sup>4</sup> She reads this act as the woman having her own separate identity from that of man; a whole being, like that of man. Their being born together suggests that neither is superior or inferior; they are innately equal or, perhaps, complementary to each other. Over time the concept of *maganda* has come to encompass not only the physical attributes of women but also the essential goodness of persons. According to Mina Roces in *Women, Power, and Kinship Politics*, a Filipino woman who is considered to be *maganda* is a ‘woman who exudes the virtues of her gender.’<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of universal literacy or that writing was universal in pre-colonial Philippines is not supported by available evidence. There existed a form of syllabary, Malay or Arabic script, linked to Islamic proselytizing works but writing was not widely practiced. This debunked the earlier assertion of universal literacy by the Spanish chroniclers, Chirino and Moraga. However, some natives did have a level of literacy. See Corpuz, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation Vol 1*, pp 20-36; Zafra, *The Colonization of the Philippines and the Beginnings of the Spanish City of Manila*, p 9; Kingsbury, *Southeast Asia*, p 301.

<sup>2</sup> Corpuz, *ibid*, p 28.

<sup>3</sup> Mananzan, ‘The Filipino Woman’ in Mananzan, *Essays on Women*, p 8. See also Jimenez, *Si Malakas at Si Maganda*; Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, p 155.

<sup>4</sup> Feminists in the Philippines refer to this myth to distinguish Filipino women’s heritage from western Christian societies. See Santiago, ‘Rebirthing Babaye’ in Basu, *The Challenge of Local Feminism*, p 110.

There is a growing body of historical scholarship that supports the idea of equality between women and men in pre-colonial Philippines. For example, Teresita Infante in her seminal study on women in early Philippine tribal communities notes that a female child was equally regarded with the male.<sup>6</sup> Boys and girls received similar parental care and opportunity for education although training for girls was quite distinct and specific. Equal division between sons and daughters marked property inheritance - a practice that continues even today.<sup>7</sup> Quindoza-Santiago notes that children bore their mother's name.<sup>8</sup> Divorce amongst the ethnic communities was generally resorted to for reasons of childlessness, infidelity, non-support of husband, desertion, domestic violence, incompatibility or neglect of either party.<sup>9</sup> Myrna Feliciano explains that the process of getting a divorce was easy. Women simply returned the dowry to their husbands or to the parents and they could remarry.<sup>10</sup> In his study of pre-Spanish society, Robert Fox noted that marriages were 'remarkably equalitarian.' He attributes this to the strong 'bilateral character of the family and kinship' relationships even after marriage.<sup>11</sup> Ties were maintained from both lineages with equal respect. In terms of decision-making, wives were perceived to have an equal voice and were more firm and steadfast in times of difficulty.<sup>12</sup> Women's contribution to the economic well being of the family was substantial. This practice persists even in contemporary Philippines because, according to Gelia Castillo, this task is acknowledged as co-management in family affairs.<sup>13</sup>

Domestic work and the maintenance of community life were shared by both men

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<sup>5</sup> Roces, *Women, Power, and Kinship Politics*, p 17.

<sup>6</sup> Cited in Mananzan, *op cit*, p 9.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* Equal division of property during pre-colonial Philippines was only for legitimate children. See Zafra, *op cit*, p 8.

<sup>8</sup> Quindoza-Santiago, 'Roots of Feminist Thought in the Philippines,' *Review of Women's Studies* 4(1) and 5(2), 1996, p 160.

<sup>9</sup> Infante, *The Woman in Early Philippines and Among the Cultural Minorities Revisited*, Paper presented at the International Congress on Women's Role in History and Nation-Building, 1998, pp 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> Feliciano, 'The Filipina' in Tapales, *Women's Role in Philippine History*, p 23.

<sup>11</sup> Fox, 'The Philippines in Pre-historic Times,' *Journal of History*, n. d, p 458. Cited in Mananzan, *op cit*, p 11.

<sup>12</sup> Mananzan, *ibid*, pp 12-13.

<sup>13</sup> Castillo, 'Family and Household' in Department of Sociology-Anthropology, *SA 21: Selected Readings*, p 250, cited in Chant and McIlwaine, *Women of a Lesser Cost*, pp 5-7.

and women.<sup>14</sup> There was a fluidity of work, be it hunting and fishing that fell on the shoulders of both men and women. Hence, the division of labour based on gender was unclear.<sup>15</sup> The absence of rigid social structures suggests that matrilineal lineage was recognized in the early Philippine society, a practice that continues in contemporary times. This practice is not exclusively associated with the Philippines but also observed in some other parts of Southeast Asia as well.<sup>16</sup> This type of equality is found in agrarian-based economies where men and women share the burden of work. Robert Winzeler in his article on 'Sexual Status in Southeast Asia' writes that in parts of Southeast Asia collective work amongst farming communities is premised 'most often on equal and frequently on undifferentiated terms' thereby resulting in women's higher status.<sup>17</sup> Land was communally owned and self-sufficiency of families did not warrant, Aida Santos contends, 'relations of dependence and exploitation.'<sup>18</sup> Production tasks of the farming household in the Philippines are distributed to all members of the unit.

Women also occupied empowering roles outside the family such as the *babaylan* or *catalonan* (priestess), the central persona in spirit worship.<sup>19</sup> Although the *datu* (chieftain) was notably a man who was the acclaimed political head, the *babaylan* held a significant role in the spiritual life of the community.<sup>20</sup> The *hilot* or *herbolaria* (folk medicine practitioner) archetypes were dominated by women, too, and many can still be found

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<sup>14</sup> Quindoza-Santiago, *op cit*, p160.

<sup>15</sup> *loc cit*.

<sup>16</sup> See Sobritchea, 'The Ideology of Female Domesticity,' *Review of Women's Studies*, 1(1), 1990, pp 26-27; Blanc-Szanton, 'Collision of Cultures' in Atkinson and Errinton, *Power and Difference*, pp 345-383.

<sup>17</sup> Winzeler, 'Sexual Status in Southeast Asia' in Van Esterik, *Women of Southeast Asia*, p 186.

<sup>18</sup> Santos, 'Do Women Really Hold Up Half the Sky?' in Mananzan, *op cit*, p 38.

<sup>19</sup> The *babaylan* in the Visayas had its equivalent in other ethnic communities. They were known as *catalonan* among the Tagalogs, *mangaalisig* among the Kalingas, *mangaanito* in Pangasinan, *anitera* among the Gaddang, *baliana* in Bicol, *mabalian* among the Bagobo, *almono* in B'laan and *doronakit* among the Isneg. See Quindoza-Santiago, *op cit*, pp 161-162; Salazar, 'Ang Babaylan sa Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas' in Tapales, *op cit*, pp 52- 72; Villariba, 'Women Who Usher in Ease and Well Being,' *Women in Action* 1(3), 1996, pp 25-28.

<sup>20</sup> The *babaylan* undertook the following tasks: 'She determined when to plant harvest; she presided over religious rituals; she cured the sick; she foretold the future through the stars.' See Domingo-Tapales, 'Women in Politics and Public Administration,' *Asian Review of Public Administration* 4 (1), January-June 1992, p 1.

practicing this traditional medicine in towns and villages in contemporary Philippines.<sup>21</sup> Women also led some towns with prominent religious cults. These roles reflected the importance of women in cultural production and nurturance in the pre-colonial period.

In the field of politics, Infante discusses the citizenship participation of early native women amongst the Kalinga tribe where ‘some are recognised as pact holders.’<sup>22</sup> This entailed a form of agreement between two parties belonging to different tribes for secure passage into each other's territorial domain.<sup>23</sup> Pact holders denoted an important role in the preservation of harmony between tribal communities. That women were allowed to become pact holders suggested that they were active participants in the affairs of the community. They could even succeed as chieftains in the absence of a male heir, though this was rarely the case.<sup>24</sup>

The combination of oral myths and scholarship strongly suggest that Filipino women in the pre-colonial period occupied a relatively high status.<sup>25</sup> They were actively engaged in the affairs of the family and in the community. Quindoza-Santiago argues that women during this period ‘were not necessarily under the power of men’ because of the existence of opportunities ‘to become equal with men in community affairs.’<sup>26</sup> She further argues that the indigenous language indicated a ‘lack of sexual bifurcation,’ notably ‘in case of nouns and pronouns.’<sup>27</sup> This means that language, the bearer of culture, did not

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<sup>21</sup> Mendoza, ‘Towards a Filipino Women's Archetype Paradigms,’ Paper presented at the International Congress on Women's Role in History and Nation-building, 1998, p 3.

<sup>22</sup> Infante, *op cit*, p 157.

<sup>23</sup> Mananzan, *op cit*, p 15.

<sup>24</sup> Szanton, ‘Women and Men in Iloilo, Philippines’ in Van Esterik, *op cit*, p 98. See also Jayawardena, *op cit*, p 156.

<sup>25</sup> See Quindoza-Santiago, *op cit*, p 160; *The Woman Question in the Philippines (Part 1 of 5)*, Contemporary Women's Issues Collection 01-01-1997, pp 1-10, <http://www.education.elibrary.com.au> [3/2/02]; Domingo-Tapales, *op cit*, p 1. Belen Atienza de Leon cited the works of chroniclers on the early Spanish period describing the higher social status and roles of indigenous women. These include Pedro Chirino, *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas y de lo que en Ellas han Trabajado los Padres de la Compana de Jesus* in 1890; Juan Delgado, *Historia General Sacro-Profano Polica y Natural de las Islas Ponientes Llamadas Filipinas* in 1892; and Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*. See de Leon, *Selection of Women as Senatorial Candidates*, pp 35-36. See also Zafra, *op cit*, pp 4-5.

<sup>26</sup> Quindoza-Santiago, *op cit*, p 161.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p 163.

show 'whether a particular object or a particular labor is specific to men or women.'<sup>28</sup> The indigenous characteristics of women did not disappear with colonialism but were, rather, infused with western values.

## 2. *Women and Spanish Colonialism*

Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer, 'discovered' the Philippines in 1521 and claimed it for the Spanish crown, a colonial process that lasted for three centuries.<sup>29</sup> Lands were privatised and the European conception of property replaced communal ownership.<sup>30</sup> The indigenous role of women as *babaylan*, 'the mediator between God and humans,' was eroded.<sup>31</sup> They were branded as *bruhas* (witches) and lost their previously held prestige in the community.<sup>32</sup>

Within this period, Castilian values permeated society and a new model of womanhood was successfully engineered by religion. Roman Catholicism with a Spanish feudalistic flavour captured the hearts and minds of the lowland native or *indio*. Their version of an ideal woman is epitomised in Jose Rizal's heroine in *Noli Me Tangere*, Maria Clara.<sup>33</sup> Maria Clara is the antithesis of the *mujer indigena* (indigenous woman): she is sweet, docile, obedient, self-sacrificing, and virtuous.<sup>34</sup> The gaiety and independence of the native woman contrasts with the Castilian model of submissiveness and passivity. According to Florida Ruth Romero, the 'exemplar of the times was the diffident, chaste and half-educated woman whose all-consuming preoccupation was to save her soul from perdition and her body from the clutches of the devil incarnate in man.'<sup>35</sup> Social codes confined her to honing the requisite skills of 'excellent daughters, housewives and servants

<sup>28</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>29</sup> Aquino, 'Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective' in Nelson and Chowdhury, *Women and Politics Worldwide*, p 591; Tarling, *Nations and States in Southeast Asia*, p 22.

<sup>30</sup> This land system was feudal. Tracts of lands were transformed into *haciendas* and small lands were confiscated under which farmers redeemed it by mortgage. At present, the Spanish colonial legacy could be seen in the unequal distribution of land mostly in the hands of the landowning class. See Quindoza-Santiago, *op cit*, pp 163-164; Neher, *Southeast Asia in the New International Era*, p 71.

<sup>31</sup> Quindoza-Santiago, *op cit*, p 163.

<sup>32</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>33</sup> Mananzan, *The Filipino Woman*, p 29.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, pp 28, 30.

of God' corresponding to the sources of authority in her life: father, husband and priest.<sup>36</sup> She could not leave the familial abode except upon marriage. Once married, practice demanded that she adopt her husband's last name and keep it until death.<sup>37</sup> Her right to divorce was rescinded by Spanish Civil Law.<sup>38</sup> This time the innocent spouse only could initiate divorce.<sup>39</sup> Pre-marital sex, having a child before marriage or abortion was deemed symptomatic of evil will. The rights enjoyed before by women in pre-colonial era were scorned and reinterpreted to mean acts contrary to good womanhood. Virginity and chastity became the sublime ideals.

Laws institutionalised women's dependence on men. Women's status, Romero observed, was 'equated with that of infants, idiots and lunatics.'<sup>40</sup> This meant that women were regarded as having no capacity for rational thought and that they needed their husbands or fathers to decide for them. The Spanish Marriage Law of 1870 incorporated man's rule over his wife, denying the latter possession of property without the formers' consent.<sup>41</sup> The Catholic Church preached the 'ideology of female domesticity' with its control of curricular dogma.<sup>42</sup> Education focused on 'Castilian values and norms of sexual behaviour.'<sup>43</sup> Consistent with the admonition that 'women are made to weave, to give birth and to weep,' the Hispanized Filipina was denied a modicum of public life except going to

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<sup>35</sup> Romero, 'Women's Status in Philippine Society,' *Fookien Times Philippine Yearbook 1978*, p 324.

<sup>36</sup> Sobritchea, *op cit*, p 29; Rodriguez, 'Patriarchy and Women's Subordination in the Philippines,' *Review of Women's Studies* 1(1), 1990, p 20.

<sup>37</sup> Rodriguez, *loc cit*.

<sup>38</sup> Aguilar, 'The Social Construction of the Filipino Woman,' *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 13, 1989, p 529.

<sup>39</sup> Under the Spanish Civil Code, the grounds for divorce included 'adultery of the wife in all cases, and that of the husband when it results in public scandal or in disgrace to the wife; maltreatment by deed or serious insults; violence exerted by husband upon the wife in order to force her to change religion; the proposal of husband to prostitute his wife; the attempt of the husband or the wife to corrupt their sons or to prostitute their daughters, and the connivance in their corruption or prostitution; and the conviction of the spouse to the punishment of *cadena* or *reclusion perpetua*.' See Feliciano, *op cit*, pp 31-32.

<sup>40</sup> Romero, *op cit*, p 324.

<sup>41</sup> The wife's subordination to the authority of the husband in this law included the provisions that she 'obey(s) her husband, live with him, and follow him when he changes his domicile or residence except when he moves to a foreign country; (the wife) cannot make contracts or acquire property by will or descent, without the permission of her husband, except as provided by law; (the wife) cannot publish any literary or scientific work of which she may be the author without the husband's consent or in his default a judicial authorization.' See Feliciano, *op cit*, p 27.

<sup>42</sup> Sobritchea, *op cit*, p 28. See also Jayawardena, *op cit*, p 159.

<sup>43</sup> Sobritchea, *ibid*, p 29. See also Feliciano, *op cit*, p 26.



church.<sup>44</sup> Religion, the only mode of public access, allowed women to develop, as Sr. Mary John Mananzan stated, 'a religious fervor which would verge on fanaticism.'<sup>45</sup>

The colonial discourse on women reflected the European construction of women's subordinate role in society, particularly their relegation to the private sphere.<sup>46</sup> Liberal theorists consider relationships in this sphere as beyond state intervention. Following Hobbes and Locke, the private sphere is represented as a domain of 'natural' freedom and is 'free from relations of power and domination' by the state.<sup>47</sup> In her critique of this social order, Elshtain argues that as opposed to the public realm of power, the private becomes associated with women and their qualities that make them unfit for political life.<sup>48</sup> This remains one of the ideological cornerstones of patriarchy.

Pateman's conception of women's citizenship status in *The Sexual Contract* reflects the status of many Filipino women influenced by the values promoted in the colonial period. Pateman argues that modern society is patriarchal and that women are subjected as citizens by the sexual contract. Marriage binds women to the natural world of the family and is outside the realm of civil society. As mothers or wives, women are not considered political subjects. Civic freedom is constructed along the lines of masculinity and is denied to women.<sup>49</sup> They are subordinated to the needs of men in the so-called fraternal patriarchy.<sup>50</sup> The brotherhood of men defines their rights as citizens in the public sphere as well as their sexual right to women in the private sphere.<sup>51</sup>

As a result of the colonial ideas about women, men dominated the public arena and

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<sup>44</sup> Mananzan, *op cit*, p 22.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, p 34.

<sup>46</sup> Szanton, *op cit*, p 101.

<sup>47</sup> Ackelsberg and Shanley, 'Privacy, Publicity, and Power' in Hirschmann and Di Stefano, *Revisioning the Political*, p 214.

<sup>48</sup> Elshtain, 'Moral Woman and Immoral Man,' *Politics and Society* 4, 1974, pp 453-473.

<sup>49</sup> Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, p 4.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*, p 3. See also Arnot et al, 'Changing Femininity, Changing Concepts of Citizenship in Public and Private Spheres,' *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 7, 2000, p 152; Okin, 'Women, Equality, and Citizenship,' *Queens Quarterly* 99 (1), Spring 1992, p 64.

<sup>51</sup> Benton, 'Citizen Cain's Silenced Sisters,' *New Statesman & Society* 2 December 1988, p 19.

productive activities like farming and women were confined mainly to domestic work.<sup>52</sup> But not all women succumbed to the clutches of Spanish notional object of womanhood. Those from the *principalia* (elite) were affected most because of their direct contact with the Spanish bureaucracy whereas those women from the northern highlands were not.<sup>53</sup> Since documentary evidence on Filipino women in other aspects of colonial rule is limited, much of it hinges on inference *vis a vis* men. One crucial point left unexplored is the consequence of forced labour (*polista*) for the women left behind. As able-bodied men were hauled into the shipyards, women had to assume the tasks in the fields. The once self-sufficient household became impoverished as cash cropping replaced subsistence farming. Because of this situation, it can be inferred that many poor women engaged in small business ventures to augment the family income. These included selling their produce, be it native delicacies or root crops, in the regular *tabo* (market day). These working women did not strictly follow the social conventions for women, as was usually the case for non-elite women who do not have direct social associations with Spanish authorities. They did not confine themselves to home but were free to travel and engaged in selling. This penchant for small business was observed later in Manila and the provinces.<sup>54</sup>

The colonisation of Filipino women and their interpolation into the domestic sphere was never complete. Political activism and revolt were always present. For example, in the account of Father Pedro Chirino in the seventeenth century, a *babaylan* defied Catholic teachings and formed a rival cult.<sup>55</sup> Urban *cigarreras* (female cigar workers) staged a strike in the nineteenth century demanding better conditions but this was downplayed by Spanish authorities as *alboroto* (tantrum) instead of a *huelga* (strike).<sup>56</sup> In 1889, even the propertied women from Malolos petitioned the government for Spanish instruction, the language of

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<sup>52</sup> Szanton, *op cit*, p 102.

<sup>53</sup> Santiago, *op cit*, p 114.

<sup>54</sup> Aguilar, *op cit*, p 532.

<sup>55</sup> Jocano, *The Philippines at the Spanish Contact*, pp 137-138, cited in Santiago, *op cit*, p 114. Some *babaylans* who refused to accept the Spanish world view formed rival groups which later became messianic organizations. In the sixteenth century, the rebellion of Waray Tupung in Bohol involved a *babaylan*. See Salazar, *op cit*, p 217.

<sup>56</sup> Camagay, 'Writing Her Story,' Paper presented at the International Congress on Women's Role in History and Nation-building, 1998, pp 1-2.

public life.<sup>57</sup> Their petition to be educated gained the support of the eminent propagandist who later became the national hero, Jose Rizal, who admonished these women that 'a good mother does not resemble the mother that the friars have created.'<sup>58</sup> The actions of the *cigarreras* and the Malolos women represented the desire for equal opportunity and treatment accorded to men under Spanish administration.

Other inspiring accounts by historians also reveal that Spanish colonisation was not entirely successful in making Filipino women 'total subjects.'<sup>59</sup> Reynaldo Ileto's work on *Pasyon and Revolution* analyses the *pasyon* (passion) led by ingenious *cantoras* (chanters) who incorporated native history into telling of the story of the life of Christ. This annual church activity during the Holy Week was instrumental in fomenting revolutionary consciousness amongst the local populace.<sup>60</sup> Inferring from this work, Filipino women as *cantoras* portrayed their pre-colonial role of facilitating religious activities, thereby embodying colonial oppression. Furthermore, the celebrated story of Gabriela Silang in Ilocos who took over the reins of leadership of rebellion after her husband's death in the late 1700s was an exemplar of women in non-traditional roles.<sup>61</sup> Towards the last half of the eighteenth century, women joined the *Katipunan*, the revolutionary forces against Spain. The roles of Melchora Aquino, Gregoria de Jesus, Trinidad Tecson, and Agueda Kahabagan, in serving the wounded, acting as couriers and fighting alongside men are examples of Filipino women's independence from Spanish subjection.<sup>62</sup> Another enduring

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<sup>57</sup> Santiago, *op cit*, pp 115-16.

<sup>58</sup> Cited in Mananzan, *op cit*, p 31.

<sup>59</sup> *loc cit*. See also The Woman Question in the Philippines, *op cit*.

<sup>60</sup> Santiago, *op cit*, p 116.

<sup>61</sup> Tancangco, 'Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines,' *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 4 (4), October 1990, p 326.

<sup>62</sup> Ordinary women like Gregoria Montoya, a farmer's wife, led a battle in Calero, Cavite in November 1896 but her heroism was not fully recognised by elitist historians probably because of her low social status. Filipino women as historical actors have been lately recognised in Philippine historical writing. See Santiago, *op cit*, p 117; Camagay, *Working Women of Manila in the Nineteenth Century*; Torres, *The Filipino Woman in Focus*; Soriano, *Women and the Philippine Revolution*; Tirona, 'Why Are Some Filipinas Historic But Not Heroic?' *Review of Women's Studies* 4(1) and 5(2), 1996, pp 115-122; Fernandez, 'If Women Are the Best Men in the Philippines, Why Are They Invisible in History?' *Review of Women's Studies*, *ibid*, pp 123-140; Policarpio, 'The Filipino Women During the Revolution,' *Review of Women's Studies*, *ibid*, pp 19-39; Camagay, 'Women in the Text and in Reality,' *Review of Women's Studies*, *ibid*, pp 11-18; Navarro, 'Heroism of Filipino Women in Popular Movements,' *Review of Women's Studies* 3(1), January-June 1998, pp 55-72; Peczon-Fernandez, 'Why Women are Invisible in History,' in Tapales, *op cit*, pp 1-21; Aquino, *op*

legacy is the continued affirmation of the strong qualities of women with the mythical Princess Urduja in Pangasinan. According to Maria Crisanta Nelmidia-Flores, the 'myth of Princess Urduja is the raw articulation of a collective experience against the excesses of patriarchal culture' of a colonised society.<sup>63</sup> Urduja is still an acclaimed name of women's power and authority in contemporary Philippine society with many women named after her. What is important here is that these women broke the chains of the Spanish tradition of docility. Their contributions are now recognized in the annals of Philippine revolutionary history. Some Filipino women, like some men, contributed in resisting colonial oppression.<sup>64</sup>

### 3. *Women and American Rule*

Philippine colonial history has been described as '300 years in a convent followed by 50 years in Hollywood.'<sup>65</sup> American military forces arrived to a newly independent Philippine Republic in May 1898.<sup>66</sup> The American doctrine of Manifest Destiny transplanted western democratic ideals to the Filipinos also known as their 'little brown brothers.'<sup>67</sup> The governing principles were made consistent with the US Constitution.<sup>68</sup> The 'civilising' efforts grafted a people mimicking American lifestyle which made English the *lingua franca* in schools and businesses. According to Edna Manlapaz, English was the

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*cit*, p 593; Cruz, 'The Filipina at the Time of the Fil-American Revolution' in Mananzan, *op cit*, p 56; Jayawardena, *op cit*, p 161.

<sup>63</sup> Nelmidia-Flores, 'Princess Urduja,' *Review of Women's Studies* 9 (1 and 2), January-December 1999, p 84; Aguilar, 'Women's Political Involvement in Historical Perspective,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 2, 1992, p 14.

<sup>64</sup> Aguilar, *ibid*, p 14.

<sup>65</sup> See Kiester, Jr and Kiester, 'Yankee Go Home and Take Me With You,' *Smithsonian*, 30 (2), May 1999, p 43; Neher, *op cit*, p 71.

<sup>66</sup> San Juan, 'The Philippine Centenary,' *Amerasia Journal* 24 (3), 1998, p 27.

<sup>67</sup> Philippines was America's 'show window of democracy in the Far East.' Although Filipino democracy is largely shaped by American 'colonial democracy' it has 'evolved with distinctly Filipino features.' The focus on democracy in the Philippines was criticised by Lee Kuan Yew as inimical to development because it leads to undisciplined and disorderly conditions. See San Buenaventura, 'The Colors of Manifest Destiny,' *Amerasia Journal* 24 (3), 1998, p 1; Miranda, *Democratization*, p 1; Fernandez, 'The Filipina,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 1(4), 1994, pp 43-52; Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, p 71; Paredes, 'Introduction' in Paredes, *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, pp 1-12; Ball, 'The Philippines, An American Outpost in the Pacific,' *Cabbages and Kings* 20, 1992, pp 1-11.

<sup>68</sup> Feliciano, *op cit*, p 35.

‘language of power.’<sup>69</sup> Like the Spaniards, the Americans found an effective tool to capture the minds of the Filipino people - this time, education.<sup>70</sup> The introduction of popular education significantly increased the aspirations of the Filipina to move away from their cloistered lives during the Spanish period.

Education facilitated the most significant political act gained by Filipino women during this time: the grant of suffrage. Proserpina Domingo-Tapales notes that ‘with education came higher ambitions, including the desire to participate in political decisions affecting the country.’<sup>71</sup> In her thesis on the selection of women senatorial candidates in the Philippines, Belen Atienza de Leon argues that the involvement of Filipino women in civic and political activities was probably ‘encouraged by the educational policy of the American colonial government.’<sup>72</sup> In other words, education of women promoted their participation in the political arena and, I would say, also towards full citizenship since voting is the ultimate act of citizenship in any liberal-democratic state. Within the liberal feminist perspective of the First Wave, the granting of equal political rights for women offers the resolution of their oppression.

The struggle to win the vote took many years. The *Association Feminista Ilonga* (Association of Ilonga Feminists) first raised the issue in 1906.<sup>73</sup> Three years later Carmen Poblete edited the first feminist magazine, *Filipina*. The magazine aimed to ‘revindicate the rights of women.’<sup>74</sup> According to Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, this magazine echoed Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and proved that early twentieth-century Filipino women had an appreciation of the feminist discourse. In association with American suffragists, women from the upper echelons formed the Society for

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<sup>69</sup> Manlapaz, *The Impact of English on Pre-War Filipino Women Writers*, Paper presented at the National Centennial Commission Women’s Sector’s International Congress on Women’s Role in History and Nation-building, 8-12 December 1998, p 2.

<sup>70</sup> Constantino, *A History of the Philippines from the Spanish Colonization to the Second World War*, p 309.

<sup>71</sup> Domingo-Tapales, *op cit*, p 1.

<sup>72</sup> de Leon, *op cit*, p 41.

<sup>73</sup> Tancangco, *op cit*, p 327; Santos, *op cit*, p 42.

<sup>74</sup> Santos, *loc cit*.

Advancement of Women in 1912.<sup>75</sup> They joined with the Asociacion Feminista Ilonga to campaign for suffrage.<sup>76</sup>

The franchise movement grew stronger in the 1920s when the Society for the Advancement of Women, later known as the Manila Women's Club, became the catalyst for a nationwide suffrage movement.<sup>77</sup> The Manila Women's Club convened all the provincial chapters in Manila in 1920 for the first time.<sup>78</sup> As a result, the League of Women Suffragettes was formed and a year later organised the National Federation of Women's Clubs. The latter served as the frontrunner for the women's suffrage movement from 1921 to 1937.<sup>79</sup> Their efforts culminated in the passage of the suffrage bill in 1933 and the Administrative Code (Act No 2711) in 1935 which allowed women to vote.<sup>80</sup> The successful plebiscite on May 14, 1937 made Filipino women the first women in Asia to achieve the right to vote with its corresponding right to seek office and participate in governance.<sup>81</sup> By 1939 the Philippines is one of the sixteen countries in the world that granted women the right to vote.<sup>82</sup> Myrna Feliciano notes that the suffrage movement during the American period may be attributed to three factors, namely: the opportunities opened to Filipino women to be active outside the home; influence of feminist ideas; and

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<sup>75</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>76</sup> Leaders like Pura Kalaw, Concepcion Felix Rodriguez, Rosa Sevilla Alvero, Encarnacion Alzona, Natividad Almeda-Lopez staged a rally at Malacañang, the presidential palace in 1919 at the invitation of the wife of the American Governor-General. Their actions led to the introduction of pro-women's suffrage bill in the Senate even if the Lower House opposed these bills. It was believed that the American Governors-General were instrumental in pushing women's right to vote to distract attention from the issue of independence. See Aquino, 'Filipino Women and Political Engagement,' *Review of Women's Studies* 4 (1), 1993-94, p 35; Santos, *op cit*, p 44.

<sup>77</sup> de Leon, *op cit*, p 41.

<sup>78</sup> Aquino, *Filipino Women and Political Engagement*, p 35.

<sup>79</sup> There were other associations organised to achieve the women's franchise. These included the *Liga Nacional de Damas Filipinas*, Women's Citizen's League and the Philippine Association of University Women. See Aquino, *Filipino Women and Political Engagement*, p 36; Santos, *op cit*, p 43; de Leon, *op cit*, p 42.

<sup>80</sup> Although the right of suffrage was granted to women in 1933 they were only able to exercise this right in the local elections of November 1937. The 1935 Philippine Constitution provided that women would be granted suffrage if not less than 300,000 qualified women voted for it in a national plebiscite. This meant the women who satisfied the age and literacy requirements. In the 1937 plebiscite, 447,725 women voted in its favour. See Feliciano, *op cit*, p 36; Alzona, *The Filipino Woman*, p 95; Tancangco, 'Voters, Candidates and Organizers' in Tapales, *Filipino Women and Public Policy*, p 63; Santos, *op cit*, p 43; Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 595; Jayawardena, *op cit*, pp 165-166.

<sup>81</sup> Santiago, *op cit*, p 119.

<sup>82</sup> Miranda, *Notes for Gender Politics*, p 9.

the confidence of the Filipina as a person and as a member of society.<sup>83</sup> This means that the doors of education and the democratic flow of ideas from outside the country especially America, contributed to the success of the franchise campaign. With more women entering into the halls of universities and colleges, women were oriented towards liberal ideas and roles outside the domestic realm. By recapturing the public sphere, denied by Spanish colonialism, Filipino women moved on to be actively engaged in Philippine politics.<sup>84</sup> This orientation towards a public political life was instrumental in fomenting consciousness of active citizenship amongst Filipino women. The exposure to democratic principles of governance contributes to the positive adoption of Australian citizenship upon migration and an easier integration into a western society.

Although the American occupation of the Philippines provided the impetus for wider political roles of Filipino women through education and the ballot, their social construction remain rooted in domestic affairs. Popular education fostered the continued socialization of Filipino women to their tasks at home. According to Carolyn Sobritchea, the promotion of sexual division of roles in colonial American education failed to achieve gender parity.<sup>85</sup> Boys and girls were trained to develop skills appropriate for a capitalist economy. Boys' instruction in Industrial Arts included 'gardening, woodwork, basket and mat weaving and clay modelling.'<sup>86</sup> In contrast, girls were taught 'lace-making, sewing and various home-related activities.'<sup>87</sup> This type of educational program carried a similar gender ideology to that promoted by Spanish education.<sup>88</sup> Sobritchea states,

*With the fear of the devil and the restrictive  
influence of convent morality behind her, she  
metamorphosed into a "modern" woman,  
comfortable with all the trappings of western  
life and ethos as well as with traditional patriarchal*

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<sup>83</sup> Feliciano, 'The Political Rights of Women in Philippine Context,' *Review of Women's Studies* 1(2), 1990-1991, pp 35-36.

<sup>84</sup> See Roces, 'Negotiating Space in the Public Sphere,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(5), 20 April-20 May 2000, p 34.

<sup>85</sup> Sobritchea, 'American Colonial Education and Its Impact on the Status of Filipino Women' in Tapales, *Women's Role in Philippine History*, p 103.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid*, p 86.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*, p 87.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*, p 89.

*norms and practices.*<sup>89</sup>

The careers opened to Filipino women were usually an extension of their nurturing roles as teachers, nurses or secretaries. Sobritchea avers that these careers were ‘compatible with their “womanly” qualities.’<sup>90</sup> This trend in women’s choice of profession can be seen in contemporary Philippines.

The opportunities offered by the inclusion of Filipino women into the political arena were limited to those in the upper class. Women leaders during this time, like Pura Villanueva Kalaw, had an elite background although women coming from the low strata supported them.<sup>91</sup> Even when Filipino women of privileged background entered the political fray, they were not progressive enough to deal with their own subject position in society. Apart from the franchise campaign, they were mainly involved in social welfare projects.<sup>92</sup>

As during the Spanish period, class influenced women’s role during the American regime. Upper class Filipino women aspired to be ‘small copies’ of their American counterpart.<sup>93</sup> The women from this class, Aurora Javate de Dios notes, ‘were effectively coopted’ by the Americans.<sup>94</sup> They spoke the language of the colonizer something that remains one of the distinguishing characteristics of the intelligentsia. From this social group came the pool to fill vacancies in the bureaucracy. Those Filipino women coming from lower income groups, usually found in rural agricultural communities, continued the

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<sup>89</sup> *ibid*, p 80.

<sup>90</sup> Sobritchea, *The Ideology of Female Domesticity*, p 29.

<sup>91</sup> Aguilar, *Women’s Political Involvement in Historical Perspective*, p 16.

<sup>92</sup> These activities indicated that there were many poor Filipinos who needed social assistance. This has become an effective strategy to win electoral support from the impoverished people where the majority of Filipinos, including women, belong. Provision of free dental and medical services, for example, is widely practiced by politicians during the election campaign period. Carolina Hernandez notes that Philippine elections is long subject of patronage and creates a ‘culture of dependence’ amongst the poor people to their political patrons. See de Leon, *op cit*, p 41. See also Tancango, *Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines*, p 327; Hernandez, ‘Overhauling Philippine Elections,’ *Philippine Political Update*, February-March 1992, p 19.

<sup>93</sup> Aguilar, *The Social Construction of the Filipino Woman*, p 531.

<sup>94</sup> de Dios, ‘Participation of Women’s Groups in the Anti-Dictatorship Struggle’ in Tapales, *op cit*, p 144.



backbreaking labour of combined tasks in the field and at home.<sup>95</sup> Other women in urban areas worked in foreign-owned manufacturing companies with meagre pay and under miserable conditions.<sup>96</sup> There were also peasant women who participated in the anti-imperialist resistance movement.<sup>97</sup>

Despite the different roles of Filipino women based on their class, they have been, generally, influenced by the democratic space of American administration. New measures of public participation such as voting allowed eligible women to contest the political arena long dominated by men. The opportunities offered by the system of public education suggested that poor women, as well as men, had the opportunity of moving up the social ladder.<sup>98</sup> But women faced more constraints on the way to the top or in fulfilling their individual aspirations because of their ingrained primary role in the domestic sphere.

The existence of political rights and social rights, through the granting of suffrage and access to education, for Filipino women, while being oriented towards domesticity, describes Lister's 'critical syntheses' of women's citizenship. By combining the liberal and civic republican tradition of citizenship into a 'critical synthesis,' women's citizenship can be explored. The liberal tradition focuses on the status of the individual citizen with rights and obligations; whereas, the civic republican tradition focuses on political participation.<sup>99</sup> During the American period, Filipino women had the status of citizens. Their practice of citizenship observed from their political participation was limited to the vote and charitable works due to the prevailing gender ideology of subordination. But the idea of human agency, central to the 'critical synthesis' approach, explains the success of elite Filipino women leaders who started to carve a niche for themselves in the political sphere, albeit at this time, an auxiliary and peripheral niche. Education also served as the medium for social mobility which determined the type of participation Filipino women took up in the labour force. The point is that by the end of the American occupation in 1946 the social and

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<sup>95</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>96</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>97</sup> Some of the known groups include the *Pulahanes*, *Colorums* and *Sakdalistas*. See de Dios, *op cit*, p 144; Aguilar, *Women's Political Involvement in Historical Perspective*, p 15.

<sup>98</sup> Sobritchea, *American Colonial Education and Its Impact on the Status of Filipino Women*, p 79.

political climate has widened the economic, social, political avenues available for Filipino women.

#### 4. *Women in Post-Independence Philippines*

The Philippine Commonwealth was granted independence by the United States in 1946. It embraced liberal democracy with institutions, for example, of free elections, political parties and freedom of speech.<sup>100</sup> With major structures in place to administer a democratic government after the Second World War, Filipino women were free to enter into men's domain while basically still convinced of the primacy of their domestic role. A year after independence, the Women's Auxiliary of the Liberal Party was organised to support the Liberal Party. The educated, generally elite, Filipino women aligned themselves with the political parties and interest groups. During the first national election of the newly proclaimed independent Republic of the Philippines in April 1946, two women were elected in the bicameral legislature.<sup>101</sup> In 1950, the Civic Assembly of the Philippines evolved from the earlier Women's Civic Assembly of the Philippines. Their goal was to be at the forefront in policy-making. There was a short-lived National Political Party of Women in 1951, too.<sup>102</sup> These activities were derived from their right to vote which, according to Maria Serena Diokno, has since then been considered the ultimate duty and right of a citizen in the Philippines.<sup>103</sup> Pateman notes that democratic citizenship

<sup>99</sup> See Lister, 'Dialectics of Citizenship,' *Hypatia* 12(4), Fall 1997, pp 6-13; Lister, *Citizenship*, p 196.

<sup>100</sup> For a description of liberal democracy see Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, p 8; Kingsbury, *op cit*, p 309.

<sup>101</sup> Remedios Fortich and Geronima Pecson won seats in Congress (Lower House) and Senate (Upper house), respectively. Since their first successful electoral feat, Filipino women have been elected to almost all positions in the Philippines. About 4.98 per cent of Filipino women candidates were elected in the Philippine legislature since 1946. The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women reported that in the 1992 synchronised elections women garnered 16.7 per cent of Senate seats, 9.6 per cent in Congress, 9.6 per cent governors, 6.8 per cent vice-governors, 11.9 per cent board members, 7.6 per cent mayoralty posts, 8.8 per cent vice-mayors and 12.6 per cent councilors. Looking at the worldwide average, however, the status of Filipino women in electoral politics is at par or even higher than in other countries. For example, the world average of women in national parliaments for both houses in 1997 was 11.7 per cent while that of the Philippines was 11.0 per cent in 1995 and 12.6 per cent in 1998. Specifically, in the Senate the world average is 9.8 per cent while that of the Philippines reached 16.7 per cent both in 1995 and 1998. See Domingo-Tapales, *op cit*, p 2; Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 597; Aguilar, 'Filipino Women in Electoral Politics' in Tapales, *Filipino Women and Public Policy*, p 24; NCRFW, *Minifacts on Filipino Women*; Miranda, *op cit*, p 12; de Leon, *op cit*, pp 49-50.

<sup>102</sup> Santos, *op cit*, pp 44-45.

<sup>103</sup> Diokno, 'The Democratizing Function of Citizenship in the Philippines' in Davidson and Weekley,

through the practise of universal suffrage presupposes the recognition of each member of the polity as 'social equals and independent "individuals"' with implied capacities on such status.<sup>104</sup>

Despite these pivotal political gains, the prevailing gender ideology remained patriarchal. The political acts of women reflected their concerns relative to their role in domestic affairs. Mostly the political acts of women came in the form of social welfare like provision of adequate health services and addressing poverty.<sup>105</sup> The direction of women's involvement in politics was, more often, in an auxiliary capacity to that of men. Moreover, gender and class oppression could nowhere be raised in an atmosphere of peace and democratic stability.<sup>106</sup> Basic statutory provisions protecting women's welfare were already in place. The New Civil Code of 1950 (Republic Act No 386), for example, contained provisions that reflect, according to Feliciano, the 'liberalization of women's rights.'<sup>107</sup> These included the following: declaring women to be qualified for all acts in civic life; allowing legal separation based on adultery and concubinage; administering conjugal properties; providing a system of complete separation of property; allowing the exercise of profession or engaging in business; vesting joint parental authority over children; and omitting provisions that deny married women consent to contracts.<sup>108</sup> More importantly, the Bill of Rights in the Philippine Constitution explicitly guarantees the fundamental equality of Filipino citizens. This is a 'declaratory' provision of basic rights of citizenship which include, amongst others, equal protection of the laws.<sup>109</sup> Because these provisions seem to put women in equal standing with men, the 'woman question'

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*Globalization and Citizenship in the Asia-Pacific*, p 135.

<sup>104</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 218.

<sup>105</sup> Santos, *op cit*, p 45.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*, p 46.

<sup>107</sup> Feliciano, *The Filipina*, p 40.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid*, pp 40-41.

<sup>109</sup> The Bill of Rights is enshrined in Article III of the 1945, 1973 and 1987 Constitutions. In the 1987 Constitution, there are twenty-two sections outlining the rights of individuals such as due process of law; freedom from unreasonable search and seizures; privacy of communication; freedom of speech, of expression, of the press and peaceful assembly; freedom of religion; freedom of political beliefs; liberty of abode and travel; right to information of public concern; right to form unions or associations; just compensation for private property taken for public use; non-impairment on obligation of contracts; freedom from torture in detention; no involuntary servitude; no imprisonment for non-payment of debt or poll tax;

was apparently left out in earlier discourses on nation-building.

In the period from 1946 to the 1950s, Filipino women were viewed in their traditional roles as homemakers and subordinate to men in politics.<sup>110</sup> In the aftermath of the Second World War, the country and its women citizenry were preoccupied with reconstruction.<sup>111</sup> Their right to vote did not alter the male-dominated Philippine politics despite a higher voter turnout by women than men.<sup>112</sup> The higher rate of participation during election time has been a feature of Filipino women's involvement in politics since 1947.<sup>113</sup> From the first national election to other succeeding electoral contests, Belinda Aquino notes that Filipino women 'were not necessarily voting as women.'<sup>114</sup> This implies that elective seats were largely perceived as a man's job and the idea, feminist or not, of women's equal role in political affairs had not gained popular support. The practice of Filipino women not usually voting for women candidates is attributed to, Atienza de Leon notes, the tendency of sex discrimination, and the nature of Philippine politics and culture.<sup>115</sup> Women do not have a fair chance of being selected to a national ticket largely controlled by men.<sup>116</sup> The National Directorates and Executive Committees of the political parties, for instance, were mostly composed of men who were responsible for deciding the slots for national selection; their practice was usually to assign one woman candidate.<sup>117</sup>

Aside from the very selective recruitment process amongst the national political

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and no ex post facto law. See Nollado, *The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines Explained*, pp 11-15.

<sup>110</sup> Santos, *op cit*, p 45.

<sup>111</sup> Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 597.

<sup>112</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>113</sup> Tancangco, *Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines*, p 339. Voter turn-out rate of Filipino women from 1984 to 1998 was consistently higher than men. In 1998, for example, women's rate was 87.1 per cent compared to 85.8 per cent of men. See *Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995-2025*, cited in Miranda, *op cit*, p 15.

<sup>114</sup> Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 597.

<sup>115</sup> de Leon, *op cit*, pp 53-54. Political patronage reflects the patron-client relationships in Philippine politics. Close family ties, personal alliances and factionalism are key features of this system. See Kerkvliet, 'Toward a More Comprehensive Analysis of Philippine Politics,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26(2), September 1995, p 401; Neher, *op cit*, p 81.

<sup>116</sup> de Leon, *ibid*, p 252. See also Aguilar, 'Profile of Women Politicians in the Philippines,' *Review of Women's Studies* 2(2), 1991-92, p 2.

<sup>117</sup> de Leon, *ibid*, p 252.

parties, Carmencita Aguilar cites another reason why there are fewer candidates seeking an elective post. She points to the belief that politics is not the right career path for Filipino women.<sup>118</sup> The value orientation of Filipino women, as revealed by a study in the 1980s, remained rooted in the family.<sup>119</sup> Aguilar further explains that there are prevailing views about women who enter the political fray. One of these is the stereotypical image that 'women are weak in facing problems.'<sup>120</sup> Other 'negative perceptions' include the inability of female politicians to compose themselves in crisis situations, limited freedom of movement because of familial responsibilities and a tendency to be 'soft' in decision-making.<sup>121</sup> These views reflect the idealised role of women in the private sphere where their perceived characteristics are represented as not much good in the public sphere. Pateman notes that 'women were less likely to feel politically competent' in conventional electoral politics.<sup>122</sup>

However, Domingo-Tapales argues that there could be a women's vote in the future. She bases this on two indicators - 'the politicization of women's organizations and the conscious formation of women's political organizations.'<sup>123</sup> There are different types of women's organizations in the Philippines. Luzviminda Tancangco provides a typology of Filipino women's organizations by sector, by ideological orientation and by the services they provide.<sup>124</sup> These organizations are either local, regional or national in scope. Women's organizations have pushed their political agenda in collaboration with men and other institutions, especially the academe.<sup>125</sup> This 'political agenda,' encompass the

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<sup>118</sup> Aguilar, *Filipino Women in Electoral Politics*, p 35.

<sup>119</sup> Cited in Tancangco, *Voters, Candidates, and Organizers*, p 75.

<sup>120</sup> Aguilar, *Filipino Women in Electoral Politics*, p 31.

<sup>121</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>122</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 7.

<sup>123</sup> Domingo Tapales, 'Is There a Women's Vote?' *Review of Women's Studies* 2(2), 1991-92, p 12.

<sup>124</sup> The women's organizations by sector indicate the type of institutional membership or support base which include the professional group (eg doctors, lawyers, etc), civic groups whose membership is drawn from different sectors, church-based groups, school-based groups, business groups and housewives or mother's group. The women's organizations by ideological perspectives reflect their consciousness of women's issues and feminist ideas. Women's groups by type of services include those in economic and livelihood services, information and education amongst others. See Tancangco, *Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines*, pp 329-331.

<sup>125</sup> Tancangco, *Voters, Candidates, and Organizers*, p 75.

economic, social and cultural problems faced by Filipino women.<sup>126</sup>

In retrospect, the return to the radical political field of Filipino women came about in the 1970s. Led by activist students, the First Quarter Storm signaled the initial phase of successive protests against Marcos rule and American influence in domestic affairs. Women leaders formed MAKIBAKA (Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan) or the Free Movement of New Women and opened the ideological discourse on the 'woman question' in the Philippines.<sup>127</sup> The group's Marxist orientation espoused the causes of women's oppression in the political system, the family, in religion and in relation with man.<sup>128</sup> Like their western sisters who also raised the issue of gender oppression, the Filipino feminist prime movers were initially shunned by mainstream groups and exerted little influence on ordinary Filipino women.<sup>129</sup>

The Marcos dictatorship witnessed the rise of a new breed of Filipino women whose aims were more radical than their predecessors.<sup>130</sup> The 1980s saw the mushrooming of women's organizations in response to the critical social issues of the times.<sup>131</sup> Domingo Tapales views the activities of grassroots women's organizations, for example, as part of a 'broader public realm' of women in Philippine politics.<sup>132</sup> The stimulus for Filipino

<sup>126</sup> Herrera, 'Filipino Women's Political Agenda,' *Review of Women's Studies* 2(2), 1991-92, p 15.

<sup>127</sup> MAKIBAKA was forced to go underground with the declaration of martial law in the Philippines. The mass-based protest strategy left an imprint from which latter groups would follow. For example, picketing the Miss Philippines beauty pageant and other forms of mass action became regular scenes in Metro Manila which later spread throughout the provinces. See Santiago, *op cit*, p 120; Santos, *op cit*, p 47; de Dios, *op cit*, p 145.

<sup>128</sup> Santos, *op cit*, p 46.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid*, p 48.

<sup>130</sup> Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 597.

<sup>131</sup> The PILIPINA (Kilusan ng Kababaihang Pilipina) and KALAYAAN (Katipunan ng Kalayaan Para sa Kababaihan) were organised in 1981 and 1983, respectively. More women became involved in community organising and the protest movement following the assassination of erstwhile opposition leader, former Senator Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino. In 1984, the largest feminist coalition, GABRIELA (General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action) was formed. The underground New People's Army (NPA) counted women in their ranks in the armed anti-dictatorship struggle for national liberation. See Santiago, *op cit*, pp 121-122. See also Sobritchea, 'Some Reflections on Current Developments in the Women's Movement,' *Readings in Philippine Studies* 17(1), 1995-96, pp 99-102; de Dios, *op cit*, pp 147-148; Stoltzfus, "'A Woman's Place is in the Struggle'" in Schirmer and Shalom, *The Philippines Reader*, pp 308-312.

<sup>132</sup> Tapales, 'Filipino Women in Politics and Public Affairs,' in Tapales, *Filipino Women and Public Policy*, p 18.

women's activism can be found in the national economic and political situation of the time. A country controlled by Marcos and his cronies, with the military under their control, resulted in a crisis of insurmountable proportion: human rights violations, economic degradation and women's exploitation through government programs. For example, the contract labour migration of Filipino women to countries without bilateral protective agreements and the promotion of the tourism industry, *aka* sex tourism, were among the programs initiated to alleviate the worsening economy.<sup>133</sup> Pamela Beth Radcliff notes in 'Imagining Female Citizenship in the New Spain' that women tend to be involved in social movements to address local issues or human rights.<sup>134</sup> The same could be said of women in the Philippines. But Filipino women's organizations differ in their orientation. They sought to address these issues relative to the 'woman question' and national struggle whether the women's groups are conservative, moderate, progressive or radical in orientation.<sup>135</sup>

The issues confronting women in the Philippines, Quindoza-Santiago observes, 'could not be subordinate or secondary relative to national and social liberation.'<sup>136</sup> Marian Simms has also stressed that 'it is impossible to understand [Filipino] women's politics without first locating them in the context of broader issues.'<sup>137</sup> For example, the issue of prostitution was integrated into the campaign against the US military installations in Subic and Olongapo.<sup>138</sup> Alongside the nationalist struggle, Filipino women's groups promoted the feminist agenda although their members may not necessarily identify as feminist in the

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<sup>133</sup> See Mananzan, 'Sexual Exploitation of Women in a Third World Setting' in Mananzan, *op cit*, p 106; Milly, 'The Rights of Foreign Migrant Workers in Asia' in Jacobsen and Bruun, *Human Rights and Asian Values*, p 312; Aguilar, 'The Philippine Foreign Debt and the Impact on Women,' *Review of Women's Studies* 4(2), 1994-95, pp 15-23; Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 600.

<sup>134</sup> Radcliff, 'Imagining Female Citizenship in the New Spain' in Canning and Rose, *Gender, Citizenship and Subjectivities*, p 75.

<sup>135</sup> See Garcellana, 'Women and the National Struggle,' *National Midweek* 7(1), 6-13 November 1991, p 23; de Vera, 'The Women's Movement in the '90s,' *LAYA Feminist Quarterly* 1(1), March 1992, pp 7-16; Medel-Añonuevo, 'Possibilities of Theorizing in the Women's Movement,' *Review of Women's Studies* 1(2), 1990-91, p 53; Sobritchea, *Some Reflections on Current Developments in the Women's Movement*, pp 99-109; Angeles, *Feminism and Nationalism*; Aguilar, 'Toward a Reinscription of Nationalist Feminism,' *Review of Women's Studies* 4(2), 1994-95, pp 1-13.

<sup>136</sup> Santiago, *op cit*, p 122.

<sup>137</sup> Simms, 'Democracy, Freedom and the Women's Movement in the Philippines' in Jennett and Stewart, *Politics of the Future*, p 341.

<sup>138</sup> Garcellano, *op cit*, pp 23-24.

Anglo-American sense.<sup>139</sup> Simms points out that, unlike in western countries, the 'women's issues were construed differently in the Philippines.'<sup>140</sup> She states,

*...questions of women's sexual freedom which were high on western feminist agenda were given low priority in the Philippines... 'Sexual reform' agenda was largely composed of critiques of prostitution and sexual exploitation of women detainees.<sup>141</sup>*

Unlike its western counterpart, the feminist agenda of liberation from gender oppression, according to Cynthia Nolasco, is 'not yet fully developed' in the 'collective consciousness' of the Filipino women's movement.<sup>142</sup> The popular understanding of the 'superior' status of Filipino women based on myths cloud social realities.<sup>143</sup> Another explanation is the strong influence of the Catholic Church and Christian teachings. Roman Catholicism promotes the ideal mores of Filipinos at home and in society and has consistently formed a strong lobby against threats to its teachings such as divorce, contraception and abortion.<sup>144</sup> According to the Catholic doctrine divorce contravenes the sanctity of marriage; contraception opposes the biblical canon of 'go into the world and multiply' and only recognises natural family planning methods like rhythm and withdrawal; and abortion runs counter to God's gift of life. Many Filipino women have rallied behind the cause of nationalism but have shied away from opposing the Catholic Church. The church's doctrines and interpretations of social policies are deeply entrenched into the Filipino way of life. The pervasive influence of the Catholic Church is manifested by the number of people, mostly women, going to church every day. It is not surprising that many women's groups advocate to stop prostitution and the exploitation of Filipino women both inside and outside the country, but 'coy over the abortion question' or

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<sup>139</sup> See Tancangco, *Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines*, p 337; Francisco, 'The Philippine Women's Movement,' *Women in Action* 1(1), 1997, pp 28-31.

<sup>140</sup> Simms, *op cit*, p 343.

<sup>141</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>142</sup> Nolasco, 'The Women Problem' in Mananzan, *op cit*, p 80.

<sup>143</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>144</sup> Soriano, *op cit*, p 107. See also Richter, 'The Status of Women in the Philippines' in Schirmer and Shalom, *op cit*, p 137.



advocate 'women's right to choose' pregnancy or abortion.<sup>145</sup> Women caught in the web of prostitution, for example, do not represent the ideal of Filipino women in a society based on morality. By pursuing the 'liberation' of these women, concerned women's groups are assured of popular support. To do otherwise and oppose the Church teachings is to commit political suicide.<sup>146</sup>

The 1986 EDSA Revolution known as 'people power' catapulted to the helm of the Philippine politics a woman - Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, wife of the slain opposition leader.<sup>147</sup> Her stature as the first woman president in the Philippines and in Southeast Asia also reflected the collective struggle of Filipino women who joined the movement against Marcos dictatorship, culminating in their brave efforts to face the loyalist soldiers at Epifanio de los Santos Avenue clad with their basic defenses - body and faith.<sup>148</sup> The women at EDSA carried rosaries and other religious icons in contrast to the armoured vehicles of the military. Their action was, in some ways, drawing on an amalgam of understanding of Filipino women's role in society as social agents of change. The collective action of the people becomes a hallmark in the subsequent years amidst alleged massive graft practices of ousted President Joseph Estrada in the second 'people power' uprising in 2001 which put into office the second woman president of the country, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.<sup>149</sup> These two women presidents came to power by unconventional means.

A closer look at contemporary Philippine society reveals the existence of legal guarantees to uphold the rights and welfare of women as citizens of the country.<sup>150</sup> To start

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<sup>145</sup> Simms, *op cit*, pp 349-350.

<sup>146</sup> There are also other aspects of Philippine politics where certain acts are deemed a political suicide, for instance, to run for office as a communist.

<sup>147</sup> This unique form of a bloodless 'revolution' inspired other democratic movements in Poland, Nicaragua and South Korea. See Velasco, 'Philippine Democracy' in Laothamatas, *Democratization in Southeast Asia*, p 77.

<sup>148</sup> Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 603.

<sup>149</sup> 'Gloria of the Philippines,' *The Economist* 15 April 2000, p 36. See also 'Asia: People Power Rides Again,' *The Economist* 352(8131), 7 August 1999, p 29; 'What Keeps the Philippines Down,' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 164(19), 17 May 2001, p 8.

<sup>150</sup> See Feliciano, 'Law, Gender, and the Family in the Philippines,' *Law & Society Review* 28(3), August 1994, pp 547-560. See also Roces, 'Negotiating Modernities,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(3), 20 February-20 March 2000, p 34.

with, the language of the 1987 Philippine Constitution is generally gender-neutral but, in some instances, the specific gender is identified for emphasis.<sup>151</sup> The status of Filipino women as citizens is outlined in Article VI and is considered to be of equal standing with men.<sup>152</sup> One of the pillars of Philippine constitutional law is the principle of equality and equal protection of the laws.<sup>153</sup> Women are represented as a sector in the House of Representatives through the party-list system.<sup>154</sup> The rights accorded Filipino women by law in the Philippines prepare them to practise citizenship in a similarly formally democratic country like Australia.

To promote the rights and welfare of women directed by the Constitution and to maintain consistency with international treaty obligations, a number of laws have been passed by the Philippine legislature. These include the 1988 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, the 1991 Women in Development and Nation-building Act, and a number of specific measures concerning women's health and social welfare.<sup>155</sup> Perhaps the recent

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<sup>151</sup> For example, Article II Section 11 stipulates that the 'state values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.' In Section 14, women are so identified and recognised by the state in their role in nation building. See Nolleto, *op cit*, p 5.

<sup>152</sup> Article III (Bill of Rights) Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution states: 'No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws.' See Nolleto, *ibid*, p 11.

<sup>153</sup> Article II Section 14 ensures the 'fundamental equality before the law of women and men.' Equal protection of the laws amongst Filipino citizens is further provided for in Article III Section 1 which states: 'no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws. Myrna Feliciano contends that the notion of gender legal equality or 'equality to the assignment of similar rights and privileges granted by law' amongst 'persons within the same class' is far from social equality. See Nolleto, *op cit*, p 5- 11; Feliciano, 'Legal and Political Issues Affecting the Status of Women, 1985-1993,' *Review of Women's Studies* 4(1), 1993-94, p 14.

<sup>154</sup> The other party-list representatives named in Article VI Section 2 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution are labour, peasant, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities and youth. See Nolleto, *ibid*, p 63.

<sup>155</sup> The 1988 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law or Republic Act No. 6657 provided in Section 10 that 'all qualified women members of the agricultural labour force must be guaranteed and assured equal rights to ownership of land, equal shares of the farm's produce and representation in advisory or appropriate decision-making bodies.' As a result, the number of women members in agricultural organizations significantly increased from 16 per cent in the 1980s to 26 per cent in the 1990s. Representation by women as officers likewise increased from 3 per cent to 29 per cent during the same period. The 1989 *Philippine Development Plan for Women* that ensured the mainstreaming of Filipino women in government plans and services. The 1991 *Women in Development and Nation Building Act* (R. A. No 7192) is considered to be the 'most important piece of pro-women legislation' by the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). This Act recognises Filipino women as 'full and equal partners of men in development and nation building' and provides a wide range of women's rights and welfare: setting aside a portion of official development assistance funds to support women's programs; removing gender bias in government policies; priority of rural development activities; integrating sex-disaggregated data in any program; equal capability

legislative change most affecting Filipino women's citizenship is the Philippine government's recognition of the transnational Filipino community by passing R. A. (Republic Act) No. 8171 in 1995. This Act provides for the repatriation of Filipino women who have lost their Philippine citizenship to aliens and of natural-born Filipinos.<sup>156</sup> Many women's groups still advocate for more progressive legislative acts for Filipino women.<sup>157</sup> One controversial venture is the Anti-Wife Cruelty Bill which challenges the cultural orientation of a male-dominated legislature.<sup>158</sup> The protection of the rights of women as citizens seems to be applicable only in their public character as workers and not in their private personal relations. The plight of Filipino women in this case depicts Pateman's idea that, in the sexual contract, 'men pass back and forth between the private and public spheres and the writ of law of male sex-right runs in both realms.'<sup>159</sup> Women, the subject of the contract, are subordinated in both spheres.<sup>160</sup> Hence, it follows that a man has access and right to a woman's body and, in his absolute control and the privacy of his property, he can do as he pleases.<sup>161</sup>

In contemporary Philippine society, women are citizens with equal status and obligations in law. But their full citizenship or having equal standing in all spheres of public life has not yet been achieved. Women comprise a mere 10 per cent of total

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of married women to enter into contracts and loan agreements without prior consent of the spouse; provision of social security services to household managers through their working husbands; and equal access of women to membership organizations as well as admission to military schools. More significantly, RA 7192 mandated the formulation of the *Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development* covering the period 1995 to 2025. See Feliciano, *Legal and Political Issues Affecting the Status of Women, 1985-1993*, pp 14-15; Women, Agriculture and Rural Development-Philippines, *op cit*; Jimenez-Tan, 'Legislating Women's Laws,' *PIGLAS-DIWA* 6 (4), 1994, pp 7- 10; Molina, 'Championing Women's Rights is Part of Upholding the Constitution,' *Philippine Free Press* 18 January 1992, p 6; 'Laws and Presidential Directives in Support of Women's Welfare and Rights' in *UCWS Gender Training Manual Reading #3*, pp 3.1-3.5.

<sup>156</sup> NCRFW, *Philippine Laws on Women*, p 2.

<sup>157</sup> Recently, the Anti-Rape Bill was passed as RA 8353 redefining rape as a crime against person and not of chastity. The Anti-Sexual Harassment Act (RA 7877) declares unlawful the practice of sexual harassment in employment, education and training environment. In response to the growing issue of international trafficking of Filipino women, RA 6955 declares unlawful the practice of matching Filipino women for marriage to foreign nationals on a mail-order basis and other similar practices including its advertisement. See Jimenez-Tan, *op cit*, p 10; NCRFW, *op cit*, p 3.

<sup>158</sup> See Jimenez-Tan, *op cit*, p 15; Coseteng, 'The Silent War Against Women,' *Philippine Graphic* 3(39), 8 March 1993, pp 17-18; Unas, 'Violence Against Women in the Philippines,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 1, 1992, pp 7-8.

<sup>159</sup> Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, p 12.

<sup>160</sup> *ibid*, p 6.

membership in local and national legislature.<sup>162</sup> According to Roces, 'images of male power' or *machismo* continue to define contemporary Philippines and that women are 'less likely to acquire political power' because they are 'less successful accumulators of potency than men.'<sup>163</sup> In 1992, about 52 per cent of the total female population of working age was in the labour force as compared to 94 per cent of the men.<sup>164</sup> Women are generally paid less than men.<sup>165</sup> They are also poorly represented in decision-making positions in both the private and public agencies.<sup>166</sup> More importantly, the right to control their body is curtailed by state and religion. Abortion is a crime and contraception is usually limited to married women.<sup>167</sup> Cynthia Nolasco points out that Filipino women are oppressed as citizens because they bear the burden of the economic crisis due to the export-oriented and import-dependent Philippine economy.<sup>168</sup> It is the women's bodies that are mainly exploited for cheap labour in the domestic economy as well as in international labour migration.

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<sup>161</sup> *ibid*, p 2.

<sup>162</sup> See Aguilar, *Filipino Women in Electoral Politics*, p 24; Rikken, 'Politics is for Everyone, Including Women,' *Igorota* 1(1), 1998, p 3; Irlandez, 'We Need More Women in Politics,' *Philippine Free Press* 18 January 1992, p 16.

<sup>163</sup> Machismo is associated with 'virility and aggressiveness.' See Roces, 'Some Thoughts on Images of Female Power in Post-war Philippines,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 1(1), 1996, pp 51-60; Garcia, 'Society and Gender Roles and Issues,' *Philippine Health Education Journal* 7(1), July-December 1993, pp 38-39; Tirona, 'Improving the Quality of Women's Lives Through Legislative Measures,' *The Philippine Educational Forum* 29(1 & 2), October 1990, p 81; Sobritchea, 'Sexism and Militarization in Philippine Society,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 1, 1992, p 22; Domingo-Tapales, *Women in Politics and Public Administration*, p 5; Neher, *op cit*, p 75.

<sup>164</sup> See 'Woman Power,' *IBON Facts & Figures* 16(15), 15 August 1993, p 3; Mauricio, 'Celebrating Filipino Woman,' *Starweek* 6 March 1994, p 4; Sobritchea, 'Gender Ideology and the Status of Women in a Philippine Rural Community' in Mananzan, *op cit*, pp 90-103; Sycip, *Working Mothers*, p 10; 'Reality of Filipino Women's Situation Contradicts Government Pronouncements,' *Women Envision*, 1(1), 1997, p 4; Sobritchea, *The Ideology of Female Domesticity*, pp 34-35; Arroyo, 'Survey Data on Gender Differences,' *Social Weather Bulletin* 91(8), April 1991, p 3.

<sup>165</sup> Filipino women's earnings in agriculture are .09 of a peso for every one peso earned by men. In managerial, executive positions, production, clerical, professional and service sectors, women's earnings are consistently below par. See 'Women at Work,' *IBON Facts & Figures* 20(3 & \$), 15-28 February 1997, p 11. See also de la Torre, 'Male-Female Inequalities at Work,' *ILS News Digest* 5(3), May-June 1992, pp 5, 11.

<sup>166</sup> See 'Labor Pains,' *IBON Facts & Figures* 16(15), 15 August 1993, p 5; Gequillana, 'Changing Roles,' *World Mission* 6(6), July 1994, p 35; Nolasco, *op cit*, p 85.

<sup>167</sup> Religion has promoted the 'impression that sex is dirty and dangerous for women and should be avoided as much as possible.' The loss of virginity is considered 'the ultimate disgrace' because it leads to pregnancy and 'jeopardises a girl's marriage prospects.' See Gastardo-Conaco, *A Study in Female Sexuality*, pp 90-91. See also 'The Sexuality Soiree,' *Connexions* 38, Winter 1992, p 21; 'Suffer the Women,' *IBON Facts & Figures* 16(15) 15 August 1993, p 6; Heinen and Matuchniak-Krasuska, "'Right to Life" Versus Women' in Ward et al, *Women and Citizenship in Europe*, pp 125-127.

<sup>168</sup> Nolasco, *op cit*, p 87. See also Perpiñan, 'Philippine Women and Transnational Corporations' in Schirmer and Shalom, *op cit*, pp 234-243.

The unchanging class dichotomy indicates that access to the rights of citizenship enshrined in law favours women in the upper echelons. According to Irene Cortes, for the 'women in the remote rural areas; the law may be equally remote.'<sup>169</sup> Apart from the gender bias in the exercise of citizenship, it is also class-based. For example, the five forms of women's political participation are determined by their social standing: 'voting; campaigning for a particular candidate; running in elections as candidates themselves; assuming positions in Cabinet or the bureaucracy; and organising and mobilizing for political empowerment.'<sup>170</sup> Although voting is universal, there are perceived differences in the exercise of this right between the rich and poor. The poor are often susceptible to vote-buying and the rich electorates, probably, are not.<sup>171</sup> The close associates of the candidate coming from a privileged background mostly resort to campaigning for a particular candidate.<sup>172</sup> The same holds true for women seeking an elective position and those appointed to Cabinet positions.<sup>173</sup> Belinda Aquino argues that despite a limited success in gaining elective or appointed positions, 'Filipino women are more fully represented in the political system and in the private sector' compared with other Third World countries.<sup>174</sup> Filipino women's 'high visibility' in politics is interpreted by many observers as meaning that Filipino women have 'no need of "women's liberation."<sup>175</sup> Domingo-Tapales revealed in her study of gender influence in policy-making and implementation in the

<sup>169</sup> Cortes, 'Filipino Women and the Law,' *Diliman Review*, July-August 1982, p 32.

<sup>170</sup> Aguilar, *Filipino Women in Electoral Politics*, p 22. See also Tancangco, 'Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines' in Tapales, *Women's Role in Philippine History*, pp 179-202.

<sup>171</sup> Hernandez, *op cit*, p 19. See also 'Money Politics and the Middle Class,' *The Economist* 2(12), 2000; Anderson, 'Cacique Democracy in the Philippines' in Rafael, *Discrepant Histories*, p 18; Diokno, *op cit*, p 135; Sidel, 'The Philippines' in Alagappa, *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia*, p 148; Perez, 'Some Insights on the Voting Behavior of the Filipino,' *The Philippine Educational Forum* 30(1&2), October 1991-March 1992, p 126.

<sup>172</sup> Examples of this type of participation included the Women for Magsaysay in 1953, Blue Ladies for Marcos in 1969, Osmeña Women's League and the Osmeña Pearls in 1969, Cory Crusaders, UNIDO Ladies, Volunteers for Cory and Doy, Antipolo Ladies for Cory and Doy. See Aguilar, *Filipino Women in Electoral Politics*, p 23; Tancangco, *Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines*, pp 186-190.

<sup>173</sup> The Kababaihan Para sa Inang Bayan (KAIBA) is an all women's political party organised for the 1987 congressional elections. Nikki Coseteng, a television personality, won. See Aguilar, *Filipino Women in Electoral Politics*, p 23; Co, 'Women and the Ballot,' *Philippine Graphic* 2(47), 4 May 1992, p 37; 'Nikki's Mom Going to Mexico, Says DFA,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(1), 20 December-20 January 2000, p 6.

<sup>174</sup> Aquino, *Filipino Women and Political Engagement*, p 51. See also Sobritchea, *The Ideology of Female Domesticity*, p 40; 'Gains and Obstacles of Filipino Women,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 1(1), 1996, pp 113-114.

<sup>175</sup> Richter, 'The Status of Women in the Philippines' in Schirmer and Shalom, *op cit*, p 135.

Philippines that there are no perceived differences between men and women.<sup>176</sup> Women in the higher civil service perceive their influence in this area to be the same as men.<sup>177</sup> But Greta Ai-Yu Niu points out that the experiences of a few 'powerful women, while not uncommon for their class, are not representative of Filipinas' experiences.'<sup>178</sup> Involvement in the organization and mobilization of women for political empowerment has seen participation by all classes but their group affiliations are, often times, based on the issues and interests that represent the class divide in Philippine society.<sup>179</sup> This is not to mention the other markers of difference based on the region, ethnicity, religion and ideology.<sup>180</sup> In general, Filipino women's level of political participation is about the same as the women in Western Europe.<sup>181</sup>

However, Filipino women's continuing advocacy and the use of covert activities to influence public policy make Filipino women 'political' within a 'cultural script.'<sup>182</sup> This means that Filipino women pursue their interests without disturbing the traditional hold of male politicians in the public arena.<sup>183</sup> In her study of kinship politics, Mina Roces reveals that although men have the official power as elected leaders or candidates their wives or sisters exercise unofficial power, albeit in a supportive role; women's involvement in the political limelight can spell defeat or success for the male candidate.<sup>184</sup> Roces argues for the inclusion of women's civic activities as 'politics' outside the androcentric definition. When Filipino women are engaged in charity work, networking or raising funds, these should also be construed as political action. In the Philippines, these activities forge

<sup>176</sup> Tapales, 'Gender and Perceptions of Influence in Policy-making,' *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 29(1), January 1985, p 57.

<sup>177</sup> *ibid*, p 55.

<sup>178</sup> Niu, 'Wives, Widows, and Workers,' *NWSA Journal* 11(2), Summer 1999, p 88. See also Syahrudin, *A Logit Analysis of the Labor Force Participation of Married Women in the Philippines*, p 48.

<sup>179</sup> For example, the National Federation of Peasant Women in the Philippines (AMIHAN) is composed of landless peasant women working against the abuses of the landlords and government agencies. See Lindio-McGovern, *Filipino Peasant Women*; Arinto, *Women and Revolution*, p 8; de Vera, *op cit*, pp 8-9; Tancangco, *Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines*, pp 331-333; Simms, *op cit*, p 340; Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, p 146; Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 596; Lanot, 'The Filipinas Have Come and They're Still Coming' in Mananzan, *op cit*, p 70.

<sup>180</sup> Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 602.

<sup>181</sup> Richter, *op cit*, p 136.

<sup>182</sup> Tapales, *Women's Political Participation in the Philippines*, p 114.

<sup>183</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>184</sup> Roces, *Women, Power and Kinship Politics*, p 29.

alliances and are sites for negotiations or power brokering which directly affect the holders of official power.

The social construction of the contemporary or modern Filipina is a combination of indigenous and colonial attributes. This is what I refer to as the fusion between East and West paradigm into a distinct persona that is, oftentimes, viewed by social scientists as 'ambiguous.'<sup>185</sup> Arlene D'Mello and Aniceta Esmaque note that the Filipinos are a 'unique blend of East and West.'<sup>186</sup> But this blending takes place within an indigenous cultural frame. The high social valuing of Filipino women's role in the family and society has been both diminished and enhanced through, in the words of Luz Lopez Rodriguez, the 'process of colonialism, feudalism and capitalism.'<sup>187</sup> While still acknowledged for their vital role in the family, Filipino women are subordinated in the hierarchy with the father as the head of the unit accorded with respect and authority. This system is maintained by the larger patriarchal system in Philippine society reflected in social and legal practices. For example, adopting a husband's name is still the norm that seals the woman's membership in the male-created household. Paternal proof or filiations of illegitimate children involves complex procedural requirements that are made simpler by marriage.<sup>188</sup> Wives are expected to take charge of domestic chores, even if employed, while the husband undertakes work and provides for the needs of the family.<sup>189</sup> But in reality this is not totally so. An overwhelming number of Filipino women in the middle and lower income brackets are engaged in entrepreneurial ventures and other means, like migration, to add to the family coffers or be the 'breadwinner.' Some studies have shown that it is the mothers who work even for the entire household.<sup>190</sup> Alison Jaggar suggests that women who are

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<sup>185</sup> The idea of Filipino womanhood remains a critical engagement amongst feminist scholars in the Philippines. See Aguilar, *The Social Construction of the Filipino Woman*, p 528; Contreras, 'Political Ideologies of Western Feminism in the Context of the Women's Movement in the Philippines,' *Review of Women's Studies* 2(2), 1991-92, p 95; Estrada-Claudio 'The Psychology of the Filipino Woman,' *Review of Women's Studies* 1(2), 1990-91, p 4; Demain, 'The Saga of the Filipino Wife,' *Metro* June 1993, p 58; Aguilar, 'Ambiguities of Motherhood in the Philippines,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 1(1), 1996, pp 97-104; Aquino, *Filipino Women and Political Engagement*, p 51.

<sup>186</sup> D'Mello and Esmaque, *The Filipinos a People of Many Cultures*, p 3.

<sup>187</sup> Rodriguez, *op cit*, p 19.

<sup>188</sup> See Rex Editorial Staff, *The Civil Code of the Philippines*, pp 56-65.

<sup>189</sup> Lozada, 'Mothering in Crisis,' *Connexions* 43, Summer 1993, p 32.

<sup>190</sup> Sycip, *op cit*, p 8.

employed are 'winning economic independence from men.'<sup>191</sup> But even when the wife shares economic power, the husband is still considered the nominal head of the family. Although the patriarchal ideology of domesticity has survived since the colonial period, Filipino women are not inhibited from engaging in activities outside the home. Changes in the economy and social patterns as an offshoot of urban life have now resulted in an increasing number of female-headed households in the Philippines.<sup>192</sup>

Space at the helm may be reserved for the man but this does not necessarily mean acquiescence by the woman. As Eva Marie Gequillana states,

*In the home, although the husband is the head, the wife holds considerable power within the family and over decisions that the couple make. The husband consults her in all matters and her opinion influences his decisions. She may even impose her will in a situation wherein their thinking is opposed.*<sup>193</sup>

I argue that Filipino familial practices provide a base for democratic values. Decisions in the household are, according to Maria Serena Diokno, 'tempered by bargaining (*bigayan*), thus giving room for negotiation.'<sup>194</sup> The perceived all-time authority of the father is not true at all times amongst Filipino families. Another feature of the Filipino family is the practise of letting the wife handle the financial matters of the home. Delia Aguilar notes that the role as 'purse keepers' reflects the age-old view of the Filipina as the 'queen at home.'<sup>195</sup> In this set-up, the working husband turns over a day's earning to his wife who, in turn, allocates it to meet familial needs. Decision-making and financial management are key areas in a family unit. Although the father occupies the headship position, the mother commands a space for her voice to be heard in decision-making as well as direct hand in finances.

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<sup>191</sup> Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, p 328.

<sup>192</sup> Torres, 'Coping Strategies of Female-Headed Households in Urban Poor Communities of the Philippines,' *Review of Women's Studies* 4(1), 1993, p 95; Lora, 'Democracy within the Family,' *Connexions* 43, 1993, p 17.

<sup>193</sup> Gequillana, 'Changing Roles,' *World Mission* 6(6), July 1994, p 34.

<sup>194</sup> Diokno, 'Becoming a Filipino Citizen' in Diokno, *Philippine Democracy Agenda*, p 23.



Thus, the Filipino woman does not conform to the patriarchal conception of the private as passive subjects to men. They do not willingly obey the husband as the head of the family without exercising some sort of influence; nor, do they deny their position as wife and mother. The private sphere of the Filipina becomes, as previously noted, a negotiated space. This means that the husband and wife both occupy a role crucial for the well being of the family. Although the father has perceived 'natural' authority in the family, the wife is equally treated with respect. Studies in the Philippines have shown that despite gender role expectations the Filipino egalitarian precepts regard women with 'approval and prestige.'<sup>196</sup> Feminists' scholars in the Philippines recognise that the households exhibit 'gender parity' in terms of decision-making as compared to other areas such as lawmaking where men predominate.<sup>197</sup> The egalitarian orientation of the family allows Filipino women to deploy qualities of assertiveness and independence in negotiating her role. These qualities could be considered requisite political attributes of a citizen where the ability to assert oneself amidst various challenges in society is a constant. Iris Marion Young has shown that the 'home carries a core positive meaning as the material anchor for a sense of agency.'<sup>198</sup> The Filipino home provides women the space, for what Young calls, 'the conditions that make the political possible.'<sup>199</sup>

The indigenous role of Filipino women in the community has been transformed from the cultural trashing of Spanish colonialism to their recognised roles, both orthodox and unorthodox, in the opening of wider political spaces of American and post-independence developments in the Philippines.<sup>200</sup> According to Leonor Ines Luciano,

*The Filipina today is learning her lessons towards  
empowerment through gender-responsive  
programs, family-friendly methods, coalition  
building with men - as together, they work  
out strategies to meet the challenges of poverty,*

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<sup>195</sup> Aguilar, *The Social Construction of the Filipino Woman*, p 533.

<sup>196</sup> Cited in Chant and McIlwaine, *Women of a Lesser Cost*, p 6.

<sup>197</sup> See Sobritchea, *The Ideology of Female Domesticity*, p 29.

<sup>198</sup> Young, *Intersecting Voices*, p 159.

<sup>199</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>200</sup> The orthodox mode of political participation is synonymous with the formal political process like voting, while the unorthodox pertains to the informal processes like advocacy and armed resistance. See Tancangco, *Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines*, p 334.

*abuse, rape, discrimination and violence against them...*<sup>201</sup>

Based on Luciano's comments, the empowerment of Filipino women through gender-responsive programs is a process that includes, rather than excludes, Filipino men. Filipino women's engagement in the political sphere, while significant, remains challenged by the existing patriarchal values.<sup>202</sup> Hence, the struggle of women, not necessarily feminist, is perceived to be best carried out in partnership with men. This view is reflected in the advice of former President Corazon Aquino where she suggests that women can achieve their potential 'with the help of men.'<sup>203</sup> Unlike in the West, the 'woman question' in the Philippines remains embedded in the over-all question of national survival. Tapales notes that Filipino women are 'struggling through the intricate web of the cultural script' and 'have to weave their own pattern[s] of political participation' which 'are not overtly political but in many ways are just as effective.'<sup>204</sup>

In this section, I have outlined the development of the idea of Filipino womanhood from the pre-colonial privileged status in the family and in the community. The indigenous idea of equality and high regard for women did not disappear with colonialism or the introduction of Spanish Catholicism.<sup>205</sup> I have shown that the esteemed values of docility and submissiveness failed to deter women's active involvement in nation building. The freedom to pursue economic and political activities was strengthened by the democratic space provided by American administration. The grant of suffrage to women became the rallying point for continued political activism of Filipino women. There is a crucial mix of indigenous qualities of Filipino womanhood, especially that of being equal with men, with western democratic practices. This fusion is an important component in the active political engagement of Filipino women, either formal or informal, making their citizenship count in the polity.

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<sup>201</sup> Luciano, 'Feminism, Philippine Style,' *Philippine Panorama* 6 March 1994, p 4. See also GABRIELA, 'Defending Our Future,' *Women's International Network News* 18(4), Autumn 1992, p 19.

<sup>202</sup> Tapales, *Filipino Women in Politics and Public Affairs*, p 13.

<sup>203</sup> Cited in Murphy, 'Filipino Women are Just Hitting Their Stride,' *National Catholic Reporter* 25(23), 31 March 1989, p 9.

<sup>204</sup> Tapales, *Filipino Women in Politics and Public Affairs*, p 13.

<sup>205</sup> Aquino, 'Feminism Across Cultures' in Goodman, *Women in Asia and the Pacific*, p 325.

The construction of Filipino womanhood in the Philippines promotes agency in women's citizenship. The distinct social valuing of Filipino women at home prepares them to become active participants in the affairs of the community. The absence of rigid social constraints to engage in activities outside the home has made Filipino women receptive to western precepts such as equality and rights. Their socio-cultural characteristics, of having a mix of Eastern and Western values, contribute to a positive valuation of political membership in Australia upon migration.

## **B. Migration and Citizenship in Australia**

In Australia, like any other immigrant-receiving countries, immigration and citizenship are intrinsically related. Immigration policy has been effectively utilised to determine who has the right to claim membership in the nation-state.<sup>206</sup> The grounds for immigration control in Australia are intrinsically linked to the construction of and meaning of Australian citizenship. I have identified two categories important in this study - race and gender. Exclusionary immigration policies and the preference for skilled manpower have significantly shaped contemporary discourse on Australian citizenship.

### **1. *Racial and Gender Biases in Immigration***

The sovereign right of the Australian Commonwealth to screen would-be nationals is embodied in Section 51 of the Constitution.<sup>207</sup> Preserving the common bond with the British indelibly marked all institutions and remains the foundation of nation building. One of the first acts of the newly federated Australia was the *Immigration Restriction Act* in

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<sup>206</sup> States have the right to regulate the entry of foreign nationals. Tomas Hammar has identified 'three gates at entrance' in industrialised countries: gate 1 refers to the 'granting of work and residence permits for short periods which may be prolonged' like guest workers; gate 2 refers to the 'regulation of status as denizen' with 'permanent work and residence permits' and access to social and legal rights; gate 3 refers to naturalisation with full political rights. See Hammar, *Democracy and the Nation State*, p 21. See also Batrouney, 'From White Australia to Multiculturalism' in Hage, *Arab-Australians Today*, pp 47-49; Bauböck, 'Ethical Problems of Immigration Control and Citizenship' in Cohen, *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, pp 551-556; Bauböck, 'Entitlement and Regulation' in Rudolph and Morokvasic, *Bridging States and Markets*, pp 19-47; Li, *Imagining the Nation*, p 3.

<sup>207</sup> See Goldlust, *Understanding Citizenship in Australia*, p 9; Langtry, *Family Reunion and Australian Immigration Programme*, p 1; Human Rights Commission, *Human Rights and the Migration Act 1958*, p 4.

1901, which effectively excluded the entry of non-Europeans until 1958.<sup>208</sup> Popularly referred to as the 'White Australia Policy,' it systematically ensured that would-be members of the Australian state belong to the same racial stock and put a legislative stamp against threat of the 'yellow peril' - particularly, the Chinese.<sup>209</sup> However, there were 689 Filipinos in Australia in the 1901 census.<sup>210</sup> James Jupp notes that the 'White Australia' policy was 'not just a method of controlling immigration' but an ideology based on the superiority of the white race.<sup>211</sup> Since the 1880s, Asians and non-Europeans, including Aboriginal peoples, were perceived to be 'genetically inferior' and, if allowed to intermarry, could 'debase the existing population.'<sup>212</sup> From 1901 until 1948, the migration policy became the basis for prospective membership in the Australian nation-state, as British subjects, in the absence of an Australian citizenship provision.<sup>213</sup> Race became the singular qualifier for membership in the polity and various state apparatus, such as the dreaded dictation test, served the purpose of excluding Asians.<sup>214</sup> By this time, Filipino migration declined and only numbered 141 in the 1947 census.<sup>215</sup> Aboriginal inhabitants and 'aliens' were specifically denied the right to vote, to own property, to work in the

<sup>208</sup> The Migration Act 1958 is the primary legal framework for migration to Australia. See Jupp, *Immigration*, p 46; Collins, 'Asian Migration to Australia' in Cohen, *op cit*, p 376; Rubenstein, 'Introduction' in BLEC Books, *Immigration Law Update 1995*, p 4.

<sup>209</sup> The Chinese who first came to Australia in 1853 were gold-miners. See Jupp, *op cit*, p 43. See also Martin, 'Non-English- Speaking Migrant Women in Australia' in Grieve and Burns, *Australian Women New Feminist Perspectives*, p 235.

<sup>210</sup> Bureau of Immigration Research (BIR), *Community Profiles Philippine Born*, p vii. Allegedly, the first Filipinos who arrived in Australia in 1884 were Aquilino Roces, Catalino Torres and Pablo Valiente who settled in Broome. By 1916, there was only one Filipina in Broome. See 'Who Were the First Filipino Immigrants in Australia?' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 10(1), January 2003, p 2.

<sup>211</sup> Jupp, *op cit*, p 53. See also Kivisto, *Multiculturalism in a Global Society*, pp 107-108.

<sup>212</sup> Jupp, *ibid*, p 83.

<sup>213</sup> There are various reasons cited for why the framers of the Australian Constitution omitted a provision on citizenship. One is that the term 'citizen' was associated with republicanism. Australia was a subject of the British monarch and the term 'citizen' was considered inappropriate. Another was the view that the 'citizen's rights were best left to the protection of the common law in association with the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty.' Australian citizenship was a creation of parliament and not by the constitution. See Zappala and Castles, *Citizenship and Immigration in Australia*, p 4; Monsma and Soper, *The Challenge of Pluralism*, p 98; Salvaris, 'Political Citizenship' in Hudson and Kane, *Rethinking Australian Citizenship*, pp 79-80; Stephen, 'The First-half Century of Australian Citizenship' in Rubenstein, *Individual Community Nation*, p 4; Rubenstein, 'The High Court of Australia and the Legal Dimensions of Citizenship' in Rubenstein, *ibid*, p 22.

<sup>214</sup> The 'dictation test' was introduced in 1897 primarily for Indian and Chinese immigrants and was abolished in 1958. Asian immigration has also been at the centre of controversy in Australia. See Human Rights Commission, *op cit*, p 5; Jupp, *op cit*, p 48; Collins, *op cit*, p 378; Brawley, *The White Peril*, p 329; Cowie, *Australia and Asia*, p 270.

<sup>215</sup> BIR, *op cit*, p vii.

public sector, to get hawking licenses and to bring in family members.<sup>216</sup> Exclusion made explicit 'identity and difference, citizens and aliens.'<sup>217</sup>

Race served as the essential criteria for inclusion in the nation-state from the 1900s until the 1970s when the restrictive policy was dismantled. John Chesterman and Brian Galligan have shown that Australian citizenship developed to accommodate 'exclusion and disabilities on racial grounds.'<sup>218</sup> Aboriginal peoples in the 1940s and 1950s in particular lived 'under a regime of confinement, segregation and discrimination.'<sup>219</sup> This approach secured membership and benefits for white Australians who comprised the nation-state. As Roger Brubaker contends, citizenship is an effective instrument of 'social closure.'<sup>220</sup> During this time Filipinos were at the centre of international drama when Lorenzo 'Lory' Gamboa, a sergeant in the US armed forces, was denied entry into Australia to be reunited with his Australian wife and family.<sup>221</sup> Another well connected Filipino, Aurelio Locsin, was also refused entry and the decision became known to all of Asia.<sup>222</sup> Foreign policy considerations, especially relations with Asian countries, eventually paved the way for reform of Australian immigration laws.

The needs of an industrialising economy in the aftermath of the Second World War introduced another dimension in the immigration preference - skilled manpower. Economic objectives as well as the need to build a viable defense force were primary

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<sup>216</sup> Jupp, *op cit*, pp 49-50. See also Garkawe et al, *Indigenous Human Rights*; Chesterman and Galligan, *Citizens Without Rights*; Jordens, 'The Legal and Non-legal Aspects of Immigration and Citizenship' in Rubenstein, *op cit*, p 86.

<sup>217</sup> Li, *op cit*, p 4.

<sup>218</sup> Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, p 13.

<sup>219</sup> Lake, 'Citizenship as Non-Discrimination' in Canning and Rose, *Gender, Citizenship and Subjectivities*, p 140; See also Peterson and Sanders, *Citizenship and Indigenous Australians*; Chesterman and Galligan, 'Indigenous Rights and Australian Citizenship' in Rubenstein, *op cit*, pp 64-72; Eveline, 'Feminism, Racism and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Australia' in Crawford and Maddern, *Women as Australian Citizens*, p 144.

<sup>220</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, pp 21-34.

<sup>221</sup> Sullivan, 'It Had to Happen' in Iletto and Sullivan, *Discovering AustralAsia*, pp 101-114. Lory Gamboa challenged the White Australia Policy which contributed to the opening of immigration gates to Asians in Australia. In 2000, he received the first Filipino-Australian of the Millennium Award. See 'Kate Ceberano and Lory Gamboa are Filipino-Australian of the Year and Filipino-Australian of the Millennium,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(11), November 2000, p 26.

<sup>222</sup> *ibid*, p 115. See also Brawley, *op cit*, p 308.

considerations in increasing the immigration intake.<sup>223</sup> The British still ranked as the most desirable immigrants but there were few takers. Doors were opened to tradesmen from eastern and northern Europe in late 1940s and southern Europe in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>224</sup> The Australian government allowed the entry of white European people who were perceived to readily assimilate into the British-Australian 'way of life' and expected to individually adapt to the cultural norms and remain 'indistinguishable' from the rest of the 'white' population.<sup>225</sup> For example, Wendy Walker-Birckhead argues the Dutch were represented as an 'assimilated people' occupying the top hierarchy for preferred migrants because of their 'digestibility.'<sup>226</sup> These so-called 'assimilable types' posed no threat to social stability and preserved the myth of a homogenous society.<sup>227</sup> Aliens formerly shunned by Australian immigration policy were now welcomed to boost, amongst others, the building and construction industry, metal trades and motor manufacturing.<sup>228</sup> Later on as traditional sources waned and as Australia faced diplomatic problems with its international 'white' image, particularly amongst its Asian neighbours in the 1960s, the doors were further opened to 'coloured Asiatics.'<sup>229</sup> But the liberalization of immigration laws still had its racial bias as most Filipino migrants were *mestizos* (racially mixed) who were of European descent and could 'pass' as white Australians.<sup>230</sup> Consistent with the 1965 United Nations' *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, the Australian Commonwealth passed legislation prohibiting racial

<sup>223</sup> In 1945 the Department of Immigration was established with Arthur Calwell as minister. There were three basic categories by which a migrant could be legally admitted in Australia: skilled, family and humanitarian. See Morrissey et al, 'Migration to and From Australia' in Brownlee, *Migration and Citizenship in the Asia Pacific*, p 4; Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration*, p 32; Castles, 'The "New" Migration and Australian Immigration Policy' in Inglis et al, *Asians in Australia*, p 54.

<sup>224</sup> Zappala and Castles, *op cit*, p 1.

<sup>225</sup> See Castles, *Migrant Incorporation in Highly Developed Countries*, p 9; Hollinsworth, *Race and Racism in Australia*, pp 242-243; Camiscioli, 'Producing Citizenships Reproducing the "French Race"' in Canning and Rose, *op cit*, p 167.

<sup>226</sup> Walker-Birckhead, 'Paying Our Way,' *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 9 (1), 1998, pp 89-100.

<sup>227</sup> See Lippmann, 'The Multicultural Society' in Consultative Committee on Social Development, *Multiculturalism and Its Implication for Service Delivery in Australian Society*, p 3; Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 'Introduction' in Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, *Unsettling Settler Societies*, p 24.

<sup>228</sup> These 'previously abhorred' peoples include the 'Balts, Poles, Germans, Dutch, Italians, Yugoslavs, Greeks and Lebanese.' See Jupp, *op cit*, pp 56-57; Wilton and Bosworth, *Old Worlds and New Australia*, p 1.

<sup>229</sup> See Brawley, *op cit*, pp 300-301; Jupp, *op cit*, p 84; Ongley and Pearson, 'Post-1945 International Migration,' *The International Migration Review* 29(3), Fall 1995, pp 765.

discrimination in 1975.<sup>231</sup> The radical shift in domestic policy provided the impetus for a new tide of Filipino migration distinct from that of the general pattern from the 1980s - the majority being women.<sup>232</sup>

Aside from racial considerations, the immigration policy consistent with its economic objectives had a gender dimension. Men were targeted to be the backbone of an industrialising economy. For example, Italian migration to Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century was 90 per cent male.<sup>233</sup> Wives became part of the recruitment package. The immigrant selection process contained women in the 'family reunion' category as dependents and not on the basis of their skills during the first twenty-five years of post-war migration program.<sup>234</sup> The prevailing assumption then was that women were not 'economically viable' and were not expected to work in Australia.<sup>235</sup> In the mid-1960s, single women from Greece were recruited as domestic servants and, possibly, potential wives for non-Anglo males.<sup>236</sup> Jan Pettman notes that the immigration of these single women as potential wives was to 'redress the over-representation of their men' and to protect Australian women.<sup>237</sup> Two decades later, there were many Filipino women who came to Australia as wives or fiancées of Australian nationals<sup>238</sup> although emigration of

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<sup>230</sup> Balaba and Roca, 'A Socio-Economic Profile of the Filipino Community in Australia Based on the 1986 Census Data' in Coughlan, *The Diverse Asians*, p 57.

<sup>231</sup> See Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, p 177; Zappala and Castles, *op cit*, p 7.

<sup>232</sup> Jupp, *op cit*, p 92. See also Hugo and Channell, *Filipino Immigration to and Settlement in Australia*. Paper presented at the Australian Population Association, 3<sup>rd</sup> National Conference, 3-5 December 1986, Adelaide.

<sup>233</sup> Rosoli, 'Catholicism and the Issue of Migration,' in Cresciani, *Australia, Australians and Italian Migration*, p 24.

<sup>234</sup> Fincher et al, *Gender Equity and Australian Immigration Policy*, p 6. See also Bottomley, 'Living Across Difference' in Grieve and Burns, *Australian Women*, p 59; Martin, *op cit*, p 234; Martin, 'Non-English - speaking Women' in Bottomley and Lepervanche, *Ethnicity, Class and Gender in Australia*, p 111.

<sup>235</sup> Fincher et al, *ibid*, p 28. For an overview of women in Australian immigration see de Lepervanche, 'Holding it All Together,' *International Review of Sociology* 2, 1991, pp 73-96.

<sup>236</sup> In the early 1960s there was a gender imbalance amongst the immigrant population in Australia. A campaign known as 'Bring Back A Bride Scheme' in the 1970s paid for the return fare of immigrant men looking for a wife in their homeland. See Fincher et al, *op cit*, pp 45-46; Jupp, *op cit*, p 77; Henderson, *From All Corners*, p 9.

<sup>237</sup> Pettman, 'Second-class Citizens?' in Sullivan and Whitehouse, *Gender, Politics and Citizenship in the 1990s*, p 8.

<sup>238</sup> Philippines have the highest number of women applicants for Australian spouse or fiancé visas. See Fincher et al, *op cit*, p 69.

single women is not a new phenomenon in Australia.<sup>239</sup>

## 2. *Australian Citizenship*

Those who are allowed legal entry into Australia are usually potential citizens. Citizenship formalises the status of immigrants as members in the nation-state. From 1901 to 1948 this membership was based on Anglo-Celtic connections where all eligible Australians were considered British subjects and the rest were aliens so defined in the *Nationality Act 1920*.<sup>240</sup> Again, the basis for belonging in the community was racial affinity or Britishness. Asians and Aborigines were classified as aliens. The progenitor of the 'citizen' at this time was a British subject who embraced the nationality of the Empire.<sup>241</sup> Those of non-British descent were excluded from the Australian nation-state. As in the French preference for white Europeans over the Chinese, the citizen body in Australia also embodied Anglo-Celtic construction.<sup>242</sup> This meant that Australian citizenship was also membership in the national community. Race was the significant qualifier for this membership in the nation-state and, Elisabeth Porter notes, 'the boundaries between insiders and outsiders define citizens and alien, member and stranger.'<sup>243</sup>

Nearly fifty years after federation the idea of Australian citizenship emerged. In 1949, the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948*, later known as *Australian Citizenship Act 1948*, came into effect. The Act separated the status of Australian citizenship from that of British nationality; but there was not much public reaction about the provision because Australian citizens were also considered British subjects. The primary basis for Australian citizenship stipulated in the Act was through birth or descent: Australian citizens were those Australian-born and British subjects who resided for five years and other British subjects born overseas if their fathers were permanent residents.<sup>244</sup> Although the basis for

<sup>239</sup> Henderson, *op cit*, p 147.

<sup>240</sup> Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, p 33.

<sup>241</sup> Pryles, 'Legal Aspects of Citizens' in *Citizenship and Human Rights*, p 1.

<sup>242</sup> Camiscioli, *op cit*, p 176. See also Jordens, 'Promoting Australian Citizenship' cited in Gillgren, 'Aliens to Ethnic' in Crawford and Skene, *Women and Citizenship*, p 151.

<sup>243</sup> Porter, 'Identity, Location, Plurality' in Wilford and Miller, *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p 36.

<sup>244</sup> Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, p 29.



acquiring Australian citizenship was based on *ius soli*, the underlying theme of belonging to the 'national family' with shared cultural heritage remained prominent.<sup>245</sup> Citizenship was not a universal right but a privileged conferment of status for belonging.<sup>246</sup> According to Morrissey, Zappala and Castles, 'nationality and citizenship were generally seen as being virtually identical.'<sup>247</sup> Non-Europeans were not eligible to apply for naturalisation until 1956 and the qualifying residential period for such application was fifteen years as compared to the five-year requirement for Europeans.<sup>248</sup> Rights of Australian citizenship were not spelled out in the Act but developed, according to Brian Galligan and John Chesterman, in a 'piecemeal way' through legislative and administrative 'exclusionary regimes' against Aboriginal natives, Asians, Africans and Pacific Islanders.<sup>249</sup>

Aside from its racial basis, Australian citizenship as conceived during this time, was gendered, too.<sup>250</sup> As previously noted only children of overseas-born male British subjects had claim to Australian citizenship provided they were permanent residents. Logically, women could not confer the same status even if they gave birth to their sons or daughters. In terms of basic entitlements of membership in the Australian polity, qualified women were not allowed to vote. The *Franchise Act 1902* extended this right only to white women.<sup>251</sup> In Australia, the campaign to grant suffrage to 'white' women was based on the assumption that their primary concerns were the protection of women's and children's welfare and not to become politicians. This conservative approach assured men that 'the world would not change too much if women had the vote.'<sup>252</sup> Marriage of a white woman to an alien in Australia meant the loss of her nationality and, amongst other things, her

<sup>245</sup> See Morrissey et al, *op cit*, p 6; Davidson, *From Subject to Citizen*, p 67; Zappala and Castles, *op cit*, p 5.

<sup>246</sup> Zappala and Castles, *ibid*, p 5.

<sup>247</sup> Morrissey et al, *op cit*, p 9.

<sup>248</sup> Goldlust and Batrouney, 'Immigrants, Australian Citizenship and National Identity,' *INFOCUS* 20(1), Autumn 1997, p 17.

<sup>249</sup> Galligan and Chesterman, 'Australia's Citizenship Void' in Davidson and Weekley, *Globalisation and Citizenship in the Asia-Pacific*, pp 78-79.

<sup>250</sup> Anthias and Yuval-Davis, *Racialized Boundaries*, p 127.

<sup>251</sup> Aboriginal peoples were officially recognised as persons under federal law only in 1967. See Lake, 'The Constitution of Australian Women Citizens,' *Voices* 4 (4), Summer 1994-95, p 17; Choo, 'A Challenge to Human Rights' in Crawford and Skene, *Women and Citizenship*, pp 59-60. See also Tarrant, 'The Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States and Australia,' *Adelaide Law Review* 18(1), 1996, pp 47-82.

<sup>252</sup> Hirst, *Australia's Democracy*, p 95.

right to vote.<sup>253</sup> The *British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914*, uniformly applied throughout the Empire, allowed a British-born woman to reclaim her nationality upon the dissolution of her marriage to an alien.<sup>254</sup> The *Nationality Act 1920* defined 'disability' as 'status of being a married woman, or a minor, lunatic or idiot.'<sup>255</sup> Responding to the women's lobby, the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1920* provided for the retention of British nationality for women residents in Australia.<sup>256</sup> In succeeding legislation, the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948*, marriage of a woman to an alien had no effect on her nationality.<sup>257</sup> Margaret Thornton argues that the construction of citizenship in its universal veil is based on 'benchmark men' who are 'white, Anglo-Celtic, able-bodied, heterosexual and middle class' from which 'women and others are measured.'<sup>258</sup> Inferring from Thornton's critique, non-white immigrant women, like Filipinos, are measured up against 'white, Anglo-Celtic' women in Australia.

Although the franchise is a milestone for women's advancement in Australia,<sup>259</sup> they remain, according to Marilyn Waring, 'less than equal.'<sup>260</sup> Women occupy 15 per cent of seats in parliament and 32 per cent in the Senate.<sup>261</sup> Although the equal pay principle was institutionalised into law in the 1970s, about 65 per cent of working age women in the paid workforce still earn 80-84 per cent of men's wages.<sup>262</sup> Women are concentrated in the secondary labour market and are often occupationally segregated. In the 1990s, women predominate in part time and casual work, which accounted for 75 per cent and 60 per cent,

<sup>253</sup> Davidson, *From Subject to Citizen*, p 66.

<sup>254</sup> Jordens, *Redefining Australians*, p 13.

<sup>255</sup> Cited in Gillgren, *op cit*, p 149.

<sup>256</sup> Jordens, *Redefining Australians*, p 14. A British subject who married an alien could retain her rights through a declaration but was not entitled to a British passport in a legislation that took effect in 1935. See Gillgren, *op cit*, p 149.

<sup>257</sup> Jordens, *Redefining Australians*, p 15.

<sup>258</sup> Thornton, 'Sexing the Citizen' in Rubenstein, *op cit*, p 35.

<sup>259</sup> White women in some colonies were granted the right to vote in the 1890s. See Grimshaw and Ellinghaus, 'White Women, Aboriginal Women, and the Vote in Western Australia' in Crawford and Skene, *op cit*, p 1.

<sup>260</sup> Waring, 'Less Than Equal' in Rubenstein, *op cit*, pp 42-52. See also the history of Australian feminism in Lake, *Getting Equal*.

<sup>261</sup> See Grey, 'Increasing Representation of Women in Parliament' in Damousi and Ellinghaus, *Citizenship, Women and Social Justice*, p 183. See also 'Women,' *Herald Sun* 5 January 2001, p 46; 'Women in Politics and Public Life,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 2, 1992, pp 82-93.

respectively.<sup>263</sup>

As Australia embarked on a massive immigration program after 1945 the meaning of Australian citizenship gradually shifted from exclusion to inclusion. The 1969 amendment to the *Nationality and Citizenship Act* reduced the period of residence for aliens' literate in English from five years to three years before they could lodge an application for naturalisation.<sup>264</sup> Proficiency in the English language implies a common understanding of cultural belonging. Coinciding with the demise of the 'White Australia' immigration policy and the introduction of multiculturalism, the *Nationality and Citizenship Act* was renamed the *Australian Citizenship Act* in 1973. Aliens and British subjects alike were now treated to the same requirements for Australian citizenship: good character, adequate knowledge of the English language and adequate knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship.<sup>265</sup> Further significant changes took effect in 1984 which included removal of the notion of a British subject, reduction of residence requirement to two years, and the reduction of the language requirement from 'adequate English' to 'basic English.'<sup>266</sup> Five years later, the Australian government designated 1989 as the *Year of Citizenship*.<sup>267</sup> The aim was to encourage primarily those qualified permanent residents to take up Australian citizenship.

The grant of a certificate of Australian citizenship, Michael Pryles points out, 'does

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<sup>262</sup> Healey, *Sex Discrimination*, p 13. See also Kamper, 'Wage Gap Blows Out to \$166,' *Daily Telegraph* 28 March 2001, p 15.

<sup>263</sup> Boreham and Whitehouse, 'Managing Time' in Sullivan and Whitehouse, *op cit*, p 182. See also the following for the status of women in Australia: Kaplan, 'Women in Europe and Australia' in Grieve and Burns, *Australian Women*, p 49; Broom, 'Justifying Injustice' in Broom, *Unfinished Business*, p xiii.; Eccles, 'Women in the Australian Labour Force' in Broom, *ibid*, pp 81-88; Jones, 'Income Inequality' in Broom, *ibid*, p 104; Bryson, 'Women, Paid Work and Social Policy' in Grieve and Burns, *Australian Women*, p 183; Deacon, 'The Employment of Women in the Commonwealth Public Service' in Simms, *Australian Women and the Political System*, pp 133-134; Clarke, 'Losing the Numbers Game' in Simms, *op cit*, p 51; Walmsley, 'Women, Feminism and the Political Process' in Simms, *ibid*, p 61; Cass, 'Rewards for Women's Work' in Goodnow and Pateman, *Women, Social Science & Public Policy*, pp 68-72; *IWRAW to CEDAW Country Reports on Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Israel, Namibia, Argentina and Australia*; Office of the Status of Women, *Women - Shaping and Sharing the Future*, p 43.

<sup>264</sup> Jordens, *Redefining Australians*, p 88.

<sup>265</sup> Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, p 71.

<sup>266</sup> Davidson, *op cit*, p 88. See also Gillgren, *op cit*, p 153.

not *ipso facto* make the grantee an Australian citizen.<sup>268</sup> A person is required to take an oath of allegiance in a public ceremony before a Federal judge, judge, magistrate, or other person duly approved by the Minister.<sup>269</sup> Based on the Australian Citizenship Amendment Act 1993, there are two slightly different pledges of commitment as a citizen of Australia.<sup>270</sup> The new citizen chooses which one of these pledges is to be recited.

The shift from an 'homogenous society' to a 'multicultural' one in official discourses has led to the granting of access to social welfare benefits and equity to immigrants, either as permanent residents or citizens, since 1985.<sup>271</sup> In 1989, the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* was released by the Commonwealth government which outlined the first statement on the rights and responsibilities of Australians.<sup>272</sup> This document contained the three policy dimensions of multiculturalism: cultural identity, social justice and economic efficiency.<sup>273</sup> Specifically, these policy directives were reflected in the 'goals', or should I say the rights, of Australians which include, amongst others, 'the basic right of freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or culture.'<sup>274</sup> In 1999, the National Multicultural Advisory Council published its report, *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness*, with

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<sup>267</sup> The Australian Federal government has launched national campaigns to encourage eligible permanent residents to become citizens. See Goldlust, *op cit*, p 20; BIR, *Australian Citizenship Statistical Report No. 1*, p 1; 'Government in Push for New Citizens,' *Wollongong Advertiser* 4 July 2001, p 1.

<sup>268</sup> Pryles, *Australian Citizenship Law*, p 91.

<sup>269</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>270</sup> Pledge No. 1 states: 'From this time forward, under God, I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.' Pledge No. 2 states: 'From this time forward, I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect and whose laws I will uphold and obey.' See Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, p 77.

<sup>271</sup> Jordens, *The Legal and Non-legal Aspects of Immigration and Citizenship*, p 89.

<sup>272</sup> *ibid*, p 90. See also Jupp, 'Immigration and National Identity' in Stokes, *The Politics of Identity in Australia*, pp 134-135.

<sup>273</sup> Office of Multicultural Affairs, *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, p viii.

<sup>274</sup> *ibid*, p 1. In 1996, the *Parliamentary Statement on Racial Tolerance* was passed with the following affirmations: 'reaffirms its commitment to the right of all Australians to enjoy equal rights and be treated with equal respect regardless of race, colour, creed, or origin; reaffirms its commitment to maintaining an immigration policy wholly non-discriminatory on grounds of race, colour, creed, or origin; reaffirms its commitment to the process of reconciliation with Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Island people, in the context of redressing their profound social and economic disadvantage; reaffirms its commitment to maintaining Australia as a culturally diverse, tolerant, and open society, united by an overriding commitment to our nation, and its democratic institutions and values; and denounces racial intolerance in any form as incompatible with the kind of society we are and want to be.' Cited in Kivisto, *op cit*, p 102.

recommendations underpinning four core principles: civic duty, cultural respect, social equity and productive diversity.<sup>275</sup> Civic duty pertains to the obligations of all Australians ‘to support those basic structures and principles of Australian society which guarantee our freedom and equality and enable diversity in our society to flourish.’<sup>276</sup> Cultural respect suggests that different ethnic groups can ‘express their cultural preferences without hindrance’ based on ‘mutual or reciprocal tolerance.’<sup>277</sup> Social equity indicates protection from discriminatory treatment and ensures equality of opportunity. Productive diversity, Peter Kivisto points out, ‘offers a rationale for multiculturalism’ because of the varied benefits derived from ‘having and maintaining diversity.’<sup>278</sup>

The positive conceptualisation of citizenship, in the broadest sense of the term, as civic identity within a multicultural nation is based on a ‘shared citizenship rather than a shared nationality.’<sup>279</sup> The Australian Citizenship Council subscribes to this broad meaning which incorporates the core values of society such as equality of rights.<sup>280</sup> This idea, however, remains contested as contemporary Australian society witnesses the rise of anti-immigration groups like Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party and the ambivalent stance of the Liberal-National government under John Howard since 1996.<sup>281</sup> (This issue is further explored in Chapter VIII).

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<sup>275</sup> Cited in Kivisto, *loc cit*

<sup>276</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>277</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>278</sup> *loc cit*. There are three modes of political integration in pluralistic societies: proceduralist, civic assimilationist and millet models. The proceduralist view suggests that in states with irreconcilable cultural differences the primary concern should be peace and stability. Civic assimilationist model reflects shared political culture with uniformity in the public sphere and diversity in the private realm. The millet model argues for the centrality of culture that should be upheld by the state. See Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, pp 199-200.

<sup>279</sup> Shared nationality is the basis for equal treatment in the classical model of citizenship. See Morrissey, *Migration to and from Australia*, p 9; Stephen, *op cit*, p 5; Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship*, p 142.

<sup>280</sup> Australian Citizenship Council, *Australian Citizenship for a New Century*, p 8. See also Morrissey et al, *op cit*, p 7; Salvaris, *op cit*, p 79.

<sup>281</sup> One Nation Party represents a return to the racially inclusive Australian national identity with policies of zero net immigration growth and reversal on the process of reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples. See Wesley, ‘Nationalism and Globalization in Australia’ in Suryadinata, *Nationalism and Globalization*, p 195; Morrissey, *op cit*, p 10; Hollinsworth, *op cit*, pp 254-268; Woods, ‘Australia in Asia’ in Ang et al, *Alter/Asians*, pp 263-268; Morrissey et al, *op cit*, p 9; Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration*, p

Brian Galligan and John Chesterman argue that there is a 'citizenship void' in Australia because of the apparent shift in the 'world view' from that of being part of a British Empire to an independent sovereign country in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>282</sup> This void 'cannot easily be filled because, historically and institutionally, Australian citizenship has not been defined in terms of positive core values.'<sup>283</sup> Australian citizenship, as previously mentioned, was based on racial exclusion and British subjecthood.<sup>284</sup> It was, Wayne Hudson and John Kane note, 'conceived largely in statist and passive terms' under the mantle of immigration.<sup>285</sup> The recent conception of citizenship as a shared civic identity, designed to incorporate immigrants, cannot simply erase the lingering attachments to British heritage in national discourses. In Alastair Davidson's conceptualisation of the different periods in Australian history, the period from 1949 to 2000 is considered as the period of 'emerging citizenship' in Australia, which suggests that the road towards complete inclusion of coloured immigrants is still to be achieved.<sup>286</sup> Hence, non-European immigrants like the Filipinos seem to be caught in this 'emerging' tide of citizenship in their desire for political integration in Australia.

Galligan and Chesterman write that having 'no clear understanding about the meaning of citizenship' is part of the problem in contemporary Australia.<sup>287</sup> Helen Irving offers an explanation on the ambiguity of Australian citizenship. She states,

*Australians have rarely thought citizenship in theoretical terms...Australian citizenship tended to draw, if anything, on social definitions of citizenship, thinking less about political or civic practices, and more about 'character' or community. For Australians, citizenship has been more of a social construction than a political or legal category, and their*

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144; Castles, *Challenges to National Identity and Citizenship*, p 29; Jayasuriya and Pookong, *The Asianisation of Australia*, pp 1-3.

<sup>282</sup> Galligan and Chesterman, 'Australia's Citizenship Void' in Davidson and Weekley, *op cit*, p 73.

<sup>283</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>284</sup> *ibid*, p 84.

<sup>285</sup> Hudson and Kane, 'Rethinking Australian Citizenship' in Hudson and Kane, *op cit*, p 2.

<sup>286</sup> Davidson, *op cit*, pp 248-80.

<sup>287</sup> Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, p 1.

*approach has changed little over the last  
one hundred years.*<sup>288</sup>

Based on Irving's statement, Australians of Anglo-Celtic origins share the 'character' of the national community which inform their perception that Australian citizenship is constructed along such basis. On the other hand, non-white immigrants like Filipino women in this study perceive Australian citizenship as a political category. This means the identification with the common ideal of equality as citizens regardless of race or ethnicity.

In 1995, the discussion paper of the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee, *A System of National Citizenship Indicators*, noted that 'there is presently no clear notion of what Australian citizenship embodies.'<sup>289</sup> Sir Ninian Stephen has also noted that citizenship in Australia is a 'somewhat clouded concept.'<sup>290</sup> Citizens and non-citizens alike apparently have vague ideas about the rights and obligations of Australian citizenship.<sup>291</sup> In the first place, the express rights conferred by the Australian constitution, Sir Anthony Mason points out, are 'limited and qualified.'<sup>292</sup> These include the 'acquisition of property on just terms (s51(xxxi)), trial on indictment by jury (s80) which has a procedural effect only, freedom of religion (s116), rights of out of State residents (s117), and perhaps the guarantee against civil conscription in relation to the provision of medical and dental services (s51(xxiiiA)).'<sup>293</sup> There is limited constitutional freedom of expression implied in relation to federal government and political matters as well as limited due process rights.<sup>294</sup> The rights of Australian citizens are found, Marilyn Waring notes, in 'Commonwealth and State laws and the common law developed by the courts.'<sup>295</sup> The Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Human Rights and Equal

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<sup>288</sup> Irving, 'Citizenship Before 1949' in Rubenstein, *op cit*, p 9.

<sup>289</sup> Cited in Emy, 'Citizenship, Democracy and the Constitution' in Davis, *Citizenship in Australia*, pp 28-29. In 1994 a staggering 87 per cent of Australians even had no clear understanding of the Australian Constitution. See Botsman, *The Great Constitutional Swindle*, p 2.

<sup>290</sup> Cited in Salvaris, *op cit*, p 78.

<sup>291</sup> Cited in Hammar, *op cit*, p 91.

<sup>292</sup> See Mason, 'The Australian Constitution in Retrospect and Prospect' in French et al, *Reflections on the Australian Constitution*, p 9.

<sup>293</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>294</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>295</sup> Waring, *op cit*, p 43.

Opportunity Act 1986, for example, protect some rights of Australian citizens.<sup>296</sup>

An immigrant keen on understanding the parameters of citizenship entitlements in Australia, for example, has to go through a myriad of policies and deduce their applicability relative to permanent residents. There are conflicting accounts on rights and entitlements of Australian citizenship in different sources. The following lists of rights is debatable: 'right to vote, to speak freely, to be equally protected by the law, to enjoy free basic health care, and to receive a minimum wage, a minimum level of social security, and a basic level of education.'<sup>297</sup> These 'rights' are referred to by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs as 'privileges of Australian citizenship' with corresponding duties.<sup>298</sup> Not surprisingly, the Filipino women interviewed in this study also display 'hodge-podge' knowledge gleaned from reading, listening to the radio, watching television, direct contact with government agencies and informal sources such as friends. Some of them believe that the rights of Australian citizenship are similar in any democratic country like the Philippines or the United States. They perceived the rights of citizens in Australia, though some are not rights per se, to include the following: to vote, to perform jury service, to hold an Australian passport, to protection while in a foreign country, to travel abroad without a visa, to government assistance, or social security benefits, to work and preference in job placements, to complain, to claim what is entitled, to go out of their homes, not to lose previous Filipino citizenship, to sponsor relatives, to practice the Australian way, to follow the rules to be an Australian, to be friendly with other people, to

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<sup>296</sup> *loc cit.* The conservative Liberal government of John Howard initiated a 40 per cent cut to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission which affected the implementation of the policy. See Johnson, 'The Fragility of Democratic Reform' in Rai, *International Perspectives on Gender and Democratization*, p 190.

<sup>297</sup> See Goldlust, *Understanding Citizenship in Australia*, p 23; Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, pp 66-73; Morrissey et al, *op cit*, p 6; Stephen, *op cit*, p 5; Chesterman and Galligan, 'Indigenous Rights and Australian Citizenship' in Rubenstein, *op cit*, p 65.

<sup>298</sup> The privileges of Australian citizenship are: 'the right to vote to help elect Australia's governments; the right to apply for any public office or to nominate for election to parliament; the right to apply for an Australian passport and to leave without a resident return visa; the right to claim protection from Australian diplomatic representatives while overseas; the right to apply to enlist in the defence forces and for government jobs requiring Australian citizenship; and the right to register [a] child (under 18 years of age born overseas) as an Australian citizen by descent.' The duties include the following: 'obey the laws and fulfill [the] duties as an Australian citizen; enrol on the electoral Register and vote at Federal and State/Territory elections and referenda; serve on jury, if called on; and defend Australia, should the need arise.' See Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), *What it Means to be an Australian Citizen*, pp 12-13.



security of Australian citizenship or not to have difficulty in staying in Australia, to possess property rights, to speak English, to have the same treatment as others, freedom to embrace their own culture, and to equality and not to be ashamed anymore of having a different colour. The meaning of these rights in the context of Filipino women's experience of Australian citizenship is discussed in the succeeding chapters.

I contend that the lack of uniformity in understanding what embodies Australian citizenship amongst immigrant Filipino women is the result of the absence of a Bill of Rights, something that they are familiar with in the Philippines.<sup>299</sup> Referring to this as a one-off document for rights and privileges of Australian citizenship would be easier than the series of departmental edicts announcing entitlements.<sup>300</sup> Filipino women are oriented towards an American-style republican tradition where rights are enshrined in the fundamental law. Soliman Santos, Jr observes that Filipinos have a lot of learning to do to 'understand the Australian reluctance about rights.'<sup>301</sup>

Fifty years after the enactment of Australian citizenship, the notion of membership within the polity, according to Judith Brett, remains weak. The reasons for this weakness include the absence of such provision in the Constitution; the two-tiered levels of government (*i.e.* federal and state) which somehow created a 'dual citizenship' of sorts or dual allegiances amongst the members of the Australian community and, in case of conflict, leads to partisan loyalties;<sup>302</sup> the establishment of 'dual citizenship' for Australian citizens and British subjects; and the colonial connections permeating society provide an

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<sup>299</sup>The adoption of a Bill of Rights remains a contentious issue in Australia. A Bill of Rights that would protect the freedoms of people from infringement by federal and state authorities is an on-going debate in contemporary Australian politics. The major arguments raised against the adoption of a Bill of Rights include: it will create a litigious society; it is ineffective against deliberate breaches of rights by the government; it will disrupt the federal balance; it will eliminate common law rights; it would place the courts over the commonwealth and state parliaments and it would involve the courts in policy decisions; and Australia is a free society and has no need of a Bill of Rights. The move to adopt a Charter of Rights and Aspirations was, however, supported by the Australian Labor Party National Conference in August 2000. See Harris, *A New Constitution for Australia*, pp 11-21; Rubenstein, *Australian Citizenship Law in Context*, p 286.

<sup>300</sup>Rubenstein, *Australian Citizenship Law in Context*, p 284.

<sup>301</sup>Santos, Jr, 'Of Centenaries and Centennials,' *Australian Journal of Human Rights* 6 (1), 2000, p 152. See also Botsman, *op cit*, p 119.

ideological basis for dividing those who have affinity to the racial stock and those who are coloured.<sup>303</sup> In the light of this, Filipino women belong to the 'coloured' stock and their belonging to the Australian community as citizens could perhaps be more ambiguous than, say, Anglo-Celts. However, I argue in the next chapter that this is not always the case. The idea of Australian citizenship adopted amongst Filipino women connotes a strong attachment to the political ethos of the adopted country.

### C. Conclusion

Drawing from the historical construction of Filipino women and their status as citizens in the Philippines, this chapter has shown that they have not achieved full citizenship. While fundamental law in the Philippines embraces formal equality of women with men, social and political practices continue to undermine their status as equals. Participation in formal politics is largely dominated by men although women have come to use other effective strategies to push their concerns.

The attainment of citizenship is experienced differently by Filipino women, primarily, because of class. Yuval-Davis notes that women in Third World countries are often represented by elite women.<sup>304</sup> This chapter revealed that only a few Filipino women have successfully challenged male dominance of politics. Young mentions that persons deprived of basic needs 'cannot pursue lives of satisfying work, social participation, and expression.'<sup>305</sup> However, Filipino women, rich or poor, have actively pursued participation in the democratic space through women's organizations. These organizations may have different ideological agenda, but they are united in their belief to address women's issues and improve the lives of Filipinos.

The various influences, particularly from Spanish and American colonialism, have contributed to the concept of Filipino womanhood as both embodying the traditional and

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<sup>302</sup> Federalism divides the authority within the nation-state and 'confers both national and sub-national citizenship.' See Schuck, 'Citizenship in Federal Systems' in Rubenstein, *op cit*, p 152.

<sup>303</sup> Brett, 'Retrieving the Partisan Theory of Australian Citizenship,' *Australian Journal of Political Science* 36 (3), November 2001, pp 423-425.

<sup>304</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, pp 119-120.

<sup>305</sup> Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, p 91.

modern: traditional in the sense that Filipino women are mainly rooted in their familial responsibilities; modern because they appreciate the democratic practices and principles to advance their well-being. These attributes place Filipino women in a, more or less, favourable situation when migrating to a similarly democratic country like Australia. The existence of democratic institutions and practices in Australia makes the change of citizenship from Filipino to Australian, as the next chapter demonstrates.

On the other hand, though Australian citizenship provides the same guarantees of membership in the community, it carries a long strain of racial and gender biases especially towards non-white immigrants. Race as an exclusionary tool for belonging seemingly adds another constraint to Filipino women. The multicultural framework of society is constantly charged with nativist sentiments that undermine meaningful participation of those who are deemed to be the 'Other.' The next chapters show that the racial and gender biases shape the practise of Australian citizenship.

## IV

**BECOMING AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS: IN SEARCH OF POLITICAL SPACE**

'Becoming' or the 'fact of coming into existence' presupposes a preceding condition.<sup>1</sup> It involves a transition from one state of existence to another; of leaving behind and embracing anew. From a migrant's perspective, this means leaving behind the country of birth, being domiciled in a foreign land, and becoming a citizen of the adopted place where, presumably, a better life awaits. Becoming a citizen is a choice. This choice is a basic guarantee of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which stipulates in Article 15 that 'no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the rights to change his nationality.'<sup>2</sup> The individual, theoretically, makes the choice as to which country is deemed to be instrumental in the pursuit of happiness.

This chapter explores the process of becoming an Australian citizen first by tracing the patterns of Filipino female migration to Australia. This is followed by the analysis of the significant factors of Filipino migration to Australia which shapes the manner in which Filipino women exercise their citizenship. This draws on the construction of immigrant Filipino women as the racial 'Other' in Australian society, a process that influences their negotiation of their space in the Australian community using Australian citizenship as a tool of political agency. The next section discusses the reasons behind taking up Australian citizenship and its perceived attributes compared to Filipino citizenship. Becoming a citizen of another country involves a degree of comparison with the previous country of citizenship. Phrases like *maganda pa rin ang Pilipinas* (Philippines is still beautiful) or *maganda dito sa Australia* (It's better here in Australia) crop up in conversations with Filipino women. I argue that these comparative perspectives provide a continued rationale for being citizens of the adopted country. What the new country of citizenship has to offer becomes paramount to immigrants *vis a vis* what they left behind in their native land.

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<sup>1</sup> *Webster's New World Dictionary*, p 123.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Adopted and Proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948,' *International Social Science Journal* 50 (4), December 1998, p 472.

### A. Filipina Migration to Australia

Migration is not a new phenomenon in the Philippines. With a land area of 115,600 square miles, the major islands of the archipelago constantly welcome entrants from other places.<sup>3</sup> The constant flow of people crossing between islands marks everyday life. Because of its more than 7,000 islands, Jane Corpuz-Brock observes that 'migration of peoples has always been a part of the nature of the people and the nation.'<sup>4</sup> The absence of cultural impediments to travel means that both men and women move between and across borders, although men traditionally predominate and initiate the process. Up to the 1980s, men dominated land-based migration.<sup>5</sup> A high number of Filipinos are now permanently living outside the Philippines particularly in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

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<sup>3</sup> Simkims and Wernstedt, *Philippine Migration*, p 1. See also Perez and Feranil, 'The Economic Integration of Female Migrants in Urban Labor Markets,' *Philippine Social Sciences Review* 51(1-4), January-December 1993, pp 97-98.

<sup>4</sup> Corpuz-Brock, 'Gospel, Cultures and Filipina Migrant Workers,' *International Review of Mission* 85(336), January 1996, p 63. Externally, there have been a number of significant migratory movements, either temporary or permanent migration. The first wave occurred in the 16th century when Filipino crewmen deserted the harsh conditions of their ships en route to the Manila-Acapulco trade and started to carve a niche in Mexico. The educated Filipino elites also settled in Europe to escape Spanish political repression in the 19th century. The second wave occurred in the early 20th century composed of *pensionados* (pensioners) and cheap plantation workers bound for America. Filipino contract workers in Hawaii accounted for about 18 per cent of the population by 1929. Those who went to mainland USA were engaged in seasonal harvest cropping, fruit picking and fish canning. The third wave of Filipino migration happened at the conclusion of the Second World War when military service personnel, professionals and students moved to the United States stimulated by the relaxation of the nationality-based quota system of the Immigration Act of 1965. Those who crossed the European border were enticed by the opportunities offered by an expanding economy and labour shortages in Great Britain, France and Italy. The fourth wave of migration coincided with the thrust of Philippine economic development program to fill the much-needed foreign exchange with the influx of contract workers to the Middle East in the 1970s. Part of this wave also included the Filipino-US veterans, professionals and those in inter-cultural marriages. The fifth wave was directed to Japan and newly industrialised Asian economies. See Paredes-Maceda, 'Responding to Filipino Migration Realities' in Medina et al, *OCWS in Crisis*, p 9; Tan, 'Foreword' in Perdon, *Brown Americans of Asia*, p xv; Catholic Institute for International Relations, *The Labor Trade*, pp 16-17; Posadas, *The Filipino Americans*, pp 14-19; Amjad, 'Philippines and Indonesia,' *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 5(2-3), 1996, p 348; Abrera-Mangahas, 'An Evaluation of the Philippine Overseas Employment Policy' in Paganoni, *Migration from the Philippines*, p 58; Cariño, 'Migrant Workers from the Philippines' in Battistella and Paganoni, *Philippine Labor Migration*, p 4; Paredes, 'The Truth and Myth about Filipino Migration,' *Asian Migrant* 3(4), October-December 1990, pp 118-126; Stahl, 'Manpower Exports and Economic Development,' *International Migration* 26(2), 1988, pp 147-169; Liu et al, 'Dual Chain Migration,' *International Migration Review* 25(3), Fall 1991, pp 487-513.

<sup>5</sup> Male labourers led earlier migration to the United States. Fathers or older brothers move out from their locale and after setting the path allow the rest of the family members, the women and children, to follow. See Tyner, 'The Global Context of Gendered Labor Migration from the Philippines to the United States,' *The American Behavioural Scientist* 42 (4), January 1999, p 671; Espiritu, *Filipino American Lives*, p 18.

Since the 1970s the number of Philippine-born individuals residing in Australia has almost doubled every five years. In 1978-79, Philippines ranked eighth with 1,256 arrivals or 1.9 per cent of the total immigrant intake.<sup>6</sup> Ten years later, it ranked third after the United Kingdom and New Zealand with 6.3 per cent of permanent arrivals. Richard Jackson and Ester Flores note that the Philippine-born migrants have the 'single most rapid growth rate of any nation of birth group in Australia.'<sup>7</sup> The September 1995 *Immigration Update* reveals that Philippines contributed 4.5 per cent to the net permanent gain in Australia.<sup>8</sup> In the 1996 census, the Philippine-born migrant represented 0.5 per cent of the Australian population and was the third largest Asian group after the Vietnamese-born and the Chinese-born.<sup>9</sup> A current estimate of the Filipino community in Australia, including the Australian-born and recently arrived migrants, is 180,000.<sup>10</sup> (See Appendix B)

The rise of Filipino migration to Australia coincided with the massive outflow of Filipinos to other parts of the globe for temporary and permanent settlement. In Australia, the rapid growth of the Filipino immigrant community during this period could be attributed to a number of factors. Benjamin Cariño points to the effect of stringent US immigration policy and the abandonment of the discriminatory 'White Australia Policy.' Many Filipinos have made Australia an alternative destination to the United States where some visa categories take about twenty years to process. Despite it not being a labour-contracting country, Filipinos, along with other Asians, have entered Australia in large numbers since the late 1970s when immigration doors were opened to them.<sup>11</sup> Together with Malaysia and Lebanon, Philippines became one of the top ten sources of immigrants in 1976-1977. Some Filipinos came through assisted passage. For example, Dama, a Filipina in Wollongong, recalls that '*as a tradesman, my husband is a fitter and turner. So,*

<sup>6</sup> Department of Immigration and Multicultural affairs (DIMA), *Immigration Update, June Quarter 1999*, p 16.

<sup>7</sup> Jackson and Flores, *No Filipinos in Manila*, p 12.

<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (BIMPR), *Immigration Update September Quarter 1995*, p 3.

<sup>9</sup> Khoo, *Community Profiles 1996 Census*, p 1.

<sup>10</sup> The Filipino Community, <http://www.philembassy.au.com/bil-filcom.htm> [8/1/03]. See also 'Philippine Born Population in Australia,' <http://www.filipino.com.au/categ/migration/philborn.htm> [8/1/03].

<sup>11</sup> Brawley, *The White Peril*, p 320. See also Marginson, 'Filipinos in Australia,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 8(1), January 2001, p 34.

*they sponsor us to come here with the whole family, assisted passage... everything is free.*' Mark Carvana notes that the forging of a multicultural Australian policy attracts many Filipino immigrants whose country at this time is beset by political and economic problems.<sup>12</sup> The phenomenal exodus of Filipinos worldwide is explained by historical and economic conditions.<sup>13</sup> The rapid growth in population flows began in one of the most tumultuous periods in Philippine history - the twenty year iron rule of Ferdinand Marcos. While the rest of the Southeast Asian economies were booming in the 1980s, the Philippines was on the verge of collapse.<sup>14</sup> Despite recorded growth of 5.5 per cent in gross national product during the Ramos administration in the 1990s, a majority of Filipinos remain poor and many continue to leave the country.<sup>15</sup>

Barbara Lane posits that whilst migration is personal, it is also due to the 'failure of development policies to provide adequate living and employment structures'<sup>16</sup> A country with worsening economic conditions coupled with a high population growth rate can spell a bleak future, and so many turn to migration to escape poverty.<sup>17</sup> Bradford Barnham and Stephen Boucher remark that in developing economies where household earnings are low, remittances from domestic and international migration are a major source of income.<sup>18</sup> For

<sup>12</sup> Carvana, *Filipinos in Western Sydney*, p 5.

<sup>13</sup> Beginning from Spanish colonization up to the American occupation, the waves of Filipino migration are inextricably linked to the free trade policies and colonial conditions of the time. Manolo Abella claims that 'history more than geography' made Filipino migrants accessible to worldwide labour market because of their ability to speak the English language. See Abella, 'International Migration and Development' in Battistella and Paganoni, *op cit*, p 22.

<sup>14</sup> Twenty years ago the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita started to fall and the level achieved in 1997 was still not at par with the real GDP per capita in 1982. There was a slow growth and a high inflation rate aggravated by a heavy debt burden. This was exacerbated by the assassination of former senator Benigno Aquino, Jr which led to capital flight, pullout of investments, spiraling prices, hoarding and shortage of goods. See Borra, 'An Economic Analysis of Philippine Manpower Export Industry' in Paganoni, *op cit*, p 8; Alba and Papell, 'Exchange Rate Determination and Inflation in Southeast Asian Countries,' *Journal of Development Economics* 55(2), April 1998, pp 423-36; Estanislao, *The Philippine Economy*, p 3.

<sup>15</sup> Ferrer, *Philippines and the Image of Future Development*.

<sup>16</sup> The problem of perennial poverty is unabated in the Philippines. See Lane, 'Filipino Domestic Workers in Hong Kong,' *Asian Migrant* 5 (1), January-March 1992, p 24.

<sup>17</sup> Basch et al, *Nations Unbound*, pp 232-33. See also Nuqui, 'Birds of Prey,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 7, 1998, p 67.

<sup>18</sup> Remittances of Filipino overseas workers provides US\$6 billion to the Philippine government. A quarter of the country's foreign exchange earnings come from remittances exceeding that of traditional exports. See Barham and Boucher, 'Migration, Remittances, and Inequality,' *Journal of Development Economics* 55 (2), April 1998, p 308; Sto. Tomas, 'Overseas Employment in the Philippines' in Paganoni, *op cit*, p 111; Rosca,

the average Filipino, migration is traditionally viewed as 'an acceptable alternative means to his [or her] economic betterment.'<sup>19</sup> This has become the single most important reason for many who face the economic gloom in their communities. This simple causal model of migration applies in the Philippine context. The so-called 'push-pull'<sup>20</sup> factors or Ravenstein's 'attractive forces' are clearly manifested in the migratory process. According to Imelda Argel, Australia 'offers opportunities to live a modest but fulfilling life' not only for the individual Filipino migrant but also for the family left behind in the Philippines.<sup>21</sup>

The trend towards the feminisation of migration in the Philippines started in the 1980s. By 1994 women comprised 60 per cent of overseas workers.<sup>22</sup> Filipino women are increasingly becoming dominant in seeking permanent residence abroad representing about 60 per cent of immigrants in the 1990s.<sup>23</sup> In a study about migration from Ilocos Norte, Raul Pertierra concludes that women comprise 65 per cent of both permanent and contract migrants.<sup>24</sup> The figures presented here only reflect the documented emigrants and do not include those who are considered illegal immigrants. Also, those who left the country as labour migrants and eventually sought permanent residence in the host country or went to a third country have never been systematically recorded. I have had the opportunity to meet this type of migrant in the course of my fieldwork in Sydney. Anita Beltran Chen argues that the experience of immigrant Filipino women in Canada challenges the idea of the 'pioneering male' because women have dominated the successive waves of migration.<sup>25</sup>

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'The Philippines' Shameful Export,' *The Nation*, 17 April 1995, p 522; Sassen, 'Women's Burden,' *Journal of International Affairs* 53(2), Spring 2000, pp 503-524.

<sup>19</sup> Simkims and Wernstedt, *op cit*, p 79.

<sup>20</sup> Bogue, 'A Migrant's Eye View of the Costs and Benefits of Migration to a Metropolis' in Brown and Neuberger, *Internal Migration*, pp 171-173.

<sup>21</sup> Argel, 'Concerns of Overseas Contract Workers Migrating to Australia,' *The Philippine Star*, 30 March 2000, p 10.

<sup>22</sup> Anny Misa Hefti notes that the 'growing demand for female labour and new social needs have created a demand for services in which only immigrant women are prepared to work.' Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo also points to the New International Division of Labor for the global trend of female labor, usually taking advantage of 'cheap docile and manipulable womanpower' which is 'based on wage differentials between the First World and Third World workers and between male and female workers.' See Hefti, *Globalisation and Migration*, <http://www.philcol.nl/solcon/Anny-Misa.htm> [15/1/02]; Pineda-Ofreneo, 'Women and Work,' *Review of Women's Studies* 1(1), 1990, p 43. See also Barber, 'Agency in Philippine Women's Labour Migration and Provisional Diaspora,' *Women's Studies International Forum* 23(4), 2000, p 400.

<sup>23</sup> Paredes-Maceda, *op cit*, p 10.

<sup>24</sup> Pertierra, *Remittances and Returnees*, p 140.

<sup>25</sup> Chen, *From Sunbelt to Snowbelt*, p 52.



This is also true for Filipino women in Australia. In the 1986 census, 33,752 or 69.3 per cent of Filipino migrants were women.<sup>26</sup> The sex ratio amongst the Philippine-born was 53 males per 100 females in the 1996 census,<sup>27</sup> and Filipino women outnumber the men in all age groups above 20-24 years.<sup>28</sup> Although there was a downward trend in the number of Filipino migration in the late 1990s, women comprised the majority. Cariño argues that the female dominance of Filipina migration to Australia is reflective of Philippine migration as a whole.<sup>29</sup>

In Australia, this gender imbalance is an offshoot of the recruitment mainly of Filipino nurses in the 1960s and the later phenomenon of migrants-for-marriage scheme.<sup>30</sup> About half of Filipino women migrants came as the spouses and fiancés of Australian male residents; while a significant portion arrived as sponsored relatives.<sup>31</sup> Skilled migrant women constitute a minority. Maria Aliena Ang believes that the initial migration to Australia was composed of all-Filipino families but the 'active recruitment of nurses established the gender imbalance quite early.'<sup>32</sup> These Filipinos may have sponsored their female relatives to come to Australia or facilitated contacts with Australian male friends for their female friends or kin. The extent of the latter practice, however, has never been statistically measured in Australia. But such introductions were revealed through my

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<sup>26</sup> Balaba and Roca, 'A Socio-economic Profile of the Filipino Community in Australia Based on the 1986 Census Data' in Coughlan, *The Diverse Asians*, p 59. In 1995, about 55 per cent of Filipino settler arrivals were women. See BIMPR, *Immigration Update September Quarter 1995*, p 10.

<sup>27</sup> DIMA, *Immigration Update December Quarter 1999*, p 40.

<sup>28</sup> Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA), *Profile 1981 Philippines*, p 10.

<sup>29</sup> Cariño, 'Filipino Immigrants to Australia,' *Asian Migrant* 7(2), April-June 1994, p 60. The shift in the pattern of male-led migration is not only observed amongst Filipino women but also their counterparts in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, compared to other countries, particularly Nepal, Indonesia, Thailand and Latin America, Filipino women have significantly higher out-migration on the basis of sex analysis differentials. In the 1970s the percentage of female migration to urban areas was recorded at 55.3. After a decade, one out of five females in Metro Manila was a migrant. Women workers in the Export Processing Zones account for about 90 per cent of the total labour force where 62 per cent are migrants. See Youssef et al, *Women in Migration*, p 21; Singelman, 'Levels and Trends of Female Migration in Developing Countries' in United Nations, *Internal Migration of Women in Developing Countries*, p 82; Lee, 'Some Gender Issues Arising From Migration,' *Philippine Panorama*, 8 August 1993, p 14; 'Philippines: Women Bearing the Cross of Globalisation,' *WIN News* 24(4), Autumn 1998, p 62; Rodenburg, 'Emancipation or Subordination' in United Nations, *op cit*, p 279.

<sup>30</sup> Jackson, 'Recent Migration to Australia from the Philippines' in Iletto and Sullivan, *Discovering Australasia*, pp 144-147.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*, pp 146-147.

<sup>32</sup> Ang, 'The Filipino Settlement Experience in Australia,' *Asian Migrant* 8(2), April-June 1995, p 44.

interviews with Filipino women married to Australian men.

There are two reasons cited by the group of Filipino women in Wollongong and Sydney about their decision to permanently leave the Philippines - marriage and work. Women like Dayday, Asuncion, Bituin, Carla, Dama, Liwayway, Pilar, Rajah, Rama, Ramona and Sagisag immigrated to Australia as spouses or fiancées of Filipino and Australian men. Other women like Anita, Carmina, Donita, Eva, Filomena, Hana, Hiraya, Jamila, Linaw, Lorna, Maria and Monica came to Australia as independent skilled migrants. Their reasons for migration are consistent with the two basic categories of gaining legal entry into Australia. Marriage is covered by the family category while work is crucial to skilled migrants.<sup>33</sup>

The usual process of following husbands to Australia is through family reunion. Gerard Sullivan and S. Gunasekaran point out that the Philippines, together with Indonesia, have more migrants under this scheme.<sup>34</sup> Kamuning, married to a Filipino, said: '*I was petitioned... that of a spouse.*' They were married before her husband set foot in Australia. Liwanag also tells her story: '*of course, after our wedding in the Philippines, he applied [for] me [to come] as a spouse.*' Likened to Goan Catholics and other migrant women, the Filipinas migrated to join their husbands - an act consistent with fulfilling her marital role.<sup>35</sup> A similar situation applies in intermarriages; between a Filipina and an Australian national. About 45 per cent of these marriages take place in the Philippines.<sup>36</sup> Based on my interviews those Filipino women who arrived as spouses in Australia were married in the Philippines. The Australian groom undergoes the solemn Catholic wedding and witnesses the traditional rituals, particularly the daylong festive celebration of marriage in the

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<sup>33</sup> As of 2000 there are three categories of general skilled migrants: independent, skill matching, and family sponsored. Independent skilled migrants are those who do not have a sponsor in their application for migration. Skill matching is designed for those whose skills are in demand and nominated by a State, Territory government or an employer. Family sponsored skilled migrants are those who have a sponsor and assurer. See DIMA, *General Skilled Migration*, p 14.

<sup>34</sup> Sullivan and Gunasekaran, 'Is There an Asian-Australian "Brain Drain?"' in Inglis et al, *Asians in Australia*, p 170. Other birthplace groups with a high tendency to sponsor spouses and fiancés in Australia include Vietnam, Turkey, Lebanon, Romania, Sri Lanka, China, Cambodia, former Yugoslavia and former USSR. See Khoo, *Sponsors of Spouse Migration to Australia*.

<sup>35</sup> Mascarenhas-Keyes, 'International and Internal Migration' in Buijs, *Migrant Women*, p 25.

<sup>36</sup> Fincher et al, *Gender Equity and Australian Immigration Policy*, p 70.

presence of relatives and friends. Even those Filipinas whose Australian husbands were already divorcees at the time of the marriage in the Philippines still face the civil ceremony in front of the local judge or mayor. Being married first in the country gives the Filipina and her family a tinge of pride. Overall, the marriage ceremony symbolizes the acceptance of the Australian man into the family of the Filipina, granting him the right to bring her to Australia. Such an act dispels any unchaste rumours about the wedded Filipina and even elevates the status of her family in the community.

To work and earn more money in terms of value over time is another reason for migration to Australia. Some Filipino women in this study migrated to Australia as independent skilled migrants in high demand occupations like nurses, teachers, doctors and accountants. Nurses, like Carmina and Donita, have filled the vacancies in hospitals in Australia as well as other parts of the globe.<sup>37</sup>

### **B. Shaping the Practise of Australian Citizenship**

Coming from a country with a long tradition of democratic ideas, Filipinos, generally, place a positive value on Australian citizenship. They have a high adoption rate of citizenship compared to the total overseas-born migrants.<sup>38</sup> Of those Filipinos who arrived during 1986-90, considered as the peak period in Philippine migration to Australia, 93.7 per cent have embraced Australian citizenship as opposed to 65.3 per cent of all overseas-born in the same period.<sup>39</sup> In 1991, the citizenship rate of the Philippine-born was 67.7 per cent, remarkably increasing to 82.3 per cent in 1996.<sup>40</sup> The rate of citizenship for

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<sup>37</sup> The major destinations of Filipino nurses are the Middle East, United States, Canada and Europe. Filipino teachers go to Papua New Guinea and Samoa. See 'Why Filipino Nurses Migrate,' *ILS News Digest* 5(3), May-June 1992, p 4; Lao, 'Undocumented Filipino Migrant Workers' in Medina et al, *op cit*, p 98; Vasquez, 'Economic and Social Impact of Labor Migration' in Battistella and Paganoni, *op cit*, p 59; Catholic Institute for International Relations, *op cit*, pp 53-58; Medel-Anoñuevo, 'Feminist Reflections on the International Migration of Women,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 1, 1992, p 45; Beltran et al, 'Filipino Women Migrant Workers' in Beltran and Rodriguez, *Filipino Women Migrant Workers*, p 16; Abrera-Mangahas, *op cit*, p 57.

<sup>38</sup> Overseas-born groups in Australia with high rates of taking up Australian citizenship include those coming from the Mediterranean and other developing countries. See Goldlust and Batrouney, 'Immigrants, Australian Citizenship and National Identity,' *INFOCUS* 20(1), Autumn 1997, p 18.

<sup>39</sup> Khoo, *Community Profiles 1996 Census*, p 12.

<sup>40</sup> *loc cit*. Philippines ranked third with 93.3 per cent behind Laos (97.6 per cent) and Vietnam (93.4 per cent). The last two countries have large number of refugees while the Philippines is one of the top ten sources for skilled migrants. See DIMA, *Australian Citizenship 1996 Census*, p 7.

Filipinos whose residency is less than four years is 63.8 per cent which is three times the rate of the total overseas-born within the same period (20.8 per cent).<sup>41</sup> Richard Jackson and Ester Revilleza Flores in their study on Filipinos remark that 'there is not a single instance in any state for any category of length of residence in which they do not have a higher rate of adoption than the average.'<sup>42</sup> They speculate that this high adoption of citizenship is a consequence of marriage to Australian citizens. However, I argue that this is not the only reason for becoming Australian citizens. The later section of this chapter presents the reasons or motivations for acquiring Australian citizenship based on the personal narratives of a group of first-generation immigrant Filipino women in Sydney and Wollongong. Their reasons for becoming Australian citizens reflect more than just 'a ritual public affirmation' of commitment to the adopted country.<sup>43</sup>

Filipino women in this study share the attributes or features of the larger Filipino community in Australia. These include proficiency in the English language, a high level of education and skills, and high labour force participation. These factors significantly shape the women's practise of Australian citizenship, particularly in negotiating their racialised status and challenging negative representations of Filipino women in Australia. English is one of the two official languages in the Philippines. It is no surprise that 71.3 per cent of Philippine-born in Australia speak English very well.<sup>44</sup> The 1996 census shows that Filipinos in Australia have high English language proficiency within a short period of residency: 25 per cent speak only English at home, 50 per cent speak English very well, 22 per cent speak English well, and only 3 per cent do not speak English well.<sup>45</sup> It is widely believed that knowledge and fluency in the English language is a determinant of successful integration into Australian society.<sup>46</sup> Daisy Kruizinga, in her study of the Filipino community in the Illawarra region in Australia, argues that the knowledge and understanding of the English language positively contributed to an easier adjustment

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<sup>41</sup> Bureau of Immigration Research (BIR), *Community Profiles Philippines Born*, p 10.

<sup>42</sup> Jackson and Flores, *No Filipinos in Manila*, p 34.

<sup>43</sup> Bauböck, *Transnational Citizenship*, p 111.

<sup>44</sup> BIR, *op cit*, p 26.

<sup>45</sup> DIMA, *Immigration Update December Quarter 1999*, p 42.

<sup>46</sup> Bureau of Immigration and Population Research (BIPR), *Immigration Update June Quarter 1994*, pp 42-43. See also Bauböck, *op cit*, p 83.

period in Australia.<sup>47</sup> The use of the host country's language is seen as a 'key index of cultural assimilation' amongst immigrants.<sup>48</sup> This has also been observed amongst Filipino immigrants in Canada and in the United States where the proficiency in the English language contributes to their adjustment in work and in the broader society.<sup>49</sup> The Filipino women's experience of their use of the English language is in contrast to the findings of studies with other migrant women who consider language as the 'most formidable obstacle to articulating their rights and their worth' in Australia.<sup>50</sup>

Fluency in the English language is related to educational attainment. The Philippine-born community in Australia is more highly educated than the general Australian population. Philippine-born migrants with post-secondary qualifications constitute 32.8 per cent in contrast to 12 per cent of the total Australian population in the 1991 census.<sup>51</sup> In 1996 the proportion of Filipinos aged fifteen and over who were educated or who had occupational qualifications was 59.3 per cent in contrast to 42.3 per cent of the whole Australian population.<sup>52</sup> The majority are professionals, public servants, computer analysts, programmers, solicitors, doctors and architects.<sup>53</sup> According to Donita, a community worker in Wollongong, most first generation Filipino women migrants she knew have '*either high school, trade qualifications and some with university degree comparable to Australian university degree.*' This feature of the Philippine-born migrant reflects the very selective process of Australian immigration that gives more credit to educated and skilled professionals at the time of entry. Leon Bouvier of the Center for Immigration Studies, in his study on the naturalization of immigrants in the United States, has revealed that 'higher levels of education correspond to higher rates of naturalization.'<sup>54</sup> This finding implies that Filipino women already possessing high educational attainment

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<sup>47</sup> Kruizinga, *The Filipino Speaking Community of the Illawarra*, p 35.

<sup>48</sup> Rumbaut, 'Assimilation and its Discontents' in Stone and Dennis, *Race and Ethnicity*, p 250.

<sup>49</sup> Chen, *op cit*, p 53. See also Almirol, *Ethnic Identity and Social Negotiation*, p 144. The Filipinos are the most linguistically assimilated immigrants in the United States. See Rumbaut, *op cit*, pp 247-250.

<sup>50</sup> Martin, 'Non-English-Speaking Migrant Women in Australia' in Grieve and Burns, *Australian Women New Feminist Perspectives*, p 239.

<sup>51</sup> BIPR, *Community Profiles 1991 Census Philippines Born*, p 20.

<sup>52</sup> Khoo, *Community Profiles 1996 Census*, p 16.

<sup>53</sup> 'Philippine Migration to Australia,' *Update on Philippines-Australia Bilateral Relations*, <http://www.filipino.com.au/categ/migration/philmigupdate.htm> [10/10/02].

upon migration to Australia are likely to adopt Australian citizenship.

Related to the knowledge of the English language and education is the high labour participation rate of Filipinos. Compared to other immigrants from non-English speaking countries (NES), the Filipinos in Australia have a higher rate of labour participation. Figures in 1986 and 1991 show that the rates was 58.0 per cent and 65.5 per cent, respectively.<sup>55</sup> In the 1996 census, 76.0 per cent of Filipino men and 59.1 per cent of Filipino women were in the labour force. Their participation rates were higher than that of the total Australian population with 71.4 per cent for men and 52.8 per cent for women. The corresponding rate for other overseas-born people was significantly lower at 67.2 per cent and 48.0 per cent.<sup>56</sup> This active involvement in the economy is related to age, education and fluency in the language. All factors are to the advantage of the Filipino migrants looking for work in Australia. Aside from these, it is also important to relate these advantages to their motivations to work. For first-generation migrants, the need to establish themselves in a foreign land is a priority. According to Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo Suarez-Orozco in their study of Latino immigrants in the United States, the immigrants come with dreams of making a good life not only for themselves but also for their children.<sup>57</sup> Work becomes the means by which the ideal house or car and other amenities become a reality. More importantly, the cultural value of sharing prosperity with those family members left behind in the Philippines adds to the pressure to continually work. A study made by Fadzillah Cooke and John Western in Brisbane reveals that Filipino women are keen on helping their families.<sup>58</sup> A Filipina respondent in this research, Dayday, confided that she must work even at her age of sixty so she can provide the needs of her children and grandchildren in the Philippines. She was not able to bring them to Australia because of her failure to declare them as such in the visa application due to ignorance. The motivation to work is stronger for Filipino women married to Australian men who must use their own money to help their relatives' back home.

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<sup>54</sup> Bouvier, *Embracing America*, <http://www.cis.org/articles/embamer/embracing.htm> [15/1/02].

<sup>55</sup> BIPR, *Community Profiles 1991 Census Philippine Born*, *op cit*, p 22.

<sup>56</sup> Khoo, *Community Profiles 1996 Census*, p 18.

<sup>57</sup> Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 'Migration' in Romanucci-Ross and De Vos, *Ethnic Identity*, p 325.

<sup>58</sup> Cooke and Western, *Filipinas and Work*, p 7.

A positive valuation placed on Australian citizenship, a proficiency of the language of integration and the possession of education and skills usable in the labour market are the factors that shape the practise of Filipino women's citizenship in Australia. These significantly contribute to how they negotiate their subject position as racialised citizens and the prevailing issues affecting them. These attributes play a crucial role in how immigrant Filipino women understand their citizenship status in relation to other Australian citizens who simply perceive them as 'mail-order brides' or victims of domestic violence or serial sponsorship.<sup>59</sup> For example, the concept of the 'mail-order bride' connotes that Filipino women are marketable because of their cultural traits of subservience, docility, meekness, loyalty and being family-oriented.<sup>60</sup> According to Lilia Mckinnon, president of the Filipino Women's Group in the Illawarra, '*it's our tradition that we look after our husbands. So, that's why [Filipinas] became popular... Well, so that time a lot of Filipinos became wives or involved with Australian men. Not only they are Australian citizens but [also] they are of different nationalities. Many Filipinos are married to Italian, Greek, Yugoslav - different nationalities.*'

Filipino women are often represented by the pejorative image of the 'mail-order bride.' Kathryn Robinson calls it the 'potent symbol in Australian representation[s] of Asia.'<sup>61</sup> The Philippines whose imagery is that of a nation of 'luscious compliant beauties that are sex slaves, in this case, represents Asia.'<sup>62</sup> The mail-order bride is a practice

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<sup>59</sup> Serial sponsorship is another issue associated with Filipino women in Australia. This refers to the practice by some Australian men of sponsoring a succession of spouses or fiancées from another country. A number of cases have been reported about these women who have been abused, abandoned or even murdered shortly after their arrival in Australia. See Smith and Kaminskas, 'Female Filipino Migration to Australia,' *Asian Migrant* 5(3) July-September 1992, p 75; Ethnic Affairs Commission, *Families & Cultural Diversity*, p 11; Centre for Philippine Concerns, *Confronting Sexual Exploitation*, p 25; Iredale et al, *Serial Sponsorship*, p 5.

<sup>60</sup> Smith and Kaminskas, *op cit*, p 75. There are other connotations of the 'mail-order bride.' First, it suggests that Filipino women use marriage to jump up the immigration queue. They are, therefore, opportunistic and manipulative. Second, it depends on an understanding of Filipino women who work in bars meet their Australian husbands while on holiday. Hence, 'they are characterised as 'a sex-crazed, manipulative ex-bar girl who had tricked a decent outback Aussie battler into marrying her.' See Robinson, 'Of Mail-Order Brides and "Boy's Own" Tales,' *Feminist Review* 52, Spring 1996, pp 53-54; Boer, *Are You Looking for a Filipino Wife*, pp 9-10.

<sup>61</sup> Robinson, *op cit*, p 53.

<sup>62</sup> *loc cit*. Geeta Chowdhry argues that the practice of mail-order bride is an example of the *zenana* representation of Third World women who are considered to be 'mindless members of a harem, preoccupied with petty domestic rivalries rather than with artistic and political affairs of their time.' See Chowdhry, 'Engendering Development,' in Marchand and Parpart, *Feminism/Postmodernism/Development*, pp 27-28.

organized for the benefit of white-foreign men - Third World women, in this case Filipinas, are cast as inferior subjects.

While these issues negatively mark Filipino women as the racial 'Other' in Australia the adoption of citizenship has been utilised by Filipino women to equalise their marginal status. I argue in the next chapters that the representation of Filipino women in Australia influences their practise of citizenship at home, at work and in the community. The understanding of the meaning of Australian citizenship and the attributes of language, education and employment shape their manner of negotiating their racialised status in Australia.

### C. Reasons for Becoming Australian Citizens

Research conducted by the Ohio State University has revealed that the desire for citizenship is one of the fifteen fundamental desires and values of human beings.<sup>63</sup> This section presents the main motivations for becoming Australian citizens that were offered by the group of Filipino women interviewed for this study. I organise these reasons into eleven categories based on their narratives. These include family, family sponsorship, social integration, lifestyle, access to social services, job security, sense of power, boost to morale, state protection, use of Philippine passport, and dual citizenship.

#### 1. *family*

Marriage to an Australian or to a Filipino living in Australia basically prompted the Filipina to adopt the citizenship of their husband. Rajah states, '*I am already married to an Australian citizen.*' Ligaya also believes that '*It is important and necessary because my husband is Australian, so [I] have to be Australian, too.*' Ramona echoes a similar feeling. She felt obliged to become an Australian citizen after marrying an Australian: '*I got married already and I have no more choice to return to the Philippines.*' A study in Australia conducted during the 1988 Bicentennial celebration revealed that one out of four

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See also the discussion on the representation of Third World women in western feminist writing in Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes,' *Feminist Review* 30, 1988, pp 79-82.

<sup>63</sup> Cited in 'People Guided by 15 Fundamental Desires and Values,' *USA Today* 127 (2642), November 1998, p 9.



respondents decided to apply for naturalisation because of their family.<sup>64</sup> Clifford's study on Polish migrant women also revealed that they took up Australian citizenship following their husband's naturalization or as a result of being married to Australian nationals.<sup>65</sup> Since the time of Aristotle, marital relations have been intrinsically linked to citizenship. Woman has long been subordinate to the man in the family.<sup>66</sup> Natural law admonishes the wife to transfer her rights to the family, specifically the freedom of choice. Hence, the wife ought to 'follow him whenever he decides to take residence.'<sup>67</sup>

Pateman argues in *The Sexual Contract* that when marriage is constituted as part of the private sphere, women become subject to men whose natural power also 'extends to all aspects of civil life.'<sup>68</sup> Women must enter into the marriage contract in order to be incorporated into civil society. Pateman contends that the major institutional bonds of civil society are constituted through contract – citizenship, employment and marriage.<sup>69</sup> Women are men's 'natural subordinate' in the private and public spheres.<sup>70</sup> Pateman writes in another work that it is in man's image that the citizenship model is constructed and women are incorporated into the state as mothers.<sup>71</sup> Coming from a society that orients women to the primacy of the family and the authority of the husband, Filipino women in this study perceived it to be natural to take up the citizenship of their husbands upon marriage.

Family as a primary reason for adopting Australian citizenship also includes the children. Rama said, '*my family became Australian [citizens] already and I want to join them...I do not want to be the odd [person]...I want to be Australian, too, because of my children.*' According to Pilar, '*I preferred to be an Australian citizen for the sake of my children.*' Linaw also said, '*I decided to become an Australian citizen when I had my child ... [who] is already an Australian citizen so I thought about it.*' In a study conducted by

<sup>64</sup> Cited in Hammar, *Democracy and the Nation State*, p 91.

<sup>65</sup> Clifford, 'You Have to Make Some Sort of a Commitment' in Crawford and Skene, *Women and Citizenship*, p 160.

<sup>66</sup> Vogel, 'Is Citizenship Gender-Specific' in Vogel and Moran, *The Frontiers of Citizenship*, pp 67-68.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*, pp 72-73.

<sup>68</sup> Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, pp 113, 180.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*, p 180.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*, p 91.

Rosemary Wearing on Italian, Yugoslav, British and Maltese immigrants in Australia, the reason 'for the kids' was one of the most prominent basis for taking up Australian citizenship.<sup>72</sup> They believe that parents should have the same citizenship as their children born in Australia. Australia was also perceived to be a good place to bring up their children.<sup>73</sup>

## 2. *family sponsorship*

Equally important to joining their family is the privilege of sponsoring a relative or fiancé to Australia. Eva discloses that: '*I decided to become a citizen. Of course, my purpose also is to bring my other relatives [to] Australia and... to bring my fiancé to Australia*'. Salome said, '*After three years I sponsor [ed] my sister to come to Australia*.' For Dayday, '*you need to be an Australian citizen to sponsor [your family]*.' In fact, the rapid growth of the Filipino community in Australia is mainly caused by what Richard Jackson calls the 'high propensity of settled migrants to sponsor relatives from home.'<sup>74</sup> About 90 per cent of recent Filipino immigrants to Australia came through the family reunion category.<sup>75</sup> But this practice is not restricted to Filipinos. Other migrants, like the Italians, do so as well.<sup>76</sup> Being able to bring in relatives is another advantage of Australian citizenship although the rules are becoming more stringent. Australian citizens are given priority over permanent residents in sponsoring the immigration of family members.<sup>77</sup>

Unmarried Filipinas who migrated to Australia later sponsor their fiancés back home. Anita and Eva petitioned their loved ones and were eventually married in Australia. Those in mixed marriages have sponsored their relatives, too.<sup>78</sup> Sponsorship of family members reflects the close knit structure of Philippine society. A family member who feels alone and wishes to improve the life of other siblings takes the chance of filing a

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<sup>71</sup> Pateman, *Equality, Difference, Subordination*, p 19.

<sup>72</sup> Wearing, *Citizenship and Cultural Identity*, p 71.

<sup>73</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>74</sup> Jackson, *op cit*, p 146.

<sup>75</sup> The Filipino Community in Australia, *op cit*.

<sup>76</sup> Henderson, *From All Corners*, p 16.

<sup>77</sup> Jordens, *The Legal and Non-legal Aspects of Immigration and Citizenship*, p 90.

<sup>78</sup> Soriano, 'Filipino Families in Australia' in Hartley, *Families and Cultural Diversity in Australia*, p 97.

sponsorship application. A person who is materially blessed is expected to provide occasional assistance to a needy family member. Local money couriers take large amounts of remittances to the Philippines. Children are morally bound to look after the welfare of the aged parents and younger siblings. The female offspring are more likely to take up the caring role. It is common amongst Filipino households to have an elderly parent or unmarried kin with them. Those far from home, the migrants, provide financial assistance or even sponsor the family member to come to Australia. In her study of women migrants in the European Union, Louise Ackers discusses the varied forms of fulfilling care at a distance; from bringing family members to join them, regular home visits, and financial support.<sup>79</sup>

### 3. *social integration*

Embracing Australian citizenship is seen as an acceptance of the new country. Luningning vividly remembers her happy feeling when she became a citizen. She said, 'because you have already adapted to this country where you have been to.' Hiraya said, 'we were thinking of staying in Australia for good...So that was another reason why we decided to become Australian citizen [s]...we were also adapting to a lot of Australian values that was really good like turning up on time...being aware of feelings of other people like speaking English in Australian surroundings...being clean like not throwing rubbish anywhere.' According to Ligaya, '[if you want to stay here] for the rest of your life you need to have your citizenship.' For Sagisag, 'I wanted to become a citizen because I wanted to integrate and to be a part of the system...As a migrant, it is loyalty to the country. Loyalty to Australia and its people whose...democratic beliefs I...share...whose rights and [liberties] I respect and the laws I uphold...that's the main thing.' This sense of duty was also identified as one of the reasons for embracing Australian citizenship amongst Polish migrant women in Western Australia.<sup>80</sup> According to Carmina, 'my desire to become an Australian citizen is just to be part of Australia. I just felt that it was my duty when we migrated to Australia.' Jamila said, 'to me it's more of...a personal choice whether you love your country where you live [now] and why...it's just gratitude [to] the

<sup>79</sup> Ackers, *Shifting Spaces*, pp 296-97.

<sup>80</sup> Clifford, *op cit*, p 158.

*people...embracing [it because you]... live here...you embrace the country and what [they] believe and abide [by] the law...So, I'd like to be...a dinky-di Aussie...some sort of inside... [strengthens my belief] that I belong.'*<sup>81</sup>

Their motivations coincide with the integrative function of citizenship in social life.<sup>82</sup> Citizenship allows one to be a part of a community in some ways. According to Rama, 'I want to vote during the state and federal elections.' As shown in the study of Margot Clifford, recently arrived Polish migrant women have associated the right to vote as an incentive for naturalisation.<sup>83</sup> For the naturalized Filipina, citizenship guarantees her membership in the Australian community, of claiming a space. She feels prepared and ready to embrace Australian citizenship having been oriented to similar democratic practices in the Philippines.

The idea of social integration as a rationale for naturalisation suggests that Filipino women have some form of identification with Australia. Their responses indicate that they want to belong and be a part of the community. This follows Rainer Bauböck's realistic model for naturalization because immigrants decide to become citizens in their host societies after considering the identities and affiliations they have formed are important.<sup>84</sup> The kind of identification immigrants have to their host country and their country of origin determine whether naturalization is 'attractive.'<sup>85</sup> The Filipino women's identification with Australia emerges from recognizing a similar cultural or democratic ethos in this country as they have been oriented to in the Philippines. For example, Salome said, '[because of] our culture...I can adapt easily. I mean [I] am here. You have to adapt to the culture of Australia...you will not be left behind.' In particular, the policy of multiculturalism in Australia envisions a system of integration which, according to Tomas Hammar, encourages immigrants to plan for their future in the new country.<sup>86</sup> Studies in Canada

<sup>81</sup> See Farmer 'Why Celebrate Australian Citizenship,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(8), September 2002, p 3.

<sup>82</sup> Barbalet, *Citizenship*, p 87.

<sup>83</sup> Clifford, *op cit*, p 162.

<sup>84</sup> Bauböck, *Transnational Citizenship*, p 104.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid*, p 105.

<sup>86</sup> Hammar, *op cit*, p 99.

amongst Filipino immigrants have shown that they have a fairly good preparation to live in a western society.<sup>87</sup>

#### 4. *lifestyle*

Jamila came to Australia as a nurse in 1973. Asked why she became a citizen, she says: *'I like the lifestyle and I'd like to adapt and I was adjusted [to the]... way of living in Australia and I believe it would be best for me to be a citizen in Australia...and I can embrace my culture...you've got the freedom...I can [practice] my Filipino culture and at the same time I can adapt [to] the Australian way of living.'* For Rama: *'I'm happy because life here in Australia is really good and they have a high living standard.'* Sagisag said, *'[There are] some ways that I don't like [in the Philippines which] I like it better in Australia.'* Dama confides that initially they did not want to stay permanently in Australia: *'We said that after two years, we [would] go back to the Philippines. We will just save for the house and we will go home. We will go back there. But, after two years, we are already settled here. We do not want to go back anymore because we have adjusted to the life here.'*

The lifestyle in Australia seems to be easy to adapt to for Filipino women in this study. Australia and the Philippines share some parallels in terms of existing social and political institutions as well as differences. For example, both countries adhere to the principles of democracy. The democratic system, albeit structurally different, is seen by the women as apparently working to enhance people's welfare in Australia compared to the practices back home. Hiraya said, *'[in] Australia...there was less corruption in the government and I...think that the MP [member of parliament]...in Bankstown...was fighting for what we need in our area.'* For Asuncion, *'In Australia I am aware of what's happening in the government because they televise the debates in the Senate...I do not know anything about this in the Philippine because they always have closed door [meetings]. The government here [in Australia] is more open...the people listen to the government.'* Like other migrant women from non-English-speaking countries in Australia, the Filipino women compared their perspectives of Australian life to that of their own

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<sup>87</sup> Cited in Chen, *op cit*, p 53.

country.<sup>88</sup>

Another institution in Australia that is familiar to Filipino women is religion. Australia and the Philippines have a Christian tradition albeit with different variants, mainly Catholicism in the Philippines and Protestantism in Australia. The presence of Christianity suggests an adaptable social environment to migrant women who profess deep religiosity. Norma Claire Onley showed in her study, *Migration and Women's Religious Experience*, that migrant women coming from a Catholic country continue to observe their religious practices in Australia even if the experience is quite different from their own country.<sup>89</sup> In the case of Filipino women, attending Sunday mass in Australia fulfils their obligation despite a different church ambiance. The Irish Catholic style of celebrating the mass, for example, is different from the lively atmosphere in Philippine churches with regard to the choice of hymns and their tempo.

Most of the older Filipino women I interviewed migrated to Australia at the height of martial law in the Philippines. According to Dayday, '*Australia is a good country to live. This is a free country.*' For Jamila, '*it's the freedom in this country, you can even do the things [you cannot do] in the Philippines...You're not restricted in a lot of areas.*' Maria said, '*the peace and order is better here than in the Philippines.*' The desire for a stable life as compared to what they have experienced in the Philippines during this time was an important consideration in their decision to become Australian citizens. Another similarity is the capitalist-oriented economy which suggests that individuals can have more opportunities for a 'fair go' in Australia. The Australian lifestyle is similar to the western orientation Christian women are exposed to in the Philippines considering the infusion of American culture. Filipino women in Australia are not faced with social restrictions such as, for example, wearing a veil or jeans found in some Muslim societies.<sup>90</sup> Hence, the migrant Filipina feels culturally safe with following the lifestyle in Australia.

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<sup>88</sup> See Ganguly, 'Can We Be Australian?' *Hecate* 23(2), 1997, pp 13-34.

<sup>89</sup> Onley, *Migration and Women's Religious Experience*, p 11.

<sup>90</sup> See Gaspard, 'Immigrant Women and their Daughters' in Jenson et al, *The Gendering of Inequalities*, p 64.

### 5. *access to social services*

Social security is another pull for Filipinas to change citizenship. Rama notes that: *'it's very important for us who migrated here to become Australian citizens so that we can access to all the privileges of the citizens of the country. [Being] a citizen you can access to all the privileges in Australia like social security, health privileges, education and housing... Actually, there are lots of privileges if you are [already] an Australian citizen.'* Tamana said, *'If you are not a citizen you cannot get the support from the government.'* Some Filipino women in this study are not clear about the social services available to permanent residents and citizens. One explanation is that there are too many benefits introduced by the government since they have arrived in Australia and it is impossible to remember all of them. Anita presents her side: *'because I am foreigner, like you. I am a foreigner in Australia. I feel that I need to acquire citizenship to be entitled [to] whatever benefits rather than you are not a citizen. ..For example, I have no relatives here whom I can ask for help. And then if I will not become a citizen, I might be left behind.* Anita is referring to the privileges that may be available only to Australian citizens. Having access to social services is considered by many Filipino women in this study to be a right of Australian citizenship, more especially to those who pay their taxes. By not becoming Australian citizens, they believe they are missing out on their tax contributions.

In reference to social services in Australia, Filipino women in the group study have pointed out the difference between maintaining Filipino citizenship and acquiring Australian citizenship. According to Lilia Mckinnon the 'big difference' between the Philippines and Australia is the welfare system:<sup>91</sup> *'In the Philippines...those who worked for a long time in the government [and] get pension from GSIS...[and those] in the private [sector]...get pension from SSS...Now, in Australia it's like a total income [to avail of the*

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<sup>91</sup> The level of development achieved by each country determines its commitment to deliver basic services to the people. Australia is a welfare state while the Philippines an economically impoverished state. The Philippines is laden with a huge external debt of US \$28 billion at the end of Marcos rule and successive governments have adopted a policy of automatic debt servicing which means lesser funds are allocated to effectively deliver basic services like health, housing and education. See Mitchell, 'Life-course and Labor Market Transitions' in Gatens and Mackinnon, *Gender and Institutions*, p 23; Pinches, 'Entrepreneurship, Consumption, Ethnicity and National Identity in the Making of the Philippines' New Rich' in Pinches, *Culture and Privilege in Capitalist Asia*, p. 275; Aguilar, 'The Philippine Foreign Debt and the Impact on Women,' *Review of Women's Studies* 4(2), 1994-95, p 16; Gerson, 'Poverty and Economic Policy in the Philippines,' *Finance & Development* 35(3), September 1998, pp 46-49.

*social security benefits].* Dayday said, *'even those who have no work in Australia can eat decently. The poor cannot sustain themselves in the Philippines. In Australia, the rich and poor can eat the same food.'*<sup>92</sup> Rajah observes that *'people who have no jobs in the Philippines die of hunger.'* In Australia, there is qualified income support for the unemployed.<sup>93</sup> Rama notes that, *'the unemployed people here [in Australia] are better off than the unemployed in the Philippines because of the social security system.'*

The Philippine Medicare program, unlike in Australia, is not universal and is available only to salaried employees through their compulsory contributions. The majority who are poor have no access to health security.<sup>94</sup> According to Mirasol, *'the people are pitiful.'* Tamana said, *'a health care card [makes] it very easy...handy. It's a big relief. It's not burdensome.'* With respect to Australia, Mirasol conveys her appreciation: *'the government ...they really help you if you don't have any. The government in Australia they really help the poor ones.'* Dayday airs the same feeling: *'In Australia you receive many benefits. [Unlike] in our country [where] you do not get anything when you are unemployed; you don't get anything. Whether you're old or as long as you have no job, even if you're still young so long as you have no job you receive a dole [in Australia]. There's none in the Philippines.'* According to Mirasol, *'as a citizen [in Australia] you are entitled to sickness benefit or disability benefit. When you are old enough and [it is] hard for you to get work but you're not yet of pension age you can get old-age allowance...But you have to prove these all the time. And then if you are of pension age you can get a pension.'* Despite the welfare schemes available, many of the respondents, especially those married to Filipino men, are not eligible to receive such benefits because of their higher income. According to Rama, *'with social security I got no problem because ever since we came to Australia we did not depend on social security. My husband has a good work, a good job. I've got a part time job. And I think we're alright. Only those*

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<sup>92</sup> In the Philippines, pre-school children are found to be deficient in iodine, vitamin A and iron. Consumption of cereals continues to decrease. These all boil down to the inability of many Filipino households to sufficiently meet the nutritional requirements of their members due to poverty and the spiraling prices of basic commodities. See 'Reality of Filipino Women's Situation Contradicts Government Pronouncements,' *Women Envision* 1(1), 1997.

<sup>93</sup> Carney and Hanks, *Social Security in Australia*, pp 149-188.

<sup>94</sup> Chant and McIlwaine, *Women of a Lesser Cost*, p 68.



*people who came here unemployed for the moment depend on social security.*' She adds that *'the unemployed people here are better off than the unemployed people in the Philippines because of social security system here in Australia.'*

In the Philippines, Maria Serena Diokno considers the lack of access to basic services as one impediment to the identification of Filipinos with the state. She says that *'the more limited the community's access to the services, the greater the number of layers that come between the community and the state.'*<sup>95</sup> Because many Filipinos rely on their families for support their identification with the state is not that significant. Shirin Rai notes that women in the Third World are *'more removed from the state in all its manifestations than are western women.'*<sup>96</sup> She attributes this to the inability of Third World states to *'provide the kind of safety network that the western liberal state does with its welfare provisions.'*<sup>97</sup> The welfare system in Australia is an important consideration in maintaining citizenship for Filipino women in this study.

Another practical difference identified by immigrant Filipino women is the perceived orderly system in the delivery of services in Australia as compared to the Philippines. According to Asuncion, who hails from Luzon, *'they have discipline here. Discipline. First, if you go to the shopping centre: if you arrive first then you are first in the line. Not in the Philippines! Those with long hands or with a big mouth are served first even if you came ahead of them; you stay at the last.'* This observation runs strong in the minds of immigrant women who have experienced the disorderly manner of transacting business in public places in the Philippines. Few stores or business establishments as well as government agencies have an orderly system of serving customers. The *palakasan* system or the associative relations that facilitates faster service is generally seen as the culprit for those who have to endure the hours of waiting. In Australia, going to government offices is different from the Philippines. According to Rama, *'most workers are helpful and understanding to migrants. If there are problems, ask for explanation and they will [help you].'* Tamana said, *'the people in the government [agencies in Australia]*

<sup>95</sup> Diokno, 'Becoming a Filipino Citizen' in Diokno, *Philippine Democracy Agenda Vol 1*, p 29.

<sup>96</sup> Rai, 'Women and the State in the Third World' in Rai and Lievesley, *Women and the State*, p 17.

*do not put you down. They are approachable...In the Philippines, they just ignore you.'* Their views about public service in the Philippines, compared to Australia, reflect the general perception of Filipinos that many civil servants tend to be corrupt, arrogant, indifferent and always out of their offices.<sup>98</sup>

## 6. job security

Job security is another consideration for some to change political allegiance. Liwayway attests that *'I can find work easily if I am a citizen.'* Rama firmly holds the idea that: *'when you are applying for jobs... it's different when you are a full Australian citizen. So, I became one. If you [have] got the citizenship you got more privileges than a non-Australian citizen.'* Hanna also feels the same. *'When you apply for work... you have top priority over those who are not. You have to be an Australian citizen.'* According to Dayday, *'if you apply for work they usually ask [about citizenship].'* Rosa finds herself in the same situation: *'I did not really feel the need to apply for citizenship. But when I started applying for permanent jobs...my feeling is that I was not accepted because, if pitted against someone who is an Australian citizen, they will [take] the Australian citizen.'* There are certain jobs in Australia which require citizenship. The *Public Service Act 1999* governs those jobs in the government where citizenship is mandatory. Entry into the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Institute of Marine Science also requires citizenship status.<sup>99</sup>

As a result of having qualifications obtained overseas, the Filipina faces a form of discrimination in seeking job opportunities. Despite the high number of Filipino women with post-secondary qualifications in Australia, most are employed in lower level occupations such as intermediate or elementary clerical, sales or service workers (21.9 per cent), production and transport workers (11.3 per cent), labourers and related workers (19.7

<sup>97</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>98</sup> Endriga, 'The National Civil Service System of the Philippines' in Burns and Bowornwathana, *Civil Service Systems in Asia*, p 228. See also Quah, 'Corruption in Asian Countries,' *Public Administration Review* 59(6), November/December 1999, pp 483-494; Pimentel, 'Helping Control Corruption,' *The Philippines Bayanihan News* 4(10), October 2002, p 31; Batalla, 'The Social Cancer,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(10), October 2000, p 11.

<sup>99</sup> Rubenstein, *Australian Citizenship Law in Context*, pp 224-225.

per cent).<sup>100</sup> Those in the professional or associate professional levels were smaller compared to other overseas-born or even the total Australian population.<sup>101</sup> As such many Filipinos are employed in manufacturing (32 per cent), hospitality industry, and in health and community services (18 per cent).<sup>102</sup> This suggests that many Filipinos are working in occupations not suited to their educational attainment due mainly to the non-automatic recognition of their overseas qualifications.<sup>103</sup> Nonetheless, having Australian citizenship is a leverage that compensates the feeling of not being equal. This is further discussed in Chapter VI.

### 7. *sense of power*

Becoming an Australian citizen is perceived as gaining power. It gives the Filipina a sense of well being and a claim to a rightful place in the Australian community. Salome believes that *'If you are an Australian citizen you can exercise your rights as an Australian...whatever the Australian people [have].'* Kamuning opted to be an Australian citizen primarily because it gives her the power to compete with other Australians especially in looking for work. She notes: *'it's as if they look down on you if you say you are still a Filipino citizen as compared to putting that you are already an Australian citizen which [will] give you more consideration.'* The sense of empowerment is likened by Anna Yeatman to 'enabling' and 'capacitating' which suggest 'an individualized capacity for self-regulating social relationships.'<sup>104</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Khoo, *Community Profiles 1996 Census*, p 20. The same is said of Filipino immigrants in Canada where they have the lowest income return despite having the highest university education. See Chen, *op cit*, p 54.

<sup>101</sup> Khoo, *Community Profiles 1996 Census*, p 20.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid*, p 23.

<sup>103</sup> Education obtained from a non-recognized university in the Philippines is classified as secondary qualification or a Year 12 equivalent in Australia. This is determined by the *Philippine Country Educational Profile* which classifies schools according to sections. For example, the top universities like the University of the Philippines, De La Salle University and Ateneo de Manila belong to Section 1 and qualifications obtained from these schools are equivalent to an Australian Bachelor's degree. Schools not listed in the *Profile* are assessed as equivalent to a two-year Diploma or Certificate in Australia. About 39 per cent of skilled migrants submit their overseas qualifications in Australia but only 42 per cent of those are successfully recognised. See Marribay, 'Profile of the Filipino Community in Western Australia,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper*, 20 July- 20 August 1999, p 18; Argel, 'Recognition of Overseas Qualifications in Australia,' *Philippine Community Herald Newspaper*, 9(11), December 2002, p 12; Collins and Henry, 'Racism, Ethnicity and Immigration in Canada and Australia' in Collins, *Contemporary Racism in Australia, Canada and New Zealand*, p 61.

In Australia, the Filipina becomes aware of her difference in relation to the 'white' majority. Dama said, *'we are not white... We are only Asians. They look down [on] us.'* Social boundaries based on race become a poignant marker of identity for many Filipino women in Australia. Although the Philippines is a multi-ethnic society, Filipino women in this study become aware of the construction of her ethnicity as, basically, Asian and the 'Other' in 'white' Australia. The intricacies of power relations along racial lines appear as a social fact they need to reckon with in their daily lives. Acquiring citizenship, however, gives a sense of equality with the rest of the populace in Australia. This perceived achievement of 'equality' with other Australians was similar to the findings on Australian citizenship attitudes amongst Greek, Italian, Dutch, and Yugoslav citizens and non-citizens in 1971.<sup>105</sup> Eva said, *'to be [an] Australian [citizen is to be] the same as the Australian.'* This means that Australian citizenship is seen as empowering Filipino women in terms of their marginal or racialised status. Australian citizenship becomes a leverage to be treated with the same rights and to be respected.

#### 8. *boost to morale*

Filipinas in this study suggested that becoming an Australian citizen and holding an Australian passport is a boost to morale. Sagisag says: *'If I become a citizen and I own my Australian passport... if we go back to the Philippines, people there will say... the immigration people upon seeing your passport; oh, you're an Australian citizen... you're a balikbayan [one who returns to the country].'<sup>106</sup> And the impression [of] you is different. They become friendly and... they respect you.'* In the Philippines, there is an impression of preferential treatment for foreigners. If a Filipina becomes an alien citizen, then the preferential treatment given to foreigners is also accorded to her. Nora believes that holding an Australian passport allows her to go through Philippine immigration without delay: *'upon entry to immigration, they do not stamp on your passport if you are already a citizen.'* Liwanag concurs: *'if you have already an Australian passport, you are treated*

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<sup>104</sup> Yeatman, 'Feminism and Power' in Shanley and Narayan, *Reconstructing Political Theory*, p 152.

<sup>105</sup> Wearing, *op cit*, p 4.

<sup>106</sup> The *Balibkayan* program was established in the 1970s as a special status of Filipino expatriates that include special travel documentations, privileges, and import concessions. Cited in Castles, 'New Migrations in the Asia-Pacific,' *International Social Science Journal* 50(2), June 1998, p 225.

*differently at the [Philippine] airport as compared to Filipino [citizens].'* Monica also declares that without the Australian passport, *'we're like [a] third class citizen or human being... that's how we are treated. So... holding of Australian passport gives us power, too.'*

The Filipino women in this study regularly visit the Philippines. As permanent residents, they have traveled under a Philippine passport and have experienced the kind of preferential treatment given by Philippine authorities to those with foreign passports. Perhaps this is due to the large number of Filipino women working overseas as domestic helpers and 'entertainers.' This may lead some government personnel to assume that Filipinas from Australia holding a Philippine passport are also contract workers. Holding a foreign passport, such as an Australian passport, is a different experience because they believe that they are treated with more respect. Choosing to embrace Australian citizenship and, thus, holding an Australian passport boosts their morale. They see themselves as being perceived as Filipinos living permanently in Australia and not as contract workers.

### **9. state protection**

Pilar notes that *'the beauty of being an Australian citizen is that whatever happens, they say, if you are in other country, whatever happens to you in that other country...the government will immediately get you [out]. But, if not, they say it will be difficult.'* According to Jamila, *'I am secure in a way that I belong to this country and if I go home they will look after me. If...I [will] go to [another country] and then something wrong just happened there and then say there is a limit of people that can get [out of] there because [something] happens. I believe...that because you carry with you your citizenship or your passport as Australian citizen, they look at that. ...And then, you will be given priority to be on the plane because you're Australian. But if you carry a Filipino passport, probably, you go in the lower list. I'm not sure. So, I think that is... the security that you have...the government is so good because they look after you...if you're a Filipino citizen [and] you get killed you're nobody. But, here you are somebody.'* The notion that a government is constituted to protect the welfare of the people is strong in the mind of the Filipinas in this

study. Hugh Emy notes that citizenship confers, amongst others, the right to state protection while in another country.<sup>107</sup> They are aware of many cases where Filipinos working in the Middle East and Singapore have languished in jail or have been executed without much intervention from the Philippine government.<sup>108</sup> In Australia, they are aware of similar cases of Australians facing jail terms in other countries who have been successfully returned home by the government.

In domestic affairs, Mirasol is impressed about the road safety regulations in New South Wales: *'They have all the signs. They really make it safe for people to travel. In our place [in the Philippines], they don't care about the people who [are] going to travel through that road...they do not care...they don't think about safety. So, when I came back, I decided that I'm going to apply for citizenship.'* The perceived practise of putting the safety of the people in Australia first in public places is different from the practice in the Philippines. For example, placing road signs and securing the perimeter of the construction area is a standard practice in Australia. In the Philippines, the construction site is most often not secured and there is insufficient warning to road users of the impending obstruction ahead. A developing country like the Philippines cannot be compared with the standard of practice in an advanced country like Australia, but even so the women in this study have come to appreciate the safety measures put in place in Australia to protect its citizens.

#### 10. *The difficulties of using a Philippine passport*

A strong reason for becoming an Australian citizen amongst the married Filipina is related to the problems associated with holding a Philippine passport. Nora declares that: *'it's better to apply for citizenship because if you have an Australian passport you do not pay the travel tax.'* The Philippine government charges a travel tax for every departing Filipino national. Liwanag affirms that *'if you hold an Australian passport, you do not pay*

<sup>107</sup> Emy, 'Citizenship, Democracy and the Constitution' in Davis, *Citizenship in Australia*, p 15.

<sup>108</sup> See *End Secrecy, Suffering and Fear in Saudi Arabia*, <http://www.philsol.nl/of/Saudi-jun00.htm> [15/1/02]; Shenon, 'For Filipinos, A Symbol Dies in Singapore,' *New York Times Current Events Edition* 18 March 1995, p 3; 'Out Into the Dangerous World,' *The Economist* 30 September 1995, p 35; Stasiulis and Bakan, 'Flor Contemplacion,' *Public Policy* 3(2), April-May 1999, pp 19-41; Wallace, 'Filipina Workers Abused Abroad,' *Minneapolis Star Tribune* 07-04, 1995, pp 04B.

any more.' Luningning also avers that with Australian citizenship, '*no more going through [the] usual hurdles by someone who returns to the country.*' According to Filomeno Aguilar Jr, immigrants like Filipinos are compelled to change citizenship because of the 'double taxation' from the country of residence and the country of origin.<sup>109</sup> Acquiring new citizenship, therefore, is an alternative to the problems of still holding a Filipino passport. Dayday further stresses that with Australian citizenship, '*it's not difficult to go home to the Philippines. It's not difficult to come back.*' Issuances of travel documents and other bureaucratic requirements are centralized in Manila. Those coming from outside the metropolis have to make several trips to ensure processing of pertinent papers. The long wait and the seemingly circular and slow nature of public service take its toll amongst permanent Filipina residents in Australia. Hence, the need to change their citizenship.

The need for an Australian passport is often one of the practical considerations for becoming an Australian citizen.<sup>110</sup> The Australian passport allows the Filipina to travel easily to other countries. Kamuning confides that '*the chances of going abroad are greater if you want to travel than when you have the Filipino passport. It's very difficult. Whereas if you have an Australian passport, it [is] easier.*' According to Mirasol, '*I have friends who have experienced this. One is married to [a Spaniard] and she went to Spain with her husband and two daughters. And they gave her a hard time in Spain because she's Filipino! She [has] a Filipino passport even though the husband is with her and their children. So, when she came back to Australia she changed her citizenship straight away. And also when we traveled in Europe there were two Filipinos in our group...And we went [to] ... many countries in Europe. We don't need a visa as an Australian except in France because at that time there was a rift between Australia and France because of the nuclear tests... it would [have been] okay if they did not say Filipino. Just go. But, because there were two Filipinos, [they] got checked. Because the record of the Filipinos, you know, [is that] they over stay in Europe.*' Traveling with an Australian passport gives security and, Mirasol adds, '*you have the right to go anywhere. Maybe not anywhere but most of the*

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<sup>109</sup> Aguilar, Jr, 'The Triumph of Instrumental Citizenship,' *Asian Studies Review* 23(3), September 1999, p 326.

<sup>110</sup> Clifford, *op cit*, p 158.

*countries in the world. You don't look like a second-class citizen.*' Monica also affirms that *'its easier for me to have an Australian passport because I can travel anywhere in the world with no problem with visa.'* Jamila shares her experience: *'when I go overseas or anywhere, when I go back home I can have easy access to go back to [what is] you know, suppose [d] to be my homeland...because I'm a citizen here.'*

Holding an Australian passport instead of a Philippine passport gives these women an identity as Australian citizens. They understand their stature as Australian citizens to be different from the treatment given while holding Philippine citizenship. This is what Nira Yuval-Davis means in *Gender & Nation* when she says that 'people are not positioned equally' in their collectivities internationally.<sup>111</sup> A useful passport, like the Australian passport, is one of the 'most appreciated result of citizenship' because it is to be more acceptable at the international level than the Philippine passport.<sup>112</sup>

Ironically, all the respondents believe that it is far more convenient to go back to the Philippines under an Australian passport than their own. Political membership in the country of birth is replaced by an Australian citizenship that, allegedly, provides more convenience in returning home. Chandra Talpade Mohanty notes in her personal essay in *Talking Visions* that holding a passport is not a guarantee against racism or unequal treatment within the adopted country.<sup>113</sup> But Filipino women use the Australian passport to counter unjust treatment outside of Australia, that is, when they go home to the Philippines or travel to other countries.

### **11. dual citizenship**

Another reason cited by the Filipina for adopting Australian citizenship is the idea of dual citizenship. That is, one does not lose Philippine citizenship by embracing another. Tamana, fearing the loss of her Philippine citizenship upon marriage to an Australian consulted a solicitor who said: *'You've got two citizenships. You will not lose Philippine citizenship.'* Article IV Section 4 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that

<sup>111</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 91.

<sup>112</sup> Hammar, *op cit*, p 101.



citizenship in the Philippines is retained by the Filipina even after marriage to a foreigner 'unless by their act or omission they are deemed, under the law, to have renounced it.'<sup>114</sup> By embracing Australian citizenship, the Filipina has not renounced her Filipino citizenship. Since 1986 applicants for the grant of Australian citizenship are not required to renounce all other allegiances.<sup>115</sup> Keeping ones Philippine citizenship together with ones Australian citizenship is, Hammar notes, a 'considerable stimulus' for naturalisation.<sup>116</sup> In other parts of the globe, Britain and France, for example, have also a large proportion of immigrants who possess dual citizenship.<sup>117</sup> Dual citizenship is a 'fair expression of their dual national identity.'<sup>118</sup> The 1997 European Convention on Nationality reflected on the recognition of dual nationality as a growing reality that needs to be accommodated.<sup>119</sup>

A dual citizenship appears to be consistent with 'pluralistic citizenship' or multicultural citizenship. According to Mary Kalantzis, this kind of citizenship is 'the most effective way of holding things (people) together' in Australia.<sup>120</sup> The possibility of having a dual identity, being a Filipino and an Australian citizen, is seen as an advantage by the women in this study. First, the decision to become an Australian citizen does not entail a risky compromise of being totally separated from one's national identity.<sup>121</sup> Second, the multicultural framework of Australian society and the guarantee of respect of cultural identity allow Filipino women the freedom to express their identity without fear of reprisal. Third, many hold the view that Philippine citizenship can be reacquired. This is consistent with the constitutional provision stipulated in Article IV(3) of the 1987 constitution.<sup>122</sup> According to Jamila, '*I have that citizenship as you know because that's my*

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<sup>113</sup> Mohanty, 'Crafting Feminist Genealogies' in Shohat, *Talking Visions*, p 493.

<sup>114</sup> Nollado, *The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines Explained*, p 57. As of January 2003, the Philippine legislature passed the Citizenship Retention Act on its third and final reading. This allows for dual citizenship for many Filipino expatriates around the world. See 'Dual Citizenship,' *Philippine Newslink*, <http://www.philnews.com> [15/3/03]; Hammar, *op cit*, p 111.

<sup>115</sup> Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, p 76.

<sup>116</sup> Hammar, *op cit*, pp 30, 100.

<sup>117</sup> Statistics about the number of persons with dual citizenship do not exist. See Hammar, *ibid*, p 111.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid*, p 108.

<sup>119</sup> Levitt, 'Transnational Villagers' in Stone and Dennis, *Race and Ethnicity*, p 264.

<sup>120</sup> Kalantzis, 'Multicultural Citizenship' in Hudson and Kane, *Rethinking Australian Citizenship*, p 99.

<sup>121</sup> See Crawford and Skene, *Women and Citizenship*, p ix.

<sup>122</sup> Nollado, *op cit*, p 57.

*natural [land of] birth.*' This is synonymous to having a 'sleeping citizenship' which can be activated after complying with residency requirements.<sup>123</sup> The women in this study have shown what Aihwa Ong calls transnationality or 'the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space.'<sup>124</sup> Through the process of migration, Filipino women are connected to two places; each space is equally important in their lives. Being able to fluidly cross these spaces justifies their idea of dual citizenship.

In summary, immigration and the grant of Australian citizenship is perceived as a privilege bestowed by the Australian government. According to Jamila, '*Australia...is really a wonderful country and it's a privilege for everyone that comes [here].*' Coming to Australia offers an opportunity to begin a new life as a citizen. As Mirasol said, '*I live in Australia. I think it's best for me that I become an Australian citizen and it's hurting to say that [I'm] better off to be an Australian citizen.*' This stance is similar to other immigrants who maintain their country of origin as a point of reference. Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo Suarez-Orozco call this referential point as 'the immigrant's dual frame of reference.'<sup>125</sup> In other words, Filipinas tend to measure their status in Australia compared to their own society and this makes the acquisition of citizenship attractive.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Migration is a process that formally ends with naturalization or acquiring citizenship. Citizenship is the ultimate goal for many Filipino women in this study. These women represent the trend of Filipino female migration to Australia and to other parts of the world. As first-generation immigrants, these Filipino women, as well as men, possess certain attributes that significantly shape their practise of citizenship. Their high citizenship adoption rate suggests a positive valuation of Australian citizenship compared to retaining Filipino citizenship. Another is the high educational attainment obtained overseas, although this is not automatically recognised in Australia. But being educated presupposes readily employable skills which are indicated by their high labour force participation. Filipinos are also proficient in the English language which is the medium for successful

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<sup>123</sup> Hammar, *op cit*, p 215.

<sup>124</sup> Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, p 4.

integration into Australian society.

Clearly, becoming an Australian citizen is an 'added value' in the lives of immigrant Filipino women. They are motivated to embrace Australian citizenship for a combination of reasons, from the psychological gain of empowerment and morale to economic and political security. Clifford has shown in her study of Polish migrant women in Western Australia that taking up citizenship 'made an appreciable difference to social and economic rights' such as employment security and social welfare services which affect 'their material standard of living.'<sup>126</sup> The group of Filipino women in this study is also conscious of the impact of taking up Australian citizenship in their lives as compared to their previous Filipino citizenship. Wearing notes that the decision to become an Australian citizen is based on its utilitarian value.<sup>127</sup> However, the choice of embracing a new political identity for Filipino women is also seen as a step towards membership in the host society. The idea of belonging far outweighs the practical benefits of citizenship. Having Australian citizenship does not only mean equal access to all benefits and privileges, it is also a tool for empowerment in a society that continuously defines them as racially different and perceives them in terms of certain negative images such as the mail-order bride. The granting of Australian citizenship and its corollary rights and privileges enables these Filipino women to acquire 'civic competencies, virtues and behaviours' necessary in a democratic society.<sup>128</sup> A state that secures the rights of citizenship and promotes the general welfare encourages positive values of participation. The use of Australian citizenship as agency in the lives of this group of Filipino women in Wollongong and Sydney is discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>125</sup> Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 'Migration' in Romanucci-Ross and De Vos, *Ethnic Identity*, p 325.

<sup>126</sup> Clifford, *op cit*, p 158.

<sup>127</sup> Cited in Clifford, *ibid*, p 157.

<sup>128</sup> Rubenstein, *Australian Citizenship Law in Context*, p 182.

## V

## PRACTISING AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP AT HOME

As I have previously stated citizenship per se denotes the legitimate membership of the individual in the political community. It is a status with a public character. But the value of being a citizen is experienced at the personal level. Its meanings run deep in the lives of immigrant women. Citizenship defines how immigrants situate themselves in relation to others in the host country. In this chapter, I explore the meaning of Australian citizenship in the personal lives of Filipino women. Using the feminist view of the interdependence of the public and private spheres,<sup>1</sup> I argue that the political status of being an Australian citizen has subjective implications that influence the immigrant Filipina in her relationships at home. Using a gender-differentiated approach to citizenship, this chapter shows the effects of Australian citizenship on relationships with husbands and children.

### A. The Home

The home is the social space of personal relationships between and amongst members of the family.<sup>2</sup> This study involves two types of homes or households which correspond to the marriage partners of Filipino women. One type of home is Filipino with both husband and wife having the same nationality. The other type is a mixed family home brought about by intermarriage. The home is otherwise known as the private confines of the family.<sup>3</sup> The home provides 'space[s] of privacy and security' for members of the family unit.<sup>4</sup> In this space, men and women may occupy gendered roles. Gender is, according to Joan Scott, 'the social organization of sexual difference.'<sup>5</sup> Pateman states,

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<sup>1</sup> See Baker, 'Risking Difference' in Baker and Van Doorne-Huiskes, *Women and Public Policy*, p 6. Feminists have concluded that the private and public spheres are interrelated and are connected by a patriarchal structure. See Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 132.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of home has different meanings. See Settles, 'Being at Home in a Global Society,' *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 32(4), Autumn 2001, pp 627-645.

<sup>3</sup> Bhattacharjee, 'The Public/Private Mirage' in Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, p 308.

<sup>4</sup> Collins, 'It's All in the Family' in Narayan and Harding, *Decentering the Center*, p 161.

<sup>5</sup> Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p 2. See also Nicholson, 'Interpreting Gender' in Nicholson and Seidman, *Social Postmodernism*, p 39.

*The conviction that a married women's proper place is in the conjugal home as a servant to her husband and mother to her children is now so widespread that this arrangement appears as a natural feature of human existence rather than historically and culturally specific.*<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of what type of household Filipino women are in they are subjected to the idea of the male as head of the family unit. Women as wives or mothers are responsible for caring and nurturing at home, a socialized role which finds affirmation in 'submitting' to another, the husband, in certain cases.<sup>7</sup>

Based on the traditional view of the 'private,' the home is 'not open to the public.'<sup>8</sup> Susan Baker notes that classifying the home as private 'renders women's status a question of domestic relations to be analysed as a derivative of the public sphere.'<sup>9</sup> The relegation of women in the private sphere implies that they are 'second-class citizens' or 'incomplete citizens.'<sup>10</sup> As wives or mothers, women do not enjoy the same rights as men do. Domestication of care, for example, has, according to Trudie Knijn, 'deindividualised women as citizens.'<sup>11</sup> This kind of work does not beget rights in itself. Rights to social citizenship such as social security and income emanate from men's participation in the labour market and women as their dependents. Therefore, women obtain 'mediated rights' through their husbands.<sup>12</sup> However, I argue that acquiring a political identity as Australian citizens suggests awareness that the home is a site where such identity finds meaning. Elshtain points out that 'one's private identity becomes who and what one is in public.'<sup>13</sup> Alternatively, following my argument, the public character of Australian citizenship affects

<sup>6</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 213.

<sup>7</sup> Bruce, 'The Economics of Motherhood' in Heyzer, *A Commitment to the World's Women*, p 48. Some sources on the idea of gender as a social construct are Lorber, *Paradoxes of Gender*; Lucal, 'What it Means to be Gendered Me,' *Gender & Society* 13, 1999, pp 781-797; West and Zimmerman, 'Doing Gender,' *Gender & Society* 1, 1987, pp 125-151.

<sup>8</sup> Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial*, p 39.

<sup>9</sup> Baker, *op cit*, p 14.

<sup>10</sup> Bussemaker, 'Gender and the Separation of Spheres in Twentieth Century Dutch Society' in Bussemaker and Voet, *Gender, Participation and Citizenship in Netherlands*, p 25.

<sup>11</sup> Knijn, 'Participation Through Care?' in Bussemaker and Voet, *ibid*, p 73.

<sup>12</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>13</sup> Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial*, p 52.

the personal relationships at home. According to David Miller, the 'issue of citizenship is not whether people feel themselves to be citizens, but the extent to which they act on that understanding in their everyday lives.'<sup>14</sup> Looking at the practise of citizenship of Filipino women at home is one way of making 'political' their experiences as Australian citizens.<sup>15</sup> Pateman notes that any relationship can, in fact, have political effects.<sup>16</sup>

## **B. Relationships with Husband**

Yuval-Davis notes that the analysis of citizenship should even include the intimate relationships of women because there is a power dimension to these relationships, for example, the perceived authority of husbands over wives and children.<sup>17</sup> Although Filipino women are oriented to the patriarchal hold of men in the family, their status within it is acknowledged to be quite significant, especially in matters of financial management and decision-making. However, migration and intermarriage have affected their understanding about their role in the family.

### **1. *Filipinas in Bi-cultural Homes***

Filipinas who are married to Australian men view their citizenship in terms of personal security and independence. For example, Tamana confides that '*If you are not an Australian citizen then our husbands can...send us back to our country.*' According to Mirasol, '*I guess that those who are not citizens are threatened by their husbands. I'll send you back to the Philippines because you are not a citizen. Maybe they can...bluff you that you can be returned to the Philippines because they can deport you; because you're not a citizen. Maybe there are some cases.*'

This fear of deportation is based on reality. The Australian government can deport aliens.<sup>18</sup> Prior to April 1991, women who came to Australia on a spouse or fiancé visas and

<sup>14</sup> Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, p 84.

<sup>15</sup> See Rai, 'International Perspectives on Gender and Democratisation' in Rai, *International Perspectives on Gender and Democratisation*, p 7.

<sup>16</sup> See Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 112.

<sup>17</sup> Yuval-Davis, 'Women as Citizens' in Ward et al, *Women and Citizenship in Europe*, p 14. See also Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 80.

<sup>18</sup> Pryles, 'Legal Aspects of Citizenship' in Ecumenical Migration Centre, *Citizenship and Human Rights*,

who were in an abusive relationships had no protection under the Migration Regulations.<sup>19</sup> When the relationship broke down, these women lost their sponsorship and were sent back to the Philippines. There are also some publicised cases in the United States involving Filipino women that may have influenced the respondents' view on deportation in Australia.<sup>20</sup>

Women married to Australians believe that their citizenship grants them equal rights in decision-making and proprietary rights in case of divorce. Since Tamana's husband is an Australian who owns a house, she believes that *'if I do not have citizenship then I cannot have a share of the house... you have rights if you have citizenship.'* Ligaya, from Mindanao, said, *'you still have the right because that's the law. Once you have your citizenship and you're involved in this country, you know the rules and you know [where] you stand... If you're married to an Australian and you [opt for] divorce, you're still entitled to half of whatever you've been saving up. And I have a solicitor. I know what [are] my rights. And I've been working since I came here. So, I paid everything in the home, too. So, I share a lot of money, too. So, I have a right.'* Bituin also avers that *'you have rights for everything, you know, inside the house especially with your husband...it's just the same [even if I married a Filipino].'* Carla said, *'I decide everything. My husband won't do anything because he works... five days a week. So, it's all my decision...I've got every right at home.'* In terms of property, Carla confides that *'I've got some in my name. We got some in both names. Mostly, it's...in my name. For... my kids. I protected my kids and myself. I don't have any problem at all.'* Even without citizenship, Dayday contends that one is equal in any relationship - be it in marriage or de-facto. *'It's the same. Equal share of everything, even if you are not married so long as you have lived together after one year... All of your properties must be split equally.'*

This confidence does not apply to Nora who became an Australian citizen two years after arriving from the Philippines and has been married to an older Australian for

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p 5.

<sup>19</sup> Jockel and O'Donoghue, 'The Process of Immigration' in BLEC Books, *Immigration Law Update 1995*, p 34. See also Sweetman, 'Abused Migrants Find Help,' *The Courier-Mail* 5 December 1995, pp 008.

<sup>20</sup> See Calvo, 'Spouse-based Immigration Laws' in Wing, *Critical Race Feminism*, pp 380-384.

more than five years. Nora still has to find out where she legally stands as his second wife. Without the knowledge of her husband, she sought advice from her Filipino friends and welfare agencies. She wants to find out what are her rights at home. She reveals that *'at home he does not like me to change the furniture. So that means I have no right at home. It's like we mind our own...it's his own house...that's his alone. So, I feel out of place. Based on our [Filipino] practice I'm not the wife. That's how I see it. I really want the freedom. To share.'* When doing other domestic chores she is always reminded that *'you cannot do that. It's not your business. So that means I have nothing to do with our property.'* Nora seemed confused about her role at home. *'I don't even know if I have a share. That's my problem. I cannot ask my husband. Whenever I ask he says it's not your business.'* Women in the Philippines play a significant role at home, both in decision-making and in financial matters. For Nora, not knowing what her role is at home upon marriage to an Australian necessarily creates confusion about her cultural orientation as a wife in the context of Filipino practice; that is, a wife normally has a significant role in decision-making and financial matters.

Australian citizenship has been related to the right to the control of one's body and respect for cultural practices. Liwayway, married to an Australian, believes that Australian citizenship grants her the freedom to decide what to do with her body like saying 'No' to having sex with her husband. She adds, *'I have the right to look for work. I am free to do that. That I am not only here at home...We are the same in everything.'* Sagisag admits that having Australian citizenship means that *'you have to follow your husband's ways as well.'* The same for Salome who believes that *'I could practice the Australian way. All those things, you know.'* They refer to the cultural practices of their Australian husbands such as the type of food preparation, religion and social activities. Some Filipino women in this study do not prepare Filipino foods at home and are only able to eat their native dishes in Filipino gatherings. But, for Ramona, Australian citizenship means respect for her culture: *'[our husbands] have to respect all [our] Filipino ways...They have to understand that even if I eat bagoong [salted shrimp]...they have to respect that.'*

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## 2. *Filipinas in Filipino Homes*

The views of Australian citizenship in the personal lives of the women married to Filipino men are more related to empowerment and equality. For example, Eva confides that she feels equal with her husband: *'Back home it's different. I believe the Filipino lady there [in the Philippines]...is sort of inferior to their husband[s]. Whereas in [Australia] it's like you have more freedom to do what you want to do. [The] more liberated type of things.'* Maria who works in health services also confirms that her citizenship gives her *'more rights and more power'* than she was used to in the Philippines. Rosa assumes that being in Australia favours women's rights. *'I expected that it would be more equal here because I'm aware of the rights, in terms of women's rights.'* This perspective that Australia provides the social climate for women's rights is also found in a study of Greek migrant women.<sup>21</sup> The Greek mothers in this study by Gill Bottomley have expressed that they found themselves to have more freedom and independence in Australia as compared to their country of origin.<sup>22</sup>

Women married to Filipino men believe that they already have equal rights but do not assert their equality because of tradition. Hiraya, an accountant in Sydney, confides that though she feels equal with her husband the Filipino tradition plays a much stronger role in their relationship. She said, *'my husband has the final decision. We respect whatever decision he makes. But he adds the conditions we make - my children and myself...we still have the independence in voicing out our opinion.'* Pilar and Camuning, both working women, share that they, too, feel equal with their Filipino husband but they allow their husbands to have the upper hand in decision-making. Pilar says, *'my husband and I have equal rights. But, probably because we're Filipinos there is still that tradition that the man is more privileged.'* For Camuning, *'it's already ingrained in us; we were brought up that way. So, I think the Filipino way has more influence in me than the Australian which is just ...six years. Whereas my Filipino way was ingrained since I was young...Basically, my relationship...is [based] more on Filipino [ways] as compared to the Australian [way].'* This means that decision-making tends to be her husband's prerogative.

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<sup>21</sup> Bottomley, 'Women on the Move' in Bottomley and Lepervanche, *Ethnicity, Class and Gender in Australia*, p 104.

Carmina says that *'if I had my way, maybe if I had to do it all over again, I prefer to be equal.'*

This seeming acquiescence reflects centuries of patriarchal orientation in the Philippines where the man represents the household unit. However, as the following responses suggest, the subject position of the Filipino woman is a product of negotiation and compromise. According to Dama, *'it's not always that the man will be followed. Give and take. We're equal. It's not fair that he will always be followed. If he is right, then I must obey. If he is wrong and I am right, then he must follow me.'* Rajah is married to an Australian and comments that *'we agree about something if it's okay or good... I don't always follow him nor do his command.'* Understanding their role as wives and feeling equal with husbands relates to Pateman's idea of 'woman as woman' yet 'autonomous and equal.' The women in this study have a conscious appreciation of their position as wives based on Philippine cultural tradition. This tradition allows women to negotiate her role in the family, this negotiation is bolstered by the idea of equality and empowerment they feel is associated with Australian citizenship.

Jamila and Rama typify another strand of Filipino womanhood - strong, independent and assertive. Jamila reveals that *'I'm a very strong woman...My husband follows me.'* She adds that *'it's [up to] me to give him that authority [at home].'* Jamila compares her husband to her father: *'I like a man with authority that I can look up [to] just like my father. ... Like with more knowledge... Bu, I cannot see it in my husband...he can't function as a leader...Even in a small home I have to show him. I have to bring him up to be able to lead the family and so [I] allow him to...[make] some decisions...I have to, even if, probably it's not acceptable to me.'* Knowing that her husband did not show the same kind of authority as her father in the Philippines, Jamila gives him leeway in decision-making in Australia. Her strength apparently lies in her personality, her economic power and the fact that she sponsored him to migrate to Australia. Rama, likewise, refers to the usual Filipino practice of the influential role of women in the family. She declares that, *'my family is purely Filipino. My husband is Filipino. My children were born in the*

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<sup>22</sup> *loc cit*

*Philippines... At home we have equal rights and share all the responsibilities. You know how the Filipinos are. The father is the breadwinner of the family. But the mother has got a very strong say in the family. That's the same here in Australia with my family.* In the case of Rosa she admits that Australian citizenship *'did not really change anything within the home. Because I have equal rights; I have the freedom to say what I want; I have the freedom to decide and my husband and I have very good relationships that's why it did not really change anything.'* According to Mirasol, *'it doesn't matter if you are a citizen or not. It's your personality. It's your individual choice if you want to be under [your husband].'* The Filipino women who have displayed strong personal character at home are equally assertive outside of it and they have become leaders in the Filipino community and other organizations. Australian citizenship for these women enhances their belief in themselves as equals with their husbands. The emphasis on the individual's own capacities for action in a relationship is not only an aspect of personality but a combination of cultural elements that orient Filipino women to their privileged status in the family and awareness of their rights as members of a democratic society like Australia.

Some of those who have sponsored their Filipino fiancées to Australia and eventually married do not consider their Australian citizenship to be significant in their relationship. Sally who works in the public sector said, *'when we [got married] we migrated to Australia straight away. So, I can't compare being a Filipino wife and [being an] Australian [wife].'* She reflects theirs is an equal partnership. Hana has no experience of Filipino marital relations back home except those of her parents: *'I got married here. So, I didn't have time to spend with my husband in the Philippines. We immediately lived together here. Probably here because I mingled a lot with Australians for a long time... you can see, you can pickup their ways... We have balance of power and also a lot of communication.'* Having lived in Australia for quite some time provided a more liberal orientation to marriage amongst these women. This means a more egalitarian role which, Ailsa Burns notes, involves a *'commitment to interchangeability in tasks performed by men and women.'*<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Burns, 'Why Do Women Continue to Marry?' in Grieve and Burns, *Australian Women New Feminist Perspectives*, p 224.

### 3. *Domestic Violence*

Filipino women, married to either Filipinos or Australians, have equated their Australian citizenship with protection against domestic violence. This means the 'physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family.'<sup>24</sup> Pilar and Tamana affirm that their legal status as Australian citizens makes it easier for them to exercise their rights in case of domestic violence. Being aware of their rights give them more confidence about handling such an eventuality. For Tamana, *'It's easy... if you have citizenship. You can go and ask for help in case your husband hurts you. It's only my idea. If you do not have citizenship then the police will ignore you...If you are not a citizen then they will send you back to the Philippines... It will be difficult.'* Pilar said, *'there is equal rights [in Australia]...Women in Australia have more rights in case of marriage break-up. That's what I like here. Let's just say that the government always take side of the [abused] woman...they take care of the women...women who separate from their husbands have a bad image [in the Philippines]. Not here [in Australia].'* Dama said, *'I'm not really that brave. But I know I have the right in case something happened. I can fight for my right.'*

In these cases, Australian citizenship enables the Filipino women to understand the meaning of equal rights between men and women at home. They appreciate the protection provided by Australian citizenship to abused women. Although women who are permanent residents are equally protected, Filipino women in this study believe that having Australian citizenship guarantees a stronger protection and assistance from the government because of their sense of being part of the community. This is even more appreciated in relation to their former status as citizens in the Philippines. In the absence of state provision like the sole parenthood scheme in Australia,<sup>25</sup> many women in the Philippines endure physical abuse for the sake of their children. Eva said, *'I think...we're not used to fighting...As Filipino women [we are] very patient no matter what it's like...My mum is a good example.'* As pointed out by Iris Marion Young, many women 'stay in battering

<sup>24</sup> This includes battering, sexual abuse and marital rape. See Sobritchea and Israel, 'A Review of Conceptual Frameworks and Studies on Family Violence' in UNICEF et al, *Breaking the Silence*, p 15. See also Easteal, 'Double Jeopardy,' *Family Matters* 45, Spring-Summer 1996, pp 26-30.

<sup>25</sup> The Sole Supporting Parents Benefit was introduced in Australia in the 1970s. Another welfare provision is the Child Support Scheme introduced by the Commonwealth government in 1988. See Yeatman,

relationships for a long time because they economically depend on their batterers and believe that it is best for their children to keep the family intact.'<sup>26</sup> Lorna, a Filipina community worker in Wollongong, believes that Australian citizenship entitles women to police protection and to go to a safe place like a refuge centre. She said that Filipino women sometimes go to these centres by themselves or with friends or neighbours; whereas in the Philippines they endure their abusive husbands because of religious orientation and, more importantly, because of their economic situation. Lorna said, '*They have nowhere to go. If they are not educated and they haven't got any job where will they go?*' She believes that the difference between Australia and the Philippines is support from the government: '*there is support if you are a citizen and women don't have to stay in a violent relationship. There is support from the government. There are services you can go [to]. I think that's just the difference because there is somewhere to go; whereas in the Philippines you haven't got much choice.*' Eva said, '*I don't believe in divorce but sometimes I think that [it is better in Australia because] you can live here by your own...I encourage those abused [Filipino] women [to leave their husbands]...They have support in the community...So, Filipino women here...have that strength [as compared to the Philippines]...they think that [support] helps.*' Aside from the services provided to abused women in Australia, the level of response to these cases appears to be more immediate in Australia than what is generally practiced in the Philippines. Further, in the Philippines, women became the butt of jokes when they do report such incidents.<sup>27</sup> Shelter homes or refuge centres are scarce in the Philippines as compared in Australia. Cecilia Menjivar and Olivia Salcido note that immigrant women 'frame their current experiences using their home countries as a point of reference' in dealing with domestic violence.<sup>28</sup> Australia offers a more secure response to Filipino women in this situation. Their knowledge on the rights of women, especially in the context of citizenship, enables them to change their fate.

Natividad reveals her ordeal with her Australian husband. She said, '*I feel that what*

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'Feminism and Power' in Shanley and Narayan, *Reconstructing Political Theory*, p 149; Maley, *Marriage, Divorce, and Family Justice*, p 67.

<sup>26</sup> Young, *Intersecting Voices*, pp 122-123.

<sup>27</sup> Coseteng, 'The Silent War Against Women,' *Philippine Graphic* 8 March 1993, p 17.

<sup>28</sup> Menjivar and Salcido, 'Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence,' *Gender & Society* 16(6), December 2002, p 910. See also Prince and Pobjie, *Filipino Community*.

*he's been doing to me is part of domestic violence. He does not accept it because he has not physically harmed me. I told him that there are many types of domestic violence not only physical.'* She endured two years of emotional abuse. *'I've come to a point where I cannot take it anymore. Considering my educational level, I always bowed to him. I feel that I am losing my self-respect...I tried everything just to save the marriage. I realised that I cannot be adjusting all the time.'* She recalls her flight to the refuge centre. *'I had no money. I called the refuge. I don't know where it is. I called them up and ask information. My husband did not want me to use the telephone. I fought with him to allow me to use the phone. I ask the refuge if [they] have a space for my son and me. They can hear that my husband was shouting. He said that I'm a troublemaker. They told me, okay. But I told them I had no money. They asked for my address and just pack. They said, [be] ready and we're going to send you a cab.'* Natividad finds it ironic that part of her work in the Philippines was to advise women leaving for Australia about what to do in case of domestic violence.<sup>29</sup>

Domestic violence is a reality for women both married to Filipinos and Australians.

Young states,

*Violence is a social practice. It is a social given that everyone knows happen and will happen again. It is always at the horizon of social imagination, even for those who do not perpetrate it.*<sup>30</sup>

Domestic violence, like any violence, is a form of injustice.<sup>31</sup> As domestic violence occurs in the privacy of the homes, it reflects Pateman's point on the effects of the marriage contract which deny wives their 'bodily integrity' as natural subjects of men.<sup>32</sup> In a

<sup>29</sup> Domestic violence affects many families in Australia. In the 1996 survey, 23 per cent of women experienced violence at some time during a relationship, either married or in de-facto. Some Aboriginal communities have higher incidence of domestic violence. See 'Women and Human Rights,' *WIN News* 28(2), Spring 2002, pp 8-50; *Partnership Against Domestic Violence*, <http://www.padv.dpvc.gov.au> [20/1/02]; 'Australia's Hidden Culture of Domestic Violence,' *KASAMA* 15(1), January-February March 2001, Solidarity Philippines Australia Network, <http://www.cpcabrisbane.org/Kasama/2001/V15n1/Hidden.htm> [12/3/03]. See also Cook and Bessant, *Women's Encounters with Violence*.

<sup>30</sup> Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, p 62.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*, p 63.

<sup>32</sup> Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, pp 93, 123.

traditional masculinist state wives have no right of complaint because 'the common law doctrine of overture' postulates that they are 'civilly dead.'<sup>33</sup> However, the knowledge of holding Australian citizenship empowers Filipino women to counteract this injustice. The protection provided by the Australian state to its citizens, as well as permanent residents, enables women in this study to seek an alternative course; that of separation or divorce. The services and benefits available to them, Anna Yeatman notes, extend the 'capacity of individual women to resist domestic violence.'<sup>34</sup> It appears, as Yeatman contends, that the 'strong arm of the patriarchal state' is able to empower those who are considered 'weak' - in this case, the women.<sup>35</sup>

### C. Relationships with Children

Australian citizenship figures significantly in Filipino women's relationship with their children in terms of children's right and their right to discipline them. All of the women in this study believe that becoming an Australian citizen means accepting the laws affecting children in Australia. This acceptance, however, has become a source of conflict for many Filipino women in this study. They often resolve this by combining the Australian and Filipino practices or following either the Filipino way or Australian way for Filipinas married to Filipinos and Australians, respectively. This anxiety towards child rearing has been likewise observed amongst other migrant women in Australia.<sup>36</sup>

#### 1. *Discipline*

The Filipino practice of disciplining children is perceived to be against Australian law. For example, smacking children for misdemeanours is an established cultural right of Filipino parents. Parental authority over 'unemancipated' or minor children is also circumscribed in Philippine laws.<sup>37</sup> In Australia, the 'no smacking or call the police principle' is perceived by Filipino women respondents as part of the law in Australia. The right of children to seek police assistance in the case of parental abuse is recognised in the

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, p 119.

<sup>34</sup> Yeatman, *op cit*, p 150.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, p 151.

<sup>36</sup> Martin, *Non-English Speaking Migrant Women in Australia*, p 238.

<sup>37</sup> See Cariño, 'The Filipino Family as Described and Prescribed by Law,' *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 35(4), October 1991, p 300.

Australian community; whereas, in the Philippines it is relatively unheard of. Social and legal precepts provide for the authoritarian upbringing of Filipino children.<sup>38</sup> Carmina acknowledges that *'the school teaches them about child abuse and that they have the right to go to the police in case of physical abuse or sexual abuse or things like that.'* Asuncion married to an Australian reveals that *'I cannot practice the Filipino regulations [with] my children. I cannot do it to my children because...it's really different here. Even though it's your own children you cannot instill the practices in the Philippines to them. The laws here are different. Your child will not follow you. That's the hardest [part] because deep inside your heart you like that your ways are like those in the Philippines but I cannot do it and I cannot accept. What can you do? Because if you push and push your child he will just go away. You will only lose your child. Your child will not respect you. That's why here you cannot push your child. Because here the children know about their rights. And they are not afraid to leave.'*

Although there are limits in disciplining children in Australia, Filipino women try to modify the forms of punishment towards them. For example, Pilar reveals that she still follows the 'Filipino way' of disciplining her children. *'Because here, it's Australian...you cannot hit your daughter or son. No. If they did something wrong I have to. I have to hit them as a discipline. Not necessarily hit but as a form of discipline so they will have respect.'* Linaw married to an Australian, said that *'I still discipline them the Filipino style. Because my husband will not smack them because it's not allowed. I still smack them.'* Yasmina confides that *'I...still insist this is what Filipinos are doing. These are our values. It happens that I am your mum so you have to follow me. But, of course, you still have to put some sort of demarcation to allow their growth, too...But as much as I can I instill them with Filipino values.'* Filomena who has been in Australia for seven years practices the Filipino discipline. *'We try to teach them that even though we are already here in Australia our values are not to do this and not to do that. Our discipline is still Pilipino.'* Dama notes that observing the Filipino ways of disciplining the children is only good before they reach sixteen years of age. *'Let's just say that at sixteen we cannot rely on*

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<sup>38</sup> See Soriano, 'Filipino Families in Australia' in Hartley, *Families and Cultural Diversity in Australia*, p 110.



them ...Not like in the Philippines [where] even those who are already married still obey us. Not here.' But, Pilar said, 'they said that at the age of eighteen they [could] do whatever they want. I don't think so for my children...If we could afford ...we have to support them... Because we are the parents...We are still responsible for them.' They refer to the practice of many young Australians living separately from their parents because the government assists them.<sup>39</sup> Filipino women believe that it is still their responsibility as parents to care for their children regardless of their age. Dayday and Dama, however, respected their children's decision to live on their own and be near their place of work.

Based on the narratives, the women have shown two Filipino ways of rearing children in Australia. First, is the use of corporal discipline as a means to instill parental authority and obedience. Second, the continued material support for children even in their adult life. They try to negotiate the 'Filipino way' within their understanding of Australian citizenship. The women in this study see both aspects of rearing children as their responsibility in contrast to the view of state's responsibility.

## 2. *Formation of Values*

The primary concern for Filipino women in this study is the formation of good values in their children. It appears that instilling Filipino values is more highly valued than the level of freedom they perceived to be enjoyed by Australian children. According to Anita, 'I orient them on how my parents reared me. Because the Australian culture is too different ...These Australians...they have a lot of freedom [compared] to us. Just like here, eighteen years old, be it boy or girl, they are free to [make] their own decision. It's like they can now leave the house. They can tell their parents...it's none of your business. I teach my children what I have learned when I was growing up. You're not allowed to answer back if you get scolded even though it's not your fault. Not to tell a lie. I teach my kids those values.' Hana disapproves of the practise of girls becoming too aggressive with boys. She said 'they have a practice that it's the girls who court the boys. Not that.' Hana

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<sup>39</sup> There is a dependency culture amongst some unemployed Australian youths coming from families receiving income support from the government. See Saunders and Stone, 'Australian Youth and the Dependency Culture' in Saunders, *Reforming the Australian Welfare State*, p 132.

cannot accept her children living together without marriage. Carla proudly claims that, despite being married to an Australian, *'I brought [my four children to follow] the Filipino custom. They have to obey their parents while they are [under] my roof. Follow all the regulations, what we had to do in the Philippines. Obey everyday whatever I say to them.'* The 'home' in nationalist construction, is the site of the 'essence' of cultures which constitute the 'intergenerational ways of life' to include, amongst others, family relations.<sup>40</sup>

The value that they cherish most highly is respect. For Filomena, *'our number one Filipino value is to respect our elders.'* She insists that her children follow the forms of respectful address to anyone who is older than them. Rosa is particular about the formation of good values: *'What I will guard most is their values; that they would rather study [for a degree] and not rely on government assistance...That they will respect the elderly.'* In the Philippines, the care of the elderly is part of family responsibility.<sup>41</sup> The law also imposes responsibility of the elderly towards their grandchildren in the absence of parents.<sup>42</sup> Grace Soriano in her study of Filipino families in Australia concludes that Filipino parents continue to inculcate the values of respect, discipline and education and are in continuous negotiation with Australian mores.<sup>43</sup> For example, the Australian practice of leaving the elderly in retirement homes appears to be an impending issue between parents and children.

Rearing their children to learn the value of respect is an essential component of what these Filipino women see as part of their obligations as mothers and as citizens. As mothers, women in this study are preparing their children for good citizenship. Ruddick suggests that the nurturing role of women shape the way their children view the world.<sup>44</sup> She points out that a 'mother's thought' includes the 'intellectual capacities she develops, the judgments she makes, the metaphysical attitudes she assumes, the values she affirms.'<sup>45</sup> The mother's interests in 'preservation, growth and acceptability' of their children involves

<sup>40</sup> Smith, 'Nationalism and Modernity' in Stone and Dennis, *Race and Ethnicity*, p 161.

<sup>41</sup> Cariño, *The Filipino Family as Described and Prescribed by Law*, p 304.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, p 303.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, p 120.

<sup>44</sup> Ruddick, 'Maternal Thinking' in Meyers, *Feminist Social Thought*, p 585.

maternal discipline.<sup>46</sup> Respect for others breeds what Elshtain calls the 'politics of compassion.'<sup>47</sup> This maternalist view of citizenship suggests that in the family, the nurturing roles of mothers foster the development of their children in a way that they 'internalise' attachments to 'specific adult others.'<sup>48</sup> This becomes the formative sphere for such values as 'empathy, pity and compassion' which, Elshtain argues, is the foundation of citizenship.<sup>49</sup> As citizens are able to empathise with others, they are able to 'share a common identity based on mutual concerns.'<sup>50</sup> Barbara Pamphilon has shown in her study of aged Australian women that the maternalist approach to citizenship provided the link between the women's caring role in the family to the 'training and growth of others' as well as themselves.<sup>51</sup> A lifelong commitment to maternal duties falls within the ambit of an 'ethics of care' derived from women's experiences as women.

Filipino women believe in nurturing their children to the values important to the outside world. Rosa says, '*children must learn how to answer back. Because when they go out into the workplace and they are shy they will not succeed. Because here the talkative and the assertive are likely to succeed... so now if you are [not] going to teach them to reason out, the child's growth will be stifled.*' Being a Filipino living in Australia, she offers a strategy, a 'meeting ground.' '*Tell your children that they can reason out in a respectful way. Not that you are going to shout at each other, it's how to talk nicely. A good tone. Just like a discussion.*' For Hana, '*I allowed my children to answer with respect. They can reason out if [I] ask them what happened. So, you have to balance. And then leave your communication open...I know it's difficult. I grew up in the Philippines and then came here. You have inhibitions because you are not allowed to answer back...So, you can't stand up for your rights because you grew up like that. So, I teach my children that in Australia they have to survive. They have to know how to defend themselves.*' Their

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, p 588.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, p 589.

<sup>47</sup> Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman*, p 351.

<sup>48</sup> Cited in DiQuinzio, 'Feminist Theory and the Question of Citizenship,' *Women and Politics* 15(3), 1995, p 26.

<sup>49</sup> *loc cit*. See also Koven and Michael, *Mothers of a New World*, p 4.

<sup>50</sup> DiQuinzio, *op cit*, p 26.

<sup>51</sup> Pamphilon, 'What Did We Do With Our World?' in Damousi and Ellinghaus, *Citizenship, Women and Social Justice*, p 362.

responses suggest that mothers have the obligation to prepare their children with skills that would help them meet the challenges in later life; a social responsibility of guiding children to a 'better future.'<sup>52</sup>

Instilling the values and skills that are useful in citizenship describes Pateman's idea that 'women's ultimate political duty is motherhood.'<sup>53</sup> Because only women are capable of childbirth and motherhood, this should be 'constructed as a political status.'<sup>54</sup> Through this women can be included in citizenship in the same manner that men serve the state as workers and soldiers.<sup>55</sup> But this needs to be qualified in the context of different ways of mothering. As Sara Ruddick notes, the 'style, skill, commitment, integrity' of maternal practice differs between individuals.<sup>56</sup> Perceptions on rearing children are also influenced by cultural orientation. Filipino women in this study believe that instilling Filipino values in their children in Australia will have a better influence on their future life as citizens than following the 'Australian way' of giving too much freedom early on. They have chosen the kind of discipline that they perceive to be most appropriate for their children in Australia. This is a critical aspect of agency. Filipino women have shown autonomy in being 'able to make choices about one's life and to act on those choices' in rearing children in the new country.<sup>57</sup>

#### **D. Conclusion**

Analysing the practise of Australian citizenship at home offers a new understanding of what citizenship means to immigrant Filipino women. Australian citizenship is equated with concepts of equal rights, respect, independence, freedom, empowerment and security in relationships with their husbands. Embracing this citizenship enhances Filipino women's agency in dealing with difficult situations such as domestic violence and the possibility of divorce. Unlike their former citizenship status in the Philippines, Filipino

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, p 364.

<sup>53</sup> Pateman, *Equality, Difference and Subordination*, p 24.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, p 19.

<sup>55</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>56</sup> Ruddick, *op cit*, p 589.

<sup>57</sup> Young, *Intersecting Voices*, p 125.

women believe that Australian citizenship ensures government protection and support for women and children. This association of citizenship with protection suggests that Filipino women appreciate the intervention of the state in matters which are usually treated as 'personal' in their home country.

Understandings of Australian citizenship have also been identified as inflecting Filipino women's relationships with their children. Their perceptions of Australian law as highly protective of the rights of children made some Filipino women in this study modify their form of disciplining their children. However, many of them believe that instilling values of obedience, respect, especially to the elderly, is better achieved by following their Filipino practice of rearing children. Concern for the future well being of their children in Australia also involves teaching them the skill of assertiveness. They view this skill as necessary in becoming successful in Australian society. Hence, children possessing these attributes become good citizens. Understanding maternal practice as a way of enacting citizenship allows a new reading of Filipino women's lives in Australia. I read their consideration about how to raise their children and how to protect themselves against violence as women drawing on different citizenship practices, in the Philippines and Australia, to produce satisfactory outcomes for themselves, their children, and the effects on such outcomes to the community.

## VI

## PRACTISING AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP AT WORK

A second area where women's citizenship is exercised is through participation in paid employment. Work outside the home is seen by many feminists as a means of gaining economic independence which reflects women's agency and their status as citizens.<sup>1</sup> Lister writes,

*Paid work (outside the home) represents an important locus of social participation, which many women value, as well a source of self-esteem...important for the fulfillment of women's potential as citizens.*<sup>2</sup>

In Australia, like any other liberal democratic states, women have equal access to and participation in the economy.<sup>3</sup> This is essential to women's social citizenship and the enjoyment of the economic benefits of society. However, access to and the status of women in the labour market is different amongst different classes or groups of women, particularly non-white immigrant women in Australia. This chapter explores the implications of holding Australian citizenship amongst Filipino women undertaking paid work.

Yuval-Davis points out that women's citizenship should also be examined in relation to the dominant groups on the basis of their ethnicity.<sup>4</sup> This is an appropriate basis to explore the practise of Australian citizenship of racialised women. Filipino women view themselves in relation to the 'white' majority in Australia. They form a collectivity called 'ethnics' which, Jan Jindy Pettman notes, are 'neither Aboriginal nor of the dominant

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<sup>1</sup> See Baker, 'Risking Difference' in Baker and Van Doorne-Huiskes, *Women and Public Policy*, p 14. See also Sen, 'Agency and Well-Being' in Heyzer, *A Commitment to the World's Women*, p 105; Lister, *Dilemmas in Engendering Citizenship* pp 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> Lister, *Citizenship*, p 139.

<sup>3</sup> Berns et al, *Gender and Citizenship*, p 25.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Waylen, 'Gender, Feminism and the State' in Randall and Waylen, *Gender, Politics and the State*, p 13.

group/s.’<sup>5</sup> Recently, ‘ethnics’ have been categorised as a ‘minority’ in relation to ‘mainstream’ society.<sup>6</sup> The practise of citizenship of this group of Filipino women through paid work follows Yuval-Davis’ framework of dominant-subordinate relations. Filipinas are viewed as part of the racialised ethnic community and are, therefore, subordinate to the dominant ‘white’ people at work. This positioning of Filipino women as the ‘ethnic’ has implications for the process of Filipino women finding work and their experiences in it. I argue that the racialised status of Filipino women influences their relationship at work and being Australian citizens contribute to their ability to negotiate and to be recognised as equals at work. This negotiation hinges on the idea of a ‘common political identity’ as citizens.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first part discusses the status of immigrant women in the Australian labour market. The second section presents the issues affecting Filipino women at work; while the third section focuses on other constraints which affect their ability to engage in paid work.

#### A. Immigrant Women and the Australian Labour Market

The Australian labour force is segmented according to gender and ethnicity.<sup>7</sup> In terms of gender, this means that the labour market has appropriated the skills of men and women differently. Men’s work is recognized as more important than women.<sup>8</sup> In settler societies like Australia, Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis have pointed out that the labour market is stratified according to gender and further segmented by race, ethnicity, language and citizenship statuses.<sup>9</sup> Women in the labour force are, generally, concentrated in clerical and service occupations.<sup>10</sup> Aside from gender-differentiation,<sup>10</sup> race or ethnicity further segment

<sup>5</sup> Pettman, ‘Race, Ethnicity and Gender in Australia’ in Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, *Unsettling Settler Societies*, p 76.

<sup>6</sup> Gillgren, ‘Aliens to Ethnics’ in Crawford and Skene, *Women and Citizenship*, p 154.

<sup>7</sup> Pettman, *Living in the Margins*, p 45. See also Bottomley, *Mediterranean Women in Australia*, p 1.

<sup>8</sup> McDowell, *Gender, Identity & Place*, p 124.

<sup>9</sup> Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, ‘Introduction’ in Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, *Unsettling Settler Societies*, p 15. See also Vosko, *Temporary Work*; Sharma, ‘Immigrant and Migrant Workers in Canada,’ *Canadian Woman Studies* 21(4), March 2002, pp 18(8).

<sup>10</sup> O’Connor et al, *States, Markets, Families*, p 95. See also Bryson, ‘Women, Paid Work and Social Policy’ in Grieve and Burns, *Australian Women*, pp 183-189.

the labour market. Minority women, especially immigrants, are mainly found in lower-paying jobs. They are not usually represented in labour unions which often translate into their insecure status. In my brief observation of two manufacturing industries in Sydney, nine out of ten workers operating machineries or packaging finished products were immigrant women. The manufacturing industry, compared to other industrial sectors, has been employing large numbers of immigrants since 1971.<sup>11</sup> During the 1974-75 recessions in Australia, the employment of overseas-born females fell while those of the Australian-born females continued to rise.<sup>12</sup> This implies that immigrant women were at a disadvantage, probably in securing work or in being laid-off first, compared to Australian women. As a result of globalization and economic restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s, minority women continue to face income inequality and labour-market segmentation.<sup>13</sup>

Gill Bottomley notes that migrant women workers of non-English speaking background experience 'widespread exploitation.'<sup>14</sup> Aside from being concentrated in poorly-paying jobs, they also face poor working conditions that 'would not be acceptable to Australian-born workers.'<sup>15</sup> These structural inequalities at work are also compounded by 'racist beliefs' about immigrant women. Jeannie Martin points to some of these prejudices which include the belief that those non-Anglo women are 'greedy for money' or that they tend to 'crawl to the boss' and are 'anti-union.'<sup>16</sup> Correlating these perceptions to the work attitudes of the Filipino women in this study revealed why 'white' people have constructed them in this manner. There appears to be a difference in attitude towards work between Filipino women and their 'white' Australian co-workers. Rama notes that in the course of her work, '*employers comment on Filipino workers as hard workers.*' Australians, on the other hand, are perceived to be 'lazy.'<sup>17</sup> Working hard or achieving

<sup>11</sup> Fincher et al, *Immigrant Women in Manufacturing Work*, p 3.

<sup>12</sup> Brooks and Williams, *Immigrants and the Labour Market*, p 17. Ethnic disadvantage in the labour market also exists in other societies. See Jenkins, 'Rethinking Ethnicity' in Stone and Dennis, *Race and Ethnicity*, p 65.

<sup>13</sup> Castles, 'Underclass or Exclusion' in Vasta, *Citizenship, Community and Democracy*, pp 28-29. See also Probert, 'A Restructuring World?' in Edwards and Magarey, *Women in a Restructuring Australia*, pp 30-32.

<sup>14</sup> Bottomley, 'Living Across Difference' in Grieve and Burns, *Australian Women*, p 60.

<sup>15</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>16</sup> Martin, 'Non-English Speaking Migrant Women in Australia' in Grieve and Burns, *Australian Women New Feminist Perspectives*, pp 240-242.

<sup>17</sup> See 'Aussies Seen as Lazy and Racist,' *The Sunday Telegraph* 8 April 2002, p 30.



more work in a short span of time is not uncommon to many immigrants who need to establish themselves in the new country.<sup>18</sup> Starting from scratch and with no material support to lean on in times of crises make immigrants turn to work as their source of financial security. Their attitude towards work becomes even more significant for Filipino women supporting their families in the Philippines.

Filipino women perceive the Australian labour market as offering more opportunities for women compared to the Philippines. Sally said, *'I think women here [in Australia] are more equal [to men] compared to Filipino working women in the Philippines...Mostly, the big boss in the Philippines are all men...the executives are mostly men... [In} Australia, [it is a] mix...not necessarily equal...but compared to the Philippines...the right of women for top executive jobs [is observed more in Australia]'*. For Liwayway, *'I'm not generalizing [but] the treatment of men and women in Australia is mostly fair.'* This perception towards the Australian labour market, despite its overt practises of ethnic disadvantage, influences the Filipinas' continued search for economic independence.

#### **B. Filipinas and Work-Related Issues**

The right to work and be economically independent is an essential condition of women's citizenship. Although this right is based on the principle of equality, its realisation is dependent on many factors such as gender, age, language ability, education and ethnicity. With all things being equal, the most profound criterion of access and right to work for Filipino women in this study is their national origin. Ethnicity classifies them as 'non-English speaking background (NESB)' even if English is the second language in the Philippines. Their ethnicity is also the classifier of the issues surrounding their quest for work and their experiences at work.

There are three prominent issues raised by Filipino women: recognition of overseas

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<sup>18</sup> Van denHeuvel and Wooden, *Non-English Speaking Background Immigrant Women and Part-Time Work*, p 49. See also Agbayani-Siewert and Jones, 'Filipino American Women, Work and Family,' *International Social Work* 40(4), October 1997, pp 407(17).

qualifications, underemployment and racial discrimination. These issues impact on their Australian citizenship because these hinge on their racialised status. However, Filipino women use their citizenship as a common political identity with the 'white' workers which allow them to negotiate their subject position.

### 1. *Recognition of Overseas Qualifications*

Robyn Iredale and Ian Nivison-Smith outline two main schools of thought about the recognition of overseas qualifications. One school views the lack of recognition of some qualifications as 'an accurate response to the quality of training involved in the qualification and to the training institutions of some countries.'<sup>19</sup> The other school posits that non-accreditation of qualifications 'may result from a lack of accreditation of otherwise comparable qualifications gained outside Australia.'<sup>20</sup> The success rate of qualifications obtained in non-English countries is lower than those obtained in English-speaking countries.<sup>21</sup>

In her study on European migrant women, Ackers shows that many immigrant women face barriers in practicing their profession in the host society, particularly as a result of the non-recognition of qualifications.<sup>22</sup> Filipino women in Australia are no exception.<sup>23</sup> Because their qualifications are attained overseas, they are not automatically recognised upon migration to Australia. Independent skilled migrants from the Philippines are assessed by the relevant professional regulating authorities in Australia prior to lodging the application for migration. But this assessment is only used to gain the points necessary for skilled occupation qualifications needed for the grant of a permanent visa and not for employment purposes. Hence, seeking recognition of overseas qualifications and finding work pose challenges to Filipino women in this study. Non-recognition of qualifications

<sup>19</sup> Iredale and Nivison-Smith, *Immigrants' Experiences of Qualifications Recognition and Employment*, p 18.

<sup>20</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, pp 18-19.

<sup>22</sup> Ackers, *Shifting Spaces*, pp 203-208. See also Hawthorne, 'Reversing Past Stereotypes,' *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 17(1-2), 1996, p 47.

<sup>23</sup> Freeman, 'Unemployment in Selected Ethnic Communities,' *Migration Action* 17(3), December 1995, pp 36-38. See also de Vera, 'Realities Facing Filipinos Overseas – Australia,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(1), 20 December 1999–20 January 2000, p 11.

results in many migrant women who are unemployed, de-skilled and lacking financial autonomy. The implications for women as citizens are quite serious because unemployment, for example, leads to personal dependency on the male breadwinner.<sup>24</sup> According to Donita, the *'lack of recognition of overseas qualifications can result in poor access to employment opportunities...because of [this] they become economically dependent on their partners. Then that gives them poor access to... things that ...they want [and] things [that] they need.'*

Many Filipinas work for the recognition of their qualifications in line with the requirements set by each professional regulation body in Australia. Others enrol in courses to acquire the skills that enable them to work in Australia. Still others opt to work without having to go through the rigours of professional recognition and are employed in occupations entirely different from their previous jobs in the Philippines. All these efforts reflect the goal of being able to use any learned skills from the Philippines to be able to find work in Australia. This contributes to the relatively high labour force participation of Filipinos compared to the other non-English speaking overseas-born population in Australia.

Those women in this study who laboriously sought recognition of their overseas qualifications are very proud of their accomplishment. Carmina recalls that *'in my registration group I did very well. I mean we were coming from different countries, from Hong Kong, France [etc]...the training back home was very good [and] I was able to bring it here...[I have] experience in the Philippines and I also worked in Nauru ...for two and a half years [which] really helped. And I showed them that I am capable to do what [is] expected of [me]. I mean, all the work and the training here is nothing compared to the Philippines...I worked hard ...for my own good so that my family would also be proud of me...I knew I could do it...Everything sort of went my way.'* Filomena was a public school teacher in the Philippines who worked in a processing industry whilst completing the requirements for recognition. She had to do extra work and study to meet the

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<sup>24</sup> Ackers, *op cit*, pp 203-208. See also Kruizinga, *Filipino Speaking Community of the Illawarra*, p 33.

requirements set by the Department of Education and the finances involved in the process. Gaining the license to teach in New South Wales is one of her greatest achievements in life because it brought pride to her family in the Philippines and her children in Australia. Filomena believes that being a professional has boosted her standing in the Filipino community.

Some Filipino women in this study chose to enrol in new courses in Australia since it was too difficult to have their Philippine qualifications recognised, especially a medical degree. Yasmina chose to enroll in a nursing course using her medical degree in the Philippines to attain additional credits. Lakandiwa shifted her focus from Library Science to a course involving community work. Mirasol upgraded her skills in Office Administration at TAFE.

Young argues that the practice of evaluating the qualifications of individuals is 'political.'<sup>25</sup> The criteria used in assessing qualifications are 'value-laden, as well as normatively and culturally specific.'<sup>26</sup> Any institution, Young argues, employ a particular value and meaning towards the rules in place which has consequences for the individual subjected to it.<sup>27</sup> Filipino women apply for the recognition of their qualifications which is measured on a certain Australian standard.<sup>28</sup> Qualifications obtained in the Philippines which meet this standard are granted recognition. However, this recognition is not a fair measurement of the individual's competence and skills.<sup>29</sup> A professional qualification may be obtained in a school not recognized as equivalent to the Australian standard, but this does not mean the immigrant has no competence or skill in a particular occupation at all. The non-recognition, in this case, implies that an immigrant is a ready labour unit for other occupations. Or, it is directing immigrants to reorient their skills to other areas more likely to be in demand in the labour market.

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<sup>25</sup> Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, p 210.

<sup>26</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p 211.

<sup>28</sup> See National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition, *The Philippines*.

Non-recognition of overseas qualifications suggests the existence of institutional boundaries constructed by host states to immigrants. The low incidence of the recognition of the overseas qualifications of NESB migrants seems to suggest that the system of qualifying operates as an exclusionary mechanism.<sup>30</sup> Yuval-Davis notes that 'constructing boundaries according to various inclusionary and exclusionary criteria' is an 'area of struggle concerning citizenship.'<sup>31</sup> Racialised, or 'ethnicised,' immigrants are basically faced with established institutional structures that make the exercise of their Australian citizenship marginal.

## 2. *Underemployment*

Underemployment refers to the incongruence between the type of work and the qualifications to do such work. This means that a person is working in a job that is more 'low-skilled, poorly paid jobs' than one they were trained for.<sup>32</sup> The element of underutilisation of skills at work or working less than what is desired also exemplify underemployment.<sup>33</sup> There are two major categories of underemployment: visible and invisible.<sup>34</sup> Visible underemployment happens when 'people work fewer hours than they would like to work.'<sup>35</sup> Invisible underemployment refers to the 'employment inadequacy not directly related to an insufficiency on the volume of work at the individual level.'<sup>36</sup> There are different forms of invisible underemployment which include mismatch underemployment, relative pay deprivation and low employment income.<sup>37</sup> The duration of underemployment is longer for immigrants than for Australian-born people.<sup>38</sup> Further,

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<sup>29</sup> Competency is defined by the National Competency Standards Policy and Guidelines in Australia as 'the ability to perform the activities within an occupation or function to the standard expected in employment.' Cited in Iredale, *Where Are We Now in Overseas Qualifications Recognition?* p 28.

<sup>30</sup> Iredale and Nivison-Smith, *op cit*, p 19.

<sup>31</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 74.

<sup>32</sup> *Webster's New World Dictionary*, p 1454. See also Brooks and Williams, *Immigrants and the Labour Market*, p 60.

<sup>33</sup> Wooden, *Underemployment, Hidden Employment and Immigrants*, p 3.

<sup>34</sup> Flatau et al, *Immigrants and Invisible Underemployment*, p x.

<sup>35</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>36</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>37</sup> Mismatch underemployment occurs when the skills, knowledge and capacities could be better utilized in a job other than the present job occupied. Relative pay deprivation refers to earnings below the expected level considering the qualifications and experience of the worker. See Flatau et al, *loc cit*.

<sup>38</sup> Wooden, *op cit*, p 22.

migrant women appear to experience longer or more underemployment than men.<sup>39</sup>

Some women in this study sought work regardless of any recognition of their overseas qualifications. This indicates an underemployment of Filipino women similar to that of their counterparts in Western Australia.<sup>40</sup> The women are trained for a particular skill or profession in the Philippines but are employed in Australia in a different job, one that requires fewer educational qualifications in Australia; essentially mismatch underemployment. Pe-Pua observes that many Filipinos accept jobs not even related to their qualification while others opt to have a second job when time permits.<sup>41</sup> Their primary consideration is having a job and the money to sustain their new life in Australia. It is widely believed that to earn money is the primary goal while the type of work is a secondary concern. Carmina said, *'when I started working I felt disappointed...it was different because I was already a nurse supervisor...when I came [to Australia] I have to start from the bottom.'*

Despite devalued work qualifications, the women interviewed are quite satisfied with the value of their labour as compared to what they earned in the Philippines. Camuning, a former doctor in the Philippines, is now an assistant in a hospital surgery. She prefers the work entitlements in Australia where long working hours are compensated compared to the Philippines. She said, *'I know I'm qualified, more than qualified for my job. But, this cannot be compared. My qualifications in the Philippines [were] not accepted. It's not accepted unless I take an exam. So, I decided to do a job which is lower than my qualifications. Although, work wise, it's parallel... to my work in the Philippines. It was my choice to do this rather than take the exam and not pass it and then spend a lot of time, a lot of money to go after a degree in medicine. So, I'd rather work here because I believe in Australia you can do whatever you want. If you are not choosy you can always*

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid*, p 23.

<sup>40</sup> See Marribbay, 'Profile of the Filipino Community in Western Australia,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 20 July-20 August 1999, p 18.

<sup>41</sup> Pe-Pua, 'Ang Pagka-Pilipino ng mga Pilipino,' *The Philippines Bayanihan News Balitang Pilipino* 1(2) May 2000, p 5. See also Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration*, p 123.

*find work... I went a few levels down just to get this work and I find it okay. There's less stress for me, emotionally, and I like working in that environment...[compared to the Philippines] even if I work twenty-four hours or sometimes thirty-six hours...I still get the same fee...Here, you really get your money's worth...I was overworked and underpaid [in the Philippines].'* Maria said, *'the pay [in Australia] is more rewarding than in the Philippines.'* Nora likes the flexibility in working on an hourly basis: *[I] do not have a boss [like in the Philippines]...when [I] work [in Australia] it's as if [I] work on my own... [wage] is per hour...there [in the Philippines] you are paid monthly.'*

Linaw was a high school teacher in Luzon and is now working in a manufacturing firm as a process worker. She has come to accept that pursuing her previous occupation is quite difficult in Australia. Those with minimal secondary qualifications like Dayday, Ligaya, Nora and Rajah work in domestic service as cleaners.<sup>42</sup> Some work in restaurants like Asuncion and Liwayway. According to Rama, *'some Filipino women are working in hotels and restaurants as chambermaids and waitresses.'* Filipino women who live in Wollongong take the early train to Sydney where their work is located. I have met many of these women seated together aboard the City Rail, sharing stories about their lives in Australia on their way to work.

Jobs in the service sector and in manufacturing are easily accessible to immigrant women who have to deny themselves the dignity offered by their former occupation in their home country. However, this kind of work also provides the dignity for immigrants often perceived as recipients of government dole-outs in Australia to be self-reliant. For Ligaya, *'I like to work than to get the dole.'* According to Mirasol, *'people would tell me why don't you apply for the dole? You can get even...I don't think it's right for me to go and get the dole if I can earn money...So, I never did [take] advantage of [that].'* Carmina said, *'From the very start I tried to look for a job immediately...I have never been on the dole. I have never asked any support from the [government].'* There is a negative perception amongst Filipino women married to Filipinos about other Filipinos receiving dole due to unemployment. Being able to work raises their social status in the community.

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<sup>42</sup> See Martin, *Non-English Speaking Migrant Women in Australia*, p 240.

### 3. *Racial Discrimination*

Filipino women in this study have experienced discrimination primarily on the basis of their race or ethnicity. By discrimination, I refer to 'behaviour or acts predicated on racial prejudice.'<sup>43</sup> Philomena Essed shows four characteristics of racial prejudice: 'feelings of superiority, perception of subordinate race as intrinsically different and alien, a feeling of proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage, and fear and suspicion that the subordinate race wants the prerogatives of the dominant race.'<sup>44</sup> Yuval-Davis notes that racism occurs when 'the construction of "otherness" is used in order to exclude the immutable "other."<sup>45</sup>

In the workplace, Maria Ontiveros claims that 'women of color' are the 'least powerful participants' which make them 'likely targets' of harassment.<sup>46</sup> Malika Dutt has noted that immigrant women in the United States experienced exploitation in the workplace.<sup>47</sup> In 1991, the *Report of the National Inquiry into Racist Violence in Australia* revealed that there was strong evidence of racial harassment and intimidation in the daily lives of immigrants in a 'qualitatively different way.'<sup>48</sup> NESB immigrants have to struggle against racist attitudes and practices in the workplace.<sup>49</sup>

In this study, women in every workplace encountered some forms of discrimination. According to Dayday, '*you are discriminated because you are a Filipino.*' Jamila said, '*within the staff as well, they look down on you because you're a*

<sup>43</sup> Agnew, *Resisting Discrimination*, p 19.

<sup>44</sup> Cited in Agnew, *ibid*, p 18.

<sup>45</sup> There are about four ideal types of racism. The first is universalist which 'inferiorizes others as unmodern or premodern.' The second is known as 'the poor white response' which is derived 'from anxieties about losing out and being excluded from the material benefits of the modern industrial world and blaming others for it.' The third is 'anti-modernist' which 'appeals to traditions of community, religion and nation and demonizes those thought to be excessively "modern."' The fourth is based from specific inter-group hostilities. See Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 49. See also Jureidini, 'Immigration, Racism and Ethnicity' in Jureidini and Poole, *Sociology*, pp 187-188.

<sup>46</sup> Ontiveros, 'Three Perspectives on Workplace Harassment of Women of Color' in Wing, *Critical Race Feminism*, p 188. See also Fan, 'Asian Women in Hawaii,' *NWSA Journal* 8(1), Spring 1996, pp 70.

<sup>47</sup> Dutt, 'Reclaiming a Human Rights Culture' in Shohat, *Talking Visions*, p 237.

<sup>48</sup> Collins and Henry, 'Racism, Ethnicity and Immigration in Canada and Australia' in Collins, *Contemporary Racism in Australia, Canada and New Zealand Vol 2*, p 60. See also Perdon, 'Racism,' *The Philippines Bayanihan News* 2(7), July 2000, p 18.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*, pp 60-61.



*Filipina... You're second-class citizen! Something like that but it's not being said.'* Ligaya tells her story working in one of the hotels in Sydney: *'My boss is like that...she doesn't like Filipina people. That's what I heard. All Asian people...She doesn't like anybody from other [countries]...except white...she treats...me like [other] Asian people. ...if we sit there together [it's] different. But, [if] she sits [next] to the Australian girl or Scottish or whatever, she just feels easy.'* Jamila works in the hospital and said, *'before when I was new here, like at work, they will look at me [as if] I don't know. I'm an RN [registered nurse] and you've got another EN... [enrolled nurses] under me. And because I'm Filipina and the EN white person] would like to be higher than me. But I have more [qualifications]... the other RNs [was not] in favour of me. They [were] in favour [of] the EN [rather] than me.* Yasmina also observes that *'we cannot help it if there's racial discrimination.'* Working now as a nurse, she says that *'at work, those who do not have black colour are informed first of in-services...educational lectures. They first inform those who belong to the same race. And then if they cannot get anyone, like not all have [the] brains or they cannot trust that job to that person, then they start looking for us...Some are like that...There are opportunities that you would like to attend but they usually...inform us, juniors, that we have to wait for the next batch...But we say that why do we have to have for the next batch? We are equal at work. So, why not offer it to everyone?...We are the same. We have the same work.'* Hana identifies that work-related discrimination also affects job promotion.

Prejudice on the basis of abilities appears to be culturally specific. According to Donita, *'[racism] has more to do with my ethnicity and I could say that it is shared by other minority groups in Australia, not white Australians...it has something to do with the colour of [our] skin.'* Mirasol said, *'it's your culture, your ethnic background...They ask you where you are from.'* Jamila shares her experience as a nurse: *'We're not updated with our equipment...We're far behind [in the Philippines]. So, you need to learn all these new things as well [in Australia]. And because you don't know these things they look at you and say, you're a registered nurse and you don't know how to do these things...And I said...I don't have these things...I don't know...Somebody has to show [me].* Monica, who is working in manufacturing, revealed that a white Australian co-worker questioned her

appointment as representative of their department. She said: *'[The] Australian in our department did not like the idea of [the] management getting me as the representative of the department. So, she reported [this] to the union...It should be her...She told me that...I am not capable because I'm not good in English and I don't know what I'm talking about.'* In the end, Monica resolved the issue in this manner: *'we went to the union...We had a talk and I said...so we will not have this issue we go together...at the meeting and I...talk...because they wanted to close our department...She was frightened that I will not be good enough to represent our department.'* Hana believes that the language barrier based on its cultural usage appears to be a problem: *'Sometimes I talk in English but it does not really convey the message I want...Sometimes they [white workers] do not understand what I'm talking about because of my accent.'* Carmina observes that *'some other [white] people generalise that because [Filipinos] have a different colour they cannot speak or understand English well. And...sometimes you can see it in their eyes that they hesitate [to talk to you].'* Hiraya said, *'they [white co-workers]...keep asking [me] the same questions all over as if [I] don't understand what they are saying [to me]. They don't understand that [I'm] still thinking of...how [I] will answer the question...Sometimes it goes into your nerves.'* Dama finds it annoying to be cautioned 'to speak English' even when talking to other Filipinos at work: *'They [white workers] are like that. We tell them this is a free country. We want to speak our own language. We're not talking about [them]...Some white people like to listen [to us] and they do not like us talking in Pilipino. But, what can they do if we like to speak in our own language?'* In school, Mirasol remembers that *'I was discriminated [against] one time when I took a TAFE course...office works. And then our coordinator said to us that two of us are going to Sydney [to be placed in]... a big company...I don't want to brag but she chose me as the best in our group...It's only for training but she said you'll be looking at a job after this if they like you. So, they sent me there together with another girl from Portugal who cannot speak English very well...You get assessed for your performance and my performance is much better than the other girl but she got the job!'*

Based on the narratives of the women in this study, it is easy to say that racial discrimination persists in contemporary Australia. These verbal accounts of what Essed

calls 'everyday racism' are not merely personal stories but stories that 'represents social experiences' and 'commonsense theories or systems of knowledge and systems of value in their own right, used for the discovery and organization of reality.'<sup>50</sup> Racism is one of the realities of migrating to Australia for this group of women. They acknowledge and accept its existence - a social fact they have to deal with in their everyday lives. But some of these women constantly struggle and find ways to counteract racism using their status as Australian citizens.

Australian citizenship is perceived by Filipino women to be most important when dealing with racial discrimination at work. Anita said, *'of course, citizenship helps a lot because by law you're even. You're equal to [the] real Australians...'* Linaw shares her experience at work: *'they discriminate [against] the Pilipina even though they know that she's already a citizen. But I confronted [the workmate who verbally abused me]. I told her that she should not be racist because it's against the law. You cannot discriminate [against me]...the boss told her that discrimination is not allowed in the workplace. The boss sided with me. The boss knew I'm right.'* Ligaya believes that she can stand up to her supervisor because she is already an Australian citizen. If not, she said, *'I can't do that...I'm just thinking, well, maybe they are treating me like this because I'm not [an] Australian [citizen]. But I'm Australian [citizen] they will not treat me [like] this...if you are an Australian citizen you have power also. The same with them. Even though you go [to] court, you have the power because you're [an] Australian citizen. But if you're not [an] Australian citizen I don't think you have the power to say something and they'll tell you...to go back where you belong... But, if you're Australian citizen they cannot tell you to go back to where you belong. Hey! I'm Australian citizen also.'* Liwayway is prepared to handle any racial harassment: *'in case this happens to me, I will [fight] it because I know I have the right. So far, it has not happened yet. But, I will do it if I know I'm on the right side.'* Pilar is prepared to confront this situation: *'[they] can't discriminate [against] me. I'm only brown but I am an Australian citizen. I know what you are doing. You're doing the same thing as what I'm doing.'* Liwayway adds that she has *'to assert her right as a*

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<sup>50</sup> Essed, 'Understanding Verbal Accounts of Racism,' *Text* 8, 1 & 2, 1988, pp 6-7.

*citizen. It's also your right to fight for it...in the workplace.'* The women particularly utilize the notion of their equal citizenship status when combating these types of discriminatory situations.

At work, the women in this study admit that citizenship confers on them certain rights that make it easier for them to deal with other employees. The most important is the freedom to air their grievances.<sup>51</sup> Maria said that *'when you want your opinion to be heard by your boss you've got the right to speak. I always say that being a citizen I've got the right to say something.'* Camuning advocates that *'if you feel discriminated [against], tell the boss.'* Hana also believes that *'my being an Australian citizen encourages me to say something at work, especially if I'm offended...Unlike in the Philippines; people [at work] really listen to you.'* Furthermore, Sally, a government worker in Sydney, has no fear of relating to the other staff because of 'industrial democracy' - the right to voice an opinion. Maria agrees with her: *'I always assert my rights as a citizen of [this] country and I've got equal rights...when they ask for your opinion [at work].'* For Anita, *'sometimes in the office they tend to ignore what you're talking about. But you know you are right. Then you'll just have to stand up for your rights...Tell them that you have ideas as well.'* Their admonitions are quite contrary to what they have been used to in the Philippines. Maria said: *'In the Philippines you sort of hold back. I don't want to speak anything in my mind or [say] something that will hurt the boss because I might lose my job. But here you don't lose your job when you do that.'* This 'holding back' attitude appears to be part of the patriarchal strain in the workforce where more senior members are accorded respect. In his study of Filipino workers' political culture, Arturo Nuera concludes that certain Filipino values weaken democracy in the workplace - passivity, individualism, personalism, *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude), and *ningas cogon* attitude (the initial commitment dies out). Some workers are also *sip-sip* (sycophantic) and *balimbing* (disloyal, indecisive) or they spy on other workers to secure their own economic benefit from management.<sup>52</sup> This type of working environment appears to be absent in Australia.

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<sup>51</sup> Vickers, *Freedom of Speech and Employment*.

The women in this study value highly the democratic processes involved in reporting or filing complaints against what they perceive to be racial discrimination or harassment in the workplace. For example, Hana said, '*I have avenues to make an appeal.*' Filomena complained about the treatment she experienced as an overseas-trained teacher by her supervisor who urged her to resign instead of going through the improvement program. Magdalena, a civic worker in Sydney, observes that Filipinos seem to utilise the rights guaranteed by Australian citizenship and join labour unions to protect their rights and welfare as readily as any Australian.<sup>53</sup> This reflects the democratic orientation of Filipino women from a similar experience in the Philippines. For example, union membership amongst working women in the Philippines is nearly the same as men.<sup>54</sup>

Australian citizenship appears to be significant in how Filipino women deal with racial discrimination. Their status as Australian citizens empowers them to act and demand just treatment at work. Knowledge of the rights of Australian citizenship prepares them to counter possible racial harassment by 'white' employees. But their newfound political identity as Australian citizens is not the 'all-saving' mechanism with which they negotiate themselves out of a marginal status at work. Their Australian citizenship is combined with other socio-cultural characteristics of Filipinos in Australia. These include their proficiency in the English language and personal autonomy. In her study on Italian, Yugoslav and Vietnamese women in Australia, Cheryl Lange observes that 'first generation immigrants who do not speak English may experience a loss of power and sense of alienation' when they rely on others to speak for them.<sup>55</sup> She claims that the English language is 'one of the strongest factors in social exclusion from non-English speaking backgrounds.'<sup>56</sup> Jeannie Martin also notes that language problems are 'one of the greatest hurdles' in articulating the rights of immigrant women in the workplace.<sup>57</sup> This is not the case for Filipino women

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<sup>52</sup> Nuera, 'Workers' Political Culture' in Diokno, *Philippine Democracy Agenda*, p 235.

<sup>53</sup> Immigrant workers from non-English speaking countries form a large portion of union membership in Australia. See Bertone et al, 'Immigrant Workers and Australian Trade Unions,' *The International Migration Review* 29(3), Fall 1995, p 722.

<sup>54</sup> Arroyo, 'Survey Data on Gender Differences,' *Social Weather Bulletin* 91-8, April 1991, p 3.

<sup>55</sup> Lange, 'Anglo-centrism in Multicultural Australia' in Crawford and Maddern, *Women as Australian Citizens*, pp 207-208.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*, p 208.

<sup>57</sup> Martin, *Non-English Speaking Women*, p 118.

in Australia. Their knowledge of English enables them to negotiate for the improvement of their status at work. Proficiency in the English language is a form of power for Filipino women. It allows them to facilitate relations with 'white' Australians and is also a medium to negotiate their space at work; to be treated with respect as equal members. According to Sally, Filipinos are quite 'outspoken' and they know what their employers expect from them at work. She said, *'in some instances I know that an Asian is being looked down in general. But I don't think so for Filipinos because we can speak English.'* For Rama, *'I'm lucky that I have not experienced discrimination, maybe because our workplace is multicultural in nature and I can speak English.'* Carmina said, *'since we were young [my mother] wants us to speak English. So, when I came to Australia the English language was not a problem. I could easily communicate.'* Rama observes that *'the Filipina has the advantage because she knows how to fight. Many Filipino women do not allow others to belittle them. Some just stay quiet about [their experiences of discrimination]. They face a language barrier. So, those Filipinos who know how to fight for themselves almost certainly know the language. They are even involved in verbal fights because they know they can answer back. They understand [what's going on].'* Anita said, *'difficulties set in when [a person] cannot mingle with [white] people...cannot express [oneself]...I have that quality. I can talk. I can express myself...It doesn't matter whether you're Australian or not [and] you don't speak English...that is the barrier.'*

The women in this study have shown strength in their personal character. They are prepared to personally deal with racial prejudices in the workplace in their own ways. According to Ligaya, *'[One] good medicine is to laugh at [my supervisor]. You smile... The more you smile [at her] the more [that she gets] cranky...What I'm going to do? Fight with them? I can't fight with them because they have power. [I] have no power. But if they are [below] the belt, I say something to them. Because that's not [right]... this is what we're talking about now [citizenship]. Because [I'm] Australian now and...we're the same now... I just stand up for myself.'* Monica tells of her experience on how she dealt with discrimination because of her accent. She said, *'I'm the person that cannot be put down. So the more they tease me the more I make my English funnier for them...And then I say some*

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*words in our language, in Pilipino, that they will not understand. So, instead of them making me angry I make them angry.'*

These Filipino women have shown that individual personality and character are important attributes in the workplace. According to Anita, *you're being an individual [aside from citizenship] is another thing...I mean that I'm speaking for myself. I'm not [going to] let anybody take a shit out of me. No way! I want to show them that even if I'm Asian, with darker skin, I know better than them.'* She identifies her position as different from the white Australians with whom she interacts at work. Anita affirms that *'they don't say it but you feel that they looked down [on] you because you are second class citizen. But, if you really fight it out, they're okay...If you answer them back, they also know where they stand...I'm experienced and [have] been with my work for a long time. There are some young Australians who came to work. If I will compare myself to them, I am more than qualified...Why would I allow them to push me around just because they are Australians? No. And I let them know that. It works.'* Rama said, *'I'm also assertive if I know that I'm right. I'm one person who is very assertive. I listen and I don't want to embarrass myself to any other people. So, before I open my mouth I have to think twice about the point being discussed. How the people will respect you depends upon you...If you let the other people to step on you that's your fault. But if you know how to be assertive then people will respect you.'* For Luningning, *'it depends on your attitude to people. If you are friendly and you have good rapport with them. [Sometimes] you meet certain people that will react to you [because you belong to a different race].'* According to Jamila, *'racism is an old thing [in Australia]. I've experienced a lot of discrimination. But you need to be assertive. You need to say no and put your foot down. That, hey, we're the same level. We have the same ticket...not [only] because of citizenship...I came here and I [was] easily intimidated. Now, I'm being bold. I can stand on my feet. But, at the same time I'm patient ...I can flow easy.'* To 'flow easy' means that she is able to adjust well to different situations but is able to stand up for her rights. So is Maria: *'[I] just go along with the flow and then you have to say whatever you [want to] say.'* Anita utilises the Filipino value of *pakikisama* (going along with) in the workplace. *'I have no problem with my officemates. I have worked in an American company...for seventeen years...It's really your*

*personal relationship...Because there will always be people who will try and dare to belittle you...But if they get to know you and you talk to them...it's the way how you deal with these people.'* Their responses to workplace harassment or discrimination also differ as the years go by. Maria said, *'the first few months...you sort [of feel] different. But through the years you sort of get used to it...That doesn't worry me anymore.'* For Sally, *'if they won't accept you, who cares?'*

Personal characteristics at work are also related to their upbringing in the Philippines. Carmina said, *'I've never really felt any major difficulty... [that] I am brown. I'm still a human being. But...all I can say is...it depends also [on your] upbringing...If you feel that you can do it, you can do it...Australians as a whole, whether its Italian, Lebanese or pure Aussies will back-off [if you also show them that you are brave].'* For Maria, *'it's just my professional background that [I] can blend in really easy and...[my] upbringing...back home that you have to socialise.'* Hana, privately employed in Wollongong, confided that it's more her personality that makes her counter offensive behaviour, even that she receives from fellow Filipinos.

Although racial discrimination is a reality in the daily lives of Filipino women, these women perceive it to be more a test of their individual resilience in adapting to the Australian workplace rather than as a negative constraint in their pursuit of economic well being. Eva said, *'I can see people that have weaknesses and...strengths...I can see myself as one of them...If I remain...weak then I won't succeed...I'm one of those people that came over here [in Australia] who will succeed [eventually]. So, I believe there's always a glimpse of success in some difficulty.'* The majority of the women have positively responded to racial prejudice or discrimination in the workplace. They see it as a social fact that comes with migration to Australia. They have pointed out that discrimination also exists amongst Filipinos of different ethnic, regional or religious background in the Philippines. Ligaya said, *'even in the Philippines there are people who will step on you and you're not different from them.'* Racism appears to be a minor issue to deal with as compared to what lies ahead in their future in Australia.



Although Australian citizenship provides a 'common political identity' amongst the women in this study with the 'white' Australians, this identity would not be effective in negotiating racial discrimination in the workplace without human agency. Individuals make the choice of whether to succumb to racial abuse or be prepared to deal with it. Based on the narratives, these women choose to prepare themselves to counter racial prejudices at work.

### C. Other Constraints

Aside from non-recognition of qualifications, underemployment and racial discrimination, there are other constraints faced by these Filipino women in undertaking paid work based on gender. These include the continued expectation of their domestic and caring work at home and the stereotypical construction of the 'Filipina' in Australia.

#### 1. *Gender Roles*

Like many women in other capitalist states, Filipino women in Australia combine paid work and caring work at home.<sup>58</sup> Women in the paid work force are 'the great and ongoing social revolution' of contemporary society but they are beset by the difficulty of balancing work and home.<sup>59</sup> They find this 'double bind' or 'double day' more of a constraint in Australia as compared to a similar situation in the Philippines. According to Anita, *'I do not have a babysitter and a maid [in Australia]... We have two children... [my husband and I work] full time...if [I] want to eat, [I] do it myself.'*

The absence of the extended family in Australia contributes to the difficulty in performing both paid work and caring roles to children, husbands as well as parents living with them. This has often resulted in doing part-time work<sup>60</sup> while the children is not of

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<sup>58</sup> Sassoon, 'Introduction' in Sassoon, *Women and the State*, p 18.

<sup>59</sup> Healey, *Work and Families*, p 3.

<sup>60</sup> There are four regimes of part-time employment: 'the gender-roles model, which assumes that women work part-time because they are secondary earners or have children at home;' the responsive firms model which is based on 'the firms' response to workers' demands for fewer working hours;' the optimal staffing model which 'assumes that employers will create part-time jobs to the demand for time-related services;' and 'the secondary labor market model which assumes job insecurity, poor wages, and poor working conditions.' In Australia, the gender roles model mainly describes female employment in part-time work. See Tijdens,

school age or leaving work altogether when the husband retires. Monica said, *'we have extended families in the Philippines...you can call [them]. I cannot do this job [so] can you do it for me?'* According to Carmina, *'I have many people to give me support [in the Philippines]...I grew up with maids to do the cooking, ironing, washing and the like...After a day's work there's already food in the table. While here [in Australia] I have to hurry home because I need to cook and help the kids with their homework or whatever. ..Sometimes I feel crazy...It has always been that women do the housework.'* In the absence of familial support or maids, some Filipino women in this study rely on their Filipino friends to help them in housework and occasional minding of their children. Ramona confides that her Filipina friends in the community group took turns in cooking meals when she became ill. She said, *'I had flu for nearly three weeks. I don't have a maid and...my husband can't cook...So, I have to ask my friends to cook some food for me.'* Ackers has noted that this kind of 'resource framework' in the migrant women's lives allow them to combine work at home and outside.<sup>61</sup>

According to Pilar, *'I find it difficult at first...to do all the work...There's no one here [in Australia]. Just yourself...I have to wake up very early in the morning or [in the] middle of the night [to prepare my husband's meals because of work shifts].'* Carmina said, *'you want to work but you can't work full time...especially if you have kids...Unlike in the Philippines... there's nobody [here with me in Australia] and that's the biggest problem I noticed not only [to] myself with my own family but other foreigners I know [of]. They also have the same problem [of] who will look after the kids.'* Pranee Liamputtong has also shown in her study on migrant Thai women that they find the absence of kinship support in rearing children quite difficult in Australia.<sup>62</sup> For Carmina, *'my husband and I started working part-time when the kids were very young...I did the morning shift. It was very difficult then. We're always fighting...There was a time we're about to divorce. I worked from seven [in the morning] up to two [in the afternoon]. I still have to walk home. When I reached home my husband goes to work and be back by eleven thirty at night. I*

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<sup>61</sup> 'Gender Roles and Labor-Use Strategies,' *Feminist Economics* 8(1), March 2002, p 71; Aspin, *The Family*, p 167.

<sup>62</sup> Ackers, *op cit*, p 38.

*was already very tired.'*

The pressure to stay at home and not engage in paid work is felt by women with school-aged children. Sometimes being married to an older Australian who is receiving a pension, like Nora, limits the opportunities for seeking full time employment. This is because the wife's income reduces the amount of husband's pension. Nora said, '*I told him that I'd like to work [or] I will leave him... [But I also] pity him. I don't want him to think that I just used him to come [to Australia]...If not for his ill health I would have left [him] a long time ago.*' A year after my interview Nora informed me that she has finally opted for a de-facto separation to do the things denied to her like working and driving a car, yet at the same time looking after the needs of her husband from time to time. She now lives with her children.

Women are, basically, considered as dependents of the male breadwinner. According to Sylvia Walby, the patriarchal structure of production relations exists where the unwaged women's labour is 'expropriated by their husbands in exchange of maintenance.'<sup>63</sup> Women's caring work at home becomes a necessary element for the state's basis on measuring men's worth. Jordan, Redley and James note that men's employment allows them access to property, including employment and pension rights, and exercise power through women's economic dependence.<sup>64</sup> Men as the breadwinner are institutionalized in the welfare state.<sup>65</sup> The man's wage is, therefore, a family wage to support himself and his dependents.<sup>66</sup> The woman's earnings, on the other hand, are considered supplemental.<sup>67</sup> Hence, men take full time employment and women with younger children resort to part time work. This is what Janneke Plantenga calls the 'one-

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<sup>62</sup> Liamputtong, 'Motherhood and the Challenge of Immigrant Mothers,' *Families in Society* 82(2), March/April 2001, pp 195-201.

<sup>63</sup> Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, p 21.

<sup>64</sup> Jordan et al, *Putting the Family First*, p 163.

<sup>65</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 187. See also Cass, 'Citizenship, Work, and Welfare,' *Social Politics* 1(1), Spring 1994, p 108; Bryson, 'The Australian Patriarchal Family' in Encel and Bryson, *Australian Society*, p 113.

<sup>66</sup> Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, p 137.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*, p 138.

and-a-half' income model similar to the Dutch welfare system.<sup>68</sup>

Janeen Baxter concludes in her study on household patterns in Australia that 'men have not significantly increased their domestic involvement in recent years despite married women's increased participation in paid work.'<sup>69</sup> This is also true for many of the Filipino women in this study. Eva said, '*[some] Filipino husbands still continue to live in the way how Filipino men live in our country then...it will be different [for Filipino women who are working].*' Many Filipino women married to Australians experience the same situation. Even if the women's income is higher than their husbands they continue to be mainly responsible for domestic and caring work. Pateman contends that married women workers undertake 'two shifts,' one at work and the one at home.<sup>70</sup> A woman in paid employment 'never ceases to be a housewife' but becomes a 'working wife.'<sup>71</sup> This term suggests that a woman's first responsibility is her role at home while that of a paid worker is secondary.<sup>72</sup> Their responsibility for care work becomes an obstacle for exercising full citizenship.<sup>73</sup>

On the other hand, some Filipino women become more appreciative of their caring roles in Australia in comparison to their life in the Philippines. Hiraya said, '*I think my role as a wife and mother is [useful] here than in the Philippines because...we rely [to maids] most [of the time]. So as a mother I tend to work more, spend more time in the office because I was dependent [on someone to] look after [my children]. Unlike here, I have to leave work early [at] five to be with my children.*' Filipino women like Hiraya have come to negotiate their dual roles at work and at home. They have resorted to time management, use of modern technology and insisted on a transformation of gender roles.

Time management is an important aspect of their daily lives in Australia. To be

<sup>68</sup> Plantenga 'Double Lives' in Bussenaker and Voet, *Gender, Participation and Citizenship in Netherlands*, p 63.

<sup>69</sup> Baxter, 'Moving Towards Equality?' in Gatens and Mackinnon, *Gender and Institutions*, p 70. See also Sirianni and Negrey, 'Working Time as Gendered Time,' *Feminist Economics* 6(1), March 2000, p 59.

<sup>70</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 221.

<sup>71</sup> Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, p 140.

<sup>72</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 221.

<sup>73</sup> See Charles, *Feminism, the State and Social Policy*, p 22.

conscious of the time involved in a particular task allows them to do more in a given period. They perceive Australian society as 'time-bound' - being late means missing the bus or train. The use of technology has eased some of the domestic burdens of Filipino women. As Anita said, '*we have a technology in Australia to do things for us even if we do not have a maid.*' Paige Edley reveals in her study that employed mothers use technology to achieve some balance in their dual roles in paid work and caring work.<sup>74</sup> For example, the use of communication technology in checking their children's well-being is now widespread. Perhaps, the most significant negotiation is the changing gender roles for their husbands. Eva remarks that '*back home husbands are the [boss]. You have to serve them. When they come from work they just sit down. But [not here in Australia]. My husband and [I] share work at home because we both work full time...either he's cooking or doing the washing and I clean up...we help [each other]...mowing the lawn...There's no sitting down while someone is doing this or that...It's [un]like the Filipino way where husbands are not [expected] to hang clothes after washing. My husband does that.*' For Maria, '*because of the hectic schedule...you don't really stick to the Filipino culture. You have to sort of modify your way of life because of the culture...and ...schedule here [in Australia].*' These Filipino women appear to have adjusted to their life in Australia by negotiating their roles at home. By doing this, they have challenged the masculine image of their husbands 'who depend[s] on receiving care, but is never supposed to give care.'<sup>75</sup> Trudie Knijn observes that combining care and work for men 'would be a powerful tool to improve the citizen status and rights' of women care-givers.<sup>76</sup> The idea of equal parenting and equal participation in domestic activities is, Pateman notes, a 'radical change' in the meaning of work and the practise of citizenship.<sup>77</sup>

## 2. Social Construct of 'Filipina'

Another constraint Filipino women face at work is the effect of the social construction of the 'Filipina' in Australia, particularly related to the image of the mail-

<sup>74</sup> Edley, 'Technology, Employed Mothers, and Corporate Colonization of the Lifeworld,' *Women & Language* 24(2), September 2001, p 28(8).

<sup>75</sup> Knijn, 'Participation Through Care?' in Bussemaker and Voet, *Gender, Participation and Citizenship in Netherlands*, p 77.

<sup>76</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>77</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 135.

order bride.<sup>78</sup> Filipino women are represented in this image and, as Yuval-Davis notes, this image is equated with 'perfect wives' – beautiful, docile, hardworking and dependent- who marry isolated and timid western men.<sup>79</sup> This image persists because of the high incidence of intermarriages between Filipinas and Australian nationals.<sup>80</sup> Broadly, there are three categories of 'mail-order' brides. First, these are the women who are clients of introduction agencies and their 'pen pal' suitors visit the Philippines to marry them. Second, these women are employed in the Philippine tourist industry such as guides, receptionists, hospitality girls (a euphemism for bar girls) who meet and consequently marry Australian men. Third, they are the students or professionals who marry Australian men working or studying in the Philippines.<sup>81</sup> If these categories are applied to Filipinas married to Australian nationals in this study, most can be classified as mail-order brides. But they are not. None consider themselves as one. These categories, particularly the last two, are unqualified, if not flawed in the understanding of who constitutes a mail-order bride. Following these categories is tantamount to saying that Filipinas married to Australians are mail-order brides. Recently, the image of a mail-order bride has been extended to other Asian women in Australia.<sup>82</sup> By interpolation, Filipinas married to any foreign nationals form part of this pejorative construction. Or, for that matter, any woman married to an alien.

This image has become a personal issue for many of the women who often face this stereotype from their Australian associates at work. Maria, working as a nurse in Sydney, remarks that *'I always defend myself that not all Filipinos are the same. It's an individual thing...I always say that I came here as a skilled migrant...I wasn't being an ordered bride!'* Carmina said, *'they [white co-worker] often ask me "is your husband is white?" They generalise that we [Filipinos] are here because we married a foreigner...They always*

<sup>78</sup> See Murdoch, 'A Proud Woman of the Philippines,' *Age* 28 June 1993, p 4.

<sup>79</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 52. See also Mango, 'Brides by Mail Order,' *Sydney Morning Herald* 4 September 1988, p 31.

<sup>80</sup> See Channell, *Filipinos in Adelaide*, pp 29-32; Carvana, *Filipinos in Western Sydney*, p 9; Cunneen and Stubbs, *Gender, 'Race' and International Relations*, p 13; Collins, 'Asian Migration to Australia' in Cohen, *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, p 377; Fincher et al, *Gender Equity and Australian Immigration Policy*, pp 68-71.

<sup>81</sup> Chuah et al, 'Does Australia Have a Filipina Brides Problem?' *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 22(4), November 1987, p 577.

<sup>82</sup> Matzahn and Garcia, 'Mail Order Brides in Australia,' *Women in Action* 3(1), Spring 1993, pp 37-40.

*ask how I came here...Mostly, they think that our husbands are white...I think this [is] more of a challenge to me because...I'm not like them and...different from them...I mean there's nothing wrong with marrying a foreigner...But, set[ting] this aside, [I] have other things to prove...not that [it] doesn't matter.'* For Pilar, 'others think that [a] Filipina in Australia comes from prostitution [in the Philippines].' Linaw had to stand up for her personal dignity at work when a male co-worker used abusive language: 'It's really ugly to hear what he was saying...I am not used to that kind of language. I'm not what he thinks I am in the Philippines...He thought...that [working as a prostitute] was my job in the Philippines...Actually I'm not the only one at work he is talking about in a foul language. So, he thinks he can get away with it. Not with me.' In her study of the Filipino community in the Illawarra, Daisy Kruizinga indicates the negative effects of the stereotypical media portrayal of Filipino women on their self-esteem and general acceptance in Australian society.<sup>83</sup> Other researches have documented the impact of negative stereotypes on individuals.<sup>84</sup>

The 'intermeshing of sexism and racism' is, Yuval-Davis notes, particularly significant in the lives of ethnic minority women.<sup>85</sup> The construction of the 'mail-order' bride appears to be identified with one ethnic group, Filipinos. The so-called 'white' Australian men with Filipina 'brides' benefit from this image as it enhances their superiority and power over these women. According to Richard Jenkins, this power and authority are 'implicated in the social construction of ethnic and other identities.'<sup>86</sup>

There are certain characteristics related to the image of the 'Filipino bride' which add pressure to the role of Filipino women doing paid work. Rajah said, 'Australian men are looking for Filipinas as wives because they are nice and honest. They are not outgoing...[but] loving [to their] husbands...[and] industrious. Some Australians are lazy. [Australian women are] socialites. Their husbands do not trust them. They have affairs...Australian men do not only go for Filipinas who are physically attractive but also

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<sup>83</sup> Kruizinga, *op cit*, p 34.

<sup>84</sup> See Pittinsky et al, 'Identity Adaptiveness,' *Journal of Social Issues* Fall 1999, p 13.

<sup>85</sup> Cited in Wilford, 'Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism' in Wilford and Miller, *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p 15.

*if they are kind...Being industrious is number one.* Donita confirms from her involvement in the Filipino community in Wollongong that *'most [Australian] men who are married to Filipinos are either their second wife or third [wife]. ...So, they are probably looking for a partner...who's not the same as their ex-wife.'* Filipino women married to Australian men sometimes feel they have to work doubly hard to maintain a home and work although most of them in this study are engaged in occasional part-time work. The representation of Filipino women as 'perfect marriage partners,' Chris Cunneen and Julie Stubbs conclude in their study, reinforces the image of Filipino women as 'loyal and obedient women within the mould of a 'traditional wife.'<sup>87</sup> This is, Roces notes, a form of victimization of some Filipinas married to Australian men with a 'slave' or 'maid mentality' towards their wives.<sup>88</sup> This implies that some Australian nationals expect these 'woman qualities' in their Filipina wives which, perhaps, force these women to prioritise their home duties over paid work.

This argument, however, does not negate the existence of possible Filipino 'mail-order' brides in Australia. In fact, no statistical study has ever been ever conducted to ascertain their numbers. Filipino women are cast into this mould because of the high incidence of mixed marriages. But this 'phenomenon' is common in the Philippines where different races or ethnic groups intermarry. So, lumping Filipino women in Australia into this group image is, Young notes, a form of oppression. She states,

*Assuming an aggregate model of groups, some people think that social groups are invidious fictions, essentializing arbitrary features. From this point of view problems of prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and exclusion exist because some people mistakenly believe that group identification makes a difference to the capacities, temperament, or virtues of group members.*<sup>89</sup>

This manner of representing the 'Filipina' in Australia is a Damoclean sword that hangs

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<sup>86</sup> Jenkins, *op cit*, p 69.

<sup>87</sup> Cunneen and Stubbs, *op cit*, p 125.

<sup>88</sup> Roces, 'Kapit sa Patalim,' *LILA Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal* 7, 1998, pp 9.

<sup>89</sup> Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, p 46.



over their heads in their quest for full membership in the community. They have to negotiate this image in their daily lives because they are perennially marked as the ethnic group from which this image is constructed.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Practising Australian citizenship at work is a site of continuous negotiation for equality and recognition. Undertaking paid work suggests independence for these women and forms one basis from which they understand their citizenship status. In the case of Filipinas in this study, the exercise of Australian citizenship suggests that they have become active agents in search for work and their experiences at work. They face many institutional constraints, like the rigours of professional recognition, in ably participating in the Australian labour market. As such, many are underemployed. It appears that the 'dual and systematic racism and sexism' or the 'double jeopardy' affect them as racialised women.<sup>90</sup>

However, these constraints are equalised by their awareness of the rights of Australian citizenship. Their understanding of their perceived rights in the workplace, such as freedom of expression and redress of grievances, allows the Filipino women to negotiate their marginal and racialised status. This may not effect rapid social change in the workplace, such as the elimination of racial prejudices, but the individual actions of these women implies that possible change is at hand achieved in their own way.

Furthermore, immigration did not significantly change traditional orientation towards gender roles for women married to Australian men or Filipinos. For the women engaged in paid work, they have to deal with a 'double day.' Paid work becomes a secondary enterprise to caring work especially with under-school age children or pensioner husbands. But immigration and becoming an Australian citizen have significantly contributed to how women negotiate their roles at home and to their ability to share in the economic rewards of citizenship.

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<sup>90</sup> King, 'Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness' in Meyers, *Feminist Social Thought*, pp 220-222.

## VII

**PRACTISING AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY**

Another important aspect in the practise of Filipino women's citizenship is the community. The community represents the public aspect of citizenship. It symbolises the different types of women's involvement outside the home. Citizenship, Jet Bussemaker and Rian Voet aver, is not just 'sitting in a chair enjoying one's rights' but is a 'matter of participation, be it political participation, participation in the labour market, civil society or in another semi-public sphere.'<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I examine the participation of Filipino women in civil society as volunteers, members of community groups and voters.

I define the community as those spaces outside the confines of the home, excluding the workplace. Community, in this sense, is the 'fluid network of social relations' engaged in by Filipino women as citizens.<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, I explore two community spaces in which Filipino women exercise their citizenship in Australia: the school and community associations. These spaces are important in viewing the meaning of Australian citizenship in the daily lives of immigrant women. As women, they occupy the subject position as mothers who are oriented towards their children's activities in school. As immigrants, the Filipino women are associated with other Filipinos through their community groups.

This chapter also explores the women's exercise of the right to vote in terms of the process of voting for candidates during elections as a civic duty in the community. Electoral choices reflect agency and indicate the subjective practise of citizenship. The analysis of Filipino women's exercise of citizenship draws on Yuval-Davis' 'multi-tier construct.' The women in this study have multiple memberships as shown by their being part of the local Filipino community association based on their shared culture and origin and as a member of the larger body politic as citizens with civic duties.

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<sup>1</sup> Bussemaker and Voet, 'Introduction' in Bussemaker and Voet, *Gender, Participation and Citizenship in Netherlands*, p 2.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents Filipino women's participation in local schools. The second section focuses on their involvement in community associations. The third section analyses the process of voting for candidates during elections.

### A. School Participation

The women in this study have participated in various school activities as volunteers. I argue that this is another aspect of practising Australian citizenship. Involvement in civil society illustrates the 'remaking' of citizenship from passive citizenship brought about by limited formal participation to active citizenship such as involvement in volunteer activities.<sup>3</sup> Voluntary work is distinguished from paid work in three ways: first, it is not carried out for monetary gain; second, it is freely undertaken without coercion; and third, it benefits the community.<sup>4</sup> I show in this section that Filipino women in Australia engage in voluntary work in schools where their children are enrolled and welcome the opportunity to be involved as a way of integrating themselves and their families in the host society.

Hiraya speaks about her experience in Sydney: *'I was involved in the school of my children. I was involved in a community where they had... [a] multicultural school. So, they were getting parents from different backgrounds. I was most of the time involved with their sports activities. I organise. I help in taking the kids to the sports venue. I am sometimes involved with end-of-season trips.'* Anita, Salome and Rama also help in school projects. Other forms of involvement include reading and an hour or so at the canteen. Ramona said: *'I usually help the school by volunteering in the canteen or reading. I started volunteering when my first child started in kindergarten and that's when I became active participating in the school.'* For Pilar, *'when my youngest started school I felt so alone at home. I have no more company. I really cried... The house is empty whenever I go home...So, I find a way to keep myself busy. I went to school early before the time to pick-*

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<sup>2</sup> McDowell, *Gender, Identity & Place*, p 100.

<sup>3</sup> Brown et al, *Rhetorics of Welfare*, p 55.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, 'Volunteering, Capital of the Future?' *The UNESCO Courier* 54 (6), June 2001, p 21.

*up the children. Now, I told myself I'm doing this for nothing. Just sitting there. I asked around what I can do in school. So, I volunteered in the canteen, arts, and sports activities. I was in school every day.*' Salome remembers that *'I go and spent one hour to teach a child to read and [I] just corrected them...'* Hana did the same when she was laid off from work. Carla works as a volunteer in the tuck shop in a Waverly school in Bondi two days a week. She said, *'I spend more money when I'm working [there].'* This is because she lives quite far from the school and spends her own money for transportation and other related expenses. Yasmina and Jamila work in the canteen during their days off from the hospital to prepare the children's lunch orders. Yasmina adds, *'I volunteer to sell raffle tickets at work or I donate prizes for their raffle tickets if they need them.'* Salome also helped out in fundraising drives when her daughter was in primary grade. Rama said, *'I help in projects.'* And Maria, *'I do participate in international lunches...that you have to take food from your country and share it with the mothers in school.'* These women have shown active engagement in school activities. Some Filipino women, however, have minimal participation in school activities mainly because of their work schedule.

Volunteering in school affects the women's lives in Australia in three ways. First, it helps in the development of personal confidence and better communication skills. Second, it makes their children proud of their visible involvement at school. Third, it projects another image of Filipino women in the school community. Salome says that in doing volunteer work *'I just want to help the school. I thought it might make my child...sort of proud to have a mother that goes to school and helps...for myself, to meet Australian ladies ...To know the people, to have friends and not just...Filipinos but also white people... So that sort of helps me a bit...to have communication with the Australian [s].'* For Pilar: *'I'm proud of being the only Filipina member of the school council for three years. I am proud of myself. I also feel that my children are proud of me because of that. I raised the pride of the Filipina. That she is not what they think she is. I said to myself, we could do what the Australian can and be successful.'* To be able to present another aspect of Filipino women different from certain public misconceptions about them is perceived to be adding pride to a person's identity in the community. Carmina was also chosen to be part of the policy committee in school. She said, *'I was active in the school fiestas. They have policy*

*committees...Two mothers [were] chosen. I was one of [them]. And I think the kids... also appreciate that I was always there.'* Volunteering allows the women to enhance their personal skills, their role as mothers and contribute, in their own ways, to the goals of the school.

The women attend meetings when called for by the school. Attending meetings allows them to monitor their child's progress and also get to know their community. Eva said: *'We have the P[Parents] and C[Citizens]. I attend that. In the community they send pamphlets...about...what's happening in the community and to be aware...about vandalism...or just to lock your house... because of burglars...You have to be aware.'* Liwayway notes that there are many concerns raised during meetings: *'Proper study. Also the rights of children, [about] strangers...about sex.'* During this gathering they voice their concerns. Liwayway adds that *'you voice out your comments. You ask [them] if you have questions [about the school].'* Jamila observes, *'that's one of the good things about it here. I like it here.. I'm just a Filipino [but when] the principal or whoever would lead and say, any suggestions or anything?...[For example] I wanted to have a crossing...here for [children's] schools to cross the road. And so I put my hand up and they listen to you... So, if you ask questions or you want to bring inputs, they'll accept it, really. And then they will explain to you why it's not done and why it is so.'* The school meetings provide the women with an avenue to present their ideas, for example, about children's safety and understand how their suggestions are considered by school authorities. This process is participatory democracy at the micro-level. Expressing opinion in a public forum is a feature of an engaged citizenship.

As in the workplace, the school is also a place where the Filipino women in this study use their understanding of Australian citizenship in negotiating the racialised status of their children. Tamana went to the school to complain about the physical injuries of her son who got into a fight after being racially abused. She said, *'I went to the principal and told her about my son who got lot of bruises on the face. My son told me that one of his classmates called him a black nigger. I went to the teacher and he suspended his classmate for two weeks because that's not [a] very good name to call your classmate.'* Dama had a

similar experience: *'in school while they were young they call them Chinese, chung chung chung tinga. My children cried because there were not many Filipinos before. I told the teacher [about it]. They disciplined those kids bullying them.'* Studies have shown that about 20 per cent of children in Australia suffer from bullying or similar form of harassment.<sup>5</sup> This suggests that children of different ethnic background are prone to this kind of treatment at school. The Filipinas as mothers actively seek a resolution to this kind of abuse encountered by their children. They make use of the avenues offered by the school to exercise their right to protect their children and be treated fairly.

The school is an avenue for practising Australian citizenship by providing capacities for voluntary work for mothers. Its practise of holding meetings is a means for the mothers to update themselves about their children's learning, engage with community issues as well as their personal skills – particularly, confidence and communication skills. The school likewise enhances the agency of Filipino women in negotiating their children's racialised status. Although the school is a minor space in the conventional idea of political participation, this is the space recognised by Filipino women as having an impact on their exercise of Australian citizenship.

## **B. Community Organizations**

In this section, I discuss the perspectives of Filipino women on their involvement in Filipino community voluntary associations and other groups. These associations are considered an 'essential component of civil society and a training ground for active citizenship.'<sup>6</sup> Literature on the so-called third sector organizations as democratic suggests that voluntary associations strengthen active citizenship of members.<sup>7</sup> These groups reinvigorate the public sphere because of their practise of highly communicative democracy. Cohen and Rogers argue that voluntary associations with their organisational autonomy deepen and extend the democratic state.<sup>8</sup> Members of voluntary associations are

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<sup>5</sup> Healey, *Bullying and Youth Violence*, pp 1-5.

<sup>6</sup> Brown et al, *op cit*, p 52.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, pp 1, 57. The third sector refers to institutions which are 'neither part of the private economy nor aspects of government.'

<sup>8</sup> Cohen and Rogers, *Associations and Democracy*, pp 1-44.

said to 'develop habits of cooperation, solidarity and public spiritedness' and are sources of political skills and confidence.<sup>9</sup> I explore the participation of Filipino women in community organizations, mainly in Filipino groups, and its implications for their citizenship in Australia. I argue that their involvement signifies an agency which helps them define their space in the Australian multicultural society. Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis point out that multiculturalism allows immigrants a legitimate existence in society.<sup>10</sup> Subordinated groups like immigrants form an 'alternative public' providing, as Nancy Fraser notes, the 'awareness in which to undertake communicative processes' and 'deliberate on their needs, objectives and strategies.'<sup>11</sup> The creation of an 'alternative public[s]' or what Fraser terms as 'subaltern counterpublics' lead to a greater democracy.<sup>12</sup> By becoming involved in these organizations Filipino women develop their ability to pursue individual and collective goals in their adopted country.

Filipino groups represent community formation and, as Jon Cruz argues, a key to survival in a hostile environment.<sup>13</sup> Community formation is one strategy to deal with difficult social, political, economic and cultural conditions. He writes,

*Communities provide avenues for people to establish networks ...with whom they identify and...reflect on shared circumstances; they make possible a supportive social milieu... collective meanings and interests...they foster opportunities to define...needs; and they facilitate the mobilization of resources...including the strengthening and maintenance of emotional and psychic bonds, the pooling of economic assets, the organization of cultural activities, and the designing of political strategies to...promote the community's well-being.*<sup>14</sup>

I analyse the perspectives of the Filipino women about their involvement in different community organizations in Australia. First, I explore the significance and role of community organizations of which they are members; second, the type of activities in

<sup>9</sup> Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, pp 83-99.

<sup>10</sup> Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 'Introduction' in Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, *Unsettling Settler Societies*, p 27.

<sup>11</sup> Fraser, 'Politics, Culture, and the Public Sphere' in Nicholson and Seidman, *Social Postmodernism*, p 291.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, pp 291-292.

<sup>13</sup> Cruz, 'Filipino-American Community Organization in Washington' in Chan et al, *Peoples of Color in the American West*, p 235.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p 244.

which they participate; and third, the issues and concerns they have about Filipino community organizations. These three areas were central focuses in the women's community participation.

### 1. *Role of Community Associations*

In Australia, there are many Filipino community organizations.<sup>15</sup> A total of twenty-five associations, six regional associations and six religious associations were found in western Sydney in 1994.<sup>16</sup> These organizations have branches throughout the state.<sup>17</sup> In the Illawarra alone, there are seven Filipino organizations. The three major groups are the Australian-Philippine Association (APA),<sup>18</sup> Illawarra Filipino Women's Group (IFWG)<sup>19</sup> and the Club Filipino Illawarra (CFI).<sup>20</sup> These three organisations are open to any Filipino regardless of their religious affiliation or regional origin in the Philippines. Women

<sup>15</sup> Filipino organizations are organized into different levels- local, state and national. See York, 'Filipinos Make Their Mark,' *The Canberra Times* 3 August 1988, p 27. See also 'Philippine Community Associations & Organisations,' *The Philippines Bayanihan News* 4(6), June 2002, p 20.

<sup>16</sup> The peak associations in New South Wales include the Filipino Communities Council of Australia, Philippine Community Council of New South Wales, and Philippine-Australian Council in Support of Filipino Womens Inc., Filipino and Friends Parish Community Association (FFPCA), Philippine Australian Society for Senior Citizens, Filipino Business Council. Some are organised according to specific interests like sports, occupation, school, region as well as religion. Examples of these are Filipino Catholic Organization of Sydney (FILCOS), Filipino Women's Association Inc., Pilipino-Australian Teachers Association of New South Wales Inc. and the University of the Philippines Alumni Association. In 1990, the Philippine Community Council of New South Wales was organised to serve as an umbrella organization of about 90 per cent of local Filipino associations. See 'Spotlight on the Filipino Community,' *UNISON* 3, Summer 1995, p 7; Carvana, *Filipinos in Western Sydney*, pp 24-27; de los Reyes, 'FFPPCA Officers-Year 2000,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(3), April 2002, p 14; Icasiano, 'PASSCI Elections,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(9), September 2000, p 25; Cruzada-Nethercott, 'SAFSI-New Leadership,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(3), April 2002, p 25; 'Calling all Filipino Teachers and Trainers,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(10), October 2000, p 19.

<sup>17</sup> For example, the FILCOS has five centres located in Blacktown, North Shore, Murrumbidgee, Fairfield and Bankstown. See Morrissey et al, *Community Networks in the Western Sydney Region*, p 91.

<sup>18</sup> Of the three, this is the oldest Filipino community organization in the Illawarra established in the late 70s.

<sup>19</sup> The IFWG was initially organized in 1985 by the Illawarra Migrant Resource Centre and became independent in 1989. Its vision is to 'unify Filipinos and other minority migrant groups in the region while promoting friendship and harmony' and 'to give assistance and support to weave within the multi-cultural society of Australia.' The IFWG provides services in the following areas: information, support and referral for women and families; cultural and educational programs; arts, crafts, cooking and dressmaking activities; and income generating projects and employment programmes. As of 2001, there were more than 300 members. See Illawarra Filipino Women's Group, Inc., *The 5<sup>th</sup> LUZVIMINDA Queen Quest 2001*, p 1; IFWG, Inc. *Welfare Service* brochure.

<sup>20</sup> CFI was established in 1994 and is oriented towards sports, family affairs, children's activities, and charity fundraising. See Club Filipino Illawarra, Inc. *CFI Community News* 1(3) August 1996, p 2; *CFI Community News* 1(3); 1996, p 10.



comprise 65 per cent of membership in Filipino organisations.<sup>21</sup>

Mirasol observes that *'there is duplication of other clubs.'* Pe-Pua explains the proliferation of Filipino organizations in the context of giving importance to Filipino values and shared identity. Filipinos are oriented towards a group from birth and to old age.<sup>22</sup> Migrant Filipinos, Pe-Pua points out, 're-create' the social structures that they are familiar with in the Philippines in the new country; like forming a 'family' not along blood lines but through shared rituals. Membership in these 're-created families' answers the need of the Filipino value of *kapwa*<sup>23</sup> (literally, 'both' and 'fellow-being').<sup>24</sup> Thelma Burgonio-Watson notes that Filipinos re-create the value of community life by participating in an organised community group or 'by forming their [own] coalitions with people of the same linguistic or ethnic group.'<sup>25</sup> This contributes to the proliferation of Filipino groups in host countries. Establishing a support network around commonalities in culture and experiences is important in their lives as immigrants and as citizens. This has also been similarly observed in other migrant communities in Australia.<sup>26</sup>

Filipinos have many concerns that cannot be sustained by a single organization. According to Monica, they started the CFI because the parent organization, APA, was already too big and some of her friends shared a *'need for a smaller group.'* These organizations in the Illawarra coordinate with each other in project planning and implementation because of multiple memberships. Luningning said, *'I help out in the three groups [in Wollongong].'* Many Filipinas are members of different community associations at the same time and there is a need to schedule activities to avoid conflict. They also form coalitions with other groups on specific issues and projects.

The women in this study believe that community associations play a significant role in their lives in Australia. According to Donita *'the [APA] organization helps in*

<sup>21</sup> York, *op cit*, p 27.

<sup>22</sup> Pe-Pua, 'Bakit Kaya Maraming Organisasyong Pinoy?' *CFI Community News* 1(8), April 1998, p 2.

<sup>23</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>24</sup> The concept of *kapwa* in the context of Filipino usage is the 'unity of the self and others' or the 'recognition of shared identity.' See Enriquez, 'Kapwa' in Enriquez, *Philippine World-View*, p 11.

<sup>25</sup> Burgonio-Watson, 'Filipino Spirituality' in Root, *Filipino Americans*, p 328,

*developing a profile for the community...The Filipino community...[is] very active in social life, cultural activities [which] is appreciated by the government...It is one way of contributing to Australia and also a way of integrating into mainstream society.'* Luningning, an active community member, notes: *'The Women's Group is recognised in the Illawarra and even in Sydney because we are very active in many activities.'* In an interview with Lilia Mckinnon, president of IFWG, she said *'[we] participate in [the] mainstream community, for example, festivals organised by the Wollongong City Council or Shellharbour City Council. We participate...[we're] always there - the Filipino community. We participate in parades, the Folklorica, Viva la Gong, Harbour fest. We try to be involved although [there are] about five different Filipino organizations. We incorporate and participate under the Filipino community banner.'*<sup>27</sup> Filipinos, like other ethnic communities, have an increasing participation rate<sup>28</sup> - a representation of Australia as a cosmopolitan country consisting of diverse cultures. Donita said that the policy of multiculturalism *'applies to all migrant communities. It is like reinforcement from the government...to recognise and accept people from other ethnic background...and also it is a message to the public that, yes, Australia...is not just a white society. It's not a white society anymore. It is composed of people from other races.'* Through the community associations with an ethnic composition, the Filipino women are able to participate in the wider community as Australian citizens. This kind of participation signals recognition on their part that they belong in Australia.

Maria Koundoura addresses another effect of the multicultural policy of celebrating

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<sup>26</sup> See Vasta, 'The Politics of Community' in Vasta, *Citizenship, Community and Democracy*, p 117.

<sup>27</sup> Other community festivities include Battle of Nations, Multicultural Women's Business Festival and Harmony Day. Carnivale is the premier annual multicultural arts festival in New South Wales. The three major Filipino community organizations in the Illawarra have joined together as the United Filipino Organisations Illawarra (UFOI). See Farmer, 'APA Illawarra Welfare Service Awards,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 8(2), February 2001, p 3; 'Harmony Day 2001 for All Australians,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 8(1), January 2001, p 6; 'Carnivale-More Than A Festival,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(3) 20 February-20 March 2000, p 2; IFWG, *Monthly Meeting* 7 February 2001.

<sup>28</sup> 'Australia Day Ethnic Community Participation on the Increase,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(12), December 2000, p 5. The Philippine Community in NSW presented 'Selebrasyon 2001' as their contribution to the centenary celebrations of the Australian federation. This consisted of various activities on trade and investment, business tourism, arts and culture. These activities aimed to 'heighten awareness of how the Filipino community' was 'enriching Australian society.' See Bigornia, 'Selebrasyon

diversity through festivals. She argues this 'traps' ethnic groups into preserving their culture and moves them 'further away from the realities and transformation' in Australia.<sup>29</sup> In the case of Filipino women in this study, their participation in multicultural activities reflect the realities of Australian society - the presence of many cultures. They do not find themselves 'trapped' in their own culture *vis a vis* the 'Australian culture' because these two are not perceived to be contradictory. As their participation is coursed through the community groups, Filipino women are able to become involved in the wider community than the practise of the policy of multiculturalism itself.

Aside from representing the Filipino community in the multicultural Australian polity, the organizations enhance the capabilities of Filipino women in practising Australian citizenship by providing welfare assistance and a locus for particular activities aimed at developing women's potentials. Rama has been a member of APA for twenty years and has served in various official capacities. She said: *'this is a new country and there are lots of different things that they can experience here than in the Philippines. And while they are still very new, our welfare service can help them to have a better integration of their life ...in Australia.'* Donita comments that the *'different Filipino associations provide settlement assistance to newly arrived migrants on a lot of issues - employment, immigration, health, aged care, youth, housing and accommodation and income support.'* Natividad, a volunteer community worker in Wollongong, attests that *'Filipino organizations help in many ways. But the main welfare program is really to assist newly-arrived migrants. And those who have lived here quite long have some difficulties; those who are weak and cannot fight - they call the office to ask for advices or some help. We give referrals if needed. Because those who have stayed here long enough do not really know where to go. So, it's very easy for them to learn that we have a Filipino community that they can turn to. Whatever help they need except financial.'* In the APA, Rama said that *'our welfare worker has organised and run seminars, training and activities to help newly arrived Filipinas especially those living in remote places. Transportation has been arranged to transport these women to the Centre and back to access the different activities.'*

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2001-Celebrating the Centenary of the Australian Federation,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 8(1), January 2001, p 1.

<sup>29</sup> Koundoura, 'Multiculturalism or Multinationalism' in Bennett, *Multicultural States*, p 81.

*Newsletters, pamphlets and brochures are sent to women who cannot come to the Centre. Sometimes home visits are arranged.*' According to Eva, it is important to inform newcomers *'that there are Filipinos that are there to help them and be with them or listen to them.'* Salome agrees that, *'they help other Filipinas with problems and all that... So, in a way, I think it's good.'* The community associations serve as the first point of contact for assistance for many newly arrived migrants and to those who are already settled in Australia. Before dealing with government agencies, many Filipino women initially contact community workers or other members of the organization. In this way, voluntary associations are more effective in promoting general welfare than those carried out by public institutional hierarchies.<sup>30</sup>

Filipino groups serve as links between the people and the state. They articulate specific needs of the community. According to Monica, *'the association gets all the information from the government every time there [are] new things, new issues or new changes in the government. It's easier for the government if there's an association, which can spread it to its membership...it's easier...also for the migrants...to get information ...even in a small way we can help the government.'* Carla said, *'we talk about Filipinos' needs'* during their meetings in Sydney. Pilar in Wollongong also confides that *'if we have funding or we have little money, we think of projects [for Filipinos].'* Linaw observes that the organization devises projects that can be supported by the government. In 2000, the IFWG together with four Filipino organizations received a \$2,000 competitive grant from the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales (EAC-NSW) under the Community Development Grants Program for their projects.<sup>31</sup> In this set up, marginalised people are able to reach out to the state and express their particular needs through the community organisations.

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<sup>30</sup> Brown et al, *op cit*, p 58.

<sup>31</sup> 'Filipino Groups Get NSW Grants,' *The Philippines Bayanihan News* 2 (12), December 2000, p 2. The NSW government provides funding for social and community development project under the Area Assistance Scheme for non-profit organisations, usually for short term projects of up to four years. The IFWG received a \$40,000 grant under this scheme to 'develop supportive programs for Filipinos and other affiliated groups such as Thai, Malaysian, Indonesian and Maltese.' There is also a Women Grants Program by the Department of Women. See 'Grants to Assist Groups,' *Wollongong Advertiser* 26 April 2002, p 2; '2002 Women Grants Program-Call For Applications,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(5)

Within the community groups, women are able to exercise their multiple subject positions as Filipinos, as immigrants and as women through shared language, social and religious practices. Community organizations, then, serve as an expression of their Filipino identity. Carla observes that the *'Filipino community just reminds you of where you came from.'* Camuning reveals that she was indeed happy to join the Filipino Fiesta. She said, *'I said to myself, thank you! At last, there is a group with whom I can belong. The feeling that there are also Filipinos like me.'* Hiraya is a member of FILCOS in Sydney and believes that participation in activities reinforces teaching of cultural values. *'I believe it is the reason that I am still able to expose my children to the Filipino community. There [are] still a lot of Filipino values that I want my children to acquire.* The Filipino community groups provide the women with an avenue for transmitting cultural values to their children. It is by showing to their children born in Australia or who left the Philippines at a very young age the importance of their Filipino identity.

One of the important avenues for expressing identity is language. The women seek other Filipinos who speak their regional dialect. Ligaya notes that *'whenever Filipinas get together they speak Tagalog. That's their trait. They don't speak English no matter who is around.'* Jamila said, *'it's good to be with [other] Filipinos...You speak your own tongue freely...You don't need to think of what...word [to say]. It's good to have fun and be able to share, and there's always that bond.'* According to Bituin, the Filipino group is important because *'you can meet all those Filipina and speak Tagalog. Like not talking English all the time. I'm not really that comfortable [speaking English all the time].'* Asuncion further notes that *'these Filipino groups facilitate communication in their own language...you can rightly express yourself what's really in your heart to fellow Filipinos.'* Sagisag feels the same saying, *'when you go to this group you talk in your own language. You can shout to each other with no hard feelings. Because it's our "apir-apir" (a form of hand greeting)...We can do that. But if there's a white person in there...you have to behave yourself. You know the Filipino attitude that they just talk straight away...Not like the Australian way that if you want to talk to somebody they say "excuse me." You know you*

*have to do that. But [with] Filipino [s] you just barge in their communication and there's no problem.*' These women find that some of their peculiar ways do not correspond to the norms in Australia. They can freely express themselves amongst other Filipinos in the community groups but observe the so-called manners of the Australians when they are around. This is a way of accommodating Australian values as Australian citizens without losing their Filipino identity.

Filipino community groups are also organised according to where members came from in the Philippines. In Sydney, for example, there are associations of Cebuanos, Ilocanos, Capampangans, Batangueños, Cordilleran, and those from Pangasinan, amongst others.<sup>32</sup> Although these groups have their own regional dialect, English is the language used during meetings. In my observation of the business meetings conducted in Wollongong, the proceedings are conducted in English. Minutes of meetings are also written in English. In other words, the community groups provide the space for Filipinos who share the same regional dialect to come together and, during informal sessions, speak their own language. Otherwise, English is the language of formal discourse. This kind of practice is similar to what is observed in the Philippines where English is the official language in the conduct of business meetings and recordkeeping. In Australia, using the English language amongst a group of Filipinos with shared dialect is common in community groups. This can be viewed as becoming 'Australian' in practise.

Community groups also facilitate another aspect of community involvement amongst the women in this study. Through the women they meet in the community associations, Filipino women loosely band together to honour a particular saint. The popular devotions in Wollongong and Sydney include the Sto. Niño and Fatima.<sup>33</sup> Their involvement reflects a continuity of spiritual life in the Philippines. According to Linaw, 'I

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<sup>32</sup> Carvana, *op cit*, p 27. See also 'Calling All Capampangans from Pampanga and Tarlac,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 10(1), January 2003, p 29.

<sup>33</sup> A novena to honour Sto. Niño, patron saint of the Philippines, is held every first Friday of the month in St. Francis Cathedral Church. A novena to the Mother of Perpetual Help is organized every Wednesday at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Church. There is a regular pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy at Berrima. See 'Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy Penrose Park (Berrima),' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(6), 20-May-20 June 2000, p 32; de los Reyes, 'Devotion to Our Mother of

*miss what I was doing in the Philippines. I did not bring a rosary here. I started praying the rosary again when I joined the Fatima.*' Bituin describes the Fatima devotion: *'we bring the Fatima from house to house every weekend. Pray and socialise...just communicate to each other.'* They recite the rosary with a lead person. Prayers are followed by a feast prepared by the sponsor or *hermana*. While eating the members' engage in conversations ranging from the personal to the political. According to Natividad, *'mostly in these groups they just eat and, you know, catch up with what [are] the latest happenings.'* Tamana comments that *'I'm happy that I belong to this group. After the rosary we talk about our life. We also help each other especially those who are sick.'* Dayday said, *'we provide bereavement assistance even to those relatives in the Philippines.'* In this case, Filipino voluntary organizations, like their counterpart in the United States, foster the creation of in-group interpersonal relationships where Filipinos 'find a sense of belonging' in the new country.<sup>34</sup>

Involvement in religious activities is another form of community participation of Filipino women. Some women in this study are actively involved in their local churches, for example, serving as choir members. In my observation in one local church in the Illawarra, they have introduced some lively hymns during Sunday mass, often a reflection of contemporary church music in the Philippines. Honoring a patron saint's day in Australia also allows the women to re-create a similar ambiance found in the Philippines. By finding similar social institutions in Australia, in this case, Christianity, Filipino women are able to participate in one aspect of Australian community life.

The community associations also facilitate the formation of small mutual aid groups or *paluwagan* (meaning to 'loosen up' or to 'broaden') within its membership.<sup>35</sup> This involves the creation of a cooperative-style of saving money. Each member contributes a certain amount of money within a given period and release of payment is determined by lottery. The amount of money involved is decided individually and is not

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Perpetual Help,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 8(3), March 2001, p 14; *CFI Community News* 1(4), December 1996, p 10.

<sup>34</sup> Almirol, *Ethnic Identity and Social Negotiation*, p 191.

organised by the association itself. Remittances are given to an assigned person who releases the allocated money per schedule. There could be more than two *paluwagan* groups within an organization. The money is usually intended for a specific purpose - saving for a trip back home or a special occasion like birthdays. This practice provides the women with a support group in their lives as immigrants in Australia faced with financial limitations.

Filipino women view the community associations as a filter for political issues in Australia. Though the Filipino associations are considered as non-political, the women engage in informal discussions on Australian politics. According to Monica, *'sometimes you have to talk something political. It's not the association. It's the members who start it...So, what can you do? You have to answer their questions or find out the answers for them.'* She believes that such discussion builds on the exercise of citizenship in Australia. Monica shares her opinion about the political parties in Australia with the members of the group. Because she has always voted for the Labor Party, she said, *'I just do my own voice among our community. I voice out that this Labor Party is better than the Liberal. So, in our group in the community, not with Australians...I try to [influence other Filipinos to decide].'* But, Monica adds, *'not all will like your party so we discuss issues sometimes...In parties, birthday parties...get togethers... especially when election is coming...we discuss because not all the time...our friends are...in one party. We have different parties, too...sometimes ...we went to almost a fight. I [lost] a friend because of that party thing... I'm a bit careful now when I talk about insisting my opinion.'* According to Natividad, *'there are many ways to discuss about politics [and] election. Whenever there is a group around ...we have to discuss some things. They say...each party [has a stand] on this issue. So we were discussing that and [coming] up with our own stand. It's more on the policy...But sometimes there are people who belong to [a different] party but he's been working well for us. So, even if he is not a member of the party but you know his work...is helpful [to] the community, we pick him as our candidate for that position.'* The community groups allow the women to informally discuss Australian politics and

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<sup>35</sup> See Yu, 'Filipino Migration and Community Organizations in the United States,' *California Sociologist* 3(2), Summer 1980, pp 86-88.



contribute to the formation of public opinion within a small group of immigrants. This demonstrates that Filipino women in this study are abreast of the policy stands of the major political parties and current issues in Australia.

Discussions on politics occur before and after meetings. However, there are some issues that particularly affect them and these form part of the agenda. For example, the IFWG discusses community petitions during their meetings. According to Lilia Mckinnon, *'if there is a petition that is good for the [Filipino] community or the community in general...we gather signatures and we send that to Canberra...[or] to Sydney.'* However, in the APA, Rama said, *'we are non-political and non-sectarian. We do not talk about politics. If we got big projects we just invite politicians to come and become speakers or guests. But as much as possible we do not interfere with politics. I do not like influencing people who to vote for. That is an important freedom and right that one should exercise [and not the organisation].'* But Rama admits that, informally, *'we just say, who do you vote? That is so far about our politics and we don't discuss it or comment on the candidates.'* Based on these narratives, I suggest the community groups provide a venue the women to express concerns on issues affecting them as well as a place to gauge other member's opinions about their choices of electoral candidates.

Filipino community groups appear to have different perceptions on the role of their organisations in relation to elections and political issues. While formally not a political organisation, the community groups, admittedly, engage in political discussions or activities that reflect their political preferences. Inviting politicians to attend important occasions in the community association is an indication of this preference. The choice of politicians is not decided by the leadership but results from democratic consultations made within the management committees. Through the practise of involving local politicians in their activities, the community groups are able to interact with representatives of the government. In this way, the relation between the citizens and the state is actualised through the community activity.

The manner in which community groups associate with the political personalities in

Australia is quite similar to those found in the Philippines. The choice of candidates is based on their perceived contribution to the Filipino community and reflects the patron-client relationships in Philippine political culture. This refers to what Carl Landé notes as a 'dyadic relationship with superordinates and subordinates' aimed at 'particularistic goals' involving individuals instead of broad categories of persons.<sup>36</sup> Such relationships bind individuals of unequal status, wealth and power.<sup>37</sup> In Australia, patronage of certain politicians appears significant for the community groups. This provides an opportunity for community groups to present their capabilities and contributions to Australian society. Politicians who have made their presence felt in the Filipino community groups, often times, gain support during election. The Filipino value of *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) somehow contributes to their choice of candidates. Community groups are then able to provide the means for which members define their place in Australian society. The manner by which they express their relationship towards the state is the same as those found in the Philippines.

## 2. *Type of Activities*

Participation in community activities harnesses the potentials of individual members who are able to channel their skills to help others. As immigrants, building on knowledge and awareness of Australian society prepares them to face the problems and challenges of their new life. An informed person is one basis of forming active citizenship. Pilar believes that holding Australian citizenship does not guarantee an awareness of all the rights. Membership of a community association is a 'venue to know the rights' of citizenship. She said, *'you will learn all the rights through the workshops. You will know even those rights that you were unaware of. People from different organizations come and explain your rights. There are many things we need to know even if we are already Australian citizens.'* According to Nora, *'I learned many things, which I did not know about in the Philippines. It helped me greatly because I can now fight for my rights especially to people who looked down on me. I want to defend myself. I am not what I used to be. I just bow to them before. But now I can deal with them if necessary.'* Rosa relates

<sup>36</sup> Landé, 'Leadership and Followership in a Philippines' Village' in McAlister, *Southeast Asia*, p 294.

<sup>37</sup> Sidel, 'The Philippines: The Languages of Legitimation' in Alagappa, *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia*, p 145.

the experience of her friend: *'She has endured the verbal abuse of her white husband. He always confronts her that if not for him she would still be living in poverty in the Philippines. It's only when she joined the group that she realised she has rights. She started to ask around and gradually asserted her rights. She used to say yes all the time.'* Hiraya said, *'I think the way I look [at] the Filipino group that I'm involved with is more of support...for the women to practice their rights.'* The community group enables the women to understand more fully their status as Australian citizens. This understanding enhances their personal agency and directs possible action taken to deal with their particular situation.

Aside from hosting workshops and seminars on specific subjects, Filipino community organizations undertake various activities to develop technical and social skills for Filipino women. Members are taught some skills, craft and provided with a venue for the promotion of cultural activities.' In the IFWG, Lilia Mckinnon describes the weekly schedule: *'We have lots of activities especially on Thursday. We have the drop-in day and have classes. Drop-in day [is] for women who are not part of any classes like dressmaking, glass painting or knitting. We have lunch here. It's a drop-in day for them to come to talk and see their friends or exchanging what they cook or what they shop.'* Although membership is for women, the activities of the group involve the whole family. According to Mckinnon, *'we invite men even during our meetings, the husbands, so that they will see what we do.'* Membership is fluid across all organizations and never exclusive. Participation in any activities is encouraged even for non-Filipinos. The IFWG, for example, has twelve members coming from other ethnic groups.<sup>38</sup> Monica outlines the regular activities of CFI. *'We meet once a month, every Tuesday. [This is] only [for] women. No male. And then we have issues every time we meet. One time we have racism, the next time we have [a topic on] raising children. So, we have different issues all the time and then we set an hour for that and then twenty minutes for exercise and then twenty minutes for socialising...we always have a topic every time we meet.'* Based on their various activities, I argue the community groups provide the women with opportunities to

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<sup>38</sup> Illawarra Filipino Women's Group Inc., *The 5th Luzviminda Queen Quest 2001*, p 1. See also Moore, 'Book Looks at Communities,' *The Advertiser* 11 September 2002, p 2.

better understand their new life in Australia.

Rosa observes that although the women *'join cooking classes and craft the philosophy behind it is during these activities that they establish rapport and they get to share.'* According to Rama, Filipino women married to Australian men *'come to the [APA] Centre to socialise with other Filipinos.'* Jamila said, *'sometimes I pass by...because I've got something to do. I just pass by and they will be doing whatever. So, I just sort of...support [them] rather than doing it [craft].'* For Hiraya, *'the Filipino groups...are just support group for all of us...families and...mothers. Because if [I] voice out [my] worries and problems it's only, I think, Filipino women who can also understand [me]. Because [we] have the same background...If [I] voice out [my] problem to Australian women they will answer [me]...in a different way.'* Tamana said, *'[I] feel okay when [I] go out... [already] happy when [I] go home, it's lonely.'* Nora remarks that *'I'm happy with this organization. I'm happy because if you stay at home all your problems come into your head. That's why you are happy when you go out. You can come here [to the Women's Group] and talk, socialising or whatever. You're now happy when you go home. At least, you are able to express yourself. It's a different story when I'm alone. I feel that deep inside I have a big problem.'* Through her friends in the community association Nora finds people who can empathise with her, understand her situation of being married to an older Australian and the problems of having a mixed family. Dama notes that Filipino organizations are crucial to the lives of these immigrant women. Through them, *'they can meet other Filipinas and the organization serves as an outlet to cope with boredom and loneliness.'* In this way, the women are able to meet other Filipinos whom they perceive to have a better understanding on their personal concerns than Australian women. The friendships they cultivate through the community groups provide the women with support in negotiating their subject positions in Australia.

Raising the level of awareness, support and vigilance for others who have difficulty understanding Australian society enhances a form of 'active' citizenship for Filipino women. According to Luningning, *'I want to contribute to the community. Since you are*

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*now here it's better to help others, especially those who do not know where to go.'* Asuncion shares her feeling about her voluntary work at the Filipino Women's Group: *'you can't help it but you feel the need to help these Filipino women in Wollongong and to show them you know. You want to teach them [craft]. As far as I'm concerned, I want to help those who have problems. It's like you're being a Filipino comes first.'* Jamila said, *'lots of Filipino women here are not working. And they're stuck in their homes and there [are] lots of things that they can do...And at the same time, too, whatever talent... and skills can be used as an input to be able to give out to other Filipino ladies that are here in Australia. And that they can have sharing and unity and be able to know as a Filipino that you belong...I always do voluntary work in a lot of [ways] since I've been here...I have heaps of voluntary work to occupy my...time and so I don't get bored...It's my nature I think...I love to help. I love to do things productive. We need to be productive. We need to do something rather than be idle.'* Wagayway justifies her voluntary work as a *'good reason to get out from the house... I like to keep myself busy.'* According to Luningning, *'I am active in the community. When my husband was still alive he didn't want me to work. I [had] a job in the Philippines before. [Here] he told me not to work. So, I focus my time [on] the community.'* Active involvement in voluntary work allows the women to do something for themselves and for others which they perceive to be important in their lives in Australia. This also reflects on the women's agency to carve a niche for themselves when denied the opportunity to work by their husbands. They may be economically dependent but are 'politically' independent in this respect. According to Margaret Bell, voluntary action is entrenched in the cultures of the Asia Pacific region. And confirming her analysis, this study shows that migrant Filipino women seek to join community organizations 'simply to make a difference' in their personal lives.<sup>39</sup> These impacts on the lives of other women whom they encounter in the community groups as well.

Being a member of a community group also develops the confidence of Filipino women. Development of self-confidence is often times a 'pre-requisite for effective citizenship.'<sup>40</sup> It gives an 'empowering effect' to individual women in contrast to, Lister

<sup>39</sup> Bell, 'Civil Society & the Third Sector' in Farrar and Inglis, *Keeping it Together*, p 43.

<sup>40</sup> Lister, *Dilemmas in Engendering Citizenship*, p 8.

argues, the 'more formal kinds of political activity which can be more alienating than personally empowering.'<sup>41</sup> This feeling of confidence is nurtured by the types of activities participated in by Filipino women. Pilar says that for the past ten years she has attended almost all activities of the APA. She said, '*we still have a lot to learn from the association...I did folkdance, cooking, craft. Everything! I want to be involved not because I need something but to help. It also develops my self-esteem...I feel different now. I changed my lifestyle. I learned how to share with others...I learned how to be humble...I come to appreciate my being a woman in Australia. I am able to help other women especially those with problems in their homes. They come to me. I was not able to do this in the Philippines.*' Jamila also believes that '*it's good to belong to an organization because you'll be strong and somehow for you, too, you got a back up. You can run to someone [who] knows [about many aspects of Australia]...somehow it just builds up one's self-esteem as well.*' Monica said: '*In the Philippines I'm not an officer, just a follower. But, it's different here. I'm the leader. I didn't realise I have that potential.*' Many of them have represented their own groups in local radio programmes. For example, the community groups alternately anchor a Sunday Filipino program in 2VOX (106.9) FM (Mabuhay Radio) in the Illawarra.<sup>42</sup> Developing self-confidence and other personal traits prepares them for the challenges in the wider society. The women in this study have shown that their self-esteem is enhanced when they are able to help other women. In doing so, they find themselves in leadership positions or simply a person with recognised ability in the community associations. By helping others, the women also empower themselves. An 'empowered' person embodies the attributes for engaged citizenship moulded by their participation in community activities.

Filipino community organizations, like many other immigrant associations, are a 'source of cultural survival' where memories of the homeland come afresh in the various cultural activities.<sup>43</sup> In a study of a Filipino community in Salinas, California, Almirol has noted that people engage in social and recreational activities such as dances, potluck

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<sup>41</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>42</sup> These groups are the IFWG, APA, CFI and the Filipino Christian Group. See IFWG, *Minutes of the Monthly Meeting* 3 January 2001, p 2; IFWG, *AGM 2000*, p 9; CFI *Community News* 2(2), September 1999, p 9.

lunches, ticket raffles, beauty queen contests, sightseeing trips and parties.<sup>44</sup> The Filipinas in Wollongong and Sydney participate in the same type of activities (see Appendix C). Dayday attends the Queen Quest<sup>45</sup> and Talent Quest in Wollongong. Sagisag and Tamana tell of their preferred activity: *'sometimes we like dancing.'* Salome attends dancing activities because her ten-year-old daughter likes to. She said, *'we thought it might help her with other kids [overcome her shyness].* They attend the activities, she said, *'mainly because they have [a] family night out. You could bring your kids with you. Whereas if you go to Australian things kids are not allowed. So, in that way it was good because you could bring your kids and they could enjoy themselves...[I attend] because it involve [s] the whole family.'* Ramona also attends the Christmas Party and disco dancing together with her children. These women find the social activities to be 'child-friendly,' something they are used to in the Philippines.<sup>46</sup> The activities sponsored by community groups are organised by the women themselves and are similar to activities commonly undertaken in the Philippines. The women have also identified activities which involve their families in contrast to those organised by Australians which they perceive to cater to a more restricted public. In a way, the women have negotiated the kind of activities that they prefer to participate in and these are consistent with their role as mothers and their identity as Filipinos.

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<sup>43</sup> Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary*, p 76.

<sup>44</sup> Almirol, *op cit*, p 155. The Philippine-Australian Club in Sydney generally undertakes fundraising activities, functions and parties. The Philippine Community Council of NSW holds a biennial conference. Some beauty pageants undertaken in NSW are the Charity Queen and Miss Philippine Australia. Major activities culminate in the crowning of beauty queens. There is also the Filipino Talent Quest for those who can sing, dance or play a musical instrument. See Diaz, 'The Miss Philippine Independence 2002,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(5), June 2002, p 27; 'Spotlight on the Filipino Community,' *UNISON* 3, Summer 1995, p 7; 'Charity Queen 2000 and Miss Philippine Australia 2000 Winners at the 12<sup>th</sup> Grand Philippine Fiesta Sydney 2000,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(9), September 2000, p 13; 'The Filipino Talent Quest 2001 Schedule of Contest,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(12), December 2000, p 42; Morrissey et al, *op cit*, p 92.

<sup>45</sup> The Queen Quest was launched in 1997 and has been undertaken as an annual fundraising activity of the IFWG. See IFWG, *The 5<sup>th</sup> LUZVIMINDA Queen Quest*, p 4.

<sup>46</sup> Examples of activities undertaken by Filipino groups in Wollongong which involve the family include the Annual Family Picnic, Family Disco and sightseeing trips. Some activities are conducted in line with traditional Philippine festivities like Christmas caroling. See Ognilla, 'Illawarra and South Coast,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 8(1), January 2001, p 38; Australian Philippine Association Illawarra Incorporated, *Activities/Meetings Undertaken 2000-2001*; IFWG, *AGM 2000*, p 9; Collins and McKinnon, 'IFWG News Flash!!!' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(9), September 2000, p 16.

The Filipino community organisations also facilitate ties to their homeland. The CFI, for example, regularly sponsors a child in the Philippines through World Vision Australia.<sup>47</sup> It is a normal practice in Filipino associations to contribute money for bereavement assistance to families in the Philippines of members. Peggy Levitt, in her study of Miraflores in the Dominican Republic, notes that the migrants' organisations are 'transnational' as their activities, mainly in raising funds, are carried out across borders.<sup>48</sup> In this study, the community groups associated with by the Filipino women are transnational in scope as they provide financial assistance to certain people in the Philippines. This form of assistance is seen as most effective in helping those who have lost a loved one in the Philippines or alleviating the economic fate of some Filipinos through sponsorship and education of their children.

### 3. *Issues*

Participation in community associations is not without problems. There are certain issues raised by the women concerning community organizations that deter involvement in their activities. These include the nature of the organization, the type of projects undertaken, leadership and gossip.

A few women in this study expressed their indifference towards Filipino community groups because of their composition. Hana comments that '*Why would [I] join a purely Filipino organization? Why not join instead those groups with other nationalities? [I] will learn from their cultures.*' She adds that Filipino organizations '*gather and unite Filipinos for Independence Day and other occasions aimed at comradeship or friendship. Apart from that, it won't improve myself. I can do that by joining other groups.*' As an Australian citizen, she believes that it is more useful to become involved with organisations that reflect the multicultural character of Australian society.

Instead of actively participating in Filipino community organisations, some women

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<sup>47</sup> McCauley, 'Chairperson's Report,' *CFI Community News* 1(8), April 1998, p 4.

<sup>48</sup> Levitt, 'Transnational Villagers' in Stone and Dennis, *Race and Ethnicity*, p 263.



join multicultural or even mainstream organisations. Jamila has been involved with activities undertaken by the Red Cross, Global Care, St. Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army. During the flood in Wollongong in the late 1990s she said, *'my whole family went and clean-up houses, scrub walls, clean up floors, rip up carpets. We did that in our own time.'* She is also actively involved in a multicultural Christian Church and is 'reaching out' to the community. Jamila said, *'I have contacts with different nationalities in the area, like [the] Chilean community, Macedonian...[We] come together in unity, to raise funds for the needy...it's good to have your own people as well and at the same time be able to relate with different nationalities. And that's exciting because we're all [from] different countries.'* Hiraya is a member of the Youth for Christ in Sydney, mainly composed of Catholics of different ethnic backgrounds. Carla prepares homemade jams to be donated to different nursing homes in Sydney. Based on their involvement in non-Filipino community organisations, these women have shown that for them becoming Australian citizens mean engaging in activities organised and participated in by the wider Australian community.

Another issue raised by some women which affected their participation in community organizations was the type of activities organised by community associations in their locality. These activities limited their involvement in community groups. For example, women married to Filipinos could not identify with activities specifically geared towards mixed couples. Some of these include bi-cultural parenting, conflict resolution and legal matters.<sup>49</sup> Anita said, *'[Filipino] ladies coming over here [and] marrying Australians...and then they get divorced, they get fussed up and all that. They needed someone to run to. An association, a community group is very helpful...But I don't go to them. I have a happy life. If I [have] a miserable life, fine, I'll go...I'll go because they're Filipinos. I know they will help me.'* Maria expresses a similar idea: *It is important to Filipinos who are married to Australians. For Filipinos who are married to Filipinos, it doesn't really matter...I think it's more [for] the socialization...[For example] they are married to another culture [and] they live differently from Filipino...families. So, even the food is different because some Filipinas don't cook the same food as what we do. But with*

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<sup>49</sup> See Pe-Pua, *Towards Full Participation in Australian Society*, p 27.

*me it doesn't matter because we have got a Filipino household.*' These narratives reflect the two groups of Filipino women in this study. Some of the women married to Filipinos indicated this perception that community associations particularly target the needs or problems of Filipino women in cross-cultural marriages. This is true for some community groups with large membership of Filipino women married to Australian men. But these activities are not exclusive to them and are open to other Filipinos who find the activities relevant in their lives in Australia.

There are certain factors that shape the perception of some of the women married to Filipinos about the relevance of community associations in Australia. These include class and the presence of a family network in Australia. Class, in this case, refers to the level of education and skills that allow these women to readily integrate in the Australian labour force and society. The level of skills and education possessed by the women affects their understanding of whether they need a community association. Sally believes that: *'I can adapt to the lifestyle here in Australia so why should I go to these groups?'* For Maria: *'Being a qualified migrant, I just have to apply for a job. For those who haven't got educational qualification they sort of go to the Filipino community for help.'* Those Filipino women who migrated to Australia as skilled independents, for example nurses like Maria, can readily transfer their skills upon registration. They are, therefore, in the labour force and have no need of the community association to help them find work. Some women who do not possess professional qualifications are able to learn from the community organization about short-term courses to upgrade their skills. The IFWG, for example, facilitated the employment of its members during the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. In other words, women with professional qualifications feel independent and so do not need the support provided by community associations.

The presence of family network in Australia is another reason some women, like Sally, do not to rely on the community organization for support. Their kin usually provides guidance on many areas of settlement, whereas, women without any relatives in Australia go to the community groups which provide references for work or guarantee good

behaviour in applying for rental properties.<sup>50</sup> Hana said, *'Filipino women who do not know anything about Australia go to these groups.'* Women without the support of a family network tend to find such support in the community association. It is through them that women are able to negotiate their subject positions in the new country; whereas, women with existing familial support first cultivate this in lieu of community groups.

Other issues raised by some women affecting their affiliation with Filipino community groups pertain to leadership and gossip. Whether the women like or admire an association's leader affects their level of participation. Asuncion volunteers only if she likes the leadership of the organization: *'if you don't like the people who are running [the organization], you don't like what they're doing, you don't participate.'* Almirol in *Ethnic Identity and Social Negotiation* observes that due to the personalistic orientation of Filipino voluntary associations, leaders compete for power and prestige which, I would add, draws the loyalty and personal ties of members.<sup>51</sup> The choice of a leader implies that they are able to provide many kinds of support. Bituin comments that the President in her association is *'willing to help anytime and gives moral support.'* She believes this is very important. The assistance provided by leaders often exceeds their official capacities. There is too much expectation on the leadership position that, in order to meet these expectations, leaders often resort to the personal loyalties of selected members.

In the process of achieving the goals of a certain project, some women may have been left out and personal schisms develop. Hana said, *'sometimes Filipino groups engage in gossip and quarrel with each other.'* According to Dayday, some members instigate trouble and are jealous. She said, *'they compete with each other, who is powerful, who has a higher status or who will lead.'* The more common reason, Liwayway and Rajah note, is that *'there is too much politics in Filipino organizations.'* Dayday believes that some disagreements during discussion continue even after the meeting: *'At times favouritism or those whose suggestion was not accepted or approved during the meeting leave the*

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<sup>50</sup> Real estate agencies usually require references for private rental accommodation. There is no obligation, however, on organizations to provide these references for their clients. See 'Rental References for Newly Arrived Migrants and Refugees,' *Phoenix* October 2001, p 4.

<sup>51</sup> Almirol, *op cit*, p 191.

*organization.*' This scenario is reflective of the Filipino political culture of personalism<sup>52</sup> and particularism. Alliances are built on personal connections and those who belong to a particular group usually follow the stand of their leader on an issue.

The personal schisms observed in Filipino community groups deter future involvement of some women. Carmina said: *'my life is already stressed out because you [have] to do everything. You do not want that extra burden [of indulging in gossip].'* According to Ligaya, *'sometimes they are just fighting and so I'd rather not go.'* Instead of becoming a part of an organised community group, other women confine themselves to small informal groups based on personal connections. Anita maintains her small circle of friends. Carmina stays with her loosely organised regional group. She said, *'just to make other people from...Leyte and Samar feel that they are not alone. That we are here... Our group [is] more on friendship because we all had connections from each other starting from where we came from.'* Rajah believes that *'it's better to have a few trusted friends in your life than be involved in such a big group.'* Based on these narratives, I argue some women form their own personal network after being exposed to the large community groups. This also reflects on the effect of having lived longer in Australia where their involvement in community groups is now perceived to be irrelevant in their lives.

However, regardless of the negative issues raised concerning community groups, there is a continuing support for their role in the lives of immigrant Filipino women in Australia. Some of the women are still actively involved in their preferred community association and have been since they arrived in Australia. Some women have found other ways to form their own small groups more attuned to their lives. But this does not mean total rejection of the Filipino community associations. In my observation, these women continue to participate in selected activities organised by community groups. In certain occasions, they patronise the activities organised by other Filipino groups located outside their locale.<sup>53</sup> This shows that despite not becoming actively involved in their own

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<sup>52</sup> Personality politics has been a feature in Filipino community organizations especially during elections. See Opilas, 'Engaging Australia,' *The Philippine Bayanihan News* 5(2), February 2003, p 8.

<sup>53</sup> Examples of these activities include the Philippine Independence Ball hosted by the Philippine Community Council of NSW, the *Flores de Mayo* organized by FFPCA, and the Grand Philippine Sydney Fiesta by

community groups, the women are still able to build camaraderie along shared cultural experiences.

The women in this study all agree that Filipino community organizations are important and play a significant role in the lives of Filipino women in Australia. They are especially important in how entitlements to rights are practised for some of them. Their participation in community groups generates social capital amongst immigrant women whose role is often overlooked in the 'white gaze.'<sup>54</sup> According to Lister, the involvement of women in community groups is 'citizenship in the republican sense' because it forms part of a 'public community and political participation.'<sup>55</sup> The community groups allow the women to practise citizenship in Australia in a different way from what is conventionally practised. The women have shown that, through their involvement in community associations and in other non-Filipino groups, they are able to 'engage in useful social contributions to the extent that they are able' in their adopted country.<sup>56</sup>

### C. Voting Choices

Elections are the formal avenue for citizen participation. This is the most studied area of political participation, concentrating on voting patterns for both men and women, in liberal democracies.<sup>57</sup> In Australia, the right to vote is a major determinant of citizenship which signifies the transition from permanent residency to Australian citizenship amongst immigrants.<sup>58</sup> The right to vote is an expression of political membership as well as a duty

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PASC. See de los Reyes, 'May Flower Procession-'Flores de Mayo,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 8(3), March 2001, p 14; 'Philippine Community Council of New South Wales, Inc. 104<sup>th</sup> Philippine Independence Dinner & Ball,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(3), April 2002, p 3; 'The Philippine Community Council of NSW Calendar of Activities,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(6), 20 May-20 June 2000, p 42.

<sup>54</sup> Social capital is defined as the 'features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action.' See Brown et al, *op cit*, p 195.

<sup>55</sup> Lister, *Dilemmas in Engendering Citizenship*, pp 5-8.

<sup>56</sup> See Young, *Intersecting Voices*, p 129.

<sup>57</sup> Randall, *Women and Politics*, p 35.

<sup>58</sup> Australian citizenship is a necessary qualification for voting stipulated in the *Electoral Act 1918*. See Rubenstein, 'Citizenship, Membership and Civic Virtue' in Davis, *Citizenship in Australia*, p 7; Rubenstein, *Australian Citizenship Law in Context*, pp 239-242; Rubenstein, *The High Court of Australia and the Legal Dimension of Citizenship*, p 26.

of citizenship since voting is compulsory for all qualified citizens in Australia.<sup>59</sup> In the absence of formal parliamentary representation of ethnic groups in Australia, I focus my discussion on the implications of electoral exercise amongst migrant Filipino women, particularly the process of voting for candidates.

The right to choose the representatives of the people in all tiers of government is an integral aspect of membership in a political community. Although in Australia this right is a form of coercion because of the punitive consequences of not voting, Filipino women consider their right to vote important in their identity as Australian citizens. According to Dayday, *'you can now vote if you are already an Australian citizen. If not, you can't vote.'* For Anita, *'that is a must when you become an Australian citizen.'* Based on their responses, I suggest that the penalty is not the major reason for exercising the vote but the right itself. As Lakandiwa, an active community worker, attests: *'Because this is where I live, I like to exercise my right to vote. I like to have a voice.'* Yasmina notes similarly: *'To vote as a citizen is to have a voice. First of all, we have...[the] right to vote, to express [our] will. Secondly, there is a fine for failure to vote. I mean, it's one way of spreading your right.'* Camuning confirms that *'you are given that chance to choose the candidate you like. So, why not?'* Liwayway declares that *'I have to make sure the right candidate is chosen.'* At times, she risks the fine because she does not believe in the candidate. Linaw even had to cut short her holiday in the Philippines just to cast her vote in the embassy. She said, *'of course, at least if you are an Australian citizen your vote is important. Sometimes a candidate wins by one vote. If you don't, you're wasting your right to vote.'* In this case, Filipino women have shown the importance of exercising their right to vote which they perceive contributes to the outcome of an election. By voting, they are able to express their voice which indicates a form of integration in Australian political affairs. Their attitude towards exercising the right to vote in Australia draws on a similar experience in the Philippines where such political activity is highly participated in by Filipino women.

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<sup>59</sup> Hill, 'On the Reasonableness of Compelling Citizens to "Vote,"' *Political Studies* 50, 2002, pp 80-101.

However, the manner in which such right is exercised must be analysed in the context of real political participation. According to Ramchander and Lakshmi in their study on women and politics in India, there are factors that influence the level of political involvement. These include personal and socio-economic factors. Personal factors include the 'individual's attitudes, beliefs, and personality traits.'<sup>60</sup> The socio-economic factors to consider are social class, occupation and gender.<sup>61</sup> In this section, the personal factors are prominent in the narratives of Filipino women. This correlates with the kind of political orientation they are familiar with in the Philippines. Pateman also raises another issue about the 'meaning of the vote' particularly whether women's vote is the same as men's vote in the context of consent.<sup>62</sup> The following discussion on the choice of electoral candidates show in terms of consent that some Filipino women freely choose a candidate through a process of examining all available information, others follow their husbands.

From the narratives of Filipino women in Sydney and Wollongong, there appear to be two ways in which they exercise the right to vote in Australia. Some consult their husbands and follow his choice of candidate, some cast the vote with their own choice of candidates. Some women who are married to Australian nationals consult their husbands on whom to vote for. For example, Ligaya confers with her husband, saying: '*sometimes I go along with my husband... I depend on my husband because he knows everything, the people in here.*' According to Dayday, '*I just ask my husband which candidate to choose.*' Tamana always follow the lead of her husband. Rajah disclosed that '*it's a must that my husband's choice prevails when I vote. He will tell me whom to vote...Whether its Labor or Liberal...I also consider my husband's choice...I have to follow him otherwise we will just quarrel!*' Being married to an Australian provides the women with a source of information on their choice of candidates. In the case of Rajah, this seems to be not a matter of processing information on the candidate but simply following her husband's choice for the sake of domestic peace.

Following the husband's choice is not restricted to women married to Australian

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<sup>60</sup> Ramchander and Lakshmi, *Women and Politics*, p 25.

<sup>61</sup> *loc cit*

men. Some women married to Filipino men also follow their husbands when voting in Australia. Dama, for instance, said: *'We talk about whom we are going to vote [for]. Who can help...which one is a good candidate...My husband chooses. He follows up about them. I follow him on this matter...I don't have anything to say about it. I follow him because he knows better.'* Sally also relies on her husband: *'he knows more of this, you know, big monkey-business politics.'* The tendency to rely on the choice of their husbands' reflect on the belief that political activities are gendered. Some of the women hold the perception that their husbands' are more politically oriented than them. Because of this, husbands appear to be better informed than their wives in assessing the credentials of electoral candidates. A 'genuine sense of consent' towards candidates appears to be an issue.<sup>63</sup> By adhering to the choices made by their husbands, the women's' real participation in the process is limited.

Although there are some women who consult their Australian husbands on their electoral choices, they believe that it is still their choice that prevails. Salome will also consult her husband and 'talk about it' but is not compelled to follow his choice: *'I have my own. I know which one to pick.'* Nora consults her Australian husband on the line-up of candidates but makes her own choice. She remarks, *'I choose the candidates. No one can teach you to vote for this person or that [person]. Mind your own business. That's the rule...I first ask my husband. I ask him, is he okay? Is he good? It's because you haven't met these people. You don't know them. So, of course, I have to ask someone who knows them...It's up to you if you will follow what your husband says.'* This suggests that some women have choices which may be different or the same as their husbands. Consulting their husbands is a way of accessing information on the candidates which they find important as immigrants.

Some women who are employed and are married to Filipinos also consult their husbands prior to election day but choose their own candidates. Camuning reveals that sometimes she consults her husband but *'he has a different opinion.'* She said, *'I still choose my own candidates. I think more on how they can help other foreigners or other*

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<sup>62</sup> Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, p 65.

<sup>63</sup> *loc cit*



migrants. So, for example, I go more for the Labor Party because [they] seem to look after the migrants more than the other party.' Eva, a nurse, has a similar situation and affirms that 'I discuss with him whom I want and the same with him...We listen to one another. But still it's up to us whom we want to vote [for].' Yasmina confides that, 'we compare our ideas and also share what I know [or] what have I read. So, we compare what we know...But in the end it's still my choice...we cannot really be united on our choices. Of course, I don't like some of his ideas. I also like some of his ideas...we both weigh our choices. If we don't agree, I still have to follow my own decision...I listen to their platform. They have what you call meetings and brochures distributed which outline their platform. So, by that you can compare which one has good intentions to be a member of government or parliament...' Pilar also notes this process: 'I have my own choice. Then, I ask my husband. How about you? Whom do you think are we going to vote?...I also seek other opinion to balance it. I like watching news on television, what's going on in the community, what's happening in politics...I weigh it. I balance it whether they have a good administration.' Jamila reveals that they, too, talk before casting their vote. 'He doesn't want to influence me whom I like [to vote]. We talk...In most of the time we agree...whom we have to vote. So, there's no problem.' For Hiraya, 'if there [were] instances [that] we don't agree...we just respect each others opinion.' These narratives suggest that women engage in political discussions with their husbands. They have also other sources of information, aside from their husbands, which they access to determine their choice of candidates.

There are Filipino women who show independence in their choices of candidates during election whether they are married to Australian nationals or to Filipinos, and across all occupation levels including housewives. There is no pattern on the level of education and class of these women to determine their choice of candidates. For example, Donita, a woman married to an Australian and a professional, reveals that 'I don't consult my husband. I'm independent when I make my decision.' Her decision is formed after, she said, 'reading and based on what I get from the media. But then again the media is not reliable so you make your own decision. You look up the quality of the major parties and you base it on that.' Another is Liwayway who works in casual part-time work affirms that

*'I make sure that, as much as I can, I choose the right person.'* Her husband does not influence her choice. For Ramona: *'[I] have to make [up] own mind - what is good and bad.'* So is Bituin. *'I decide it myself.'* Sagisag asserts that *'nobody can tell [me] that...this is not a nice person. You can tell by listening to the radio, watching on the TV [about] that particular person and why [should I vote for him]. By reading...pamphlets about him. And also [I] can tell the way, sometimes some people are arrogant in the way they talk.'* These women critically assess the abilities of certain candidates or policy positions of political parties in their choice of candidates.

Those women married to Filipino men indicate a similar autonomous viewpoint. Maria, a nurse, remarks that *'I just go through the candidates and whoever is I feel more qualified to do the job, I vote.'* She believes her husband has his own decision and they never talk about the candidates. Hana reveals a similar perspective: *'We do not discuss...you have to base it from your readings. I have to consider their achievements in the past.'* However, Hana and her Filipino husband discuss their choices after the election. For Anita, an accountant in Sydney and married to a Filipino, *'it's my choice because...even if you're married to each other your opinion differs...Sometimes he is for Labor while I am for the Liberal but that doesn't mean to say that we argue.'* In this case, the women have independent views on their choice of candidates, reflecting agency in the process. This narrative also indicates that these women view their political choices as individual citizens who consider themselves to have a rational capacity to dispense their political obligation through the vote.

A preference for the Labor Party is apparent amongst the Filipino women interviewed. According to Carmina, *'between the two parties I feel that Labor is more oriented to the local masses like me, while the Liberals are more oriented to business, I mean this is also good for the country... But the average Australian can relate more to the Labor Party because they are for the working class.'* Luningning recalls that *'I campaigned for the Liberal Party [before]. I even have a uniform ... I like our [Liberal] candidate then...But now I am for Labor.'* For the past twenty years Tamana has always voted for Labor *'because my husband always vote[s] for Labor.'* This preference for the

candidates of the Labor Party is similar to the support of Southern European immigrants to the Australian Labor Party in the 1980s.<sup>64</sup> Their perception that the Labor Party is more responsive to their needs as citizens is one reason for voting the candidates from this party. However, some of the women's view about the Labor Party appears to be influenced by the political orientation of their husbands.

Two women in this study, Dayday and Liwayway, have shown their preference towards individual candidates instead of a political party even if this means risking the financial penalty for not voting. In cases where they are not convinced of the personal abilities of the electoral candidates, they cast an empty ballot. Dayday said, '*because I don't know all these candidates I sometimes submit a blank form... So long as I sign my name there and have it marked...I vote but [I] just sign my name if I do not know anyone.*' Liwayway once risked the fine for failing to vote not because she was negligent but she was not convinced that any candidate was worthy of her vote. These women appear to have shown a Filipino political orientation where voting is determined by 'attitudes toward individual candidates' and not on the party platform.<sup>65</sup>

As in the Philippines, Filipino women in Australia participate in the electoral process mainly as voters. This is similar to Clifford's findings on Polish migrant women in Western Australia whose major political activity is voting.<sup>66</sup> The process of voting for candidates during election indicates the use of various information sources to cast an informed ballot, ranging from the personal endorsements of their husbands to their own understanding of media materials on party policies and candidates integrity. Processing these information sources, however, rests with the individual Filipina who translates it into the selection of her preferred candidates. Voting is an acknowledged right and duty of citizenship in Australia, although the exercise of this right is sometimes reserved only for the right candidate and not the political party.

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<sup>64</sup> Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration*, p 152.

<sup>65</sup> Neher, *Southeast Asia in the New International Era*, p 84.

<sup>66</sup> Clifford, 'You Have to Make Some Sort of a Commitment' in Crawford and Skene, *Women and Citizenship*, p 163.

The perception of these women about the exercise of their right to vote appears rooted in their experience as Filipino citizens. Although there is a different electoral system found in Australia as compared to that in the Philippines, many of the women's beliefs in the nature of politics itself depends on their experience in the Philippines and Australia. Their narratives suggest that after the complexity of elections in the Philippines, the Australian electoral process seems very simple. But there is a general sense of appreciation on voting as indicative of becoming Australian citizens.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The practise of Australian citizenship in the community by the women in this study is observed in two spaces, the school and the community organisations, as well as in the process of voting for candidates during elections. In the first two spaces, their participation appears to be a mutually beneficial engagement. The Filipina contributes time, money and effort as a volunteer which benefits the school or the association. But, at the same time, this involvement enhances the personal capacities of the Filipina to develop her potential and become an engaged citizen. Their involvement in the community groups suggests the building of social capital for an active civil society.<sup>67</sup> The exercise of the right to vote, on the other hand, involves a process whereby the role of husbands as sources of information is a factor in the choice of candidates. For some women married to Australian men, this appears to be expected as they have formed a level of knowledge to determine the best candidate in contrast to that of the migrant Filipina. Some women married to Filipinos have also consulted their husbands to affirm their choices. Many women in this study, however, cast an informed and independent ballot.

There is a tendency of Filipinos, as elsewhere, to form community groups in Australia. This correlates to their sense of *kapwa* and the perceived need to re-create familiar social structures and practices that are found in the Philippines in Australia. This so-called collectivist orientation of Filipinos is observed in the membership of Filipino women mostly in Filipino groups. A few also have been involved in multicultural and mainstream groups instead of their own ethnic groupings. These few women have raised

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<sup>67</sup> Kenny, 'Unpacking Citizenship,' *Community Quarterly* 44-45, September/December 1997, p 52.

some issues on Filipino organisations based on their perceptions as to its significance in their lives in Australia. But being part of a group is an important aspect of their social life.

A collectivist orientation is a positive factor in their membership as citizens in Australia. This suggests that being Australian citizens provide a basis for belonging to a community in a multicultural society. For example, membership in Filipino groups is not only aimed at community survival or cultural relatedness but also contributing to the idea of a common good. A state that is ethnically stratified like Australia is best able to provide for the needs and interests of those belonging to minority groups through their organisations. These ethnic groups create 'alternative publics' for them to articulate their needs which would not be effectively realised, following Fraser, under the supervision of dominant groups. The goals of 'alternative publics' like Filipino communities in Australia are consistent with the desired goals of the larger society. Such public exists in what Yuval-Davis refers to as a 'multi-tier construct.' In this case, there are levels by which practising citizenship is realised. Being a part of their own ethnic or multicultural collectivity does not mean being outside of the political collectivity as citizens.

Practising citizenship in a multicultural society relates to Mouffe's idea of a common political identity. Being a part of a group, ethnic or otherwise, is a principal right of human existence. Under Mouffe's principle of democratic equivalence, the various groups are bound by the general notion of citizenship to which observance of Australian law is primary. In the first place, the presence of ethnic groupings in Australia, or in any liberal democratic state, is guaranteed by the principle of liberty under the prism of law and their activities are regulated by the state. The community groups in this study contribute to the realisation of state's objectives towards its diverse citizenry. Otherwise, the relation between the state and its citizens becomes abstract.

## VIII

### AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP AND FILIPINO IDENTITY

The previous chapters, V, VI, and VII, have demonstrated the ways in which Filipino women are perpetually negotiating their lives as Australian citizens and Filipino nationals at home, at work and in the community. This chapter explores this relationship in depth.

Embracing a new citizenship suggests another layer of identification for the women in this study. As immigrants, this means when they embrace the citizenship of the host country having the identity of Filipinos and another identity as 'Australian'. But to be a 'Filipino' has different meanings in the Philippines. These different meanings will be examined later in this chapter. The existence of a governmental endorsed policy of multiculturalism in Australia means that becoming an Australian citizen also implies membership beyond the conventional idea of belonging in the nation-state. I argue that women in this study embrace Australian citizenship as their political identity and this new identity does not conflict with their Filipino identity because the latter is directed towards an idea of a Filipino nation represented by the kinship network while the former is directed towards the state. This political identity, as shown in the previous chapters, becomes paramount in their negotiations to belong in the Australian community as racialised subjects.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the interrelationships between multiculturalism, citizenship and identity for Filipinas in Australia. The second part examines their Filipino identity in terms of Australian citizenship.

#### A. Multiculturalism, Citizenship and Identity

I explore multiculturalism as a policy and as a discourse in Australia relative to its effect on the status of Filipino women's citizenship and identity. Australia adopted

multiculturalism as a policy for migrant incorporation<sup>1</sup> in response to a rapid change in cultural demographics in the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Multiculturalism refers to the recognition of ‘co-existence of a plurality of cultures within the nation.’<sup>3</sup> According to A. J. Grassby, Minister for Immigration from 1972-1974, multiculturalism was a policy ‘designed to embrace all Australians of all backgrounds and ensure a fair go for all.’<sup>4</sup> This is based, Stephen Castles notes, on social justice and equal rights.<sup>5</sup> As embodied in *Multiculturalism for All Australians*, a pamphlet by the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs in 1982, multiculturalism is not simply about the delivery of ‘special services to minority groups’ but implies a cultural diversity in Australian society where ‘each can be a “real” Australian without necessarily being a “typical” Australian.’<sup>6</sup> In practice, this means that one becomes a ‘real Australian’ by adopting the attributes of the ‘typical Australian’ represented by the Anglo-Australian model. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson state,

*“Multiculturalism” is both a feeble acknowledgement of the fact that cultures have lost their moorings in definite places and an attempt to subsume this plurality of cultures within the framework of a national identity.*<sup>7</sup>

Promoting the policy of multiculturalism requires the acceptance by immigrants of a set of ‘overarching values’ in Australia.<sup>8</sup> Multiculturalism is based on the assumption that ‘all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia’ above anything else.<sup>9</sup> As explained by the Minister for Immigration Philip Ruddock in 1997, multiculturalism, is ‘asking new immigrants to be committed to Australia and to accept its

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<sup>1</sup> There are three possible models for managing ethnic diversity: differential exclusion, assimilation and pluralism. Differential exclusion refers to the incorporation of immigrants into limited areas in society but deny them membership in the nation-state. Assimilation refers to a one-sided process of adaptation where immigrants are expected to conform to the norms of the majority population. Pluralism follows the inclusionary principle where immigrants are granted equal rights in all aspects of society while maintaining their cultural identity. Multiculturalism is an example of this last model. See Castles, ‘Multicultural Citizenship’ *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 18(1), April 1997, p 5(18).

<sup>2</sup> Jayasuriya, ‘Rethinking Australian Multiculturalism,’ *The Australian Quarterly* 62(1), Autumn 1990, p 51.

<sup>3</sup> Stratton and Ang, ‘Multicultural Imagined Communities’ in Bennett, *Multicultural States*, p 135.

<sup>4</sup> Grassby, ‘Multiculturalism – The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,’ *Ethnic Spotlight* 47, August 1999, p 28.

<sup>5</sup> Castles, ‘The “New” Migration and Australian Immigration Policy’ in Inglis et al, *Asians in Australia*, p 67.

<sup>6</sup> Cited in Stratton and Ang, *op cit*, p 154.

<sup>7</sup> Gupta and Ferguson, ‘Beyond “Culture,”’ *Cultural Anthropology* 7(1), 1992, p 7.

<sup>8</sup> Zappala and Castles, *Citizenship and Immigration in Australia*, p 13.

<sup>9</sup> Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration*, p 166.

way of life.’<sup>10</sup> These unifying Australian values include ‘the constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech, and religion, English as a national language and equality of the sexes.’<sup>11</sup> The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs describes ‘what it means to be an Australian citizen’ in terms of ‘shared values for a shared future.’<sup>12</sup> These values are not only found in Australia but in other societies as well. Most modern democratic countries apply certain laws to promote harmony amongst its people along these lines. For example, Filipinos are bound by fundamental democratic principles stipulated in their constitution like the rule of law, individual rights and liberties in the Philippines.<sup>13</sup> As a result of this kind of orientation, the policy of multiculturalism, and its requirements for immigrants to accept the core Australian values, appears consistent with the experiences of the Filipino women in this study.

Since the 1970s, however, multiculturalism as a policy has been contentious in Australian political discourse.<sup>14</sup> Grassby states,

*The subsequent implementation of multiculturalism overlooked the inclusive nature of the policy of multiculturalism by totally ignoring indigenous Australians and failing to recognize that Anglo-Australian were just as much a part of multicultural Australia as any other ethnicity.*<sup>15</sup>

As a result, multiculturalism has come to apply to ethnic groups, especially non-Anglo-Celtic, to the exclusion of other groups in Australia.<sup>16</sup> In this set-up, people with different cultures do not share equal footing with those having a British heritage. Following Yuval-Davis, belonging to a collectivity is differently organised according to, amongst other

<sup>10</sup> Cited in Gillgren, ‘Aliens to Ethnic’ in Crawford and Skene, *Women and Citizenship*, p 153.

<sup>11</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>12</sup> DIMA, *What it means to be an Australian Citizen*, p 1.

<sup>13</sup> See Nollado, *The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines Explained*, pp 4-14.

<sup>14</sup> Parry, ‘Immigration and Multiculturalism,’ *Social Education* 62(7), November-December 1998, p 449. See also Martin, ‘Multiculturalism and Feminism’ in Bottomley et al, *Intersexions*, p 110; Povinelli, ‘The State of Shame,’ *Critical Inquiry* 24(2), Winter 1998, pp 575(36).

<sup>15</sup> Grassby, *op cit*, p 28.

<sup>16</sup> See Jayasuriya, *op cit*, p 51; Gunew, ‘The Melting Pot of Assimilation’ in Lim et al, *Transnational Asia Pacific*, p 145. In the late 1980s, the Aboriginal peoples were included in the conception of multiculturalism, particularly seen in the bicentennial slogan of ‘Living Together.’ See Curthoys, ‘An Uneasy Conversation’ in Docker and Fischer, *Race, Colour and Identity*, p 29.



factors, race or ethnicity. The historical construction of hegemonic myths of white settlers has been used to justify practices of appropriation and exploitation of other peoples.<sup>17</sup> Minoo Moallem and Iaian Boal note that the discourse of multiculturalism ‘homogenizes ethnic groups’ and fails to address the ‘specificity and particularity among and within groups.’<sup>18</sup> Instead of its envisioned harmony for all Australians, multiculturalism has become a divisive political issue that resurfaces in national debates.<sup>19</sup> This places the ethnic communities at the centre of such debates. For example, James Jupp argues that, in the context of the term ‘multicultural,’ Australia is not a plural society since ‘it does not contain two or more distinct ethnic communities living in relatively insulated enclaves’ except in the Northern Territory.<sup>20</sup> Rather, Jupp said,

*In...Australia there is an overwhelming English-speaking, British-derived and nominally Christian majority, which enjoys a central role in all aspects of life, including the political, with the rest of the population drawn from a multiplicity of origins, touched upon by the dominant culture at many points, at varying levels of “assimilation” and only able to make political headway through institutions set up long ago by the dominant majority.*<sup>21</sup>

Jupp’s argument presents a critique to multiculturalism which, Castles claims, is ‘a minority voice in public discourse’ amongst scholars and ordinary people who do not accept multiculturalism as a national identity for Australians.<sup>22</sup> But this ‘minority’ position represents the existing social and political milieu of Australia. As Laksiri Jayasuriya notes, Australian multiculturalism, in contrast to Canadian multiculturalism, ‘was decidedly individualistic’ and did not give ethnic and cultural groups ‘any formal standing in the national polity.’<sup>23</sup> Alastair Davidson also contends that the policies of Australian multiculturalism ‘were never extended to include citizenship’ because they did not incorporate the ‘legal, political and ethical voices’ of ‘NESB newcomers’ which, under the

<sup>17</sup> Stasiulis and Yuval -Davis, *Introduction*, p 12. See also Morris and Hu, ‘Why the Melting Pot is Ready to Boil,’ *The Daily Telegraph* 12 July 2002, p 6.

<sup>18</sup> Moallem and Boal, ‘Multicultural Nationalism and the Poetics of Inauguration’ in Kaplan et al, *Between Woman and Nation*, p 256.

<sup>19</sup> Hage, *White Nation*, p 240.

<sup>20</sup> Jupp, ‘The Politics of Multiculturalism,’ *The Australian Quarterly* 58(1), Autumn 1986, p 94.

<sup>21</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>22</sup> Castles, ‘Democracy and Multicultural Citizenship’ in Collins, *Contemporary Racism in Australia, Canada and New Zealand*, pp 89-90.

myth of Australian primacy, 'requires a continuing silencing of the migrant voices.'<sup>24</sup> Multiculturalism did not confer any legal status on ethnic groups, except the Aboriginal people with respect to specific land rights.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Castles points out that the social and political institutions remain based on Anglo-Saxon models and do not take into account the 'values and experiences of people of different backgrounds.'<sup>26</sup> Castles concludes that Australian multiculturalism is not a 'fully-developed strategy for participation by all' and 'has not yet led to fundamental changes in the most powerful institutions in the state and the economy.'<sup>27</sup> As presented in Chapter VI, immigrant women, for example, remain economically marginalized. Multiculturalism, as a practice, is not that far from the earlier policy of assimilation.<sup>28</sup>

According to Ghassan Hage, Australia has a 'white nation fantasy' positioning Third World-looking migrants in 'liminal spaces of inclusion/exclusion.'<sup>29</sup> In this fantasy, white Australians govern while non-whites are seen as passive objects.<sup>30</sup> Non-English speaking immigrants like Filipino women, Hage argues, 'can only feel at home by knowing their place within the national field and knowing how not to transgress the position allotted to them within it.'<sup>31</sup> Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis succinctly phrase this as existing 'within the boundaries of civil society but outside the boundaries of national collectivity.'<sup>32</sup> Yuval-Davis argues that only by 'being born into a certain

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<sup>23</sup> Cited in Castles, *ibid*, pp 104-105.

<sup>24</sup> Davidson, 'Multiculturalism and Citizenship,' *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 18(2), October 1997, p 77(16). Theories of multiculturalism are mainly connected to the politics of culture which 'addressed the implications of class, race and gender for the constitution of identities' and not by mainstream theories of citizenship. See Torres, 'Democracy, Education and Multiculturalism,' *Comparative Education Review* 42(4), November 1998, p 421.

<sup>25</sup> Smolicz, 'Australia: From Migrant Country to Multicultural Nation,' *The International Migration Review* 31(1), Spring 1997, pp 171-186.

<sup>26</sup> For example, the issue of relativism in law was rejected by the Law Reform Commission although it recommended the removal of cultural biases in law. See Castles, *Democracy and Multicultural Citizenship*, pp 106-107.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p 107.

<sup>28</sup> Trainor, 'Democracy and Multiculturalism,' *IPA Review* 48(2), 1995, p 40. See also Jamrozik et al, *Social and Cultural Transformation in Australia*.

<sup>29</sup> Hage, *White Nation*, p 18, 246.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, p 96.

<sup>31</sup> Hage, 'Anglo-Celtics Today,' *Communal/Plural* 4, 1994, p 62.

<sup>32</sup> Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, *op cit*, p 18.

collectivity could one be a full member of it.’<sup>33</sup> The status of an immigrant or alien, Chandra Talpade Mohanty avers, is ‘primary’ because one is always an alien or ‘forever [a] foreigner’ despite becoming naturalised.<sup>34</sup> Filipinos then are perceived to be outside the Anglo-Australian national collectivity even after becoming Australian citizens. As a gesture of inclusion into Australian society, multiculturalism makes them a part, though apart, of the state; forming an ‘ambivalent space’ that makes the immigrant both ‘discursively confined and symbolically embraced.’<sup>35</sup> However, this positioning of Australian multiculturalism on Asian immigrants is different from the experience of Filipino women who feel that they belong in Australia.

In the 1990s, the resurgence of ‘white majority populism’ fuelled by Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party<sup>36</sup> had rekindled ‘assimilation’<sup>37</sup> as a possible government policy approach and consequently made the policy of multiculturalism seem to be on hold under the Howard government’s first years in office.<sup>38</sup> In December 1999, the Liberal-National government released its multicultural policy statement, *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia*. This new agenda is consistent with the conservative government’s social policy which stressed cultural diversity and national unity. It moves away from the previous Labor government’s focus on social equity and access.<sup>39</sup> Philip Ruddock stated that his new agenda ‘ensure[s] that the benefits of multiculturalism are fully maximized

<sup>33</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 22.

<sup>34</sup> Mohanty, ‘Crafting Feminist Genealogies’ in Shohat, *Talking Visions*, p 492. See also Tuan, *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites*.

<sup>35</sup> Ang, ‘The Curse of the Smile,’ *Feminist Review* 52, Spring 1996, pp 45-46. See also Shankar and Srikanth, *A Part, Yet Apart*.

<sup>36</sup> One Nation campaigned to promote a ‘white’ Australia which considered the entry of Asians as a ‘bizarre social experiment.’ See Ang, ‘Asians in Australia’ in Docker and Fischer, *op cit*, p 122. See also Thomas, ‘Introduction,’ *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 9(1), 1998, p 1.

<sup>37</sup> Curthoys, *op cit*, p 31.

<sup>38</sup> During the first year of office of Prime Minister John Howard, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research were abolished in 1996. The national immigration intake was cut by 11 per cent and welfare benefits to migrants have been reduced. Parliament issued a declaration on tolerance which failed to mention multiculturalism. However, the Australian Commonwealth government has created a Council for Multicultural Australia to assist in implementing the *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* in July 2000. The Council members are drawn from well-respected Australians of different backgrounds from all States and Territory. See Markus, *Race*, pp 98-99; *Council for Multicultural Australia* brochure; Roach, Chairman of the Council for Multicultural Australia, *Recognising Cultural Diversity Through Harmony Day, 21 March 2001* statement; Perera and Pugliese, ‘Racial Suicide,’ *Race and Class* 39(2), October-December 1997, pp 1-19.

<sup>39</sup> Dutton, *One of Us?* p 153.

and made relevant to all.’<sup>40</sup> Australian multiculturalism has been celebrated thereafter as Harmony Day every 21<sup>st</sup> of March. This date coincides with the United Nations (UN) Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In his message on Harmony Day 2001, John Howard said that this celebration ‘provides an opportunity for our community to state there is no place in Australia for racism and bigotry.’<sup>41</sup> The choice of the date for celebrating Australian multiculturalism relative to its UN counterpart implies that harmony is primarily aimed at communities susceptible to racism. Its message underscores that these communities in Australia need to ‘harmonise’ with something – presumably, the values of mainstream society to make them ‘Australian.’ To be ‘un-Australian,’ Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese point out, refers to ‘ethnic minority cultural practices that stand in dissonance to Anglocentric norms and values.’<sup>42</sup> ‘Anglo-Saxon values’ refer to attitudes such as individualism, achievement orientation, scientific curiosity, work ethic and liberalism. However, these are not specifically ‘Anglo-Saxon’ because these values are also found in modern market capitalist economies.<sup>43</sup> In the case of Filipino women in this study, they have indicated that they could be ‘Australian’ because they can adapt to what they perceive as ‘Anglo-Saxon culture’- for example, the English language, Christian religion and democracy.

On the other hand, the colour motif of Harmony Day is orange which is the same colour as the convict’s uniform in the Philippines. By inference, the Filipino ethnic community in Australia appears to be contained in certain spaces in the ‘multiculturalist industry’<sup>44</sup> which are, Hage argues, ‘rituals of white empowerment.’<sup>45</sup> In Mouffe’s idea of a pluralist political community, she states,

*There will always be a “constitutive outside,”  
an exterior to the community that is the very  
condition of its existence...to construct a “we”*

<sup>40</sup> Ruddock, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Statement on Harmony Day 21 March 2001.

<sup>41</sup> Howard, *Celebrating a Remarkable Achievement Harmony Day, 21 March 2001* statement

<sup>42</sup> Perera and Pugliese, *op cit*. An example of being ‘un-Australian’ is the practice of Islam. See Robinson, ‘Looking for Father-Right?’ in Docker and Fischer, *op cit*, p 163.

<sup>43</sup> See Trainor, *op cit*.

<sup>44</sup> This is a term used by Jerzy Zubrzycki, sometimes called the father of Australian multiculturalism, in reference to the development of a model of multiculturalism he called the ‘sectional view’ that encourages ‘tribal resentment’ and a threat to social cohesion. Cited in Trainor, *op cit*.

<sup>45</sup> Hage, *White Nation*, p 240.

*it is necessary to distinguish a "them" and  
that all forms of consensus are based on acts  
of exclusion...*<sup>46</sup>

Differences in society are not eliminated by Mouffe's principle of democratic equivalence.<sup>47</sup> The political community cannot be fully inclusive. Rather, new identities are created – in this case, citizenship. The underlying principle is a 'common bond' of peoples having the same political identity. This political identity follows the principles of modern pluralist democracy which is based on liberty and equality.<sup>48</sup> Individuals may belong to different communities but they submit to the 'language of civil intercourse, the *respublica*.'<sup>49</sup> Regardless of their differences, individuals adhere to the bonds of citizenship.

In the context of promoting cultural rights, multiculturalism has been seen as 'bad for women' by some theorists.<sup>50</sup> Susan Moller Okin argues on two grounds that the right to minority culture clashes with the notion of gender equality. First, culture is gendered. Second, group rights are seldom related to the private sphere.<sup>51</sup> Because most cultures are patriarchal, women are systematically subjugated by its institutions. The articulation of minority rights is in the hands of male members who cannot represent the well being of women and others.<sup>52</sup> Saskia Sassen also pointed out that group rights based on cultural rights are fairly disadvantageous to immigrant women.<sup>53</sup> For example, group rights work against the development of personal autonomy. On the other hand, individual rights are a better option because they empower women to gain a 'stronger sense of self.'<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Mouffe, 'Democratic Politics and the Question of Identity' in Rajchman, *The Identity Question*, p 36.

<sup>47</sup> Mouffe, 'Feminism, Citizenship, and Radical Democratic Politics' in Nicholson and Seidman, *Social Postmodernism*, p 325. See also Martín-Barbero, 'Identities,' *Media, Culture & Society* 24, 2002, pp 629-670.

<sup>48</sup> Mouffe, *Democratic Politics and the Question of Identity*, p 37.

<sup>49</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>50</sup> Okin, 'Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?' in Cohen et al, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* pp 9-24. See also Spinner-Halev, 'Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression and the State,' *Ethics* 112(1), October 2001, p 84.

<sup>51</sup> Okin, *ibid*, p 12.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, p 24.

<sup>53</sup> Sassen, 'Culture Beyond Gender' in Cohen et al, *op cit*, p 76.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, p 77.

This feminist critique of multiculturalism is reinforced by the findings in this study. Promoting group rights based on patriarchal culture would undermine the achievements of Filipino women in terms of personal autonomy and individual rights upon migrating to Australia. The notion of equality or empowerment, even in their intimate relationships, would be constrained in this situation. However, Filipino women are not so much affected by this issue of cultural rights because they can accommodate the western norms and values in Australia because they are similar to their experience in the Philippines.

I have shown in Chapter IV that the Filipino women in this study embrace Australian citizenship not only because of its practical benefits but, more importantly, because they like the idea of belonging to the political community. The women's favourable identification with Australian citizenship is grounded on their belief that, despite its limitations, Australia is a multicultural country. Hence, multiculturalism and citizenship seems to be directly related to each other in the experiences of the women in this study. I have also shown in Chapter V that Filipino women identify with Australian citizenship as their common bond with other Australians. Adopting citizenship provides them with a political tool for empowering their racialised status in the workplace and their subject position at home. These women are able to negotiate their various roles at home, at work and in the community by donning the symbolic shroud of multiculturalism, and focusing on its recognition of diversity and respect for cultural identity. Australian citizenship is deployed because it provides the equal bond that seals this diversity into a political identity based on shared civic culture.

Albeit the promotion of multiculturalism is subject to the efforts made by and the interpretations of the government in power, so far, there is no better alternative perceived to be more effective in integrating immigrants, like the Filipino women in this study, into the community as individuals and as citizens. This follows Mary Kalantzis' argument that a multicultural citizenship or 'pluralistic citizenship is the most effective way' to achieve social cohesion in Australia, and to develop Australian multiculturalism into a full civic pluralism and post-national community.<sup>55</sup> The women in this study have shown that they

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<sup>55</sup> Kalantzis, 'Multicultural Citizenship' in Hudson and Kane, *Rethinking Australian Citizenship*, pp 99-110.

have agency to negotiate the limitations imposed by the manner in which any particular government employs the idea of multiculturalism. Essentially, this negotiation of their subject position hinges on similarities in their experiences within a democratic society rather than their differences. Consistent with Mouffe's argument, adopting Australian citizenship is about embodying the principles of a multicultural democratic society where ethnic or racial differences are subordinated by a common political identity.

## **B. Filipino Identity and Australian Citizenship**

This section examines the idea of Filipino identity in the context of becoming Australian citizens amongst women in this study. I argue that the adoption of a new political identity as Australian citizens does not affect the interviewed women's Filipino identity. These two identities - one political and one national - do not contradict each other because the former is based on the state while the latter is grounded on the family as site of identification. First, this section presents the idea of a 'Filipino' in the Philippines and in terms of 'national identity.' Second, it focuses on Filipino identity in the context of becoming Australian citizens.

### **1. *The 'Filipino' and 'National' Identity***

The notion of who is a 'Filipino' has different meanings in the Philippines. There are more than seventy ethnolinguistic groupings<sup>56</sup> which contribute to the regional identities of Filipinos. In Luzon, the Tagalog-speaking people are called Tagalogs but, in specific terms, may also be a Batangueño or Caviteño, amongst others. Further north, there are, for example, Capampangan or Pampagueño and Ilocano. In the Visayas, the generic term is Bisaya but this is linguistically and geographically divided, for instance, as Cebuano, Waray, Boholano and Ilongo. The list goes on. Another category of 'Filipino' is based on religion - mainly a distinction between Christian Filipinos and Muslim Filipinos. There is also a racial identification in the case of Chinese Filipinos.<sup>57</sup> Another is the *mestizo* as a result of interracial marriages or relationships. In recent times, a new

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<sup>56</sup> Kiester, Jr and Kiester, 'Yankee Go Home And Take Me With You,' *Smithsonian* 30(2), May 1994, p 43. See also Espiritu-Pendleton, 'Sari-Saring Tao sa Iisang Lupa,' *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(5), 20 April-20 May 2000, p 14.

conception of Filipino as *balikbayan* has started to emerge in the midst of migration to foreign lands.<sup>58</sup> To be a 'Filipino' in the Philippines has different meanings depending on the context. These different or multiple Filipino identities form what Vicente Diaz calls the 'constructed nationalities' of Filipinos.<sup>59</sup>

Mapping the identity of Filipinos in the context of a 'national' identity is not easy in a multi-ethnic and multi-racial country. A national identity is one of the many identities people have and it can be strong or weak.<sup>60</sup> A national identity is an 'awareness of self within a defined national context.'<sup>61</sup> The manner in which this identification is made is through shared 'values, experiences and beliefs.'<sup>62</sup> Johann Gottlieb Herder argues that these beliefs which form part of a nation are constituted by language and culture.<sup>63</sup> These linguistic and cultural resources, Ross Poole notes, are mobilized to 'create a representation of the nation' or 'a community of which they are all members.'<sup>64</sup> Benedict Anderson calls this created nation an 'imagined community.'<sup>65</sup> Following this, national identity, Vicente Rafael states, is 'explicitly fictional, though not in the sense of being "false" rather in the sense of being constituted in and through a vernacular language.'<sup>66</sup> The vernacular language has, as shown by the existence of many dialects in the Philippines, produced a localized identity for its members. A unifying vernacular language

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<sup>57</sup> See Ang See, *The Chinese in the Philippines*, pp 6-9. See also Pacho, 'Political Integration through Naturalization,' *Asia Quarterly, A Journal from Europe* 4, 1980, pp 227-232.

<sup>58</sup> A *balikbayan* is a Filipino expatriate who resides overseas and returns to the Philippines for a visit. Many of them have come to return permanently, usually in their old age, and are still known as a *balikbayan*. See Becker, 'Dying Away from Home,' *The Journal of Gerontology* 57B (2), March 2002, pp S79-S95.

<sup>59</sup> Diaz, 'Bye Bye Ms. American Pie,' *ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies* 3(1), Rainy Season 1995, p 148.

<sup>60</sup> Krause and Renwick, 'Introduction' in Krause and Renwick, *Identities in International Relations*, p xii. See also 'Balikbayan Program,' *The Philippine Bayanihan News* 2(7), July 2000, p 7.

<sup>61</sup> Sobhan, 'National Identity, Fundamentalism and the Women's Movement in Bangladesh' in Moghadam, *Gender and National Identity*, p 63. Anthony Smith outlines the basic features of a nation which include 'a homeland; common myths and historical memories; a common mass public culture; common legal rights and duties for all members; and a common economy with territorial mobility for members.' See Smith, *National Identity*, p 14.

<sup>62</sup> Stokes, *The Politics of Identity in Australia*, p 5.

<sup>63</sup> Cited in Poole, 'National Identity and Citizenship' in Alcoff and Mendieta, *Identities*, p 271.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid*, p 272.

<sup>65</sup> See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>66</sup> Rafael, 'Nationalism, Imagery, and the Filipino Intelligentsia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century' in Rafael, *Discrepant Histories*, p 134.



is, however, still an issue between the Tagalogs and Cebuanos.<sup>67</sup> San Juan notes that the category 'Filipino' is 'still in the process of becoming, of revaluation and redefinition.'<sup>68</sup> But the idea of being 'Filipino' in terms of certain cultural narratives or myths of common origin exists in the imagined community of the Philippines. Yuval-Davis argues this identity is organized around 'commonalities and differences between self and others, interpreting their social positioning in more or less stable ways.'<sup>69</sup>

The concept of a 'Filipino national identity' or even a 'Filipino national culture' remains contested in the Philippines. This contestation can be observed in the regionalist attitudes of Filipinos and the Muslim secessionism in Mindanao.<sup>70</sup> A study by Maria Luisa Doronila has shown that Filipinos lack a strong attachment to their country.<sup>71</sup> The sense of community with the nation is compared to kinship affiliations.<sup>72</sup> It is the family which defines the idea of public good rather than the individual.<sup>73</sup> The family is the foundation of Philippine society upon which, Prospero Covar contends, lies the strength of the *sambayanan* (nation).<sup>74</sup> In Australia, as shown in Chapter III, the concept of national

<sup>67</sup> The issue of national language remains controversial between Tagalog and Cebuano speakers with the latter claiming prominence by virtue of size and percentage of speakers. Although Tagalog is the base for what is called the national language, Pilipino, it is enriched by infusion of words from regional dialects. Depending on the agenda of government, Pilipino and English are used as medium of teaching instruction. Recently, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued a directive making English the mandatory teaching language that caused much criticism from vernacularist. See *UP Educators Criticize "English Only" Directive*. <http://www.ing7.net>[3 /2/03]; Bonus, *Locating Filipino Americans*, p 27; 'English as a Medium of Instruction Anti-Filipino,' *The Philippines Bayanihan News* 5(2), February 2003, p 10; Castrence, 'Values, Not Language, Not Religion,' *The Philippines Bayanihan News* 4(9), September 2002, p 30.

<sup>68</sup> San Juan, *From Exile to Diaspora*, p 17.

<sup>69</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 43.

<sup>70</sup> See Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, pp 46-97.

<sup>71</sup> Doronila's study used sixteen orientations to identify national identity amongst school children. These orientations include preference for one's nationality over all others; generalized pride in one's country over all others; support of nationalism over internationalism; commitment to goal of development through national self-reliance; valuing special qualities of Filipino people and Filipino characteristic way of life; national traditions and cultural products; recognition of membership of other ethnic groups in national community; personal acceptance of these individual ethnics; recognition of cultural affinity among Philippine ethnic groups and personal acceptance of these groups in Philippine community; commitment to the idea of national integration of these ethnic groups; pride in national symbols; and deriving personal identity from or identification with the nation and commitment to the duties of citizenship. Cited in Gamolo, 'Maria Wants a Barbie Doll, a Blonde Seatmate and Alien Citizenship?' *Sunday Malaya* 26 May 1985, p 8.

<sup>72</sup> Diokno, *Becoming a Filipino Citizen*, p 24. See also Mulder, 'Everyday Life in the Philippines,' *Review of Women's Studies* I(2), 1990-91, p 73.

<sup>73</sup> Diokno, 'Once Again, the Asian Values Debate' in Jacobsen and Bruun, *Human Rights and Asian Values*, p 78.

<sup>74</sup> Covar, 'Unburdening Philippine Society of Colonialism,' *Diliman Review* 43(2), 1995, p 17.

identity was first based on racial homogeneity and later on the notion of a multicultural society underpinned by ‘fundamental liberal democratic values’ directed towards the nation-state.<sup>75</sup> Hence, there is a marked construct in the idea of a Filipino national identity which is specifically oriented to a particular social unit and an Australian identity which is associated with an abstract state entity.

The lack of identification of Filipinos with the nation is also explained by the following equally important factors. First, the colonization of Filipino peoples, widely dispersed by geography took place before the process of nation building. There was no nation-state to identify with but *barangays*. It was only in the nineteenth century that the process of forming a nation began.<sup>76</sup> Greg Bankoff and Kathleen Weekley note that Philippine history ‘provides no expedient agents, no indigenous monuments, citadels or palaces, nor even a suitable naturalised creed’ to use as symbols in modern nation-building.<sup>77</sup> The most significant event in nation building, the 1896 Revolution against Spain, ended in the tragic death of its hero, Andres Bonifacio, at the hands of Filipinos.<sup>78</sup> There appears to be no consensus on the heroism of Filipinos in the struggles against imperialism in public celebrations that would have forged a lasting nationalist consciousness. For example, defeats in battles are celebrated (*i.e.* Fall of Bataan) while one of the few victories shown by the people in Balangiga continues to be called a ‘massacre.’<sup>79</sup>

Second, the identity of ‘Filipino’ originally referred to the *creoles* or Spaniards born in the Philippines.<sup>80</sup> A small divided elite appropriated the term from the clutches of

<sup>75</sup> Archer, ‘Situating Australian National Identity in Theory and Practice’ in Stokes, *The Politics of Identity in Australia*, p 32. See also Stratton and Ang, *op cit*, p 137; Angelico, ‘Wallerstein and Contemporary Australian Racism’ in Collins, *Contemporary Racism in Australia, Canada and New Zealand*, p 252.

<sup>76</sup> Bankoff and Weekley, *Post-colonial National Identity in the Philippines*, p 9.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid*, p 93.

<sup>78</sup> See Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses*, pp 236-275; de Achútegui and Bernard, *Aguinaldo and the Revolution of 1896*, p 327; Bain, *Sitting in Darkness*, pp 165-169; Anderson, ‘Cacique Democracy in the Philippines’ in Rafael, *op cit*, p 9; Morden, ‘Behind 12 June Independence Day Celebration,’ *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(5), June 2002, p 2.

<sup>79</sup> See San Juan, Jr, ‘One Hundred Years of Producing and Reproducing the “Filipino”,’ *Amerasia Journal* 24(2), Summer 1998, p 2; Schott, *The Ordeal of Samar*.

<sup>80</sup> Constantino, *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-Consciousness*, p 117.

colonialism.<sup>81</sup> Even the name of the country is a colonial derivation – named after King Philip II of Spain.<sup>82</sup>

Third, the Philippine state is perceived by many scholars as not sovereign enough to steer its own destiny because of its neo-colonial status *vis a vis* the United States of America and the continued domination of foreign capital in the economy.<sup>83</sup> This belief has influenced the global dispersal of Filipinos as temporary overseas workers and permanent settlers. Mass Filipino migration represents, Vicente Rafael avers, the ‘failure of the nation-state to contain its excess population and the success of global capitalism in absorbing and accommodating this failure.’<sup>84</sup> This group of Filipinos, in the process of their migration to other countries either temporarily or permanently, contributes to the changing ideas of identity and belonging in the Philippines.<sup>85</sup>

Fourth, the perception of a ‘weak state’<sup>86</sup> is concretised by a belief in the lack of vigilance by the Philippine state in protecting citizens in host countries as well as the inability to provide adequate social services to its populace. Welfare service is, basically, a function of the family<sup>87</sup> in contrast to Australia where it is a state function. The centrality of the family is significant in the Filipino diaspora where chain migration follows after a member of the family has gained permanent settlement or citizenship. The family and

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<sup>81</sup> Tarling, *Nations and States in Southeast Asia*, p 77.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid*, p 22.

<sup>83</sup> GABRIELA, ‘Defending Our Future,’ *Women’s International Network News* 18(4), Autumn 1992, p 19. See also Arinto, *Women and Revolution*, p 8; Aguilar, *The Philippine Foreign Debt and the Impact on Women*, pp 15-19; Taguiwalo and Angosta-Cruzada, ‘The Ramos Administration Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (Philippines 2000),’ *PIGLAS-DIWA* 6(2), 1993, pp 3-10; Aquino, *Philippine Feminism in Historical Perspective*, p 592; San Juan, Jr, *One hundred Years of Producing and Reproducing the “Filipino,”* p 22; Kiester, Jr and Kiester, *op cit*, pp 40-50; Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, p 166; Karnow, *In Our Image*, p 15; Pomeroy, *The Philippines: Colonialism, Collaboration, and Resistance*, pp 304-331; May, *A Past Recovered*, pp 194-205; Goodno, *The Philippines: Land of Broken Promises*, pp 210-226.

<sup>84</sup> Rafael, ‘Your Grief is Our Gossip,’ *Public Culture* 9(2), 1997, p 268.

<sup>85</sup> Bankoff and Weekley, *op cit*, p 127.

<sup>86</sup> Sidel, ‘Philippine Politics in Town, Districts, and Province,’ *The Journal of Asian Studies* 56(4), November 1997, p 947.

<sup>87</sup> Diokno, *Becoming a Filipino Citizen*, p 24.

kinship network also provides assistance to immigrants in their settlement.<sup>88</sup>

A fifth factor is the use of different ‘national’ languages to express Filipino cultural beliefs and practices. This is experienced differently by people according to their class. English remains prominent as the official language in education, government and print media.<sup>89</sup> The kind of education received by Filipinos through the English language is, Renato Constantino argues, a ‘miseducation because it began to deFilipinize the youth’ and assists them to learn a foreign culture as ‘the model par excellence for Philippine society.’<sup>90</sup> Constantino refers to this national consciousness as a ‘neocolonial identity’ or what is generally referred to as a ‘colonial mentality.’<sup>91</sup> The Pilipino language, or Filipino in postmodern usage, is widely used for the *bakya* (literally, wooden slippers) crowd.<sup>92</sup> This use can be seen in the large number of movies and comics in Filipino designed for them. Recently, a new form of language has evolved and is now widely used in the broadcast media, by celebrities and by the *collegiala* (a college girl usually in an exclusive school) –Taglish.<sup>93</sup> This language form, Jose Carillo notes, could bring about a new generation of Filipinos who will not be able to read or speak either English or Pilipino.<sup>94</sup> Or, perhaps it could produce a new identity in limbo. A single shared language is an important tool in the promotion of a national identity. The existence of multiple, class differentiated, and regionally specific languages mean that this avenue for producing a united identity remains a question.

Furthermore, the idea of a ‘national’ culture as source of a ‘national’ identity is also an issue. I agree with Covar’s assertion that the Filipino ‘national culture is still

<sup>88</sup> Almirol, *Ethnic Identity and Social Negotiation*, p 172. See also Sycip and Fawcett, ‘Expectations, Family Networks and Emigration,’ *Philippine Journal of Psychology* 21, 1988, pp 56-71; Morrissey et al, *The Family in the Settlement Process*.

<sup>89</sup> See Diokno, *The Democratizing Function of Citizenship in the Philippines*, p 148.

<sup>90</sup> Constantino, *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-Consciousness*, p 66. See also Constantino, ‘The Miseducation of the Filipino’ in Schirmer and Shalom, *The Philippines Reader*, pp 45-49.

<sup>91</sup> May, *op cit*, p 193. See also Cannell, ‘The Power of Appearances’ in Rafael, *op cit*, p 228; Lott, ‘Migration of a Mentality,’ *Social Casework* 57, March 1976, pp 165-172; Revilla, ‘Filipino American Identity’ in Root, *Filipino Americans*, p 99.

<sup>92</sup> *Bakya* in colloquial language refers to a type of group in the Philippines composed of ordinary poor people.

<sup>93</sup> Taglish is a pidgin language derived from Tagalog and English. See Carillo, ‘Ang Pinakamasamang Titser Natin Sa Wika,’ *The Philippine Bayanihan News* 5(2), February 2003, p 15.

emerging,<sup>95</sup> in contrast to Renato Rosaldo's claim of 'no culture' at all.<sup>96</sup> Amidst the continual social changes effected by many factors, this 'emerging national culture' appears to be a feature of all national cultures. In some countries, the process may appear complete as a 'national culture' has been in place for centuries. In countries like the Philippines, this process seems more difficult based on the reasons I have earlier outlined. Covar argues that the basic foundation of the native culture remains intact in the Philippines but that Filipinos have been 'alienated' from this culture.<sup>97</sup> Covar emphasised that this native culture includes the socio-political units, belief in native spirits as well as language that still exist in Philippine society. Filipino adaptations to western values, as I have shown in Chapter III, have traces of indigenous culture. In popular culture, this is known as *Pinoy* style.<sup>98</sup> This kind of 'style' adds another dimension to the already complex Filipino identity. This dimension can be seen in the context of a Filipino national identity that reflects its colonial legacy and indigenous culture where the former permeates daily life more than the latter.<sup>99</sup> In other words, there are separate layers of external influences which contribute to the idea of a Filipino identity.

While not being exhaustive, these are key factors that contribute to the lack of identification of Filipino citizens to the Philippine nation. A Filipino identity is loosely associated with the nation, but more specifically it is aligned to a region, and focused on the family. This conception of a Filipino identity partly explains the easy adoption of new citizenship when Filipinos emigrate.

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<sup>94</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>95</sup> Covar, 'Unburdening Philippine Society of Colonialism,' *Diliman Review* 43(2), 1995, p 19.

<sup>96</sup> Rosaldo, 'Ideology, Place and People Without Culture,' *Cultural Anthropology* 3, 1988, pp 77-87.

<sup>97</sup> Covar, *op cit*, p 19.

<sup>98</sup> For example, Filipino Christianity is a fusion of Spanish Roman Catholicism and nativist beliefs and practices. This is observed in locally concocted mixtures of herbs and oils being sold for their healing effects in church doors alongside rosaries, scapulars, novena booklets and others. Spanish colonialism did not abolish the earlier animist religion that worshipped an array of gods. The powerful conception of God in Christianity is similar to the indigenous conception of the supreme being known as *Bathala*. Melba Maggay succinctly describes the Christian conversion of the indigenous people as a 'transaction that involved the mere exchange of statues: dark wooden *anitos* [spirits] were exchanged for saints that had Caucasian features.' See Perdon, *Brown Americans of Asia*, pp 56-57; Goodno, *op cit*, p 228; Maggay, 'Towards Sensitive Engagement With Filipino Indigenous Consciousness,' *International Review of Mission* 87(346), July 1998, pp 361-373.

<sup>99</sup> Heartney, 'Archipelago and Diaspora,' *Art in America* 87(9), September 1999, pp 65-67.

## 2. *Filipino Identity and Becoming Australian Citizens: 'Practising My Filipino Way'*

Becoming an Australian citizen does not negate one's identity as a Filipino. All the women I interviewed in Wollongong and Sydney identify themselves as Filipinos despite embracing Australian citizenship. According to Ramona, *'[I am] a Filipino. [I] can never change that. So, even if [I] go to another country that will not change at all.'* Ligaya in Wollongong remarks that, *'I still consider myself a Filipino because I grew up there. I was born there...whatever [I] do [I] cannot forget the Philippines.'* For Dayday, *'even if [I am] already an Australian citizen [I am] still a Filipino.'* Pilar describes her position: *'my citizenship is here because I am in Australia. I'm living here. But my ways and all are still Filipino.'* A Filipino identity is associated with belonging to a community. In Australia, this is regarded in terms of ethnicity; from a Philippine perspective, this is a 'national' identity. Immigration and, consequently, naturalization, does not mean, Ana Bagtas notes, the 'elimination of the native culture' in the experience of Filipino women.<sup>100</sup>

The women's continued identification as Filipinos is seen through their transmission of Filipino values and ways to their children and to their personal practices of religion, language and food habits. According to Sagisag, *'I still consider myself as Filipino. Everyday. As I can see, every day I wake up and I look myself in the mirror, I'm still Filipino. Because even though I'm here [in Australia]. I'm still practicing my Filipino way. My husband doesn't say ...you're in Australia you cannot do that here...Like to my children especially now they are growing [up] and they've got a big brother. I want them to call him kuya [a respectful address to older brother] which is a little bit odd [for them].'* Hiraya said that *'although our root was...from the Philippines we still speak in [Pilipino]<sup>101</sup> to our children... [practice] Filipino ethics and values.'* Salome also believes that maintaining her identity as Filipino is important: *'especially if you have [a] teenage daughter. You tell them...when we [were] young like this [in the Philippines] we...respect our elderly people and all that. I always [teach] my daughter about...our culture.'* Liwayway believes that her personal trait of being patient is characteristically Filipino: *'I*

<sup>100</sup> Bagtas, 'Being an Immigrant to the United States,' *Pact Press* Fall 1995, pp 6.

<sup>101</sup> Pilipino refers to the Tagalog-based language in the Philippines while Filipino refers to the people.

*think a lot of Filipinos are more patient with their family. Filipinos are more caring to their family. That's how I feel.'* There are certain traits and practices which the women believe depicts them as Filipinos. They show these traits in their mixed family home and continue to transmit the values which they perceive to be Filipino to their children.

Food, going to church and language are some indicators of Filipino identity in Australia. Rajah remarks: *'I still eat rice.'* Filipino social gatherings exhibit a wide selection of Filipino dishes. Nora always looks forward to these occasions, as she is able to orient her children to her culture. At home, her Australian husband prohibits her from cooking 'smelly' foods. Ligaya said: *'Eating bagoong will always be a part of me...to speak Tagalog. Those are the things that I cannot live without.'* Linaw also said that *'I miss our food...we cannot forget our language. Sometimes I talk to my child in Tagalog! I even talk to my husband in Tagalog! He would talk to me [in English] and I will answer back in Tagalog!'* Going to church on Sundays is an affirmation of Filipino identity. Rajah said, *Number one really is going to church. I try to attend Sunday mass. That's what I do in the Philippines. I go to mass three times a week - Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.'* Salome notes that *'I just go to church. I'm happy to do that.'* Filomena said, *'we have a very strong Catholic religion. It's also true here [in Australia] with my children [and] family in the first place...I practice that with my children like going to church. We have to respect one another, [and] do some prayers.'* For Nora, *'I don't lose hope with God in whatever I do. He is my rock...a shoulder to lean on...I offer my problems to Him.'* Everyone also attends other church activities especially during the Holy Week and Christmas celebrations. In the study of national identities in cross-national patterns of twenty-three countries, Frank Jones and Philip Smith have shown that it is only in the Philippines where religious affiliation is considered central to their national identity.<sup>102</sup> Religion, language and particular food habits contribute to the idea of a Filipino identity amongst the women in this study. This forms a basis of their identity as Filipinos in Australia.

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<sup>102</sup> Jones and Smith, 'Diversity and Commonality in National Identities,' *Journal of Sociology* 37 (1), May 2001, p 51.

Another manifestation of Filipino identity is their continuing ties with the homeland. This is observed, Barbara Posadas notes, through remittances,<sup>103</sup> personal communication by telephone<sup>104</sup> and periodic visits as *balikbayans*.<sup>105</sup> All the women respondents in Wollongong and Sydney undertake these activities throughout their sojourn as migrants. Rama said, *'I love the Philippines because it is the land of my birth. I still love it...because the rest of my family is in the Philippines. So, I really like to go there every now and then.'* Their regular physical connections to their country of origin signify attachment to the idea of a 'Filipino national' space. Filipinos everywhere in a diasporic forum undergo periodic visits to their homeland and this affirms their belonging to this collectivity.<sup>106</sup> In fact, a Filipino identity becomes more apparent outside of the geographical boundaries of the Philippines. Parama Roy notes that 'being somewhere else' makes migrants 'create a sense of a particular identity' that has not been previously 'experienced or claimed as uniquely one's own.'<sup>107</sup> With rapid changes in industrial capitalism and the migration of peoples, Anderson calls one of its political consequences 'long-distance nationalism.'<sup>108</sup> Migrants provide financial support to the democracy movement, for example, in their own countries.<sup>109</sup> However, in the case of the Filipino women in this study, the continued financial support is not designed to achieve national objectives but to help their families left behind. Mirasol conveys her feelings: *'I'm still a Filipino. My roots. I have five brothers in the Philippines [and] a sister. My mother is still in the Philippines. So, I still consider myself Filipino.'* Nora, for example, maintains a separate bank account from her Australian husband so she can readily send money to the

<sup>103</sup> There are many courier services in Australia, as elsewhere, for Filipinos. For example, the PERA AGAD Traders, MMBB Services, MoneyGram, Western Money Union Transfer, FOREX and IMPREZ International Services are regularly advertised in Filipino newspapers. See *The Philippine Bayanihan News* 5(2), February 2003; *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(6), 20 May-10 June 2000, p 13; *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(5), June 2002, p 7; *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 10(1), January 2003, p 10.

<sup>104</sup> Telephone services in Australia offer low call rates to the Philippines. For example, Budgettel offer it at 35 cents per minute and IDXTEL at 38.5 cents per minute in contrast to the 70 cents per minute of Telstra. See [www.budgettel.com.au](http://www.budgettel.com.au)[5/6/03]; Telstra, *Prices and Useful Information for Long Distance Calls* (effective August 2002), p 12.

<sup>105</sup> Posadas, *The Filipino Americans*, pp 140-142.

<sup>106</sup> Amongst the Asian American groups, E. San Juan, Jr. considers the Filipinos to be 'obsessed' with the idea of returning to the homeland, 'whether in reality or fantasy.' Cited in Okamura, *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora*, p 26.

<sup>107</sup> Roy, 'At Home in the World?' *Feminist Studies* 27(3), Fall 2001, pp 709-731.

<sup>108</sup> Anderson, *The Spectres of Comparison*, p 73.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid*, p 74.



Philippines: *'I help many people in the Philippines. I am supporting two people in my family [to] finish their college education.'* The women in this study identify with the economic fate of the nation through their families. The family serves as the tie that binds them to the Filipino nation.

Charles Taylor notes that identity is defined in 'dialogue' with others.<sup>110</sup> Almirol notes that the 'national' Filipino identification is irrelevant because the family is their primary identification, with regional or linguistic groups the next.<sup>111</sup> They 'become' Filipinos in interactions with non-Filipinos but, in reference to other Filipinos, they are Ilocano, Cebuano, Tagalog or other identities.<sup>112</sup> This reflects the ethno-linguistic divisions in the Philippines where Filipinos are particularly identified by their place of origin. Following Joan Scott's definition, the identity of Filipinos in Australia with other Filipinos is 'the referential sign' where their regional origin becomes their 'identifiable sociological category.'<sup>113</sup> As noted earlier, women who speak the same language usually group together in gatherings. In the absence of this reference group, they join the larger group of Filipinos using the national language or English as medium of communication. Regional identity is also seen in the formation of community groups, either formally organised or loosely bonded. For instance, Filipinos from Leyte and Samar regularly meet in Sydney for a Christmas party. In Wollongong, Dayday and Liwayway join a smaller number of women for picnic lunches. Their identification based on regional origin does not mean the absence of identification with a 'national imagined community' of Filipinos. These associations may be particularistic in orientation but they substantiate the idea of belonging to a collectivity of Filipinos similarly found in the Philippines. These are multiple layers of identities that intersect with each other.

Furthermore, the continuing re-connections with the homeland as site of Filipino identification are also enhanced by government programs. For example, the *Balikbayan* program attracts many Filipinos to undertake regular return visits to the Philippines under a

<sup>110</sup> Taylor, 'The Politics of Recognition' in Gutmann, *Multiculturalism*, p 33.

<sup>111</sup> Almirol, *op cit*, p 218.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid*, p 219.

<sup>113</sup> Scott, 'Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity' in Rajchman, *op cit*, p 5.

string of special privileges. Another is the recent legislative action to grant dual citizenship.<sup>114</sup> These kinds of programs and policies, according to Stephen Castles, ‘bind their expatriates to the homeland’ and these expatriates bring ‘economic, political or cultural benefits.’<sup>115</sup> From this perspective, Filipinos form part of a ‘national’ collectivity even if they choose to become citizens of another state.

Ties to the homeland are also promoted in the adopted countries. For example, the Philippine entertainment or ‘showbiz’ industry regularly sends a pool of talents to stage concerts for Filipinos in Australia.<sup>116</sup> The Filipino immigrant community forms a ready market for these Filipino shows in Australia. Many of the women in this study have attended these live concerts though they had little opportunity to do so when they were still in the Philippines. This is mainly because most of these shows are held in major cities. The entertainers who come to Australia represent the nation they left behind; seeing them perform brings the memories alive and form part of the women’s identification as Filipinos.

Aside from bringing over to Australia a host of Filipino talents, there are many services that foster a ‘Pinoy’<sup>117</sup> identity in Australia. These include the community newspapers, Filipino news on SBS-TV and a 24-hour Filipino cable channel.<sup>118</sup> Through these services, the women who patronize them are not really separated from their homeland as they are updated with events thousands of miles away. These kinds of services are facilitated by Australian multiculturalism. Multiculturalism allows immigrants

<sup>114</sup> ‘Dual Citizenship for Filipino-Australians,’ *The Philippines Bayanihan News* 4(10), October 2002, p 1.

<sup>115</sup> Castles, ‘Migration and Community Formation Under Conditions of Globalization,’ *The International Migration Review* 36(4), Winter 2002, pp 1143-1168.

<sup>116</sup> Some of the Filipino celebrities who have performed in Sydney include Pilita Corales, Jackie Lou, Ramon Christopher, Gary Valenciano, Nanette Inventor, Mitch Valdez, Martin Nieverra, Randy Santiago, Richard Gomez, Joey Marquez, Dulce, Rannie Raymundo, Apo Hiking Society, Ogie Alcasid, Rosanna Roces and Rico Puno. See ‘Dance Time,’ *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(3), April 2002, p 23; ‘Martin Nieverra Australia Concert Tour 2000,’ *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(1), 20 December 1999-20 January 2000, p 30; ‘2001 Lbs of Music & Laughter,’ *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(11), November 2000, p 23; Forex Australia and San Miguel Beer, *A Million Thanks- Pilita* programme.

<sup>117</sup> Colloquial term for a Filipino

<sup>118</sup> See advertisement in *The Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 7(11), November 2000, p 19. See also ‘TARBS Gives Australia’s Six Millionth Migrant Complimentary Filipino TV and Radio Service,’ *The*

like Filipinos to maintain their connections to their homeland. In this way, Filipinos learn from these services that their chosen life in Australia offers a better option than being part of the political strife and economic debacle in the Philippines. This is the general sentiment expressed by the women in this study. Their 'Pinoy' identity is enhanced by such multicultural programmes in Australia but it also makes them feel closer to their identity as Australian citizens.

Although the 'imagined' identity with the Philippines is particular and felt by Filipinos in Australia, this identity appears to be what Kum-Kum Bhavnani and Ann Phoenix call 'shifting' or 'constantly variable and renegotiable.'<sup>119</sup> Filipino women in Australia could be said to have 'shifting identities' as transnationals constantly traversing both spaces in the Philippines and in Australia. San Juan puts it as 'both inside and outside.'<sup>120</sup> In this case, they have a cultural identity as Filipinos and live in Australia as citizens. Yasmina avers that '*mentally I am a Filipino*' because of her continued adherence to Filipino values. But she maintains that she is now an Australian citizen. Linaw still feels like a Filipino after eight years in Australia but concedes that '*at home I follow the Australian way...you tend to adapt to the Australian custom. The custom in the Philippines is different. If you are an Australian citizen your feeling is that you are following the custom of Australians. When you stay here long enough that happens.*' Dama declares, '*I know I am a Filipino. I cannot explain it. I'm still Filipino but I'm already here in Australia. My [loyalty] is not anymore with the Philippines.*' And Ramona, '*I was very proud when I received my Australian citizenship. I am now an Australian even if I am also a Filipino.*' Having a Filipino identity and becoming an Australian citizen is a dual orientation in their lives. They affirm their loyalty to the Australian state and yet consider themselves as Filipinos.

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*Philippine Community Herald Newspaper* 9(3), April 2002, p 17; Winton, 'Reading the Multicultural Market,' *Communications Update* 156, July 1999, pp 16-17.

<sup>119</sup> Bhavnani and Phoenix, 'Introduction' in Bhavnani and Phoenix, *Shifting Identities, Shifting Racisms*, p 5.

<sup>120</sup> San Juan, Jr, *From Exile to Diaspora*, p 15. See also Bhatia and Ram, 'Rethinking 'Acculturation' in Relation to Diasporic Cultures and Postcolonial Identities,' *Human Development* 44(1), January-February 2001, pp 1-18.

Filipino women do not see living in between two spaces as contradicting their identity as Filipinos and Australian citizens. Anita explains: *'I've seen two cultures- Filipino culture and Australian culture. I have adapted [to] both. I have never lost touch with [being a] Filipino because I have to be like that on account that I've got a big family back...in the Philippines. Here in Australia, I have to adapt to be with [Australians]. Because if Filipinos would come and live here and show to the Australians that you're still a Filipino, what's the point in coming to Australia if you're not willing to change?...How can you call yourself an Australian citizen if, for instance...you cannot follow the rules in Australia? For instance...[in] swimming pool [s]. You're not allowed to...go into the water with [a] pair of shorts or [in] t-shirts...I have to abide with [the rules]...to be able to meet [their] requirements...as a citizen of Australia ...If I'm in the Philippines, I am a Filipino. If I'm in Australia, I am an Australian.'* This shifting identity is a matter of course in the experience of Filipino women in Australia. In their identities, as Filipinos and Australian citizens, the women have shown that each can coexist with other.

Being a Filipino and an Australian citizen follow Mouffe's idea of multiple identities in the lives of individuals. The women have indicated that they are able to subordinate their identity as Filipinos to their identity as Australian citizens and negotiate between the two identities through discipline. The need to conform and follow the rules is viewed as significant in their lives as Australian citizens and Filipinos. Mouffe notes that individuals submit themselves to 'authoritative rules of conduct' despite being 'engaged in many different communities.'<sup>121</sup> This form of conduct is associated with *respublica* or the 'specific language of civil intercourse.'<sup>122</sup> The Filipino women in this study have a clear understanding of the rules of Australian citizenship particularly on the idea that Australian citizenship treats each person as free and equal. Following Mouffe's principle of democratic equivalence, the different forms of individuality are respected and, in Australia, this is underpinned by multiculturalism.<sup>123</sup> A political multicultural community is, therefore, held together by a common bond of citizenship. Filipino women identify with Australian citizenship which requires allegiance to, as stated in the Oath, the 'democratic

<sup>121</sup> Mouffe, 'Democratic Politics and the Question of Identity' in Rajchman, *op cit*, p 37.

<sup>122</sup> *loc cit*

beliefs,' the 'rights and liberties' and the laws in Australia.<sup>124</sup>

Both citizenship and Filipino identity are sites of negotiation for immigrant Filipino women in Australia. As John Shotter writes 'no one yet quite knows what is to be a citizen; it is a status which one must struggle to attain in the face of competing versions of what is proper to struggle for.'<sup>125</sup> Filipino women understand that the grant of Australian citizenship empowers them in their struggle at work and with the larger community that marks them as non-whites. Constructing their Australian citizenship across difference follows Yuval-Davis' idea of a 'transversal politics.' This is based on the idea of women having different cultural backgrounds and it suggests the women's use of 'the techniques of rooting and shifting' in dialogue with others.<sup>126</sup> A 'transversal politics' then 'move[s] towards those from other cultures whose values and goals are compatible with one's own.'<sup>127</sup> As Filipinos, the women in this study have shown this ability to negotiate their subject position by identifying with an Australian political ethos and by using the social structures available to them to empower themselves.

Although the women in this study are ethnicised, the political identity of Australian citizenship suggests that everyone is equal. Eva said, '*you have the feeling that you're not anymore different from them even though you're from another country, that you have the right, that you feel I'm one of you. It's like that. And then, sometimes you feel that there is discrimination and everything but you don't feel that because you are proud that I'm Australian, too.*' For Anita, '*I came to Australia and changed my citizenship, not even a dual one. Just change...When I changed my citizenship it's not because I am less Australian compared to them. I am equal by rights.*' These Filipinas, like other immigrants, show their commitment to the Australian core values through what Bill Hayden, former Governor-General of Australia, refers to as 'Australians in an Italian way, in a Jewish way,

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<sup>123</sup> Cited in Li, *Imagining the Nation*, p 14.

<sup>124</sup> Chesterman and Galligan, *Defining Australian Citizenship*, p 77.

<sup>125</sup> Shotter, 'Psychology and Citizenship,' in Turner, *Citizenship and Social Theory*, pp 115-116.

<sup>126</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 92.

<sup>127</sup> Cited in Smith, 'Nationalism and Modernity' in Stone and Dennis, *Race and Ethnicity*, p 163.

a Vietnamese way'<sup>128</sup> or a Filipino way. This fusion of what it is to be an Australian in the context of one's own identity 'enriches' the migrant's perspectives of the new country.<sup>129</sup> Hana said, '*I am a Filipino physically, but in my heart and in my mind, I am Australian. This does not mean that I have forgotten my origin as Filipino. We have many Filipino values that we need to treasure and pass it on to our children.*' Their membership of the Australian political community operates as Mouffe suggests as a 'discursive surface and not as an empirical referent.'<sup>130</sup> In this way, the individual is not sacrificed to the citizen.<sup>131</sup>

Some women in this study have also indicated that a Filipino identity coupled with Australian citizenship 'does not make any difference' in their lives. Being an Australian citizen, according to Donita, is '*knowing my rights as a citizen and doing my obligations. It is important for me to exercise my rights at the same time my responsibilities. It's not just accessing your rights but what are your rights, as well, as a citizen. What can you contribute to the community?*' This perception suggests there is no link between her identity as Filipino and Australian citizenship. Such a position is possible in a multicultural societal framework which the Filipino women believe exists in Australia. Jamila also claims that '*there's no problem being a Filipino or being an Australian citizen. They don't make that fuss or make it hard for me or a conflict in my lifestyle. I look Filipino. I speak Filipino...That gives favour to me because I can speak two languages. I can speak different dialects and in fact you can get a job because you've got two different dialects... But I act like the same. There's no difference whether you're Australian citizen or Filipino citizen. You're just who you are and as a person.*' This understanding of oneself as the same person regardless of Australian citizenship or a Filipino identity indicates a strong sense of personal agency.

For the women interviewed their Australian citizenship operates in terms of identification with the Australian state while their Filipino identity is oriented towards an 'imagined' belonging to the Philippine nation. The attachment to the Filipino nation

<sup>128</sup> Cited in Smolicz, 'Australia: From Migrant Country to Multicultural Nation,' *The International Migration Review* 31(1), Spring 1997, pp 171-186.

<sup>129</sup> See Ganguly, 'Exploring Difference,' *Hecate* 21(1), 1995, pp 37.

<sup>130</sup> Mouffe, 'Citizenship and Political Identity,' *October* 61, Summer 1992, p 30, cited in Li, *op cit*, p 13.

expressed by the women in this study is associated with certain cultural practices that make them 'Filipino.' On the other hand, the values required of their Australian citizenship are grounded in Mouffe's principle of democratic equivalence and the idea of a common good for all citizens. The two identities, Filipino and Australian citizen, stand in congruence.

### C. Conclusion

Australian citizenship can work productively with a Filipino identity. The women in this study have shown that their political identification as Australian citizens does not contradict their Filipino identity. This identity is mainly produced through cultural practices that make them 'Filipino' and which the women feel must be respected because of the policy of Australian multiculturalism. The Australian core values which people of different backgrounds are required to accept are consistent with the experiences of Filipino women in terms of language, religion and democratic values.

Australian citizenship and Filipino national identity relate closely to each other. The former is shown by an affinity to the Australian state and the latter through a loosely defined membership concretized in the form of one's family unit. The Australian state secures the well being of Filipinas while their continued physical reconnection with their homeland assists in the welfare of the families left behind.

Although the policy of multiculturalism opened up the possibility for the integration of racialised immigrants in Australia, it has left them part of a 'constitutive outside' whose constructed differences with the Anglo-Celtic or 'white' Australians remain. Yuval-Davis points out the different kinds of 'Others' that divides the world into 'us' and 'them.'<sup>132</sup> Following David Leiwei Li, Filipinos, like the Asian Americans, are represented as 'hardly hav[ing] the requisite "social" competence' to inherit a British heritage.<sup>133</sup> This boundary is still marked by race. However, the socially constructed boundaries between 'us' (white Australian) and 'them' (Filipinos) can be linked through Australian citizenship and so 'us,' signifies being a part of the broader 'Australia.'

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<sup>131</sup> *loc cit*

<sup>132</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 47.

<sup>133</sup> Li, *op cit*, p 12.

A Filipino identity or an 'imagined' attachment to a homeland remains significant in the narratives of women in this study. This identification, following Anderson, is an eternal part of the self regardless of where individuals choose to reside.<sup>134</sup> The homeland is the site of a collective memory, and the flight of an immigrant to another country hinges upon what it lacks and what it has to offer.

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<sup>134</sup> Cited in Bhattacharjee, 'The Habit of Ex-nomination' in Gupta, *Emerging Voices*, p 247.



## IX

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research has analysed the relationship between migration and citizenship in the lives of first-generation immigrant Filipinos in Australia. It has explored the meaning and practise of Australian citizenship in their quotidian lives, constructing a political space from which to negotiate their subject position. Citizenship is traditionally expressed in male values and, conventionally, associated with formal political participation. However, adopting this approach limits the understanding of women's citizenship. This research moved beyond this conventional idea and focused on the meaning of citizenship in the daily lives of immigrant women. This subjective conception of citizenship provided another way of exploring immigrant women's citizenship in Australia.

The women interviewed for this study had varied experiences, as a result in analyzing their Australian citizenship, a combination of theoretical tools or 'critical syntheses' were appropriate. The complexity of women's lives simply could not be explained by a single theory. For example, the women cross between the public sphere (*i.e.* work and the community) and the private sphere (*i.e.* home) in their daily lives and ideas of citizenship are relevant to both these spheres. Citizenship is not only a formal status but begets rights and obligations necessary in social relationships. Because these women are differently positioned, the use of these rights is also experienced differently. Filipino women are considered as racialised immigrants and their understanding of Australian citizenship is affected by their experiences.

To be a woman citizen in another country is a complex state. Women's understanding of citizenship relates directly to their own experiences in their country of origin. These experiences form one basis from which they understand and exercise a new citizenship in the adopted country. In the case of the Filipino women in this study, becoming an Australian citizen is informed by their former citizenship and their roles in the public and private spheres. Emigrating and becoming Australian citizens involves a

continual process of negotiation in the adopted country in their multiple roles as wives, mothers, workers, volunteers and members of community associations. These Filipino women construct a political space from which they can understand the meaning of Australian citizenship in their lives.

The process of becoming Australian citizens involves not only the formal requirements of naturalization but also other factors that shape their positive valuing of Australian citizenship. Some of the reasons these Filipino women value Australian citizenship are based on historical circumstances specific to the Philippines. The women are infused with traditional values but also a modern receptiveness brought about by centuries of Spanish colonialism and the American democratic experiment. The indigenous idea of women's relatively high status in society was replaced by the inferior and subordinate role under the Spanish regime. But the significant position of women in the family remained. It took another colonial power, the USA, to provide the social and political structures that enabled the women to enter and negotiate their roles in the public sphere, for example, as voters and elected representatives of the Filipino people. This experience in the Philippines contributes to the positive valuing of Australian citizenship. The two nations share similar socio-political institutions. Some of these familiar institutions and practices are the democratic principles of the rule of law, equality and individual liberties; the market economy; Christian religion; and the English language. This makes the women's new citizenship easy to understand and practice. As in the Philippines, Filipinos in Australia are familiar with the experience of engaged citizenship.

The personal motivations for the women to embrace Australian citizenship were significant. First, the family is the central unit of attachment for the Filipinas and their primary role in it. Being married to an Australian citizen also implies following his citizenship to form and maintain a family. Second, Filipinas relate their Australian citizenship to their ability to sponsor family members and fiancés to come to Australia. This can enable them to assist their kin and improve their economic well being. Third, Australian citizenship facilitates social integration. The women believe that immigrating to Australia also requires them to become part of the community as citizens. Fourth, the

Australian lifestyle seems to be a much better alternative than offered by their previous Philippine citizenship. In this case, the 'ideal' becomes 'real' in Australia. Fifth, Filipinas, as with other immigrants, find the lure of the practical benefits, especially the access to social services, also a motivation of being a part of Australian society. Sixth, Australian citizenship is perceived to have an influence on their job security. Holding Australian citizenship is perceived to offer fair competition in the labour market.

Another key issue in becoming Australian citizens is the 'weight' of Australian citizenship in contrast to a Philippine citizenship. Yuval-Davis calls this a 'different positioning of different states as well the different positioning of individuals and grouping within states.'<sup>1</sup> Australian citizenship provides empowerment, a boost to morale and state protection which Filipinas in this study believed their former citizenship failed to offer. Australian citizenship gives them a sense of power to equalize their racialised status and allows them to negotiate their subject positions in society. As transnationals, the Filipinas use their Australian citizenship to boost their morale when they return to the Philippines as *balikbayan*. They believe that holding Australian citizenship guarantees state protection when they travel overseas. Australia is perceived to be a 'strong' state in this regard while the Philippines appear 'weak' in protecting its nationals away from home.

Embracing Australian citizenship while at the same time retaining Philippine citizenship is an attractive position for some women in this study. Dual citizenship is fast becoming a reality as neither the Philippine government nor the Australian government requires the renunciation of former allegiances upon naturalization. This allows the women to feel legitimately 'Filipino' while living in Australia as a citizen.

Filipino women in this study have a sufficient knowledge of the rights of Australian citizenship although these rights are not expressly provided in a single document. Their idea of Australian citizenship, its rights and entitlements, is sourced from their experience in the Philippines and the perceived practices of any democratic state. These rights are employed in empowering themselves personally and professionally.

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<sup>1</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, p 75.

Becoming an Australian citizen has subjective implications for these Filipino women from Wollongong and Sydney. In this study, the meaning and practise of Australian citizenship has been explored in three spaces – at home, at work and in the community. These spaces are sites of negotiation for women in their varied roles. I recommend that future research consider other spaces where Filipino women exercise Australian citizenship.

The home is a space where the women practised their Australian citizenship in terms of their relationships with husbands and children. Filipinas in this study who lived in bi-cultural homes relate the idea of holding Australian citizenship to personal security and independence. On the other hand, women in Filipino homes understand their Australian citizenship in terms of empowerment and equality with their husbands. Having Australian citizenship is a stronger guarantee of state protection in cases of abusive relationships than being merely a permanent resident. In terms of their relationship with children, Australian citizenship is significant in negotiating the manner of discipline employed that is consistent with Australian law and without having to sacrifice the Filipino values they want to develop. This reflects a maternalist conception of women's citizenship in which the Filipinas, as mothers, nurture the values required for citizenship such as empathy and compassion to others. The women's orientation towards the future of their children also seeks to 'build' an Australian citizen who is well-educated and respectful.

The workplace is another space in which Australian citizenship is important in the lives of the women in this study. To be able to work is one of the major reasons for migrating to Australia. Paid employment gives these women a sense of economic independence and, at the same time, allows them to contribute to the economic welfare of their families in the Philippines. Although Australian citizenship enables them to find work and use their skills in the labour market, they are faced with structural constraints that impede their labour force participation. This is mainly due to the non-automatic recognition of their overseas qualifications in Australia. Their professional qualifications have to be assessed in relation to a set of Australian standards. Because of the time and money involved in pursuing this recognition, some women opted to work in occupations

not related to their qualifications in the secondary labour market. As a result, they are underemployed and received low wages in semi-skilled occupations in manufacturing and the service industry. Despite their marginal position in the Australian labour market, the ability to work gives the women a sense of dignity and a sort of pleasure in not relying on government welfare.

Another finding in this study is the experience of 'double jeopardy' or the dual system of racism and sexism in the workplace. Certain prejudices still permeate the Australian labour industry in terms of race and ethnicity. The association of a 'Filipina' with a 'mail-order bride' is a lingering stereotype which some women have to negotiate with 'white' Australian co-workers. The women, however, are able to negotiate their subject position as non-white workers and immigrants by using their understanding of the rights entailed in their Australian citizenship. As citizens, they believe they have the right to be treated equally and with respect as all other Australians should be treated. They are aware of the avenues available to them to address cases of racial discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

However, these negative experiences with 'white' people were not perceived by the Filipino women as inhibiting their integration in the workforce. They expect racial or ethnic prejudices to take place. They see this as a social consequence of migration to Australia, a nation with a long history of racial exclusion. However, because the women understand their subject position within a racially structured society, they are prepared to handle such eventualities using their personal skills, education and language to counteract any prejudice. Their negotiation stems from the idea of a common political identity where individuals of different background and interest adhere to the same set of rules. This negotiation also involves a 'transversal dialogue' determined by the messenger which aims to reach a 'compatible value system' – a Filipino orientation in the Philippines that is similar to the core citizenship values in Australia. As a dual prejudicial system exists in the Australian labour market, Filipino women continually exercise the rights of citizenship to empower themselves to be treated as Australian citizens.

Also, the women in this study have experienced the ‘double burden’ or having to combine paid work and caring work at home. Some of them have to prioritise caring work in the case of under school-aged children or pensioner husbands. This limits their participation as citizens as they become dependents of their breadwinner husbands. Their economic contribution is viewed as supplementary and their caring work as primary. The difficulties of combining paid work and caring work are exacerbated by the lack of familial support they are familiar with in the Philippines being available to them in Australia. Some of them, however, are able to successfully negotiate their dual roles at home and at work through the use of technology, time management and a change in gender roles with their husbands. In this way, the women have shown agency to maintain their participation in the Australian labour market.

The community is another key space where the exercise of Filipino women’s citizenship takes place. This involves their participation as volunteers in local schools and in community associations. The women in this study are involved in mutually beneficial endeavours – helping others while at the same time developing their own potentials and becoming active citizens in their own way. The school and the community groups provide avenues for the women to enhance their confidence to deal with the challenges of living in a new country. For instance, the school provides the women the opportunity to contribute as volunteers and, at the same time, facilitates the development of personal skills in their interactions with other Australians. The school, through their meetings, enhances awareness of community life and allows the women to propose their ideas in a democratic process. It also serves as a minute representation of the state where the Filipinas are able to complain about bullying experienced by their children. In doing so, they identify the subject position of their children and, in defending them, they have also defended themselves.

On the other hand, the community associations enhance their sense of *kapwa* and show the collectivist orientation of Filipinos. These associations, mainly composed of Filipinos, provide many roles in the lives of the women in this study: welfare assistance, a link to state agencies, an expression of their cultural identity, and a filter of political issues.

The significance of these groups is observed in the women's continued participation in association activities although some of them are not members. A few women raised certain issues affecting Filipino community organizations such as the composition of its membership as mainly Filipinos, personalism and a tendency to indulge in gossip. Some women expressed their preference to be involved in multicultural or even mainstream organizations as a reflection of their integration in Australian society.

The right to vote is a significant aspect of Australian citizenship which Filipino women exercise as a right and as a duty. This political obligation is not only exercised because of its compulsory nature and punitive consequence but, more importantly, as an expression of their belonging to the Australian community.

In the absence of a formal parliamentary representation of Filipinos in Australia, another aspect of seeing this exercise of citizenship is observed in the process of voting for candidates during elections. The women in this study have shown that their choice of candidates is based on a process involving their husband's choice as well as other sources of information. There was a tendency of some women to follow their husbands' choices based on the perceived gendered nature of politics. However, many of the women have shown their political independence and made choices based on certain attributes of the candidates. Although they are more familiar with selecting individual candidates in the Philippines, there is a preference for the Australian Labor Party, a party which many women identify with. Their choices of candidates or political parties are informally discussed with other Filipinos during community activities. This is indicative of a highly political orientation of the women in this study.

The community is a site where the dual identities of Filipino women as Australian citizens and Filipinos have been expressed in this study. In school, they participate in voluntary activities as Australian citizens; whereas, in the community associations, they are mainly identified as Filipinos, the 'Other' or a part of one of the ethnic communities in Australia. In actively engaging in multicultural activities, the community associations serve as an alternative public forum through which the state addresses their particular

needs and interests as Filipino-Australians consistent with their common political identity as citizens.

The interviews with the women in this study demonstrated that becoming an Australian citizen can coexist with a Filipino identity. These two identities, one political and the other cultural or national, form intersecting layers of identities or what Yuval-Davis calls different collectivities in the lives of women. These identities are facilitated by Australian multiculturalism and the weak identification with the Philippine nation. Within the Filipino community, the women express their membership in a particular ethnolinguistic grouping. The women maintain a 'national' identification as Filipinos when they are with non-Filipinos. But the primary basis in their relationship with 'white' Australians is understood through the notion of citizenship where each of the different 'ethnics' come together to pursue similar ends and share a civic culture that is promoted by a multicultural democratic society.

Australian multiculturalism recognizes the different cultural affinities of immigrants yet also demands observance of certain Australian core values which also are consistent with the experiences of Filipino women in the Philippines. Australian citizenship is directed towards membership in a state while a Filipino identity is expressed in terms of cultural practices and is concretized by the family as the primary reason for their continued physical reconnections to their homeland. In this diasporic engagement, some women in this study have shown 'shifting' identities – a 'Filipino' when in the Philippines, an 'Australian' when in Australia. Or, they can be both in Australia depending on the context. One example is the practice of holding community meetings in the English language. This is seen as consistent with their experience in the Philippines as well as observing the 'Australian way.'

Becoming an Australian citizen is a key factor in negotiating the Filipino women's subject position at home, at work, and in the community. Together with the idea of multiculturalism, holding Australian citizenship is interpreted as being about an 'equality of status' and 'mutual respect' by the women in this study. Embracing Australian



citizenship gives them a strong motivation to be part of the Australian political community. Citizenship provides a basis to forge a new identity which they understand as common to all regardless of race or ethnicity. Filipinos, even with their racialised status become equal with 'white' Australians in this new political identity.

The limitations of Australian multiculturalism are offset by the agency of Filipino women as they become fully engaged as citizens. Drawing from their own experiences, they are able to effectively negotiate their status as women, as immigrants, and as Filipinos in their lives as Australian citizens. Despite the many constraints they have experienced in Australia, the Filipino women in this study positively value their new political identity as Australian citizens, because it signifies their becoming part of the Australian community.

The Filipino women in this study find their status as Australian citizens to be the embodiment of the ideals they want to pursue in life. Embracing this citizenship has brought a number of advantages for themselves and their families. Although Australian citizenship is seen as a formal political identity, it also results in a number of personal attachments to Australia, which become more permanent and important now that it is their home.

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## Appendix A

1 September 2000

Dear Ms \_\_\_\_\_,

Greetings!

I am a postgraduate student at the Faculty of Arts (History and Politics), University of Wollongong. Presently, I am conducting a research entitled FILIPINO WOMEN AND THEIR CITIZENSHIP IN AUSTRALIA: IN SEARCH OF A POLITICAL SPACE as a requirement for a doctoral degree. This research aims to document the experiences of immigrant Filipino women in the exercise of their citizenship in Australia.

In this regard, I would like to seek your participation in the research project. This will require about 1 to 2 hour- interview session at your home or in a place where you feel most convenient. Please take a look at the guide questions I will ask from you. You do not need to answer those which you feel intrudes your privacy. You have the liberty to decide when you want the session to begin and to shut off the tape recorder if you wish. All responses will be kept highly confidential and you will remain anonymous in the project. The final transcript of record will be presented to you for comments and approval before it can be used as a research material.

Should you accept, please fill-out the consent form herein attached. If you do not have time, I will appreciate it if you can pass this letter on to a Filipina who resides in Sydney or Wollongong.

You may contact my academic supervisor, Prof. Rebecca Albury (02- 42213630), for further information about this research.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

GLENDALYNNA ANNE TIBE-BONIFACIO

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- I. On Australian Citizenship
  - A. Becoming an Australian Citizen
    1. How did you feel when you became an Australian citizen?
    2. Did you wait long enough to be granted an Australian citizenship?
    3. What is the meaning of Australian citizenship to you as an immigrant and as a woman?
      - 3.1 Did it really matter to have an Australian citizenship?
      - 3.2 What would happen if you were not granted Australian citizenship?
      - 3.3 Will an Australian citizenship make any difference at all?
  - B. Exercise of Australian Citizenship
    1. In what ways do you apply your Australian citizenship?
      - 1.1 At home, do you exercise your rights guaranteed by citizenship?
      - 1.2 At work, in what ways do you assert your rights?
      - 1.3 In the community, how do you practice citizenship?
        - 1.3.1 What is your involvement as a parent in your child's activities in school?
        - 1.3.2 Do you participate in meetings?
        - 1.3.3 Do you exercise your right to vote?
        - 1.3.4 How do you access your rights to social welfare benefits?
- II. Comparative Experiences
  - A. Do you exercise the same rights in the Philippines?
    1. While in the Philippines, did you exhibit the same rights at home, work and in the community?
  - B. What do you think are the constraints in the exercise of citizenship in Australia and in the Philippines?
    1. Does your gender, or being a woman, gives you difficulty in practicing citizenship? Why?
    2. Is being a Filipino, of brown race, an obstacle in the exercise of citizenship in Australia? Why?
  - C. Do you still consider yourself a Filipino despite being an Australian citizen? Why?
- III. Role of Filipino Associations
  - A. Are you a member of any Filipino association in Australia?
  - B. What activities do you normally attend to?
  - C. Do you believe these associations are important to your exercise of citizenship in Australia? Why?

## CONSENT FORM

**Research Title:** FILIPINO WOMEN AND THEIR CITIZENSHIP IN AUSTRALIA: IN SEARCH OF A POLITICAL SPACE

**Researcher's Name:** Glenda Lynna Anne Tibe-Bonifacio

I have been given information about FILIPINO WOMEN AND THEIR CITIZENSHIP IN AUSTRALIA: IN SEARCH OF A POLITICAL SPACE and discussed the research project with Glenda Lynna Anne Tibe-Bonifacio who is conducting this research as part of a doctoral degree in Politics supervised by Rebecca Albury in the History and Politics Program at the University of Wollongong.

I understand that, if I consent to participate in this project I will be asked to

1. answer questions about my practice of citizenship in Australia;
2. share my understanding of citizenship rights at home, school, work and in the community;
3. relate the role of Filipino associations in my exercise of citizenship in Australia; and
4. compare my present practice of citizenship in Australia with that of the Philippines.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include revealing information about rights as practiced at home, and time allotted for the interview, and have had an opportunity to ask Ms. Bonifacio any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research anytime. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect the research project.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Ms. Rebecca Albury (Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts) at (02) (4221-3630) and leave a message for Ms. Bonifacio through June Aspley at (02) (42214838) or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Complaints Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong at (02) 42214457.

By signing below I am indicating my consent to participate in the research entitled FILIPINO WOMEN AND THEIR CITIZENSHIP IN AUSTRALIA: IN SEARCH OF A POLITICAL SPACE, conducted by Glenda Lynna Anne Tibe-Bonifacio as it has been described to me in the information sheet and in discussion with Ms. Bonifacio. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for a thesis and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Filipino Migration to Australia

#### 1. Number of Philippine-born in Australia, 1901-1947

Australian Census	Philippine-Born
1901	689
1911	444
1921	329
1933	234
1947	141

Source: Bureau of Immigration Research

#### 2. Number of Philippine-born in Australia, 1971-1996

Australian Census	Philippine-born
1971	2,550
1976	5,961
1981	15,432
1986	33,724
1991	73,144
1996	92,902

Source: Community Profiles. 1996 Census

**Appendix C**  
(Photo Gallery of Filipino Community Activities)  
Photo Credits: G. L. A. T. B.



2002 Filipino Fiesta celebration in Sydney with distinguished guests seated on stage.



The Ati-Atihan



A motorcade of beauties during the fiesta celebration in Sydney



Filipino community groups with their stalls selling native food and delicacies during the fiesta celebration in Sydney.





Book Launching sponsored by the Illawarra Filipino Women's Group in Wollongong



A scene from the regular meeting of the Illawarra Women's Group at the Migrant Centre in Wollongong



Filipino women engaged in craft activities

