

FILIPINO AMERICAN IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND ITS RELATION TO HERITAGE LANGUAGE LOSS

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A Thesis

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Abstract

of

FILIPINO AMERICAN IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND ITS RELATION TO HERITAGE LANGUAGE LOSS

by

Jennifer Guiang Osalbo

*Statement of the Problem*

Filipino American elders are discouraging their youth from learning their heritage language, which in turn is causing Filipino youth to actively abandon their culture. Language is the strongest link to one's culture (Zentella, 1997), yet Filipino parents and grandparents are encouraging by their children to desert it and assimilate (Tuason, Taylor, Rollings, Harris, & Martin, 2007). Although other immigrant families try to teach their children their heritage language, limited amounts of Filipino American families attempt to, fearing their children will have a foreign accent (Nadal, 2009). When Filipino families deter from sharing their native tongue, Filipino youth learn to reject their culture and assimilate to American ways without learning their heritage. The researcher of this study interviewed six Filipino Americans of different generations to further understand how they feel about their Filipino American culture.

“While a people preserves its language; it preserves the marks of liberty.” – Jose Rizal

\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this Thesis to my only living grandparent, Remedios Almazan Guiang. She is my maternal grandmother and helped raise me from the time I was 5 years old. My grandma's words inspired this thesis so I am dedicating this work to her.

I also hope that my brothers: Jonathan and Justin; younger cousins: Ramon Jr., Jaryce, Michael Glenn, Dennis, Michael Pierre, Catherine Mae, Neiman, and Nasya; and Godchildren: Anthony “Banjo”, Jacqueline Nadine, and Olivia Marie; find this work an inspiration to not only continue their formal education, but also to learn more about our Filipino heritage.

“He who does not know how to look back at where he came from will never get to his destination.”

- Jose Rizal

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Cultural and Historical Background*

Many Filipino Americans, like myself, grew up with an identity struggle. Even with a large Filipino population in California, my small town of Oakley had only five Filipino families. My parents spoke only Ilocano (one of many Filipino languages) to me until my preschool teacher warned my parents that hearing both Ilocano and English would confuse me. Since then, they speak Ilocano to each other and usually English to my younger brothers and me. Now I can understand Ilocano, but have trouble with production since I have only spoken English in the past.

My personal experience with Filipinos has not always been pleasant. Although I spent time with Filipinos during lunchtime in middle school, the same crowd rejected me (for reasons unbeknownst to me) in high school, which has greatly influenced my attitude towards other Filipinos. In college, however, I participated in a multicultural program filled with Filipinos who are my best friends today. Yet, I frequently catch myself prejudging Filipinos that I come in contact with, initially thinking that I will not get along with them because we will not have things in common although I know we share the same culture. From talking to other Filipinos, I think most Filipinos go through an identity crisis, usually not wanting to associate with other Filipinos and favoring Whites.

My interest in this thesis topic was piqued after an informal interview with my only living grandparent, my maternal grandmother. She stated that she was indifferent about my brothers and me not being able to speak Tagalog or Ilocano, and said that since

we were in America we did not have to learn it. This confirmed a passage I had read, “It is interesting that many Filipino American elders caution the younger generation not to identify as Filipino or to speak the native language, but rather to strive toward Whiteness and assimilation” (Tuason, Taylor, Rollings, Harris, & Martin, 2007). From my understanding, my parents had been discouraged by my teachers to speak our native language because it would confuse me, not because they did not want me to.

Confirmation also came from a Filipino psychologist, “It is commonplace for second-generation Filipino Americans to not speak Tagalog (or the native languages of their parents) because their parents wanted them to assimilate to American society and avoid speaking with a Filipino accent” (Nadal, 2009, p.53). Having parents and grandparents who discourage their youth from learning their heritage language seems an uncommon observation, which can be an issue in the Filipino American community. This thesis hopes to examine this rejection of culture, which runs counter to the idea that elders urge their youth to hang on to their culture via the heritage language (Zentella, 1997). But to understand the Filipino culture, we must examine the country and its history.

Filipinos have been recognized as the “forgotten Asian Americans” (Cordova, 1983) or the “invisible minorities” (Cimmarusti, 1996), consequently making Filipinos the least researched ethnic group. Since Filipinos have had a long history with America and are familiar with English and American values, they do suffer as badly from culture shock as other Asians. Furthermore, Filipino-American children do not need to communicate with their parents in their heritage language because their parents will

already have known how to speak English, making it unnecessary to learn and speak the heritage language. This barrier leads to the question, why should Filipino American youth bother learning Pilipino or another Philippine language if their family can already communicate in English?

The answer to this question would be to maintain the Philippine culture. This question is relevant to most ethnicities with families who could potentially speak another language with their children. Although language is not the only aspect to culture, it is a major part of it. “Language is a physical endowment, a living thing, which shapes the culture and thought of a people” (Joseph, 2004, p. 47). Language helps define a culture and is a very important part of it. Parts of a culture can be understood via their language and terms that they have in existence. Words are very powerful and guide thought.

For example, terms that exist in the Filipino culture help explain their values in society. These values include: *kapwa* (shared identity), *utang ng loob* (debt of reciprocity), *hiya* (shame), *pakikasama* (rapport) (Enriquez, 1976; Nadal, 2009), and *magalang*. *Kapwa* is fellow collectivism, feeling connected to other Filipinos, even if you just met. *Utang ng loob* refers to owing a debt; when a Filipino asks another for a favor, even without being discussed, it is understood that the favor will be repaid in the future. *Hiya* can be described as the goal for Filipino individuals to represent their family, bringing pride and avoiding embarrassment to the family. *Pakikasama* includes the yearning for belonging to a group; Filipinos may sacrifice their own feelings in order to maintain harmony. *Magalang* means showing respect for others, especially Filipinos who are older than you. Filipinos respect others by calling them *kuya* (big brother), *ate*

(big sister), *tito* (uncle), *tita* (auntie), *manong* (older brother), or *manang* (older sister), even if they are not related. These terms, although they can be translated into English, are best understood in their original language. “Language is not only a necessary condition for culture, it is itself a part of culture.” (Greenberg, 1971, p. 156). When Filipinos youth do not learn their heritage language they are losing that part of their culture and that connection to their Philippine culture. Other parts of Philippine culture can be found in their history.

Filipinos are believed to be a mixture of Malay, Indonesian, Chinese, Spanish, and Arab (Bautista, 1998; Marden, Meyer, & Engel, 1992; Nadal, 2009). Native Filipinos lived in segregated tribes (Borah, 1996). Two centuries prior to Spanish arrival Arab missionaries came to the southern tip of the Philippines to share the Islam religion. The Muslims there were united against the Spanish invasion in the 1500s. After Spanish rule, the United States gained control of the Philippines with the Treaty of Paris in 1898 (Bautista, 1998; Nadal, 2009). This history helps introduce how Filipinos have been greatly influenced by both Spanish and American cultures. In the following chapter I will go into further detail about the history of the Philippines.

### *Statement of the Problem*

Filipino American elders are discouraging their youth from learning their heritage language, which in turn is causing Filipino youth to actively abandon their culture. Language is the strongest link to one’s culture (Zentella, 1997), yet Filipino parents and grandparents are encouraging by their children to desert it and assimilate (Tuason, Taylor, Rollings, Harris, & Martin, 2007). Although other immigrant families try to

teach their children their heritage language, limited amounts of Filipino American families attempt to, fearing their children will have a foreign accent (Nadal, 2009). When Filipino families deter from sharing their native tongue, Filipino youth learn to reject their culture and assimilate to American ways without learning their heritage.

### *Research Questions*

This study is designed to determine the relationship between Filipino American identity and the abandonment of their heritage language. Specific questions to be addressed are:

1. How has Philippine history of colonization influenced the Filipino view of America?
2. Are Filipinos becoming too assimilated?
3. How has US imperialism impacted the value Filipinos place on their language and culture?

### *Definition of Terms*

While this paper will discuss how Filipinos immigrate to America, there are several terms about immigration attitudes that need to be defined. In terms of this paper, the *host culture* is the American culture because America is the host of the immigrants. *Americanization* is “the knowledge of America’s tongue, of America’s past glory, [and] of America’s hopes, to the newcomers” (Drachsler, 1920, p.60). According to Piaget (1855) assimilation and accommodation are dialectical. *Assimilation* is the process of adapting to the host society by conforming to their customs and attitudes, while *accommodation* is changing altering existing thoughts. Piaget called that the balance

between assimilation and accommodation *equilibration*. *Acculturation* is the adoption of cultural patterns of the host by the minority (Gordon, 1964).

Expanding on Erikson's (1966) definition of identity, Marcia (1966) defines *identity* as the degree to which one has explored and committed to an identity in a variety of life domains including vocation, religion, relational choices, gender roles, etc. *Culture* includes values and traditions; social and political relationships; and worldview created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and/or religion (Nieto, 2004). *Cultural heritage* is the legacy of the intangible attributes from past generations of a society (Silverman & Ruggles, 2008). *Heritage language* refers to the language of one's elders while *primary language* is the first language that one learns to understand and speak.

In regards to Philippine culture and language, a few terms need to be clearly distinguished. Although Philippine and Filipino are both used as adjectives to describe something relating to the Philippines, this paper will use *Philippine* as the adjective and *Filipino* to describe a person from the Philippines. *Filipino American* will refer to a person of Filipino descent living in America, regardless of where they were born. Throughout this paper, *Pilipino* will be the national language of the Philippines, essentially the same as *Tagalog*, the term used to describe the majority Philippine ethnic group and language. *Ilocano* is another Philippine ethnic group and language, sometimes politically referred to as a dialect in contrast to the one Philippine language, Tagalog. *Taglish* is the language created from combining Pilipino and English (Nadal, 2009). The

*Model Minority Myth* is the “stereotype that places a belief that all Asian Americans as well-educated, successful, career-driven, and law-abiding citizens” (Nadal, 2009, p. 15).

Filipinos came to America at different times of their lives. These different generations will be defined here. *First generation* will refer to the first immigrants of a family while the *second generation* includes the children of those immigrants, usually born in the host country (Nadal, 2009). Older children, who migrated between the ages of eight and 18 years are known as *1.5 generation* because they combine both cultures from having lived in the Philippines and moved to America. I myself am a *third generation* Filipino American because my paternal grandfather came to the US when he joined the American Navy at 18 years of age, making my father second generation and me third generation (Nadal, 2009, p.14).

#### *Limitations of this Study*

Despite the fact that this study is designed to be objective, there are still some limitations. Ethnographic interviews and life histories are obtained from each participant, and depend solely on their cooperation and honesty. Also, being Filipino like my interviewees, I hope to gain their trust while still maintaining respect for them as our culture expects. Time and availability of all parties may also be an issue when it comes to meeting together and conducting the interviews. More importantly, the life histories obtained from the parties interviewed may not generalize to the entire Filipino American population, especially with the limited number of participants.

#### *Importance of this Research*

As stated earlier, an informal interview with my grandmother piqued my interest

onto this topic. After confirmation from reading Nadal (2004) and Tauson, et. al. (2007), it is apparent that the idea to discourage Filipino American youth from learning their heritage language is widespread (Nadal, 2004; Tauson, et. al., 2007). We need to examine why this group of people is rejecting their own culture by refusing to maintain their heritage language, which is a rare practice in other cultures. Children from other ethnic groups also refuse to learn their heritage language, which is related to this cultural rejection and over-Americanization found in the Filipino American population.

Exploring this practice will hopefully lead the to the discovery of identity issues in the Filipino Americans. Exploring why this situation happens in Filipinos can help us reach other cultures and hopefully suggest ways for us to encourage families to embrace their heritage culture and language.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to collect ethnographic data to explore the impact of language transmission on the loss or subtraction of cultural identity among members of the Filipino community. The purpose of this chapter is to review the most relevant and recent research related to this study, which uses ethnographic methods to record life histories of Filipino Americans and gain a better understanding about their adaption to America. Filipinos are the least researched of the Asian community (Cimmarusti, 1996; dela Cruz & Agbayani-Siewert, 2003; Kitano, 1980; Nadal, 2009; Sue & Morishima, 1982; Wagner, 1972; Yu, 1980) and have had a very unique history compared to other immigrants in America. As an educator and a Filipino American myself, I aim to gain a better understanding of my own culture so that others can learn about the importance of this special group. I hope to get an emic perspective about how Filipino Americans view both Filipino and American culture. Mainly, I desire to more deeply understand how “[I]t is commonplace for second-generation Filipino Americans to not speak Tagalog (or the native languages of the parents) because their parents wanted them to assimilate to American society and avoid speaking with a Filipino accent” (Nadal, 2009, p. 53). This chapter will review the literature associated with the following areas: Filipino history, Filipino America identity, processes of cultural adaptation, language acquisition, and approaches to multicultural education.

#### *Philippine History*

The Philippines is an archipelago consisting of 7,107 islands in the Pacific Ocean

in Southeast Asia. There are three major island groups: Luzon (where the main languages are Tagalog, Ilocano, Bicolano and Kapampangan), Visayas (where most Filipinos speak Cebuano and Waray-Waray), and Mindanao (where most of the Filipino Muslims live and speak Chavacano) (Bautista, 1998; Posadas, 1999; Stern, 1989). The Philippines' proximity to Asia and the Polynesian Islands has brought many Asian and Polynesian influences. Filipinos are believed to be a mix of Malay, Indonesian, Chinese, Spanish, and Arab (Bautista, 1998; Marden, Meyer, & Engel, 1992; Nadal, 2009).

Historians believe that the Native Filipinos were either the Igorots or Negritos, both of which tribal groups are still scattered around the islands living in remote areas today. The Philippine islands had many scattered baranggays or villages and each tribe had its own Datu, or chief. In 1380, Arab missionaries came to Tawi-Tawi, at the southern tip, to begin spreading Islam. This newfound religion united Mindanao and helped in the resistance to the Spanish conquering (Bautista, 1998; Borah, 1996). Because of the different tribes the Filipinos were already divided and easier for the Spanish to conquer.

In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan, Portuguese explorer and navigator from Spain, arrived on the islands while in search of the Spice Islands. Lapu-Lapu, a local chieftain, killed Magellan in rebellion against Spanish domination. After nearly 50 years of Philippine resistance, the Spanish began converting Filipinos to Spanish ways, including but not limited to speaking Spanish (Bautista, 1998; Cao & Novas, 1996; Nadal, 2009). With Catholicism, Filipinos were baptized with Catholic Saint names. Then the *Catalogo Alfabetico de Apellidos* of 1849, ordered a systematic distribution of Spanish surnames,

Filipinos<sup>1</sup> were assigned names to match the first initial of their town of origin (Borah, 1996). Spanish remained an official language of the Philippines until 1973, explaining why some Filipinos are fluent in Spanish (Bautista, 1998; Nadal, 2009; Stern, 1989). Catholicism remains the majority religion today at 84% of the population (Bautista, 1998; Nadal, 2009; Stern, 1989). After nearly 400 years of Spanish rule, the Spanish influence is very prevalent today.

José Rizal, the Philippine national hero, formed *La Liga Filipina* in 1892 after returning from studying and discussing politics throughout Europe. The league's goals were peaceful: national unity, mutual aid, common defense, the encouragement of education, agricultural and commerce, and the study and application of reforms (Bautista, 1998). Spaniards felt him a threat because of his immense knowledge (he spoke 22 languages, traveled the world, and completed his medical degree at 24 years of age) and disbanded *La Liga* after only three days in existence. Consequently, after reading Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, Andrés Bonifacio, with the help of Teodoro Plata, Ladislao Diwa, and Emilio Aguinaldo, created a secret anti-Spanish society called the *Kataastaasang, Kagalang Galang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (Highest and Most Venerated Association of the Sons and Daughters of the Land), or *KKK*<sup>2</sup>. The *Katipunan* wanted Philippine independence via violent revolts and the Philippine Revolution began in 1896 when the *Katipunan* was discovered by the Spanish. After

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<sup>1</sup> Chino Mestizos were allowed told to blend their native Chinese names with that of a Christian name, a technique uniquely used by Filipinos today for children's given names.

<sup>2</sup> Katipunan was known as KKK but because of the confusion with the Ku Klux Klan is now usually referred to as the Katipunan.

conquering all but the Spanish in Manila, Aguinaldo declared independence and became the first President of the Philippines, but this independence was never recognized by Spain or America. The Spanish-American War began in February 1898 because America had interest in Cuba and was already supporting their independence from Spain (Cao & Novas, 1996; Stern, 1989).

The Treaty of Paris between the Spain and America included the United States purchasing the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam for \$20 million. The next year the Philippines challenged America for their independence in the Philippine-American War, which ended with American rule in 1902. In 1934, the Philippines was granted a ten year commonwealth status from the United States in the Tydings-McDuffie Act. This act reclassified Filipinos in America as aliens, denied Filipinos the right to work in the America, and limited the Philippines to an immigration quota of 50 persons a year (Cao & Novas, 1996; Nadal, 2009). The Philippines became an independent nation on July 4, 1946, increasing their annual immigration to 100 Filipinos (Stern, 1989). America has influenced the Philippine government, language, and school system, resulting in the present-day use of schoolbooks in English (Nadal, 2009). Similar to other countries, Filipinos are perpetuated by American media and the American dream.

After encouragement with a promise of full veterans benefits from America, 250,000 Filipinos fought alongside Americans in World War II. However, President Truman signed the Rescission Act in 1946, declaring that Filipinos were not in active US military service during the war and did not have rights or qualify for privileges or benefits. After six decades of pleading, only in February of 2009, were Filipino WWII

Veterans granted a \$9,000 to \$15,000 stimulus for fighting for America (Becker, 2009). In spite of this, Filipinos continue to migrate to the US and have had a long history of coming to America.

### *Waves of Migration*

There have been five major waves of Filipino immigrants into the US, beginning with sailors and navigators known as *Manilamen* during the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade between 1565 and 1815. Filipinos with mostly Spanish blood, known as *Illustrados*, were given access to education, land, and government positions, while other Filipinos were forced onto Spanish ships to work along trade routes between the Philippines and Acapulco, New Spain (present-day Mexico). The earliest documentation of Filipinos, and even Asians, in America was in 1587 in Morro Bay, California. Filipinos were either referred to as Chinos or Indios Luzones, by the Spanish to distinguish them from Mexican Indians (Bautista, 1998; Borah, 1996; Cao & Novas, 1996; Stern, 1989). In 1781, 45 Filipinos including Antonio Miranda Rodriguez, a literate, was one of the 12 original settlers in Los Angeles and a couple years later also helped found Santa Barbara. In 1779, Filipinos such as Vicente Tallado worked alongside Father Junipero Serra in founding Mission Carmel in Monterey (Borah, 1996). These Manilamen were the first Filipinos on American soil, although most of them did not stay and only helped scout the land.

Another early permanent settlement began in New Orleans in 1763. Some *Manilamen* would escape the Spaniards and migrate north by swimming to harbor in bayous and marshes of the Louisiana Territory (Bautista, 1998; Cao & Novas, 1996;

Stern, 1989). These Filipinos, later called *Tagalas*, founded a small fishing village called Saint Malo, and lived in secret for almost a century. They used techniques from their homeland to build small Bajau houses with net-covered front balconies on stilts. Here Filipinos pioneered the technique of sun-drying shrimp. In 1815, these men also joined Major General Andrew Jackson's command and fought in the Battle of Lake Borgne during the War of 1812 (Espina, 1988). During the Hurricane of 1915 the settlement was destroyed. The Burtanog sisters of the Saint Bernard Parish are part of the eighth generation of Louisianan Filipinas, who lost historical documents during Hurricane Katrina in 2001 (Fox, 2005).

The second wave began after American rule, lasting from 1903 to 1934, when Filipino students traveled to America to pursue their education and experience the American dream they were introduced to in the Philippines (Borah, 1996; Cao & Novas, 1996). These students were known as *pensionados*, encouraged by the American government in the Pensionado Act to study in prestigious American colleges and universities (i.e. University of California at Berkeley, Cornell, Notre Dame, Yale, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and return to the Philippines with their newfound American education. Only eight of the over 200 Filipino students invited were women. After hearing more about extraordinary America, non-sponsored Filipinos began to save their money to migrate at their own expense (Bautista, 1998; Borah, 1996). Today many Filipinos complete their degree in the Philippines in hopes of getting a working visa into the States.

In 1906, Filipinos began the third wave of migration to America to perform agricultural labor: *Sakadas* picked sugarcanes and pineapples in Hawaii, *Alaskeros* canned salmon and other fish in Alaska, and workers became union founders picking asparagus and grapes in California (Borah, 1996; Cao & Novas, 1996; Takaki, 1993). Filipinos were recruited to replace Korean, Japanese, and Chinese laborers. They were seen as cheap and efficient labor supply, especially after the Korean government was informed of abuse and the Japanese made the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908 to limit the importation of Japanese laborers. Agricultural labor had poor wages and horrible conditions including bending over from dawn to dusk in hot, dusty fields with few breaks (Cao & Novas, 1996; Espiritu, 1995; Stern, 1989). Other Filipinos came to America by joining the US military as orderlies because of the Cubic Bay Navel Base.

The fourth wave of Filipinos includes soldiers fighting for America. Beginning in 1903, nine Filipinos were the first to serve in the US Navy. The number grew to 6,000 by WWI and to 25,000 by 1930. In 1942 the First and Second Filipino Infantry Regiment were both created and trained in California. When the Philippines gained independence in 1946, America could no longer recruit Filipinos, so the 1947 Military Bases Agreement was inserted as a provision to continue the Naval recruitment of Filipino citizens (Bautista, 1998). Filipinos desired to join the US Navy to gain American citizenship and because the American salary was up to seven times the average Philippine salary after the currency conversion. Still today, many Filipinos join the US Navy to become sailors in America.

The current or fifth wave of Filipino immigrants began after WWII and is sometimes referred to as the *Brain Drain* (Bautista, 1998; Nadal, 2009). The Nationality Act of 1924, which prohibited Filipinos from permanently migrating to America, was amended in 1965. From 1950 to 1970 the Filipino population in America doubled. More Filipino women immigrated, known as *Philippine War Brides*, increasing from 37.1% in 1960 to 45.6% in 1970 and then 51.7% in 1980 (Cao & Novas, 1996; Nadal, 2009). With the rate of growth, the Immigration and Naturalization Service or INS (more recently known as USCIS for United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) predicted that Filipinos were going to be the largest Asian ethnic group by the year 2000 (Bautista, 1998). But according to the 2000 US Census, Filipinos are the third largest foreign-born immigrants, following Mexicans and Chinese.

Throughout the past century of immigration, in addition to immigration quotas and other conditions already mentioned, Filipinos were discriminated against and have been targets of exclusion laws. California had the 1933 Anti-miscegenation Law, banning Filipino men, among others, from marrying White women, until its repeal in 1948. With the encouraging Repatriation Act of 1935, 2,190 Filipinos returned to the Philippines with free transportation, although it was targeted at 45,000 Filipinos (Posadas, 1999). Filipino were barred from owning land and often depicted as gamblers and customers of prostitutes (Marden, Meyer, & Engel, 1992). These stereotypes all came as a culture shock to new immigrants because during their lessons in the Philippines, Filipinos were not made aware of the racial tensions that existed in the US.

Carlos Bulosan (1946, p. 220) declared, “In many ways it was a crime to be a Filipino in America.” The White American Federation of Labor (AFL) refused to allow Filipinos to join their labor union, so Filipinos created their own and helped shape labor unions in California. Beginning in the 1930s, the Filipino Labor Association (FLA) and the Filipino United Labor Economic Endeavor (FULEE) were the proof to defunct the myth that Asians were docile workers. In 1965, Filipinos led by Larry Itliong in the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) and Mexicans led by Caesar Chavez in the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) united to form the United Farm Workers of America (UFWA) and held a strike against California grape growers, ending with farm workers gaining higher wages and medical plans (Bautista, 1998). Philip Vera Cruz and Chris Mensalvas are also noted as some of the most effective union organizers.

### *Linguistic Formation*

Over 500 different languages are spoken in the Philippines, while there are only two official languages: Pilipino and English. One hundred seventy-five of these are different Filipino languages, with 12 major languages having at least one million speakers: Tagalog<sup>3</sup>, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Waray-Waray, Kapampangan, Bicol, Pangasinan, Kinaray-a, Maranao, Maguindanao, and Tausug. A misconception includes Spanish as an official language, although since 1973 it has not been (Bautista, 1998; Nadal, 2009; Philippine Constitution, 1973; Posados, 1999). As mentioned earlier,

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<sup>3</sup> Note that these different languages are also the names of the different Philippine ethnic groups.

America established public education in the Philippines, which has since been taught in English. Most Filipinos learn their local Philippine language at home and use it in their hometown with locals, then learn English and Pilipino in school. Pilipino is the common language spoken among Filipinos used as a language to unite the country and allow Filipinos to communicate across the islands, while English is used largely as the language for business. Today many foreign students travel to the Philippines to learn English (Philippine Department of Tourism, 2010).

Acquiring knowledge and skill in the host language may not necessarily result in the unlearning of the corresponding amount of knowledge and skill in the original language (Arnberg, 1987; Beardsmore, 1986; Kim, 2001; Phinney & Rotheram, 1987), but desiring to acculturate and adapt well to the host culture may effect the maintenance of the original language. “[Filipino] parents want [their children] to assimilate to American society and avoid speaking with a Filipino accent” (Nadal, 2009, p. 53). Some Filipinos do not want their children to acquire a Filipino accent so they refrain from teaching their children Tagalog.

**Language is only a part of culture, and both are mutually influenced. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests that language influences thought (Kay & Kempton, 1984). Mixed with the effort of Attempting to adapt and assimilate to American culture, Filipino Americans attempt to fit in with their fellow Americans. “[nonimmigrant minorities] do not behave in a manner that maximizes academic success. In fact, they are generally characterized by what may be called low-effort syndrome or lack of persevering academic effort” (Ogbu, 1987, p. 258).**

“As [ELLs] learn English and begin to fit into school routines, they embark on a personal journey toward a new cultural identity... [T]hey come to reject their home language and culture” (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005, p. 6). This observation may hold true for students learning English as a second language in their schools, but it also relates to Filipino parents and elders discouraging heritage language. Perhaps from Filipinos’ association with American culture, understand the racial discrimination that comes with speaking with an accent, and do not want to subject their own children to that racism, therefore encouraging their children to speak only English with an American accent.

### *Misperceptions*

Filipinos are subjected to three types of erroneous perceptions by Americans, the host culture: (1) Filipinos are lumped up with other Asians; (2) Asians are seen as the model minority; and (3) Filipinos are categorized with other marginalized ethnic groups like Blacks and Latinos (Nadal, 2009).

The Philippine islands are a part of Asia, and Filipinos are recognized in the Asian racial group, but Filipinos have a very distinct cultural identification from other Asians and do not necessarily relate to other Asians. Usually Asians are thought of as very light skinned with slanted eyes, while Filipinos are pictured as darker skinned with big eyes. The Philippines is the only Asian country to have been ruled by Spain and have a Spanish influence. Filipinos are the only Asian group whose dominant religion is Catholicism (Borah, 1996; Nadal, 2009). Filipinos might relate more to Pacific Islanders than Asians, even though the Philippines is not in Oceania, the qualifier for being a Pacific Island. In California, “Filipino” is listed as a separate ethnicity, apart from Asian

and Pacific Islander (Nadal, 2009, p. 24), which might show that California recognizes the uniqueness of this ethnicity.

Yet Filipinos are still seen categorized with other Asians in terms of the Model Minority Myth” (Nadal, 2009). As mentioned in the List of Terms, “the Model Minority Myth is a misleading stereotype that places a belief that all Asian Americans as well-educated, successful, career-driven, and law-abiding citizens” (Nadal, 2009, p. 15). Although some Asian Americans may fit this stereotype, all Asians cannot and do not fit this description. When Asians are broken up by ethnicity group, Filipinos, compared to other Asians, tend to have less education, lower occupational status, higher rates of teenage pregnancy, higher divorce rates, and higher rates of HIV/AIDS (Darbes, Kennedy, Peersman, Zohrabyah, & Rutherford, 2002; Nadal, 2004; Nadal, 2009; Okamura & Agbayani, 1977; San Francisco Department of Public Health, 2008). These rates may more closely compare to rates of Blacks and Hispanics.

Filipinos say that they have “brown pride” because of their brown skin, while Asians usually claim “yellow pride” from their lighter skin (Nadal, 2009). Despite the long Hispanic influence of over 300 years, Filipinos are never classified as being Hispanic. Yet some Americans mistreat Filipinos similarly to other marginalized ethnicities with darker skin tones (Nadal, 2004; Nadal, 2009). Additionally, we recognize that Filipinos, like all other ethnicities, have different shades of skin from very light to very dark.

While Filipinos do not fit the Asian Model Minority Myth, some studies show they may fit in with other racial groups. According to some studies, Filipino Americans

face racial discrimination (Nadal, 2009; Teranishi, 2002). American teachers and counselors treat Filipino students like criminals or intellectually inferior, similarly to how Black and Latino Americans are discriminated against (Nadal, 2009; Teranishi, 2002). When Filipinos are categorized with these marginalized groups, they may internalize this perceived inferiority.

Filipinos have been recognized as the “forgotten Asian Americans” (Cordova, 1983) or the “invisible minorities” (Cimmarusti, 1996), possibly because Filipinos have high English proficiency and familiarity with American culture (Nadal, 2009). As stated earlier in this chapter, the Philippines was once ruled by the US and to this day Filipinos speak English. Filipinos have a great awareness of American culture and are assumed to assimilate well to American culture. They are disregarded as Asian because of their ease of transition to living in America in comparison to other Asians who do not speak English. Filipinos are the least studied and least understood ethnic minority group (Cimmarusti, 1996; dela Cruz & Agbayani-Siewert, 2003; Kitano, 1980; Nadal, 2009; Sue & Morishima, 1982; Wagner, 1972; Yu, 1980). This invisibility of Filipino Americans reflects the lack of research that has been done on this distinctive group.

### *Colonial Mentality*

Another internalization that Filipinos may have is known as *colonialism mentality*, a form of *internalized racism* and oppression when the colonized people view the colonizer’s values, beliefs, and mores as truth and superior to their own (David & Okazaki, 2006; Fanon, 1963; Freire, 1970; Memmi, 1965; Nadal, 2009). Colonial mentality also includes an “uncritical rejection of anything Filipino” and an “uncritical

preference for anything American” (David & Okazaki, 2006, p. 241). Filipinos in the Philippines as well as the Filipinos and Filipino Americans in America can suffer from colonial mentality (Nadal, 2009). This colonial mentality plays a role in how Filipinos form their identity and relate to the American culture.

### *Identity Development*

Filipino Americans struggle with their identity, beginning with how to categorize their Filipino culture: Asian, the common racial identification; Pacific Islander, an incorrect identifier, but closely related to Filipino culture; or Hispanic, another group with which some Filipinos may identify. Other Filipinos may associate themselves with American culture because of their influence on the country and people and may internalize a colonial mentality from American culture. Erickson (1968), Dahefshy (1975), Marcia (1966), Phinney (1993), Cross (1991), and Nadal (2007) have all developed identity models, most of which recognize stages that individuals go through in search for their ethnic identity. I have described these theorists’ identity models and stages in more detail.

In Erickson’s (1968) theory of identity development, an adolescent goes through Identity versus Role Confusion. During this stage the individual tries different roles to figure out a self-image that satisfies him or herself. Adolescents attempt to find their own identity, struggle with social interactions, and grapple with moral issues. The task to discover who we are as individuals separate from our family of origin and as members of a wider society is daunting. Who we choose as our peers plays a great role in influencing our identity a great deal. However, we can also develop strong devotion to friends and

causes. It is no surprise that our most significant relationships are with peer groups.

Marcia (1966) has a four-status model of ego identity development: (1) diffusion, (2) foreclosure, (3) moratorium, and (4) achievement. In the diffused identity state, the individual is undecided and uninterested in identity. In the second status, individuals have settled on a particular identity, usually the one their parents give them because they have not had the chance to explore anything different. The moratorium state is an active exploration of various identities without committing to any of them. Lastly, an individual in the achievement status has explored different options and committed to their selected identity.

Phinney's (1993) ethnic identity development model has three stages: (1) unexamined ethnic identity, (2) moratorium or ethnic identity search, and (3) achieved ethnic identity. During the first stage, the individual has not yet examined their ethnic background because they are not interested and just believe what others tell them about it. In stage two, an individual begins to learn about their ethnic identity and decides how the newly found information is relevant to them. Finally, in stage three, the individual fully understands their identity and accepts it.

Cross (1991) developed a five stage model for ethnic identity development for people of color: (1) pre-encounter, (2) encounter, (3) immersion/emersion, (4) internalization, and (5) internalization-commitment. During the first stage, the individual identifies with and seeks acceptance from the dominant group. In the second stage the individual can have either a positive or negative encounter. During a positive encounter, the individual embraces his or her differences, while during the negative encounter the

individual feels rejected, hurt, anger and confusion. In stage three, the individual searches for a positive identity concept and tends to focus on relationships with those who share the same identity. Internalization is when the individual already possesses a positive sense of identity. The final stage is when the individual feels part of the group and cares for the group as part of themselves.

Dahefshy's (1975) model of identity focuses on two aspects: the objective and the subjective side. The objective side includes society's norms and values. The subjective side consists of an individual's self-perception. Meier (1998) examines how individuals are continuously negotiating their racial and ethnic identity. Hubinette (2004) suggests Asian Americans adopt a hybrid ethnic identity. He suggests that Korean identity transcends race, citizenship, culture, and language into a third space.

Nadal (2004) has identified the Filipino experience as different from other Asian American groups. He recognizes six Statuses or Stages of Filipino American identity. In the first stage, Ethnic Awareness, the Filipino American has neutral or positive feelings about all ethnic backgrounds from little exposure to prejudice. During the second stage, Assimilation to Dominant Culture, the individual views only Whites positively, and has negative feelings for all other ethnicities, including Filipino. The reverse of that is Stage three, Social Political Awakening, when the Filipino American has negative feelings towards Whites and neutral or positive feelings towards other ethnicities, including Filipino. Panethnic Asian American Consciousness, or Stage four, is an extension of Stage three with a partiality towards Asian American as a self identified racial group.

Stage five is called Ethnocentric Realization, the stage when the individual views oneself and other communities of color as empowering.

### *Processes of Cultural Adaptation*

Acculturation is the “process of learning and acquiring the elements of the host culture” (Kim, 2001, p. 53). When Filipinos immigrate to America, their original Filipino culture conflicts with the host American culture. The immigrants must adjust and readjust themselves in order to better function within the host society. Over time, the stress level of the immigrants decreases with increased adaptation to the host culture. Kim (2001) calls this the stress-adaptation-growth dynamics.

Many new immigrants lack a means of communicating with the host culture. For example, some immigrants cannot speak English when they come to America and cannot communicate with the American host culture. These immigrants then rely on ethnic social communication as support systems to compensate for the lack of support from the host culture (Kim, 2001). These ethnic social support systems help with the sustenance of ethnic identity (Burgess, 1978). Filipinos, on the other hand, learn to speak English in the Philippines before arriving to America. Then, when in America, they can communicate with the host culture and do not need to rely on ethnic social communication. With the ability to gain support from the host culture because of a lack of communication barriers, Filipinos do not need the ethnic support systems and therefore have a more difficult time sustaining their Filipino culture while in America. Desocialisation or deculturation is the cultural discontinuity of the internal cultural identity (Kim, 2001).

### *Multicultural Education*

Culture is “a particular way of life that includes knowledge, values, artifacts, beliefs, and other aspects of human endeavor peculiar to any group or groups of people” (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 51). Multiculturalism then, describes inclusion, acceptance, and respect of these diverse values and attributes.

There are five different of approaches to multicultural education. The five perspectives specialize in (1) the exceptional and culturally different, (2) human relations, (3) single group studies, (4) multicultural education, and (5) social reconstructionist. The first approach focuses on teaching those who are culturally different, which lead to differentiated instruction that we have in classrooms today. The second approach emphasizes promoting unity to encourage positive relationships between different people in the educational setting. Single group studies, which is the approach of this study, concentrates on the various aspects of one particular group, in this case, Filipino Americans. The multicultural education approach promotes various aspects such as cultural diversity, human rights, social justice and equity. Finally, the social reconstructionist approach recommends addressing issues that affect diverse students and encourages students to actively participate in challenging the status quo (Sleeter & Grant, 2006).

“Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students – regardless of their gender and social class, their ethnic racial, and cultural characteristics – should have an equal opportunity to learn in school” (Banks, 1989, pp. 2-3). This new vision of education has special precedence in California because of its diverse population. “In

California, ... the sum of all 'minority' students now constitute a majority of the total student population" (Campbell, 2010, p. 22). California teachers need to understand the diverse population that they are serving, and that includes getting to know the background of all of their students, which includes Filipinos. Especially since Filipinos are invisible and least researched (Cimmarusti, 1996; Cordova, 1983; Nadal, 2009) teachers need more opportunities to learn about this fragile culture.

Campbell states the need for multicultural education best. US society has divisions in racial, class, and gender, to mention a few. The educational system should acknowledge cultural differences, and especially recognize the knowledge and languages of all children. Campbell (2010) summarizes, "To do this, teachers should know about, respect, and draw strength from diverse cultural traditions present in our society" (p. 40). This statement includes Filipinos, so that they are not misperceived and grouped in with other Asians or mistakenly included with Hispanics, but acknowledged as their own individual cultural and ethnic group.

### *Summary*

This chapter reviewed literature on misperceptions of Filipinos, Filipino identity formation, processes of cultural adaptation, language acquisition, and multicultural education.

Filipinos have suffered from three major misconceptions from their American host culture, including being classified as Asian, being the forgotten Asian, and being stereotyped as the Asian Model Minority. Filipinos may geographically be Asian, but they share more qualities with Hispanics, including Catholicism and darker skin.

Many theorists have different ethnic identity models with several stages in which people go through in search of their identity. The theorists I reviewed include: Erickson (1968), Dahefshy (1975), Marcia (1966), Phinney (1993), Cross (1991), and Nadal (2007).

When migrating from the Philippines to America, Filipinos go through a process of cultural adaptation in order to adjust to the host culture. Language acquisition is different with Filipinos because they learn English before coming to America, and therefore do not have to acquire the new host language. Instead of retaining their heritage language while in America, Filipinos tend to discourage their youth from learning it in order to avoid having a Filipino accent.

Multicultural education includes strategies to assist teachers in encouraging acknowledgement of diversity. According to Campbell, “teachers must validate the home and community knowledge that all children bring to school” by respecting present cultural traditions in society (2010, p. 40).

Espiritu (1995) discusses his difficulty adjusting to the American life. Fellow Filipinos were offended by Espiritu because of his Filipino accent and called him a FOB, meaning he was Fresh Off the Boat. Instead of welcoming someone from the homeland, adolescent Filipinos his age made fun of him for having an accent like the parents of the American-born Filipinos. Therefore, many Filipinos segregate themselves by generation and different generations may not always get along. One way Filipinos divide themselves is between American-born and Philippines-born. Another way is those who embrace their Filipino culture and those who reject it.

### Chapter 3

## METHODOLOGY

#### *Setting of this Study*

I will be conducting an ethnographic study by doing life history interviews with six Filipinos Americans. From these interviews I hope to learn about how they feel about their own Filipino and American identities. I will interview each participant individually about their experiences being Filipino Americans and language use.

#### *Population & Sample*

There will be two participants, one male and one female, from generations matching my grandmother's, my parents', and my generation. The first two participants will be from what I refer to as the Grandparent Generation. They will have been born and raised in the Philippines, but now are living in America, and be at least 60 years old, with at least one grandchild living in the United States. The second two participants will be from the Parent Generation, middle-aged between the ages of 40 and 55 with adult children. The Parent Generation will have been born and raised in the Philippines but have raised their children in the US. The final pair will be consist of adults between the ages of 20 and 35 who are of Filipino decent but were born in America, which I am calling the Grandchild Generation. I chose to have both Parent and Grandparent Generations to have been born in the Philippines to ensure that they speak a Philippine language and could have taught it to their children.

I will recruit the Grandparent Generation with the help of my grandmother, who lives in the Heritage Tower Plaza Assisted Living Facility in Concord, California. She

has many elderly Filipino friends who live in the same building and will help me find willing participants. The Parent Generation will be parents of my Filipino American friends who are willing and available to participate in an interview. The Grandchild Generation will be other Filipino Americans I know from different life stages, possibly childhood friends. I will not interview couples or families because they may have the same views and similar life stories to share and I am trying to get a wider perspective.

#### *Design of this Study*

After looking at a list of possible subjects, I will evaluate them by looking at their demographics. As I stated earlier I would like to have an even distribution of males and females and elderly and youth. I will then interview the qualified participants who consent to be in my study.

#### *Instrumentation*

I will schedule individual times to meet with each participant and conduct the interview. I will interview each participant privately to hear their life histories and learn about how they feel about their Filipino and American cultures. I have a set of questions<sup>4</sup> for each participant and will listen to the responses, continuously asking if there is anything he or she would like to add. With permission, I will tape record each interview, and transcribe their responses in entirety. Each transcription is listed below.

#### *Data Collection*

##### *Grandparent Generation Female*

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<sup>4</sup> Interview Questions listed in Appendix A.

Guadalupe<sup>5</sup>, an 85-year-old mother of four and grandmother of eight, lives alone in an assisted living facility in the East Bay Area. Her husband passed away a couple years ago, having suffered from Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases. Her children and grandchildren mostly live in the East Bay Area, being an hour drive away at most. Her children's ages range from 50-56, while her grandchildren's ages range from 4-28 years old.

"I was 60, I think, when I came here. No, I was 65. My husband was the first one who came. We were supposed to come together, but I had to pay my debts first. I became a citizen after 3 years.

"Yeah, I liked it when I first came here. I was lost the first time because in Hawaii (stopover) they were looking at my chest x-ray for a long time, so the airplane left already. There was another lady who was left like me. We flew together on another flight to San Francisco and when I got to the airport my ride left to go home because I wasn't on the plane I was supposed to be. So the lady I was with said she could take me to Stockton because they were bringing her there. I said, 'No,' and asked them to take me to Oakland. So we got gas in Oakland and I gave them the phone number and they called my daughter and she was home already so they came and got me from the gas station.

"Yeah, I like living here. After I arrived here in August... September... October, then I went back to the Philippines to get jewelries because plenty of people wanted to buy jewelries. I sold some and so did my daughters and they asked me to go back and get more but I said no because the fare was expensive. Many [people] liked the jewelries

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<sup>5</sup> Names were changed to protect the privacy of the participants.

made in the Philippines. 'They are very nice,' they said. So when I ran out there was no more to sell. Then after one year I went back to the Philippines and brought some back again. I had much money before at that time than I have now. Until now if I go there they want me to get some and sell it here but I said I'm too old. I have plenty of other crystal jewelry and am keeping them. I don't know what to do with this... plenty. Maybe next year again when we have another craft in our building. Sometimes twenty dollars, like that, depends on how much I got. Do you want some jewelry, there's plenty here? Plenty bought here; they said it is very nice. I cannot sell them anymore. I don't know when they will be sold again.

"When I arrived back to the States we went already to Pittsburgh. Yeah, the house in Pittsburgh was nice. We could go to Raley's every morning and then we went to the river to get crawdads, I remember that. Crawdads, and what else did we get there? Do you still remember that place? It's nice, huh? Now it has improved, but the house that we stayed I think nobody is staying there anymore. It was foreclosed. It was a nice place, a very nice house, but we moved again to Oakland.

"Friends I had plenty. And if I go back to the Philippines, they are very happy. No more... I have to stay here now because all of my family are here in the States already. I have no one to stay with there in the Philippines. We sold our house and everything is desolate already. Yeah, I miss the Philippines. I want to go there again but I am afraid to go there alone because I am sick. It is hot so I get sick easily.

"Yeah, I wanted to move to the states because it is very hard there; It is very hard to get a job. As long as you do not select your job, it is good, but there, no. So many

people in the Philippines go to different parts of the world: Iraq, Japan, China, Libya. Everywhere there are Filipinos in the world. But even if you are a professional already, it is hard to get a job.

“Yeah, yeah, you know we had jobs, but it was very hard because everything you buy is very expensive. My husband is a dentist and I am a teacher and I sell jewelry. I have to do many things to make money because I have four kids. All four of them lived in Manila and every Saturday I had to give them food and money. So I got an apartment and boarders: four beds with double decks, six boarders plus two of my sons. Double-deck beds. And I hired a maid to cook and clean. And then weekly I would go back to give them more money for food. I would sell jewelry. I sell many things. I made ice candy to sell at the school. Many things to make money to give to them.

“I am always busy working. Even at nighttime I am on the road selling jewelry. I go house to house to people with money to sell to them and they want also to buy because they say the jewelries that I’m selling are good. Even the wife of the governor and people with much money, they will buy also. I would get the jewelry from Manila and Olongapo. I have to pay for the jewelry I have sold and they would give me another set to sell. They trusted me. They trust me. They give it to me without me paying them and then I would go every week and if I go there I have to give them cash.

“Yeah, my life is easier here. The government supports me now. Some of my medicines are free. My doctors are free. I have two doctors. The government pays them. And I have a provider who has to clean the house, help me clean the house... to clean everything here in the apartment. She drives me to my appointments, buy

groceries. She's here all the time. In the morning from 8 o'clock to 10:30, then she goes to another client. She washes clothes, irons, and vacuums. She's Filipino, but her husband is Japanese. Four [providers] already and she is the best one. She even takes care of my plants. The other providers don't care. If they finish washing, they sit down and watch TV. I ask her to sit and rest and 'No,' she says, 'what else do you want me to do?' And she asks at 10 o'clock if she can go. Then I say, 'OK, you go.' So I talk to her in Tagalog, but most of the time she speaks English because her husband speaks English. They have one child, a girl, who is in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. She is an honor pupil. They are from Manila before, but she was not able to finish her education there. But her sister was able to become a nurse, but she was young, so she finished her high school when she got here to the States. But then she got married.

"My daughter was the one who petitioned us. I didn't think that we are coming because I have no sons who are sailors then, all those people who are in the Navy. But we do not have [Navy in the family]. But after my daughter married a sailor, then they petitioned [my husband and I], then her brothers. Not like those other people; They have sailor sons and daughters but they do not petition their parents or brothers or sisters. But my daughter is looking out for her brothers.

"Growing up I lived in my parents' house, then in high school I went to Iba to finish my high school. Then after graduation, I went to Manila with my sister. She graduated from Santo Tomas High School and I went to University of Santo Tomas. I lived with my sister and we stayed with a friend of our mother. And after college I taught in San Narciso. For how many years?... Then my husband got me and took me to San

Marcelino because when I graduated, I went to Olongapo to teach there. Then my brother told me that I could live with the family and teach in San Narciso so I taught there for how many years... about 15 years maybe.

“I lived alone with my husband, but then he passed away, and then I had to move here to Heritage. It is cheaper and a better place for me because I’m alone already. No, I never lived alone before. All of us living together in one place before, like that.

“I’ve had good experiences taking care of my grandkids while their parents work. My daughter’s family took us to many places: Maryland, to see her husband’s school, New Jersey, New York, Canada... many places.

“Those Filipinos here in the States love to stay here because they have their work and they can buy anything because they have their money. In the Philippines you cannot eat anything because you can’t buy it. There is no work, no money. But if you have a job, it is good. You can buy anything you want to. Those who are poor are really poor; They have nothing.

“The best part in the Philippines before was a fish pond. Every morning, they brought us to the farm so that we could play, but that was land was bought by the Americans and became the San Miguel Base. We had land there.

“We also have Japanese language during Japanese time. Japanese time was... I don’t remember already what year was that. I was second year high school and I was a sponsor of the Miss Philippines and we were about to have the ROTC for boys in the high school and I am one of the sponsors and we are well dressed and we are ready to go

out, but the soldiers came to the school saying that we have to go because Iba<sup>6</sup> was bombed by the Japanese. So all of us went home crying. Then at midnight Grandpa Marino came home; he was teaching at the farm. He brought a cart so he said we'd go to Manila. My dad didn't want to leave the house because everything was in the house: rice, pig, chicken, all our valuables so they didn't want to come. 'We will stay here,' they said. They- my dad and brother. We had food in the barrio. We slaughtered them there. WWII, during the Japanese time, we stayed in the barrio, but when the Americans came all the people were very happy, but what did they say? 'Victory-joy! Victory-joy!' They brought candies. So all of us went back to the town. We had American friends before and they came and brought us boxes of canned goods, plenty... chicken, tuna, candy, everything. That's why we have plenty of food before, boxes at home. Sometimes they just drop it. We don't know who are bringing us the food. Lawyers are friends with them.

"I learned English in grade 1. The medium of instruction already was in English. And then up to college in English. Our books and reading in English, but when I was teaching there the medium of instruction was in Tagalog: grades 1-3 Tagalog, then grade 4 back to English. Grade 1 we used some English. You know language in the Philippines sometimes is mixed because Spanish people the regime before. Many are Spanish speaking before, like you count *uno, dos, tres, cuatro*. Many Spanish language are connected in the Philippines. My dad can speak Spanish with his brother. If they have

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<sup>6</sup> Iba is the capital of the province Zambales, Philippines.

secrets, that's what they say so we don't understand what they're talking about. I had the subject Spanish but I wasn't able to speak Spanish.

*Grandparent Generation Male*

Arturo, an 81-year-old father of four and grandparent of 12, also lives in the Assisted Living Facility like Guadalupe. He shares an apartment with his wife of 60 plus years. His children's ages span a decade and his grandchildren's ages range from 3 months to 33 years.

"I came here in 1985. My daughter in Chicago petitioned me. In July 1985 I didn't like the weather of Chicago because it's too cold, so I went back to the Philippines and worked in the government. And then in 1986, I went back, to my daughter, who is a doctor in New Jersey. Then I worked in New York, but I have to travel. My son-in-law brought me to near West Point where I worked as a manager of a laundry mat. Then after that, I don't like the weather, too. My daughter is in Concord, who is taking up medicine in UOP, so we establish here in 1994. I worked in New York for only a year. Here the weather is all right.

"I am almost 82. My children are the doctor is 58, and my nurse is 57, and the two who are here in Concord are 55 and 48. We are both here in 1985. My wife stayed here and she came and she enjoyed the weather.

"I go the Philippines every 6 months, from 1985 to right now. I just came from the Philippines, last November 17. I have only a sister there, but she lives in a different place.

“All of my kids were born in the Philippines. When my daughter graduated from UST after serving in the rural areas, she went here May 7, 1977. She came here; she’s a nurse.

“I don’t like it here because, you know, it’s lonely, not like in the Philippines. [The Philippines] a good place to live in, only, you have to have more money. Yeah, a very dangerous place, too. There are so many... the Philippines is not so good to live in. Many kidnapers, you cannot trust any people around. Sometimes they are, you know, on drugs. The government is not so good, too, in the Philippines.

“Now I visit every year because it is too expensive.

“Yeah, I’m Tagalog. I am from Santa Maria, Bulacan. Yeah, my kids speak Tagalog. Everyone there is speaking Tagalog- [in] Batangas, Queson, Manila.

“Not so much Filipino friends. My friends are my grandson, granddaughter. I am a friend. I have 12 grandchildren. Somebody is taking up law in Berkeley, she is a Fulbright scholar; she is a good student. I also have a granddaughter in Stanford, but it’s a very lonely place. I went there and I don’t like the place. All of the buildings are as tall as towers, not so a wooded area.

“My grandchildren speak English. They don’t like to speak Tagalog. Well, I have no time to teach them because they are busy studying. Their parents are very busy, working and working. Like my daughter who is a doctor, she is the one supervising a 600 bed in the Bronx and she is very busy. She has no time to communicate with them. Yeah, it’s hard to teach them how to speak Tagalog because they are very busy studying; they have no time.

“I consider myself as a Filipino. I love the Philippines because I was born there.

“At the age of the 13, I was guerilla in the Philippines, fighting the Japanese. It was so hard; I almost died fighting for the Philippines. I’ve also a brother who was there, who was killed in the death march. I didn’t apply for [Obama’s stimulus] because when we were in the Philippines fighting the Japanese, our papers were handled by my general, who was in Bataan, but he was killed in an ambush. You know, I was so young, I was only 14 to 15 years old, and I do not care what will happen. I do not like to handle papers. But I am receiving something from the Philippine government, even though they are corrupt. I get Social Security from the American government. That’s enough; it’s enough.

“Of course I have no trouble with the Americans. They mind their own business and you have to mind your own business. You say, ‘hi,’ that’s it.

“That’s it. Nothing more.

“America is better to live in because of the health problem. All your [healthcare] are free. The hospital- you are free; the doctor, you pay some dollars only. The medicine is very cheap, not like in the Philippines. One bottle is 50 pesos, and there’s only 5 pills inside. And it’s free here. And the hospitals are so nice here.

“I travel sometimes... Rome, Niagara Falls, Disneyland, Disneyworld. Disneyworld is bigger than Disneyland; it’s a very, very big place. Disneyland in California is so small and Disneyworld in Florida is big.

“It’s so lonely, but you have TV. There 500 channels, HBO, everything, so many entertainment, even in Tagalog. TFC is nice; it’s on channel 7.

“Being a Filipino, I experienced WWII. But see, the last before Tanipo the Japanese, so many experiences, I was almost killed in the battlefield. That’s it. How to avoid the Japanese, you have to hit and run, of course. They are so mighty then. We are just a group of Filipinos fighting. You do not have the power. I could have died. Hit and run, hit and run. My brother died. He didn’t see them coming.

“When I go to the Philippines I stay for about 1 month or 21 days; it depends upon my mission. I have a piece of land in Santa Maria, Laguna, a coconut plantation. I don’t need the money anymore, so I don’t need to sell it anymore. It’s a waste. My kids do not like to live there anymore. It’s a very dangerous place, not so good. So many drug addicts. You cannot trust anybody. Drug addicts, every now and then, police commissioner. You cannot trust any policeman in the Philippines, they are involved in, you know.

“Sometimes there is no good Tagalog newspaper here, only on channel 2 and channel 7, the news over there. People, the 30,000 Filipinos in Libya, and over 1 million plus in Saudi Arabia, now they are revolting in Saudi Arabia. In Afghanistan, the Filipinos are there. Even in Africa, there are so many Filipinos in Nigeria. All over the world there are Filipinos. Because the Philippines is a poor country and the one who is in power, they’re all corrupt. You cannot trust anybody. Only this time when Noynoy Acquino becomes president that they found out the corruption in the government, in the military, everywhere. He is a good one. He is not corrupt, but the previous administration, the Arroyo government, they are all corrupt. Now they found out the corrupt regime. Even the supreme court, you cannot trust them, the supreme court.

Because they are all appointed by the Arroyo government who is so corrupt. They all become millionaires, like Gaddafi. Gaddafi is very, very powerful, but he is corrupt.”

*Parent Generation Female*

Maria, a 55-year-old mother of three, came to the United States when she was 24 years old on a fiancé Visa. Her children’s ages range from 21 to 28. She lives with her husband and two younger children, who both attend college. She was a practicing dentist in the Philippines, but never took her boards to qualify and practice as a dentist in the States.

“Ninety-nine point nine percent of Filipinos want to leave the Philippines and go abroad, even the ones who have nice houses there. They all know that life has more opportunities outside of the Philippines.

“My husband petitioned me for a fiancé visa. When I first came here, my life was not good. I stayed in Seattle from January to May, babysitting a little girl named Olivia. Then we came to California and we stayed with my in-laws. I tried to look for a job... I went to family friends and worked there for, I think, a week or only two days. I left there so fast because I found another job in Oakland, which was closer to Alameda, where we were staying. I was a dental assistant and I didn’t like it because I was an assistant. Then I found another job in the newspaper working as a dental technician for a major dental laboratory. And so I went to apply there and they hired me as a waxer. I was the only Filipino in there for a long time until I helped a few friends come to work with me. First one girlfriend, then her husband. Soon we [my husband and I] petitioned my brothers to

come to America and I got all of them jobs with me at the dental lab. So I worked there for 25 years. I don't work there anymore.

“Did I feel any prejudiced when I was here? Not really. Filipinos were always my friends. There were a few dental assistants as my Filipino friends.

“I would never move back to the Philippines. All of my family is here, my kids. It would be expensive to fly back and forth. Plus, I'm not comfortable there anymore; All my friends are gone. I don't know the people there. The Philippines changed. I don't know the people there now. Instead of Ilocano, they speak Tagalog now where I'm from.

“Now I consider myself Filipino-American. I'm a Filipino because I still act like a Filipino. I raise my kids in Filipino ways: eat and cook more Filipino foods. How am I American? I don't know... Because I'm more open-minded like Americans. Sometimes I think like Americans. I think half-American and half-Filipino. I have American ways and I'm used to American lifestyle already. I raised my kids with Filipino food, Filipino ways. We speak to our kids in Ilocano and teach them our cultures. No, my kids don't really know how to speak [Ilocano] back, but they understand it. They usually answer in English.

“There's a difference in attitudes between Filipinos and Filipino-Americans. Filipinos are more respectful to elders. They're not as frank as Americans are because they are timid. And [Filipinos] are more shy. Most Filipinos have that crab mentality because they get jealous of other people. The crab effect is that when somebody is going up, like being successful, then one would be pulling her, or him, down. And Filipinos are

more obedient. There's ways that Filipino-Americans are better because they are more self-sufficient. And they're more independent. Is that the same? That might be the same. There's just a few Filipinos who are independent because there aren't a lot of jobs in the Philippines so they have to rely on their parents.

“Being in the States is better, but I don't think being White is better. Filipinos are more family-oriented than Americans, and with that, I think that Filipinos are closer to their families than Americans are. They take care of their families and help their kids as much as they feel. They put their education ahead way more than Americans do.”

*Parent Generation Male*

Chris, a 55-year-old married father of three children in their 20's lives in the East Bay Area with his wife. His eldest son lives in New York with his wife, his middle daughter lives in San Francisco, and the youngest daughter lives in Los Angeles.

“Shall I tell you the true story? Okay, let's see... I was petitioned by my mom, my mother. And my mother was petitioned by my brother. My brother, he came here as a student, and then he applied for a green card and got it, then citizenship. Then finally as a citizen, he could petition for his whole family back in the Philippines. He petitioned for my mom, then my mom petitioned for me. I have my brother and two sisters. My sister was petitioned by her husband, who was already here. But my mom petitioned for me and my youngest sister. That was way back in, something like, 1975, a long time ago. I came here by myself.

“At that time, it was a rebirth, a new beginning. At that time, back home (in the Philippines) unemployment was high and if you're young you can't plan your future.

From the '60's to the '80's it was the 'Golden Age'. I wasn't really scared. Actually when I came here in 1980, it was also recession time, and unemployment was 12.5% and America at that time was still at war in Vietnam. Unemployment rate was high, interest rates were 15 to 20 percent, but at that time Regan was the new president, and I guess they implemented a different set of economic policy.

“I got married at the age of 30, a couple years later. But even in 1980 when I came my brother-in-law said, ‘It’s a good thing you’re here, but wrong timing because it was so hard to find a good job.’ But in the back of my mind, what could be worse than being back in the Philippines where there was nothing compared to here where you can plan and hope for something. I petitioned for [my wife] to become a citizen here.

“Luckily, yes, I found a job fast. My first interview, after 2 hours, they offered me the job, so I was lucky, but they’re luckier to have me. But it was here in California. I moved to the west coast because there were more opportunities for Asians and I felt more at home here than the east coast. After working for the Clorox Company, I got my real estate license and found if you work hard it’s really up to you what you can achieve. If your boss likes you you’re okay, but if not, you’re in trouble.

“I speak English, Tagalog, a little Spanish, and the local dialect (Ilongo or Iloilo) from the Philippines, which has no value here in America. Spanish is important here in America, and now Chinese is better. I speak Iloilo if I meet someone local from there then we can speak the dialect-language. Other than that we speak Tagalog or English. If I meet Hispanics then I can speak some Spanish. Spanish was mandatory in college, 16 units. All three of my children speak English only, but since we were not strict and we

want them to learn English. We considered it more important. I was not strict like a Vietnamese or Chinese parent who makes their children speak Chinese even though they can already speak English. It's not a concern that they don't speak Tagalog; I believe they can understand if they listen to what is being said.

“I consider myself Filipino... well, American... American-Filipino. Filipino because I believe my values are still Filipino, like close ties to the family, helping each other, sharing, like that. And American – Christian values, Americans have divorce. Abortion, I don't believe in abortion. American society is very liberal and I would still consider myself more on the conservative side.

“Last year I went to the Philippines, 4 months ago. For the past 5 years, 2 times. Basically, business and family. Oh yeah, I was born and raised there, so I'm very comfortable there, with the poverty and hardships around me back home. It's very easy to relate because in America everybody's just a stranger. In the Philippines, there's more social life; there's more family life. In fact, too much family life. Like here, people change. Like in one household, it's you invite trouble if you have two or multiple families living in one household, but somehow Filipinos learn how to give and take together. Here, that's unthinkable. If you have resources, you can be mobile, but if you don't than you stay afoot.

“Being Filipino, value, we know what we value- education, being a very good thing to lift yourself. Filipino families put a lot of emphasis on good education, but I guess it's true of most Asians. We keep telling our kids that while they're still young they should pursue higher education.”

*Grandchild Generation Female*

Petra, a 28-year-old American born Filipino, was born and raised in the San Francisco Peninsula. She attended only private schools until she enrolled and graduated from a public university in California. Her family, with both parents having migrated to attend San Francisco State University, owns two nursing care homes in the Bay Area for people with disabilities. Her brother joined the US military and has already graduated from West Point. She recently completed a dental post-baccalaureate program and will be starting dental this summer.

“I get confused because I guess I’m second generation. They, my parents, came from the Philippines, but my dad was born an American citizen, so I don’t really know.

“I like being Filipino-American more than just Filipino because I’ve been exposed to America and more opportunity and my parents could provide better for me. I’m not proud; I don’t think about being Filipino-American.

“Filipinos here in this country, for the most part, I do get along with them. I judge them by the Filipino culture because that’s how they were raised. I don’t identify myself with other Filipinos in the Bay Area; I consider myself more White-washed because of how I grew up. Bay Area Filipinos, education wasn’t very important to them. It wasn’t cool to speak properly, at least in elementary and high school. And I saw that among a lot of Filipinos, but they were Filipino-Americans. Other Filipinos saw me as being White because I played sports.

“I can speak Tagalog, but don’t try. It wasn’t positively reinforced growing up. I would get made fun of by my family for speaking Tagalog. I don’t really try even now,

but it was my first language until Preschool, then Taglish, then English. And now I just watch shows on [The Filipino Channel].

“The Philippines... the culture is great, but there’s a lot of shadiness in their government and economy. You can pay your way and get away with everything. I don’t like that there’s no middle class and people in the higher society look down on everyone. Everything else is fine. The Philippines is really into religion, at least predominantly Catholic, but everyone cheats there. I mean, that’s what I think. Every now and then [my brother] and I will say, ‘We hate Filipinos.’ People, at the care home, they lie or they cheat or don’t clean the house completely.

“Basically I can go to the Philippines and I can stay there for three weeks max because I’m not used to things that go on there... little things, like people not crossing the streets at the right places. Sometimes I feel like they have an attitude. Especially if you’re not light skinned, they discriminate. People of lighter complexion are looked at as better, but I think that’s an Asian thing. Like in church, in the Philippines... people all run to the front during Communion like it’s a race and every woman is grabbing their purse. Nobody there has integrity; it’s stronger there than in the Philippines. It’s good that they have Noynoy as President now because he is not corrupt like Arroyo.

“Also, the economy there sucks, but over there our economy works well because our dollar goes a long way. It’s so overpopulated that no one has any jobs. People there are pretty desperate to having a life here in America. We had a staff on a tourist visa; she was a nurse in the Philippines, desperate to stay here. Life is better in America. Because she’s not looking for a real husband, she wants to live here in America as a nurse. That’s

an example and I hear about it everyday. They haven't seen their kids grow up because they're working here and sending money to the Philippines so their kids can go to school. He hasn't seen his kids because he's here working illegally so its okay for him to work and he hasn't seen his kids in a while and he can't go back because he's here illegally and he's trying to make his family come here. The dollar goes a long way in the Philippines. They're very tight on their sales, and there's 5 to 10 people asking if you need help.

“I've had lots of experiences with Filipinos. It's okay to speak properly and it's okay to go somewhere in life and okay to not have to be gang affiliated it's okay to be more American than Filipino because I feel that they think you need to be more Filipino than American because then you're white. I feel like everyone in the Bay is like that, at least the ones I grew up with.

“The different ones who went to college are different. I figure that Filipinos in the Bay Area in Davis because they cared about education and did well to end up at a UC, but what I found out is that Filipinos in Filipino American club all had similar struggles to Filipino Americans where we were belittled because we were into school and spoke more properly than others, and other not into Filipino America were into Filipino cliques in high school. When Lily came to Davis, she didn't have any non-Filipino friends. I didn't want to be her friend because she was Filipino-Filipino and has become friends with me because I wasn't like Filipino-Filipinos. That and trying to be cool and having five boyfriends by first year in high school, rebelling against parents, I guess. Now I get along with them okay, I'm not going to make friends with them automatically. I wasn't accepted by Filipinos growing up. That's what they called people that didn't

hang out with them, White-washed. I'm pretty sure I'm definitely not a 'Twinkie' or 'Ho Ho'. I'm in between, but in my environment there's a lot of division and I grew up differently from a lot of them."

*Grandchild Generation Male*

Ryan, a 25-year-old American born Filipino lives with his cousin in the Sacramento Area. He grew up in the South Bay and attended local public schools up through high school and then graduated from a private university in his neighborhood. He works part-time as a night shift Registered Nurse and attends school during the week to get his Masters in Nursing. Living independently, he does not get financial assistance from his parents and pays his own bills and expenses.

"My mom came here first. She got a nursing job in Indiana and petitioned for my dad to come. I think they lived in Indiana first, then stayed with an aunt or grandma in California. I think that the States was the only place to have a job back then, I don't really know.

"Growing up in Santa Clara; it was fine. I lived across the street from my cousins; we owned a block of the neighborhood, so there were a bunch of Filipinos, actually. Yes, I usually hung out with my relatives at school, but in high school, not really. For the most part, there was a train of us with each successive grade; we kind of followed each other.

"In elementary school is when I started not getting along with Filipinos because I was very intellectually advanced for my age. Seriously, everyone that was smart was White, so I started thinking that Filipinos were stupid. Well, yeah, they wanted to focus

on cartoons. I was more into academics, that's why I didn't get along with Filipinos. I was ambitious and it was hard for me to connect with Filipinos who weren't ambitious or driven and that's what I hung onto.

“Then in middle school I felt the same. After that, my interactions with Filipinos were very limited because I was in Honors classes and Advanced Placement, and there were a couple other Filipinos who shared the same ideals, but that was it for the most part. Filipinos would make fun of me for being smart and not invite me to things, more-so in elementary school than high school. And now I'm the most successful out of all those elementary school kids. They all work at fast food restaurants or hotels and get paid minimum wage. I spy on them on Facebook<sup>7</sup> and they all smoke weed and drink.

“In college, it was different. I joined the Filipino Club because they were rich, educated, more focused on schools, and I wanted inclusion so I joined the club. I felt like I could relate to them because they weren't idiots. They were very welcoming towards me. Yeah, I felt a little bit connected more than those who I grew up with throughout my educational career.

“I wasn't White enough to hang out with the White people in Santa Clara [University] because they were all White and rich, and I wasn't, so it was an opportunity to hang out with friends. Most of [the Filipinos] were cool; they got into Santa Clara for

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<sup>7</sup> Facebook is an online social network that can be accessed on [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

a reason. It was initially cool, but I didn't want to do [Pilipino Cultural Night<sup>8</sup>], they had too much [Filipino] pride, and I wasn't like that.

“Last time I went to the Philippines was in eighth grade; my parents made us. I think I did not enjoy the trip. I got into a fight with my cousin. I was a brat when I was kid and was immature and liked to rub it in other kids' faces that I was better. I'm a much better and nicer person now. I wasn't used to not having all of the luxuries I was accustomed to. I guess I had a very, what's it called, stuck up attitude, I guess. And it didn't make me think any more highly of Filipinos. Yeah, I would go back to the Philippines with family just for vacation. The Philippines is a beautiful place to vacation. I don't feel connected to the Philippines though, I feel more like a tourist visiting a vacation spot.

“I tell myself that I'm better than most Filipinos, and I am. That's how I cope with being Filipino. I don't identify with other Filipinos. I never met another Filipino who inspires me and I feel that's a strong relation to cultural identity, to be proud. Of all the ones I have encountered, they haven't been that great. Is that bad? I think I feel normal. My parents inspire me, but other than that, no one.

“I consider myself more an American who is Filipino. I don't know anything about the Filipino culture. Like when my boss asked me about Filipino bread, I answered, 'Pan de sal,' and he asked if that was a Spanish thing and I didn't know. I really don't know anything about the culture. Not really because it's not as if I would

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<sup>8</sup> PCN is an annual performance including dramatic skits, dances and songs, put on by students at most US universities.

pack up and move to the Philippines or a way that I would raise my kids. I'm so Americanized I don't think I would raise them with the ideals of the Filipino culture so why bother learn them? My parents could have taught me about their culture. I think things would be different if they had taught me the language, but they had reasons for not doing so. They thought we would get confused. If I got that connection, you know, the language, then maybe it would be different. But because I don't have any connection I'm not that interested really.

“Benefits I see to speaking Tagalog, one of them being able to communicate with my grandma because she has dementia. Plus I think that both my parents will be like that when they get older, only speaking Tagalog and us kids not being about to communicate with them. Plus I could communicate with some patients and staff, too, I guess.

“I speak Spanish. I took Spanish in high school; it was a requirement. I took it pretty advanced, but never learned in conversationally. I went pretty far with grammar, but as far as applied language, I didn't really take it that far. Because I saw it's practicality in the health care field, I saw it would help me further my goals, and its desirability as a skill to being hired. No I always joke with my colleagues that I speak Spanish instead of Tagalog, but I don't regret it inside.

“In my head, marrying someone Filipino would be a step backwards. I wasn't raised in America to bring some Filipino who I don't share beliefs with to America so she could steal my money and use me for citizenship. Sure, I want to marry a White person because in my head, I assume that they'd be more ambitious and driven and have more resources and be more wealthy than a Filipino girl.

“Filipinos are just ghetto. They’re just rude. I just don’t like Filipinos, okay?!”

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

Similarities and differences have been gathered to help analyze the life history interviews. There are more similarities between generations than between sexes, so most data has been organized by generation. Moreover, one participant introduced new terms that were not reviewed in the Definition of Terms, which I will discuss first.

Petra uses terms that other interviewees did not: “Bay Area Filipino”, “Filipino-Filipino”, “Twinkie”, “Ho Ho”, and “Whitewashed”. *Bay Area Filipinos* are Filipino Americans who grew up in the Bay Area in northern California, whom she claims did not value education. *Filipino-Filipinos* seem to refer to Filipino Americans who did get along or hang out with other Filipino Americans. Twinkies and Ho Hos are both Hostess Cakes products that are filled with crème filling. Twinkies have yellow cake on the exterior while Ho Hos have a brown chocolate cake. Petra’s reference is of people who appear either Asian (yellow) or Hispanic/Filipino (brown) on the outside, but their insides or ideals are that of Whites. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, *Whitewashed* means something that was whitened. Petra uses this term to describe herself as a person who is not White, but may share similar values or thoughts as Whites. She made it clear that Filipino-Filipinos called her *Whitewashed*, but that she “definitely [is] not a *Twinkie* or *Ho Ho*”, which creates that assumption that people who are *Whitewashed* or *Twinkies* or *Ho Hos* are looked down upon.

Both participants from the Grandparent Generation were born and raised in the Philippines, arrived to the US in their sixties, and initially did not have exceptionally

positive experiences. For their first incidents on American soil, Guadalupe missed a connecting flight, which alternately caused her to miss her ride to her daughter's, while Arturo did not like the cold weather. Both grandparents were going to be reunited with their children, who had petitioned them to come to the US, but neither of them talked about that emotional reunification. A shared experience in this generation was surviving through WWII, one fearing and trying to the Japanese house raids and the other avoiding the powerful Japanese on the warfront. All of their grandchildren were born in the US and do not speak Tagalog or any other Philippine language, which neither grandparent seemed to mind.

Both Parent Generation Filipinos were born in the Philippines and immigrated to the US in their twenties. They were both married in the US and have three children. Both participants had similar stories of having their entire immediate family petitioned to come to the US. Recognizing a difference between Americans and Filipinos, both noted that Filipinos value family and education more than Americans. Both parents explained that their children do not speak any Philippine language, but assume that their children can comprehend the home language. But it is important to note that neither parent is bothered by the fact that they did not teach their children the language of their culture.

Both participants from the Grandchild Generation were born in California and have completed their Bachelors degrees at prestigious universities in California. These youngest participants recall negative experiences with other Filipino Americans in grade school and up through high school, yet both admitted to feeling more connected to Filipino Americans in college.

Although only the Grandparent Generation was the only one to describe experiencing WWII first-hand, American colonization can be seen in all Generations and even now. Besides speaking English and the effects of mainstream America on the world, Filipinos are still influenced today by American culture. Filipinos still desire to come to America in similar manners as the *Pensionados*, earning a better education and seeking more job opportunities, as most of the participants' family members did (Arturo's daughter, Maria's husband, Chris' sister, Petra's parents, and Ryan's mother). Filipinos like Arturo and Filipino Americans like Petra's brother continue to join the American military to pursue a life in America or to serve America and obtain its benefits, although there has been a somewhat shady past with truly including Filipinos as American soldiers.

All of the participants acknowledged how much better their lives are because they are in America. Guadalupe talked about giving up on the thought of coming to America because she did not have a son in the US Navy, which is a popular way to gain access to America. Arturo discussed how dangerous the Philippines is with its kidnappers and drug dealers. Both grandparents also admire America's healthcare system for the elderly because their hospital visits are cheaper and medicines are free of charge. Chris mentioned the poverty and hardships that still in existence in the Philippines. Most participants have been to the Philippines within the last five years. Maria, Petra and Ryan would not mind vacationing in the Philippines, but know that life is better in America and would rather live here. Arturo and Petra, the two interviewees who bring up TFC, also talk about the corruption in the Philippine government and are hopeful about

Noynoy's presidency. Perhaps since those Filipinos watch TFC they hear more about the status of the Philippines and are able to comment on the current government.

Almost all participants mentioned the poor economy in the Philippines and how Filipinos yearn to migrate to other countries, with America being the most desirable country. Both Grandparents mention other countries that Filipinos have moved to. Maria, from the Parent Generation, claims "Ninety-nine point nine percent of Filipinos want to leave the Philippines and go abroad, even the ones who have nice houses there. They all know that life has more opportunities outside of the Philippines." All participants have been to the Philippines in the last dozen years, and recognize the Philippines as a nice vacation location, but none of them desire to move to the Philippines. A few interviewees mentioned how expensive it is to fly "home" to the Philippines.

All interviewees recognize the value of education and all Filipinos in the grandchildren generation from each family is or has already graduated from college. As early as 1903 with the Pensionado Act, Filipinos were offered to leave the Philippines to access education and a better life in America. This act may have been the start of Filipinos valuing education, because it linked them to escaping the perils of the Philippines and gaining an education in the US. Ryan and Petra finally could relate to other Filipino Americans in college when they were "more focused on school" (Ryan) and "cared about education" (Petra). Ogbu (1987) states, "nonimmigrant minorities tend to equate schooling with one-way acculturation or assimilation into the dominant group which they consciously and unconsciously resist" (p. 258) and further argues that they do

not maximize their academic success. Ogbu (1987) “[T]hose who try to behave like the dominant group or who try to cross cultural boundaries may encounter opposition from other minority-group members, especially from their peers” (p. 263). The Grandchild Generation experienced this theory of Ogbu because the *other* or *Bay Area Filipino Americans* did not succeed in school and then harassed Ryan and Petra for their accomplishments.

All three Generations did not have anything negative to say about Whites, although the youngest generation had negative things to say about Filipinos. Both Grandchildren Generation interviewees had negative experiences with other Filipino Americans growing up, but still became friends with Filipino Americans once in college. Petra and Ryan, during college, were then in Cross’s third stage of immersion/emersion because they both sought relationships with those of the same Filipino American identity. Ryan exemplifies this stage best when he says, “I wanted inclusion.” He desired to be included and share a similar background with his friends.

These 20-something year olds admit to expressing hatred or dislike toward fellow Filipinos Americans: Petra with her brother, “We hate Filipinos,” and Ryan expressing, “I just don’t like Filipinos, okay?!” They both harbor negative feelings about being Filipino although they stated it differently: Petra acknowledges, “I’m not proud; I don’t think about being Filipino-American,” while Ryan admits he has to “*cope* with being Filipino.” According to Nadal (2004), both adults are probably in Stage 2: Assimilation to Dominant Culture, even though Petra has positive feelings about being Filipino and she does not have negative feelings about Whites.

Because the American influence is already present in the Philippines before Filipinos arrive in America, it could be hard to differentiate when Filipino Americans become assimilated. The primary home language in homes in the Philippines is usually the local Philippine language, but English easily becomes the new home language once in America. This chosen alteration can be seen as over-assimilation since other ethnicities are able to speak their heritage language in the home and have their children learn English at school. Others may argue that decreasing the number of English language learners in the public school system is a blessing, but at what cost to the Filipino identity?

Chris, when talking about various language abilities, mentions that his “local *dialect*... has no value here in America.” First we must review the word *dialect*. His word choice is common among Filipinos, only acknowledging Tagalog or Pilipino as the Philippine language and *all* others as dialects. I purposely recognized all Philippine vernaculars as *languages* because of the political connotations of the two terms. Linguist Max Weinreich (1945) distinguished the difference best, “A language is a dialect with an army and a navy.” This definition basically states that the two are the same; only a language has more power, making this word choice political. Next, the content of his statement: Chris has devalued his own primary, heritage language. He explains that Spanish and Chinese are more practical languages to speak because those languages can be more used. He also adds that he can speak the “dialect-language” if he meets someone who does speak it. This change in title shows that Chris may desire to value his primary language as a language, although he may unconsciously describe it as only a “dialect”.

Chris may understand that English is the language of power and Philippine languages are not.

Petra claims that she can speak Tagalog, but remembers being discouraged as a child by her relatives. “It wasn’t positively reinforced growing up. I would get made fun of by my family for speaking Tagalog.” This discouragement may relate to her not being proud of being Filipino. Tagalog is a Philippine language, and if she was discouraged to do that, she may have internalized negative feelings of anything related to being Filipino. Petra may connect those discouraging feelings of her past to her present feelings of hating Filipinos.

The most interesting part of the interviews was a comment that Ryan made about not speaking a Philippine language: “I think things would be different if [my parents] had taught me the language... If I got that connection... then maybe it would be different.” Because of his knowledge of the Spanish language and culture, he understands the relationship between language and culture. Yet he does not mention the language culture connection, and only comments on the importance of Tagalog so he can communicate in the future with his parents when they suffer from a form of dementia. If his parents chose to teach him their Philippine language, then “maybe” he would be able to identify more with the Philippine culture. In addition, Ryan might be more interested in Philippine culture and Filipino Americans.

Ryan suffers from a colonial mentality, an “uncritical rejection of anything Filipino” and an “uncritical preference for anything American” (David & Okazaki, 2006, p. 241). He confessed, “marrying someone Filipino would be a step backwards”

admitting his belief that Filipinos are less worthy than Whites. Possibly stemming from his parents' discouragement of learning the Philippine culture, Ryan now devalues his own Filipino identity and refuses to learn or attach himself to anything related to it. Without recognizing his own self-rejection, Ryan may remain in Nadal's second stage of Filipino American identity development. He may only progress in identity development if is forced to identify as being part Filipino, which will probably not happen until the White host culture points it out to him his identity and how it differs from Whites.

Filipino Americans like Ryan have no example Filipinos to look up to and inspire them. Author and historian Fred Cordova asked, "What does the average American know about Filipinos who've been in this country for more than 400 years... who have helped in the development and advancement of this nation?" (Barnett & Wehman, 1994). I venture to ask this question of Filipino Americans. If Filipino parents and grandparents are not teaching their youth the Filipino language, they also may not be teaching Filipino history. Filipino American history is not included in American history textbooks so Filipino youth have little opportunity to learn about their Filipino culture and history. In the final chapter of this thesis, I will discuss options to help begin to alleviate these gaps of Filipino American culture.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

This study examined how Philippine history has affected the culture and values of Filipino Americans, resulting in the abandonment of Pilipino. In brief, the interviews reflected generational similarities between the participants. These findings supported the notion that Filipinos maintain a colonial mentality. The older participants, from the Grandparent and Parent Generations, all shared similar views on their youth's ability to speak their heritage language, which could have been predicted by Nadal (2004) and Tuason, et. al. (2004). Both grandchildren also contributed that their families discouraged them from learning their heritage language. Grandparents spoke Tagalog and verbalized the most information about Filipino history and culture, in comparison to the other interviewees. They did not necessarily encourage the use of English as the primary language, nor did they encourage the use of Tagalog with their grandchildren. In contrast to this, the younger generation, or English only speakers, had little information to draw from their primary culture and knowledge of how to use it in the American cultural context.

Further research is needed about Filipino American identity and how it relates to heritage language loss. Continued research and development could consist of conducting quantitative research on a larger sample population and administering a questionnaire that could be derived from my analysis of this pilot project. As a result, this project could be converted into a Ph.D. dissertation that would consist of quantitative research of approximately 120 respondents as well as collecting longitudinal life history data on

approximately 24 respondents. The longitudinal sample population could be divided into an equal number of 24 as well as divided the sample in different generations, between 2-4 generations. Although in this study the generations were defined by parental status and not age of entrance into the host country, additional research can utilize the new parental status generations or the traditional generations.

Another option generating from this study could be in the creation of workshop presentations to education Filipino Americans as well as non-Filipino Americans about the history and contributions of Filipinos to the America that exists today. One method could be to host a “movie night” and play Filipino American National Historical Society’s (FANHS) *Filipino Americans: Discovering their Past for the Future*, a movie that came out in 1994, and won film awards, yet has no reviews, possibly because of the lack of Filipino interest, which confirms America’s lack of interest in Filipino history and culture. This movie includes information similar to this study’s literature review on Philippine history, including the waves of migration into America. After viewing this movie as a group, there could be a discussion or dialogue about reactions or responses to the film’s content. Hopefully this movie could work as a thought-provoking discussion piece. Not until Filipino Americans learn about their Philippine history and contributions will Filipino Americans be able to accept and honor their own culture. Knowledge of current Filipino Americans who have contributed to American culture will aid in inspiring Filipino American youth to learn more about their heritage and have more pride.

I was very apprehensive when I began reflecting on the interviews and how I would utilize this information. My issue is the fact that there is an identity denial where

my constituency is not interested in their culture and would not be interested in watching Filipino movies, attending a Filipino workshop, and would just rather not learn about their heritage. At the same time, my reflections led me to the conclusion that I would not act in accordance with the identity denial and present this workshop. I anticipate difficult recruitment and for those who participate, a certain amount of cognitive dissonance where this information would tend to confuse and disorient Filipinos. At the same time, I can see the potential benefits once the attendees were presented with the information and had a sufficient period of time to reflect on their experience. Hopefully these workshops would help Filipino Americans begin to recognize the potential benefits of becoming more aware of themselves.

Among the Filipinos mentioned in the Literature Review who have been recognized as doing something great, there are more recent Filipino Americans who youth can relate to. One famous Filipino athlete and Philippine politician is rated the best boxer in the world. Manny Pacquiao, also known as Pacman, was the first boxer ever to win ten world titles in eight different weight divisions and was named “Fighter of the Decade” by the *Boxing Writers Association of America* (2010).

In the summer of 2010, California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger nominated Judge Tani Cantil-Sakauya into the highest state judicial office. She was sworn into the office of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California in January 2011 (Holton, 2011). Cantil-Sakauya is noted as being the second woman and the first Asian-American to ever hold this office. Besides California, dating back to Filipino farm laborers, Hawaii has been another state with a large Filipino population. In 2001, the Miss Hawaii was a

Filipina born in that state. Angela Perez Baraquio later became the first Asian-America Miss America to ever be crowned (Kitchen, 2005).

Filipino Americans have also included various performers, including singers, dancers, and actors. Most recently, a young famous singer has been cast in a few episodes of the hit Fox television series *Glee* (Baker, 2010). Charice Pempengco, who has sung on *Oprah* twice, was acknowledged by TV host Oprah Winfrey (2008) as “the most talented girl in the world”. Cheryl Burke, professional dancer and newly published author, was the first two-time champion of ABC’s *Dancing with the Stars*, a television dancing competition (Burke, 2011). Lea Salonga was made famous after her recruitment and accolades for the lead in *Miss Saigon*. She also debuted as Disney princesses Jasmine in *Aladdin* and Mulan in *Mulan* (Holden, 2010).

In conclusion, I conducted this research in order to study the patterns of adaptations of Filipinos. My research focused on patterns of identity development and based on the contents of the interviews the findings of the interviews indicated that Filipinos had various and palpable patterns of identity development. At the same time, the patterns were associated with generations. The contents of the interviews among the most recent generation indicate that it is consistent with the research of Nadal (2004) and Tuason, et. al. (2004). Filipino American youth suffer from not learning their heritage language and miss out even more because it is part of their Philippine culture. Moreover, not having a strong relationship to their culture contributes to their negative attitude towards other Filipino Americans or creates conflicting internal feelings that lead to compromising their education. This is due to the fact that these students are not allowed

to draw upon their cultural based funds of knowledge as a scaffolding method to facilitate their learning process. My research indicates various contributions of Filipinos and Filipino Americans to mainstream America, but sadly members of the most recent generations being aware of it. This is one of the primary reasons why I suggested the Filipino education workshops and utilized the single group studies approach. The single-group studies approach emphasizes the history, culture, and patterns of adaptation of members of a particular group. The utilization of this information in the educational process aim to raise the self-esteem of Filipino Americans and therefore play a major role in assisting them in closing the achievement gap.

## APPENDIX A

## Interview Questions

1. How old are you? What Generation Filipino American do you consider yourself?
2. Please tell me how you came to America and at what age.
  - a. When did your family come?
  - b. Who came with you and your family?
  - c. Why did you leave the Philippines and come to America?
  - d. How was life for you and your family when you first arrived? How about now?
3. What languages do you speak and with whom do you speak them?
4. Please describe your experience living in America.
  - a. Have any of these experiences had a positive/negative impact on your Filipino identity? How do you cope with these feelings?
5. How do you feel about being Filipino American?
  - a. Do you consider yourself Filipino, American, or both?
  - b. How do you feel about the Philippines? When was the last time you were there?  
Do you feel connected to the Philippines and how?
  - c. How do you identify with being Filipino?
  - d. What does being Filipino American mean to you?
6. In what language(s) do you communicate with your child(ren) and/or grandchild(ren)?
  - a. Why do you or do you not speak Tagalog (or another Philippine language) with them?
  - b. What would be the benefits/disadvantages of speaking to them in Tagalog?

## APPENDIX B

## Consent to Participate in Research

You are being asked to participate in research, which will be conducted by Jennifer Osalbo, candidate for a Masters of Arts in Education with an emphasis in Multiculturalism. This study is about the relationship between Filipino American identity and heritage language loss.

You will be interviewed and asked written questions about your life history, including your Filipino and American background. The interview may last for up to 3 hours.

Some of the questions may make you feel uncomfortable or upset if you recollect some unpleasant memories from your past. You may decline to answer questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. If you experience any discomfort during or after the research and want some help, you may ask the researcher for some resources.

You may benefit from this study because you might increase your knowledge of Filipinos, Filipino Americans or the Philippines. However, you may not benefit personally from this research. Your life history that you share will help readers of this study learn more about the Filipino and Filipino American culture, its influences, and how to interact with people of this cultural background.

All of your responses to the interview questions will be kept confidential. Your responses will be recorded, but will be kept under locked in a personal safe. These recordings will be destroyed after 3 years. Your identity will be concealed in the research by using a pseudonym.

You will receive no monetary compensation for participating in this research.

If you have any questions about this research please contact the researcher, Jennifer Osalbo, at [pinturtle@yahoo.com](mailto:pinturtle@yahoo.com) or (916) 612-xxxx. You may also contact the faculty sponsor, Dr. Forrest Davis, at [frdavis@sonic.net](mailto:frdavis@sonic.net) or (916) 278-xxxx.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study without any consequences. You may also change your mind and stop participating in this study in the future, or the researcher may choose to discontinue your participation in this study at any time. Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand this consent form and agree to participate in this research and be tape-recorded.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature below indicates that you agree to be audio-taped during this research.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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