

Migrant Returns: The Transnational Migration of Filipinos, Ambivalence, and the
Production of a Balikbayan Economy

By

Eric John Pido

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Catherine Ceniza Choy

Professor Khatharya Um

Professor Ananya Roy

Fall 2011

Abstract

Migrant Returns: The Transnational Migration of Filipinos, Ambivalence, and the
Production of a Balikbayan Economy

by

Eric J. Pido

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnic Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Catherine Ceniza Choy, Chair

This project explores how balikbayans, emigrant Filipinos returning to the Philippines, are playing a central role in the economic development of the Philippines. I focus on the return of post-1965 Filipino immigrants who had settled into the suburban neighborhoods of Daly City, California and helped to produce what I call the “balikbayan economy”, a transnational circulation of diasporic labor and capital moving between the U.S. and the Philippines. While the vast majority of literature on international migration examines labor flows and settlement into various receiving countries, I employ the idiom of “migrant return” to convey the complex process through which many immigrants maintain ties with their homeland and eventually travel back either as tourists or to resettle. Through historical archival research and ethnography, I develop the concept of migrant return in three ways. First, I examine the migration of post-1965 Filipino immigrants into Daly City and contextualize the inception of the balikbayan economy by discussing the ways in which this community maintains connections with the Philippines through remittance sending and property investments. This helps to underscore the second part of my analysis: The state’s use of tourism, property development, and balikbayans as a means of developing the Philippine economy. Finally, I follow the ambivalent return of balikbayans as they leave Daly City and literally re-build their lives in various parts of the Philippines. As “retirees”, these balikbayans uneasily straddle the interstitial space between their new and former lives and are forced to reconcile their ambivalence towards a homeland that is quickly changing but is also in many ways still the same.

To Aura, for teaching me the meaning of community.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| <i>The Balikbayan Economy: Mapping Filipino Transnationalism on the Balikbayan</i> | |
| Chapter 1..... | 27 |
| <i>The Veiled City: Daly City and the Transnational Filipino Landscape</i> | |
| Chapter 2..... | 48 |
| <i>Transnational Real Estate: Selling the American Dream in the Philippines</i> | |
| Chapter 3..... | 79 |
| <i>Balikbayan Paranoia: Tourism Development and the Anxiety of Return</i> | |
| Chapter 4..... | 96 |
| <i>Spaces of Balikbayan Neoliberalism: Touristic Zones and Special Resident Retiree Visas</i> | |
| Conclusion..... | 123 |
| <i>Balikbayan Urbanism: Manila's Balikbayan Landscape and Ambivalent Returns</i> | |
| Bibliography..... | 137 |

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| BPO | Business Process Outsourcing |
| BSP | Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas |
| CBD | Central Business District |
| CPP | Communist Party of the Philippines |
| CREBA | Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Associations, Inc. |
| DOT | Department of Tourism |
| EO | Executive Order |
| EOI | Export-Oriented Industrialization |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investments |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| NCR | National Capital Region |
| OFW | Overseas Filipino Worker |
| PEZA | Philippine Economic Zone Authority |
| PRA | Philippine Retirement Authority |
| PTA | Philippine Tourism Authority |
| RA | Republic Act |
| SEZ | Special Economic Zone |
| SRRV | Special Resident Retiree's Visa |
| TNC | Transnational Corporation |
| TEZ | Tourism Economic Zones |

Introduction

The Balikbayan Economy

Mapping Filipino Transnationalism on the Balikbayan

I. Introduction

The additions to Ernesto's newly built home were so recently completed that the brown-tinted beer bottles left by construction workers still lined one side of his concrete porch. Upon entering, the scent of the floor's hardening concrete rushed through the main entrance and the pile of unopened paint-cans that Ernesto shoved to one corner of the room was clearly visible. Unlike many of the model homes advertised to Filipinos living in the U.S. on television, Filipino newspapers, and the Internet, altogether attempting to convince Filipinos to purchase property and retire in the Philippines, Ernesto's home was relatively simple. It wasn't painted in vibrant pastels or installed with reflective windows to give the home a sleek and modern feel, elements that developers in the Philippines feel Filipinos living in the U.S. find so appealing and reminiscent of American tastes

In fact, Ernesto's home was almost completely barren of furniture or ornamentation, particularly in the bedrooms. He admits that the only reason there is a couch and a TV in the living room is because of the small housewarming that they were both hosting that day. Pointing to the bedroom nearest the entrance, Ernesto was eager to tell his guests that the room was reserved for his two children who are attending college in the U.S. The light rushed through the iron-rot bars shielding the window's exterior and warming the room to an uncomfortable temperature.

Ernesto, a technician who continues to work for a major cable company in Daly City, California, had been piecing his retirement home together with his wife since 2005. Because they continue to work and live in the U.S., they have been unable to completely devote a suitable amount of time to building and furnishing their small three-bedroom bungalow. Yet it had always been a dream of theirs to return to the Philippines, particularly for Adele, whose sick mother was forced to return years earlier after being diagnosed with cancer. Without a job and unable to afford health insurance in the U.S., the family made the decision to have Adele's mother live in the Philippines. "It's been better that way. Ernesto and I can send her money each month to pay for her treatment," Adele's resignation was clearly communicated by her sullen tone. "Medicine costs a lot in the Philippines but not like it does in the U.S."

For the past six years, both Ernesto and Adele have returned to the Philippines each summer to oversee the building of their home in Parañaque City, a municipality in Metro Manila west of Manila Bay and just a short distance away from where Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) is located.

At first we wanted to buy a home that was already built. We didn't realize from the (real estate) advertisements how misleading they were until we arrived. Many of the homes were poorly built. Sometimes, realtors had tenants who were already living there even though the homes were supposedly new ones. We decided to purchase an (empty) lot instead and build on it. We knew it would take a lot of time since we don't live here permanently yet.

To add to their headaches, even though Adele had family members who lived nearby to oversee the contractor and builders work on their home, both Ernesto and Adele returned each summer disappointed to find that their directives were consistently ignored or poorly executed. The exposed plumbing in both of the restrooms stood as a testament for each time Ernesto demanded that the contractor have his employees repair what he felt was disturbingly shoddy workmanship. Adele hoped that by offering their home as a place for their relatives to stay, both her and Ernesto would be assured that they would be compelled to act responsibly and properly look after the work being done on their property. However both Ernesto and Adele were continuously let down by their family members.

What can you do? We live in California and they live here. It costs a lot of money to call them everyday. They don't have a good internet connection. So they cannot send us pictures of the work that's being done. We don't know what kind of progress is being made. You need to be here everyday if you want this to happen properly. You should be here to watch what is happening but that's impossible...we live in California! Nothing is what you would expect. That's the most difficult thing about moving back here. No matter how many people you talk to, no matter what kind of assurances they give, coming back here is not like coming home. Things are very different.

The Balikbayan Program and Migrant Returns

Ernesto and Adele's experiences with building their home in Parañaque and the ambivalence around their return to the Philippines provides one example amongst a litany of Filipinos who are acting on the possibility of returning to their homeland after living and working in the U.S. for a number of decades. This dissertation project charts the transnational social field produced by Filipino immigrants who had settled in Daly City, California, a small suburb south of San Francisco where a little over a third of population identifies as Filipino, and the various forms of return to the Philippines that this group engages.

Recent government estimates that from a population of approximately 80 million people, 7,402,894 Filipinos are working overseas (POEA 2005). In 2005, there were 3,099,940 Filipinos contracted as temporary workers abroad and 1,566,426 were classified as "irregular", either working on tourist visas or labored as undocumented as illegal residents overseas. At the other end of this spectrum, there were 2,736,528 permanent emigrants settled in different parts of the world. This figure includes balikbayans living permanently in places like the U.S. and does not encapsulate generations of Filipino Americans who had been residing in the U.S. since the early part of the twentieth century. This number surged when Filipinos emigrated in large numbers after the passage of the Hart-Cellars Act of 1965. Since then, the number of Filipinos residing in the U.S. rose to almost 3.1 million, the

largest number of permanent Filipino emigrants residing outside of the Philippines (U.S. Census 2007).

While, like many other labor sending countries, the Philippines does not maintain a system for collecting data on return migrants, conservative estimates suggest that since 1998, 2.5 million Filipino migrants have permanently returned to the Philippines (Battistella 2004).¹ This figure does little however to illuminate the number of Filipinos who return to the Philippines each year, having settled somewhere abroad for several decades, either to purchase property as an intent to reside in their homeland in the near future or those who return for good. This particular cohort of Filipinos function as the focus of this dissertation. This project explores how *balikbayans*, emigrant Filipinos returning to the Philippines, are integral for exploration because on the one hand, their experiences returning to the Philippines complicates notions around assimilation and citizenship and on the other, balikbayans are increasingly playing a central role in the economic development of the Philippines.

For these reasons, this dissertation explores the subject of balikbayans through the actions and discourses of three interrelated groups of social actors: the Philippine state; the various real estate corporations and realtors composing the transnational real estate industry between the Philippines and the U.S.; and Filipino migrants themselves. At times, the actions and discourses presented by these three social actors are initiated by distinctly separate and even conflicting motivations and goals and other times, they complement one another or overlap. I am focusing on how the return of post-1965 Filipino immigrants to the Philippines and the decades of remittances, both financial and social, have enabled the production of what I call the “balikbayan economy”.

By balikbayan economy, I am referring to the transnational circulation of diasporic labor and capital moving between the U.S. and the Philippines. While the vast majority of literature on international migration examines labor flows and settlement into various receiving countries, I employ the idiom of “migrant return” to convey the complex process through which many immigrants maintain ties with their homeland and eventually travel back either as tourists or to resettle. Through historical archival research and ethnography, I develop the concept of migrant return in three ways. First, I examine the migration of post-1965 Filipino immigrants into Daly City and contextualize the inception of the balikbayan economy by discussing the ways in which this community maintains connections with the Philippines through remittance sending and property investments. This helps to underscore the second part of my analysis: The state’s use of tourism, property development, and balikbayans as a means of developing the Philippine economy. Finally, I follow the ambivalent return of balikbayans as they leave Daly City and literally re-build their lives in various parts of the Philippines. As “retirees”,

¹Battistella explains that the POEA only maintains records on *balik-manggagawa* or “rehires”. These contracted Filipino laborers have had their contracts renewed. Yet, the author is clear that this category provides a very a limited perspective on the numbers of Filipinos who return to the Philippines either temporarily or permanently. See Graziano Battistella’s “Return Migration in the Philippines: Issues and Policies” in *International Migration: Prospects and Policies in a Global Market*, edited by D. S. Massey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

these balikbayans uneasily straddle the interstitial space between their new and former lives and are forced to reconcile their ambivalence towards a homeland that is quickly changing but is also in many ways still the same.

First initiated in 1973, the Balikbayan Program was engineered to lessen international tensions over the particularly autocratic dimensions of Martial Law, which was implemented by Marcos just a year prior. Originally the program solely entailed various incentives for Filipinos living mainly in North America to visit the Philippines by accelerating the process of obtaining travel visas and reduced airfares. Marcos hoped that the mere presence of these “glorified tourists” freely traveling throughout Metro Manila and their home provinces would function to legitimize Martial Law (Rodriguez 2002). Provided with special balikbayan identification, Filipino returnees also had access to discount retail rates, certain privileges when arranging inter-island travels, and safe traveling permits during curfew hours (Szanton Blanc 1996).

By 1980, the legal definition of a balikbayan constituted only those Filipinos who were citizens or permanent residents of other countries and their descendents. Its distinctions no longer included Filipinos who worked for international organizations such as the World Bank or the U.N. Concurrently, the Philippine administration made its first attempt at attracting Filipinos to repatriate by introducing a “balik-scientist” program that provided particularly skilled Filipinos with job placements in scientific research positions or various development projects. Significantly, the provisions of the balik-scientist program also included the descendants of Filipinos who also fit the criteria for desired skill sets. Around the same period, Marcos had attempted to solve major deficits in the country’s economy created by mounting debts to various international financing agencies as well as terrible rates of unemployment throughout the Philippines by embarking on an extensive labor program to send Filipinos to work abroad. The President admitted the significant role that overseas employment made in a speech to his constituents in 1982 when Marcos explained,

For us, overseas employment addresses two major problems: unemployment and the balance of payments position. If these problems are met or at least partially solved by contract migration, we also expect an increase in national savings and investment levels (Gonzalez 1998).

Against a backdrop of globalization, these historical patterns of kinship ties find their way into the contemporary through the intertwining of remittance streams: the financial and emotional safety-net provided by family members living and laboring in other countries through monthly allowances, agreements to finance a sibling’s college education, sponsor family members to emigrate, and property investments.

The interlinking of capital production created by permanent Filipino emigrants and the Balikbayan economy was made clear by 1989 when President Corazon Aquino redefined the legal definition of balikbayan, this time broadening the term to encompass any Filipino who had lived abroad for at least one year regardless of citizenship. Furthermore, the memorandum order (No. 230) mandated

that 50 percent of the total USD \$1000 allowed for duty free shopping to go to the Philippine National Treasury for repayment of national debts. For a while, such mandates reconfiguring the legal definition of a balikbayan had the effect of conflating very different historically classed subjects: highly skilled and relatively affluent Filipinos living as citizens of other countries for many years, temporary and flexible Filipino workers contracted to work for a limited duration in other countries, Filipinos who had gained naturalization while working in other countries at first on a temporary basis, as well as the descendants of Filipino citizens who were born in another place. Clearly, the invention of the balikbayan specifies the manner in which the Philippine State continues to respond to crisis in the local economy and competition from the outside.

These streams have a dual-purpose as well. While they create a financial reservoir for families to establish businesses, make repairs and substantial improvements to their homes, or supplement their income, the remittances that balikbayans send from abroad also function to stabilize and secure the larger economy of their home country. One of the most crucial forms of state-led transnationalism has occurred through the garnishing and exploitation of migrant remittances. Next to India, China, and Mexico, the Philippines is the fourth largest receiver of remittances sent by overseas emigrants. This becomes more startling when one considers that the total population of the Philippines, a little over 80 million, is only a quarter of the population of the other three countries previous. Filipinos from the U.S. contribute the largest amount of monetary remittances of any group living abroad. Over the past decade, remittances have constituted between 9 and 11 percent of the total GDP of the Philippines (Le Borgne 2009).

I seek to describe how contemporary patterns of economic and cultural ties between the U.S. and the Philippines expressed through the concept of migrant returns materializes itself into the transnational landscape linking Daly City to Manila and perpetuating a fragmented sense of belonging to a place once thought of as “home”. As such, my work intervenes the literature on globalization and transnationalism by asking two major questions: (1) how have balikbayans become pivotal actors connecting networks of globalization between the U.S. and the Philippines? And (2) how do the changes taking place throughout Manila’s landscape, enabled in many ways by the investments of balikbayans, require scholars to reconsider the core-centered notions made famous by Wallerstein and other critics of development theories, which continue to predominate frameworks of globalization and transnationalism?

The intellectual energy paid to articulating the contours of globalization is exhaustive to say the least. Journalists, politicians, and thinkers have all weighed into the discourse and positioned themselves in various theoretical camps. A significant number have marked the significance of contemporary globalization through an analysis of networks of multinational corporations of agencies, which together have superseded the sovereignty of nation-states (Castells 2000; Sassen 2001; Kelly 2001). Others point to the vital importance of situating the scope of globalization’s inquiry away from faceless and seemingly omnipotent conglomerates and onto the community of migrants, laborers, and immigrants who continue to navigate invisibly along the contours of these globalized networks

(Smith 2001; Smith 1998; Burawoy 1991). The importance of my work, both at present and in the future, is the manner in which it articulates the disjuncture produced by globalization between emigrants and their home country through the fragmented sense in which balikbayans imagine and maintain connections with the Philippines.

At the intersection between globalization and international migration is an examination of various ties binding nation-states and distant localities to one another within the network of globalization through the practices of immigrants who remain situated simultaneously between their new home and their original homeland. For this reason, the figure of the balikbayan is instrumental to the emerging literature broadly encompassed by the field of transnationalism.

Disciplines within the social sciences, particularly sociology and anthropology, have greatly enabled scholars to make sense of the political-economy within and around modes of transnationalism. What remains less articulated are the cultural imprints produced by transnationalism, the ways in which these intertwining economies are affecting the everyday life of immigrants and their immediate surroundings. Framed by a concept, which I am calling the balikbayan economy, my analysis of property investments made by balikbayans, coupled together with the generations of remittances they have sent, conveys how these Filipino emigrants living in the U.S. but return to the Philippines, both intermittently and permanently, have become crucial actors within the development of the Philippine economy.

The figure of the balikbayan is unique in the literature on race and diaspora in the U.S. While the term balikbayan is geographically demarcated, its meaning functions to conjure the imaginary of Filipinos who can simultaneously be located inside and outside the literal boundaries of the Philippine nation-state. Through this simultaneity, the figure of the balikbayan presents a crucial example linking contemporary notions of race and diaspora together through the ways in which contemporary globalization becomes visibly marked on the bodies of balikbayans who simultaneously carry the cultural and economic aspirations of both the U.S. and Philippine nation-states.

By the 1960s, desiring highly-skilled and educated laborers to fill labor needs within an increasingly de-industrializing American economy, Filipinos made their way into the U.S. through labor routes already paved by U.S. colonialism.² The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 put an end to the National Origins Formula, which configured immigration into the U.S. since the Immigration Act of 1924. In its place, legislation initiated a 7-point preference system that, amongst other criteria, ranked immigrants according to their education attainment and skill –level.

² From the very onset of U.S. occupation and colonization of Manila, American corporations sent labor recruiters starting in regions in Northern Philippines to work in agricultural and food production sectors in Hawaii, throughout the U.S. West coast, and Alaska. See, as a few examples, Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony's *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), Rick Baldoz's *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

The 1965 moment simultaneously created an opportunity for the Philippine government to exploit labor migration by actively enabling Filipinos to live abroad and send various kinds of remittances back to their homeland. The historian Catherine Ceniza Choy, concerned with the continual focus paid by Filipino Americanists on the subject-formation produced by the U.S. imperialism, poses the poignant question, “Can we imagine the U.S. as an extension of the Philippines?” My work attempts to convey the impact of post-1965 migration into the U.S. by merging the borders of the U.S and the Philippines together through the transnational circulation of culture and labor produced by balikbayans. It is from the ambivalent complexity and trans-temporal condition of this interstitiality that I begin my examination of Filipino transnationality materialized within the subjectivity of balikbayans from the U.S. who strive to maintain their rootedness in ideas of home through their continuing connections to their families and communities in the Philippines. And by virtue of their physical presence in the U.S., Filipino immigrants provide a crucial role within the neoliberal desires of the Philippine nation-state at the same time.

The Veil: Ambivalence and the Limits of Transnationalism

The 1965 Immigration Act produced a pivotal moment in the history between the U.S. and the Philippines because it institutionalized and facilitated a gateway through which a network of Filipino migration could make its way into the U.S. and settle into the postcolonial metropole thereby putting the balikbayan into place. These economies were made possible because balikbayans who migrated to the U.S. after 1965, were on the one hand uniquely skilled and educated in such a way that they were viewed as a desirable pool of migrants who could fill various labor gaps throughout the U.S. economy and on the other, many of these migrants were also capable of immigrating to the U.S. regardless of their lack of skills and education due to stipulations within the Act that allowed family members to be reunited with family who had already settled in various parts of the U.S. (Hing 1993; Choy 2003). In fact, the majority of migrants who immigrated to the U.S. through the 1965 Immigration Act were permitted to migrate through the family reunification provision. Subsequently, the wave of post-1965 Filipino immigration produced a dual chain of migration to the U.S. (Liu 1991). Yet, while Filipinos comprise one of the largest immigrant groups to migrate to the U.S. as a result of this particular legislation, there remains only a small handful of literature discussing the specific impact of this key legislation on the Filipino Americans who continue to create a number of vibrant ethnic spaces throughout the larger U.S. landscape.³ One of the most important examples of Filipino American literature on post-1965 Filipino immigration is Benito Vergara’s (2009) work on Filipinos who settled into

³ See for example, Yen Le Espirtu’s *Home Bound: Filipino Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), Rick Bonus’ *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Space* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), and Benito Vergara’s *Pinoy Capital: the Filipino nation in Daly City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009).

Daly City. In an attempt to convey the daily connections maintained by Filipinos in Daly City with their homeland, Vergara employs the term “repeated turning”. Borrowing from the sense of obligation evoked within Khachig Tölölyan’s (1996) conception of diaspora,⁴ Vergara argues that

Whether manifested as political activism, assertions of ethnic pride, nostalgia, consumerism, or just vague remembering, the repeated turning is obliquely opposed to the narrative of assimilation. The tension between this remembrance and the demands of citizenship in the new homeland, the obligations in different directions, constitute a predicament for the Filipino immigrant; I examine how they negotiate-or indeed, fail to find-a balance between the two (2009, 4).

The impossibility of “making-two worlds fit”, to borrow a phrase used by Peggy Levitt (2001) to describe complexities around transnational processes, is affirmed by both Ernesto and Adele’s narrative provided earlier and Vergara. Interestingly, while this impossibility is continuously haunts the literature on Filipino Americans, very few scholars attempt to articulate its presence.

These daily negotiations and the impossibility to find a balance are reminiscent of perhaps the most influential scholar to the overlapping fields of ethnic and racial studies. At the turn of the twentieth century, W.E.B. Du Bois put words to the veil that masked the lives and culture of Black folk. “Swathed within the folds of the veil of colour,” as described by Paul Gilroy (1993), the experiences of African Americans in the U.S. were made entirely invisible to the eyes of the dominant culture surrounding it (123). Simultaneously, and in an intensely ambivalent fashion, it also provided African Americans some ability to conceal themselves in a sense from the larger white society.

Invisibility, which has often been understood in Filipino American literature as a negative consequence of imperialist amnesia and cultural aphasia, might also be understood as enabling and facilitating the transnational routes of Filipino migration between the Philippines and the U.S. This project stands on the shoulders of both Vergara as well as Rick Bonus’ (2000), but mostly Du Bois, as an attempt to make sense of the invisibility both imposed onto and employed by Filipinos in the U.S. It seeks to articulate an analytic of the veil as tool to understand and convey the ambivalent experiences of Filipino transnationalism. As such, this ambivalence and the impossibility it portends, point to the very limits of transnationalism.

In order to convey these limits, I must first attempt to push my analysis to the boundaries of transnationalism. Therefore, I am also relying on the work of Inderpal Grewal (2005) and to get beyond what she views as a prevailing discourse within cultural and ethnic studies to view migration and immigration solely through the frame of the U.S. as an imperialist nation-state. Rather, like Grewal, I too am

⁴ Vergara pays particular attention to Tölölyan’s quote, “It makes more sense to think of diasporan or diasporic existence as not necessarily involving a physical return but rather a re- turn, a repeated turning to the concept and/or the reality of the homeland and other diasporan kin through memory, written and visual texts, travel, gifts and assistance” (2009, 14–15).

exploring how *the idea of America* has "produced many kinds of agency and diverse subjects" for Filipinos and how to make sense of how this idea functions "as a discourse of neoliberalism making possible struggles for rights through consumerist practices and imaginaries that came to be used both inside and outside the territorial boundaries of the United States" (2). The metaphor of the veil forces readers of different backgrounds to suspend a U.S.-centric framework when viewing Filipinos in the U.S. and instead, complicate traditional and fictitious binaries such as those imposed between American and immigrant, colonizer and colonized, and oppressed and oppressor.

What tends to be overlooked in the literature on race and diaspora are those immigrant communities, like balikbayans, who are able to imagine, in a very real sense, a return to their homeland. Yet, while this return is possible and continuously present, by the very act of settling abroad in the U.S., balikbayans are transformed and are at once, local and foreign to the Philippines. Their status as U.S. citizens provides them with an ambivalently felt recognition amongst Filipinos in the Philippines. Balikbayans no longer simply return to the Philippines, a sentiment made apparent in Ernesto's words: "Coming back here is not like coming home. Things are very different." Their uniqueness of balikbayans is in the manner in which they carry the weight of obligations and indebtedness of the balikbayan economy on their shoulders when they return. In this way, balikbayans are exiled through the transformation of, not only themselves, but the very idea of home and their homeland as well.

Literature Review

Both historical and contemporary patterns of migration between the Philippines and the U.S. provide key insights into the term transnationalism. At the same time however, the circulation of individuals and their families, labor and capital, and more recently, the return of Filipino citizens to their homeland, points to the multiple scales through which transnationalism functions. Whether discussing the day to day connections maintained by individual immigrants with their homeland, the historical ties of U.S. imperialism and colonialism that propelled transnationalism circuits of governance and intellectual thought, or unraveling larger projects of state-led transnationalism, such a wide-range of interconnecting practices and social fields, simply from the Philippine-U.S. context alone, speaks to the larger ongoing critique waged by various scholars who argue that a transnational framework lacks the precision for analyzing migration and immigration.

Basch, Glick Schiller, and Santon Blanc (1996) define it as the "processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multistranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (6). Transnationalism emerged as a way of thinking about migrants and immigrants who are no longer "uprooted" in the diasporic sense but rather, who move back and forth across nation-state borders and continue to maintain clear connections with their homelands through the means of technological and communicative innovations and less expensive travel

(Kearney 1995; Rouse 1991; Vertovec 1999; Levitt 2001). In a profound way, transnationalism transforms notions of “home” from a migration perspective in such a way that “home and host society become a single arena of social action” (Margolis 1995, 29).

During the time of its inception, the scholars that adopted the lens of transnationalism were continually asked to provide a clear definition and framework for its analysis. Consequently, Mahler (2006) attributes much of the criticism pointed towards theories of transnationalism stem from the belief that the term has become a “slippery concept”, while others have argued that the term itself does not illuminate processes that are particularly unique to history.⁵ Guarnizo (1997) attempts to provide clarity to the definition of transnationalism and argues that term should connote a “series of economic, socio-cultural, and political practical and discursive relations that transcend the territorially bound jurisdiction of the nation-state” (9). Here, what becomes crucial is the contribution of transnational thought to articulating the manner in which various migrants have become capable of transcending, in complex ways, the boundaries of nation-state sovereignty. The term “transmigrant” broadly encompasses individuals who *regularly* engages in cross-border activities (England 1999; Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc 1995; Guarnizo 1997).

The question of nation-state sovereignty has compelled another set of scholars to examine the potential for using a framework of transnationalism to make sense of emergent forms of citizenship that extend beyond the demarcations of the nation-state. These discussions stem from the claim posed by a number of scholars who view transnationalism as pointing to the deterritorialization and even actual disintegration of nation-state sovereignty (Appadurai 1996; Gupta 1992; Hannerz 1992). Sassen (1996), for example, employs the formation of export processing zones. As designated areas utilized for the manufacturing or distribution of goods, what makes EPZs unique is that they continue to operate outside of the sovereignty of the nation-state boundaries and each state’s trade regulations. Such zones, characterize for Sassen, the partial deterritorialization of state territory.⁶ Gupta and Ferguson (1992) encapsulate this assertion, claiming that,

We live in a world where identities increasingly come to be, if not wholly deterritorialized, at least differently territorialized. Refugees, migrants displaced and stateless peoples-these are perhaps the first to live these realities in their most complete form (9).

⁵ For an in-depth discussion on the debate of transnationalism as a framework, see Alejandro Portes’ “Introduction: the Debates and Significance of Immigrant Transnationalism”, *Global Networks* 1:3 (July 2001), 181-194. In response such criticisms around “what is new” about transnationalism, Robert Smith (2003) says, “if transnational life existed in the past but was not seen as such, then the transnational lens does the new analytical work of providing a way of seeing what was there that could not be seen before” (725).

⁶ For case-studies examining EPZs throughout the Global South, see María Fernández-Kelly’s *For We are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico’s Frontier* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992) and Kris Old’s (2001) *Globalization and Urban Change: Capital, Culture, and Pacific Rim Mega-Projects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). For a discussion focused on the case of the Philippines, see

Several anthropologists, in particular, view the transcending practices of transnational migrants as undermining “the political dominance exerted by the state and its cultural authority” (Rouse 1995, 358).⁷ Glick Schiller and Fouron (2001), for example, describe long-distance Haitian nationalist who engage in transborder citizenship. Similarly, Smith (2006) provides key examples that convey how transnational ties between Mexican political communities in Ticuani, Mexico and New York in the U.S., have forged powerful means for Mexicans to “fight for recognition and respect” in both Mexico and the U.S. (76).

Perhaps the most ardent proponent of the deterritorialization thesis derives from the theoretical contributions of Aihwa Ong (1999), whose notion of “flexible citizenship” reflects the efforts of scholars to shed-light on the consequences of global capitalism and the decreasing significance of nation-state sovereignty. According to Ong, flexible citizenship captures “the strategies and effects of mobile managers, technocrats, and professionals seeking to both circumvent and benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for investments, work, and family relocation” (1999, 11). For Ong and others, understanding globalization through the framework transnationalism provides a schematic, albeit quite vague, for exploring the ambivalent manner through which specifically capable individuals and multinational corporations operate beyond the regulating control of nation-state laws and economic limits.⁸

These more celebratory discourses around the effects of transnationalism have generated the most debate amongst proponents and critics of transnational theory.⁹ These critiques pointed to yet another major problem confronting transnational studies is in the need to convey the material ways that immigrants operate within a transnational social field, yet continue to be bounded within the larger context of nation-building projects (Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Smith 2001). In line with Smith's conception of transnationalism, Kearney (1995) argues for an examination of transnational social relations that are “'anchored in' while also transcending one or more nation-states” (548).

How then does the framework of transnationalism operate at both the scale of the state and the individual? Is there a way of understanding the simultaneity of nation-state engagement with transnationalism and the strategic role that individuals are playing within these processes? In order to answer these questions, I share Levitt's (2001) view that,

⁷ See also Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis ; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), Michael Kearney's *The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism*, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995), 547-565, and Philip Kelly's *Landscapes of Globalization: Human Geographies of Economic Change in the Philippines* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

⁸ See also Katharyne Mitchell's *Crossing the Neoliberal Line: Pacific Rim Migration and the Metropolis* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

⁹ See, for instance, critiques around the discourse of hybridity in Katharyne Mitchell's (1997) *Different Diasporas and the Hype of Hybridity*, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15:5 (1997), 533 – 553.

Individual actors cannot be viewed in isolation from the transnational social fields in which they are embedded. The economic initiatives, political activities, and socio-cultural enterprises they engage in are powerfully shaped by the social fields in which they occur” (7).

As such, an analysis of transnationalism cannot separate processes that are occurring congruently at both the state and individual scale. In order to make sense of practices that operate at an individual scale, Guarnizo, writing together with M. P. Smith (1998), juxtaposes the everyday practices of individual migrants and immigrants or “transnationalism from below” from larger practices of global governance or what others have called “state-led transnationalism”.

Perceiving transnational migration through a framework of “transnationalism from below” provides a way of shifting structure-centered discourses around globalization away from the often facelessness of the global market, global cities, or the networked society, and onto individuals and communities. Portes et al. (1999), for example, concedes that transnationalism is a valuable tool to analyzing the economic, political, and socio-cultural practices of immigrants, specifically within the context of immigrant businesses that require an ongoing relationship with their homeland.

State-led transnationalism on other hand, characterizes the ways that the state tries to accommodate the transnational movements of its people and the formation of deterritorialized nation-states, by trying to reincorporate its transmigrants into its nation-building projects. Basch et. al. (1994) refers to this type of transnationalism as the “deterritorialized nation-state”; a reconfiguration of the nation-state where “the nation’s people may live anywhere in the world and still not live outside the state” (269).¹⁰ The materialization of this reconfiguration, according to Guevarra (2010), include “encouraging transmigrants to make capital investments in their home countries as ideal places for holiday vacations” (6).

Often, immigrants confront and navigate policies and regulations created by the state but are just as often enabled by the same set of policies and regulations to seek out ways to better themselves and their families. Just as likely, while one’s status as a authorized or unauthorized migrant, or whether a temporary or permanent immigrant, bares clear implications on one’s ability to become empowered by the laws and policies within a particular set of nation-state borders, at the same time various governments view migration as a fundamental source of generating capital and labor. The particular set of economic initiatives and political relationships that emerge from these state interests to perpetuate migration in order to maintain their control over their borders produces the very social fields through which individuals and communities can maintain connections with their homelands and expand their opportunities to feel more fulfilled. Within the Philippine context for instance, Anna Gueverra (2010) argues that the labor brokering institutes, labor migrants, and remittances convey how state-led transnationalism has become “crucial for managing the state’s vulnerability to

¹⁰ See Luis Goldring’s *The Mexican State and Transmigrant Organizations: Negotiating the Boundaries of Membership and Participation*, *Latin American Research Review* 37:3 (2002), 55-99.

economic globalization, specifically in terms of ensuring a profitable strategic positioning in the global economy” (6).

Yet, while Smith and others are careful to explain that their attempt to distinguish between an analytical approach to transnationalism as one from above and transnationalism from below, thereby clearly delineating the line between what others have called “grass-roots transnational politics” from state-led transnationalism, does not preclude a discussion of structural forces, their framework produces another set of conflicts. I will discuss the first now and reserve my discussion on the second problem later. First, the term “below” assigns a specific status to particular groups who are perceived to be exploited and particularly vulnerable to structural forces enabled by globalization and transnationalism. By continuing to reify this term through these particular meanings, a simple, yet problematic, dichotomy between exploiter and exploited becomes the singular way scholars perceive processes of transnationalism. As such, the literature on transnationalism tends to recognize two formations of transnationalism: those that take place through multinational corporations, the production of media technologies, and transnational elites on the one hand and those produced by oppressed and exploited flows of flexible labor on the other.

Mahler (1998) provides a poignant example conveying the problems produced by this oversimplification.

For example, in my own research amidst Salvadorans who fled civil warfare in their country and sought refuge in the United States, I now find quite common the following scenario: A peasant was threatened with death by the United States-financed Salvadoran army and anti-government guerrillas if he refused to be conscripted. Fearing retribution from either group if he joined the other, he fled El Salvador for the United States, leaving the rest of his family behind. In the United States he became an undocumented landscape laborer, working for low wages and sometimes not being paid at all. When this happened he would seek assistance from a local immigrants’ rights agency where he joined others and formed an advocacy group. Over several years, he squeezed out of his earnings enough money to build a new house in his hometown in El Salvador and to buy several acres of land. He now pays two day workers, known as *mozos*, the minimum daily wage to work this land and relieve his wife and children of that burden. The migrant’s remittances finance the education of his children who aspire to become professionals. Meanwhile, the *mozos* can barely feed, let alone educate their children, who in turn, aspire to emigrate to the land of dollars (65).

Mahler’s example illustrates the multiple and intersecting dimensions and agencies produced by modes of transnationalism. She goes on to ask, given her example,

Is the former peasant exploited, exploiter, or both? Can the meta-narrative of United States hegemony over Latin America explain every level of oppression here? If not, and a multiplicity of powerful agents and oppressions is acknowledged, shouldn’t they then be distinguished by magnitude of influence and by relationship to other agents? In short, the dualist vision-colonizer and

colonized, core and periphery, First and Third Worlds-is becoming unacceptable, replaced by a more textured and problematized portrait, but this portrait is nowhere near completion (ibid).

As a means of addressing this problematic, Mahler and others have looked to Grewal and Kaplan's (1994) notion of "scattered hegemonies". Attempting to provide a transnational scope within feminist theories, both authors argue for a more nuanced rearticulation of power relations such that "people in different locations and circumstances are linked by the spread of and resistance to modern capitalist social formations even as their experiences of these phenomena are not at all the same or equal" (5). More simply put, rather than viewing oppression through a singular form of hegemony, both authors argue for view of hegemony as scattered: multiple, overlapping, and discrete.

Within the vernacular, the term balikbayans can include the diverse body of temporary Filipino overseas workers who by the nature of their employment agreements tend to work within highly-flexible labor field and return to the Philippines either to visit their families or re-start the tedious process of searching for work abroad all over again. More often than not however, balikbayans usually connote the sizable presence of Filipinos living and working in North America, Western Europe, or Australia as middle-class citizens inconspicuously residing in the veiled homogeneity of suburban neighborhoods. Rarely are these individuals or families the transnational corporate agents who jet set between countries as a matter of business. More importantly however, within the fantasy of the Philippine nation-state, the conventional balikbayan, are not the exploited bodies of labor sent abroad to work in Europe or the Middle East as domestic labor or construction workers but those fortunate few who are imagined as having achieved the "American Dream" of owning a home and earning a relatively sizeable income. Simply put, depending on one's schematic, balikbayans represent multiple positionalities and to examine them solely through one lens would diminish and in fact, misrecognize the multiple roles they play both in the U.S. and the Philippines.

Migrant Return

Transnational theory helps scholars to not only make sense of the ways in which migrants and immigrants transform the spaces in which they settle and work but through the various forms that return takes, transnationalism provides a means for grappling with the ways in which these same groups are transforming the countries that they have left. Regarding transnationalism, Vertovec (2004) explains that patterns of transnationalism can sometimes lead to social transformation at a much larger scale saying,

While not bringing about substantial societal transformation by themselves, patterns of cross-border exchange and relationship among migrants may contribute significantly to broadening, deepening or intensifying conjoined processes of transformation that are already ongoing (972).

The return migration of Filipino expatriates from the U.S. is a singular component within the broader social field produced by Filipino transnationalism and the historical linkage between the Philippines and the U.S. The massive transformation of Manila's landscape and production of real estate, focused on capturing the economic investment of Filipinos living abroad, throughout the city and its peripheries have had an indelible effect on the social life of Filipinos in the Philippines.

Most scholars who examine return migration tend to explain the phenomenon primarily as a response to various economic pressures, whereby return is the final phase within the migration process. Within this frame, periodic visits and other types of temporary stays are viewed as being separate from the phenomenon of return migration. Battistella (2004) provides a typology for one category of return migration. The first type includes those repatriations that are voluntary and suggests that the migrant's objectives had been achieved. With the second type, various negative conditions (e.g. intolerable working conditions, changes in motivation or aspirations, or family issues) are the determining factor for the migrant's return regardless of whether or not their goals were met. The third typology is closely related to the first in that the migrant's contract allowing the migrant to work abroad had ended and thus regardless of whether or not the migrant desired to stay longer, the completion of their contract was the determining factor for the migrant's return. The final type involves direct crises, such as deportation, health or legal reasons, war.¹¹

Such rationalistic typologies, which heavily steeped in a neoclassical view of migration, tend to privilege economic factors and motivations. At the same time, they do little to provide a more nuanced and complex view of return migration and factors, which often intersect with and are just as significant as factors of economic concern. These factors include the pull of ethnic ties to ancestral homelands, a nostalgic desire to rediscover ethnic roots, and the efforts of homeland governments to actively encourage their diasporic descendants living abroad to return "home" through preferential immigration and nationality policies are integral to propelling return.

Gmelch (1980), one of the first scholars to attempt to closely examine return migration, confronts these complexities by drawing a basic distinction between emigrants who intend their departure to be permanent and those who intend it to be temporary. The author points out that most studies indicate that strong family ties, rather than economic factors, one's failure to achieve financial success, are the major incentive for return. From a more local context, Carol Stack provides one example for Gmelch's perspective. Stack (1996) writes about African Americans who returned to their rural homes in the U.S. South. She explains that return migration, or in this case return internal migration, for African Americans, is a

¹¹ For an in depth comparative discussion on these typologies written from a neoclassical perspective, see Rosemarie Rogers' chapter "Return Migration in Comparative Perspectives" in Kubat, Daniel's (ed.) *The Politics of Return* (Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies, 1984) pp. 277-99.

composite of various intersecting components that have little to do with economic rationale. For her, reasons for return migration include,

A powerful blend of motives; bad times back home can pull as well as push. People feel an obligation to help their kind or even a sense of mission to redeem a lost community....or simply a breathing space, a refuge from the maelstrom (1996, xv).

While written from a U.S. perspective, the complexity and ambivalence around concepts of “home” exuded within Stack’s work continues to function as a focal point within the broader literature around return migration.

Return can also be part of the initial migration strategy, albeit frequently postponed. Thus the concept of sojourner has been introduced as a distinct type of migrant. For example, Margolis (1995) notes that Brazilians in the U.S. see themselves as sojourners, target earners who are motivated “by the desire to save money to meet some specific goal back home-buy a house or apartment, a car or telephone, start business, or perhaps return to school” (31). Similarly, Mizukami (2007) claims that the temporal and more sojourner condition has predominated Japanese migration to Australia since the 1960s where it is often the case that Japanese immigrants who migrate to Australia never envisioned their stay to be permanent and in fact return to Japan after their labor contracts are completed.

The question of settler or sojourner is part of a literature on migration ideology that dates back to Philpott’s (1973) research on West Indian migration. In the Portuguese case for instance, Brettell (2003) provides an ethnographic study of the culturally embedded concept of *saudade* or nostalgia for the homeland. Various manifestations of nostalgia, a sentiment that often imbricates with notions of “home”, is continuously brought up within return migration literature, particularly in the fields of Anthropology and Comparative Literature. Espiritu (2003), writing in the context of Filipino Americans in California, views nostalgia as a major component within contemporary modes of transnationalism. She views nostalgia as the primary vehicle for modes of return saying, “I would argue that all immigrants-regardless of class-can and do ‘return home’ through the imagination” (11).

Because of the nature of return migration, several scholars examine the impact of out-migration on those left behind and the reintegration of those who have return after many years abroad. Mandel (1989, 1990) describes the pain and disorientation characteristic of adolescent Turkish returnees, and in another essay she alludes to the creation of a new ethnic category for Turks who have repatriated-*Alamanyali* or the “Germanlike”. Tsuda (2009) refers to this second group of return migrants as ethnic return migrants or the “later-generation descendants of diasporic peoples who ‘return to their countries of ancestral origin after living outside their ethnic homelands for generations (1).

Despite the relatively large number of ethnic return migrants around the world, the topic has not received much attention in migration studies. Usually referred to in the literature as ethnic affinity migration, most research as dealt with

Jewish and ethnic German return.¹² There have been a handful of scholars who have dealt with ethnic return migration, however Tsuda suggests that there is yet to be a general comparative analytical framework that has been introduced to convey the nuances of the this particular migration flow.¹³

Balikbayans are a hybrid of these categories and their reasons for returning to the Philippines are often an intermingling of what makes sense economically together with a desire to take care of family members in the Philippines as well as a deeper longing and nostalgia to re-experience the Philippines of their childhood. This dissertation also introduces the effort made by the Philippines state to encourage Filipinos living abroad to return to their ethnic homeland. Yet, while many balikbayans feel a nostalgic affiliation to their homeland, they are essentially returning to a foreign country from which their ancestors came.

For this reason, Tsuda (2009) employs the term “diasporic homecomings” reintroduces the notion of diaspora into the literature of return migration. The use of the term diaspora helps to highlight the

Often ambivalent, if not negative experiences for many ethnic return migrants. Despite initial expectation that their presumed ethnic affinity with the host society (as ‘co-ethnics’) would facilitate their social integration, they are often ethnically excluded as foreigners in their ancestral homelands because of the alien cultural differences they have acquired while living abroad for generations (3-4).

Like the case of balikbayans, Markowitz and Stefansson (2004) provide several examples characterizing the ambivalence experienced by first-generation return migrants who are fraught with problems and rarely experience a smooth reintegration when returning to their homeland. Similarly, Andrea Smith (2003) introduces the experiences of refugees who returned to Europe after the collapse of French, Portuguese, and Dutch colonial governments precipitating waves of return migration to Europe. Her discussion of “invisible migrants” functions as a way of complicating the “choice” often assumed to be attached with patterns of return migration.

Linking Filipino Studies to Filipino American Studies

¹² See, for instance, Rainer Münz and Rainer Ohliger’s *Diasporas and Ethnic Migrants: German, Israel, and Post-Soviet Successor States in Comparative Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2003) and Larissa Remennick’s (2009) “Former Soviet Jews in Their New/Old Homeland: Between Integration and Separatism” in Takeyuni Tsuda (ed.) *Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 208-226.

¹³ See Andrea Louie’s *Chineseness Across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), Joshua Hotaka Roth’s *Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), and and Takeyuki Tsuda’s *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Return Migration in Transnational Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

Since the publishing of Fred Cordova's *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans in* 1983, there has been a proliferation of studies on Filipinos in the U.S. written to contest what Matthew Frye Jacobson calls "imperial amnesia" or the "arts of amnesia and the extraordinary ingenuity with which Americans have been able to forget their imperial past (and so to absolve their imperialist present)" (1999, 117).¹⁴ By historically situating the linkage between the U.S. and the Philippines within the epoch of U.S. imperialism, this set of literature is the first serious attempt to conjoin together two otherwise separate yet concurrent social fields: that of Filipinos in the Philippines and those in the U.S.

Cordova's pictorial essay depicting the lives of Filipinos in the U.S. since some of their earliest settlements in Louisiana by way of Spanish galleons traveling between Mexico and Spain in 1763 set the tone for early Filipino American scholarship. These writers, mainly historians and sociologists, located themselves within the emergent field of Asian American Studies and from there explored the trajectory of migration and labor from the Philippines into the U.S. A small handful of these early scholars not only sifted through historical archives and public records to chart these migrations and the spaces they produced but also took it upon themselves to create curriculum for the study of Filipino Americans, which did not previously exist.¹⁵

The groundwork had been arduously laid by these pioneering scholars opening up the way for an onrush of an entire generation of not only scholars but poets, artists, and thinkers, many of whom were the children of Filipino immigrants. Emerging within the milieu of U.S. multiculturalism and steeped in postcolonial theory, this generation sought to complicate the goal of Filipino American scholarship. Their work was focused on interrogating what Oscar V. Campomanes called the "spectre of invisibility" casted onto Filipinos through the continual neglect of the larger U.S. historiography to account for the epoch of American conquest in the Philippines.¹⁶ In conveying the purpose of his edited volume, Tiongson (2006) indirectly explains the larger shift within Filipino Studies in another way, saying,

¹⁴ Jacobson's article on the manner in which Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) series on American Presidents failed to acknowledge Theodore Roosevelt's central role in the conquest of the Philippines during the U.S.-Philippine war is small contribution to a much larger body of work that brings to light the colonization of the Philippines as an attempt to provide the U.S. a strategic trade position with countries in Asia. See Julian Go and Anne L. Foster, eds., *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Sharon Delmendo, *The Star-Entangled Banner: One Hundred Years of America in the Philippines* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004). Americanist scholars of U.S. imperialism who focus on gender as a mode of analysis include Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹⁵ See as a few examples, Jonathan Y. Okamura's *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora: Transnational Relations, Identities, and Communities* (New York: Garland Pub., 1998) and Barbara M. Posadas' *The Filipino Americans* (Wesport: Greenwood Press, 1999).

¹⁶ Campomanes was one of the first Filipino scholars to critique "the repetitious and unreflective use of the modifier 'forgotten' to describe, even renew, this curse of invisibility" within early Filipino Americanist literature. What he calls the "spectre of invisibility" refers to need to perpetuate the invisibility of the Philippines specifically within U.S. historiography primarily because "the annexation of the Philippines proved to be constitutionally and culturally problematic for American

This volume...aims to more than just fill a gap, that is, to compensate for the dearth of scholarship on Filipinos, which usually takes the form of uncovering Filipino 'accomplishments' or, just as problematic and insidious, documenting Filipino 'firsts'...Instead it aims to engage in the more difficult but necessary task of delineating the contours of what it means to exhaustively account for the specificities of Filipinos (6).

Simply put, rather than taking for granted the invisibility of Filipinos in the U.S., this generation of scholarship focused their analysis on demonstrating, in very clear ways, how a set of policies and legislature constructed during the U.S. colonial period precipitated the various forms of invisibility that Filipinos experience within the U.S. today.¹⁷

Around the same time, the literature on transnationalism became instrumental in reframing the intersecting field of immigration studies. Transnationalism moved the discourse on immigration away from a nation-centered analysis. The notion of place as a localized and bounded space was also called into question. Scholars began attempting to examine the social field of immigrants as being simultaneously connected to their homeland and sought to complicate stable notions of "home", which many felt perpetuated myths about linear assimilation on the one hand and immigrant foreignness on the other.

In the context of Filipino American Studies, the framework of transnationalism has facilitated an understanding of how the history of U.S. imperialism continually affects the experiences of generations of Filipinos in the U.S. and how global processes and memory ties them back to the Philippines (Espiritu 2003). Historians such as Catherine Ceniza Choy (2003; 2005), Dorothy Fujita-Rony (2003), and Augusto Espiritu (2005) employed a theoretical framework of transnationalism in order to convey the historical role that Philippine labor and the production of Philippine intellectuals played in expanding the U.S.'s economic presence throughout Asia.

Yet, apart from the historical literature focused on U.S. imperialism between both countries, there remains, only a handful of texts examining the ongoing

political and civil society around the turn of the century and thereafter". See Oscar V. Campomanes' chapter "Filipinos in the United States and Their Literature of Exile" in Lum, Shirley Geok-lin and Ling, Amy's (eds.) *Reading the Literatures of Asian America* (Philadelphia: University of Temple Press, 1992).

¹⁷ Along with Cordova, another scholar who employed the term "forgotten" onto Filipino Americans was Ronaldo Takaki, whose chapter on early Filipino migrations had a been the primary text for understanding the immigration history of Filipinos in the U.S. for over a generation. See Takaki's *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company). For a systematic critique of the invisibility narrative, see Mae Ngai's text *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) for a discussion the legislative history constituting Filipinos as undesirable labor and Victor Bascara's *Model-Minority Imperialism* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2006) for an equally nuanced discussion on how Filipino Americans embody the limits and contradictions of U.S. citizenship from a comparative literature analysis.

connection between Filipinos in the U.S. and those in the Philippines.¹⁸ More specifically, scholars conducting research on contemporary Filipino American issues tend not to examine the linkage, if any, between Filipinos in the U.S. with those in their homeland, much less conduct a portion of their research in the Philippines. There continues to be a deep schism between Filipino and Filipino American Studies. Within the context of this schism, Tiongson's ideas around the "specificities of Filipinos" becomes all the more complicated. While the interdisciplinary fields of Ethnic and Asian American Studies have provided the very tools for Filipino American Studies to move away from problematic narratives around immigration and assimilation, framing Filipino Americans solely through the discourse around U.S. imperialism and contemporary forms of U.S. Empire, ignores the "repeated turning" Filipinos in the U.S. make towards their homeland or the homeland of their ancestry. Within the purview of U.S. imperialism, powerful connections are forged between the histories of Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders and Filipinos, yet it limits, in a very material way, how scholars can begin to understand the ongoing and daily connection that Filipinos maintain with their families and communities in their homeland and the actual role that they play within the larger political-economy of the Philippines.

My notion of the balikbayan economy is one attempt to convey the material and contemporary link between both Filipino and Filipino American Studies. To be clear, this project does not steer away from an analysis of U.S. imperialism. Rather, it provides a way of understanding the trajectory of Filipino Americans alongside U.S. imperialism without constraining their subject formation solely through its constitutive lens. It allows Filipino Americans to be understood alongside the context of their family, communities, and larger politics of Philippine history.

Because these interweaving complexities simultaneously function on global and local levels, when studying the racial formation of Filipinos between nations, such a phenomenon requires an analysis that, as Paul Kramer (2006) argues, slides-scales. In order to comprehend the positionality of Filipinos within this transnational circulation, one cannot follow a linear chronology which began in 1898 and stop at the present. Nor can one simply peer back at the Philippines from

¹⁸ From a historical perspective, Vicente Rafael's text *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000) and his attempt to chronicle the ongoing presence of the U.S. in the Philippines through the production of various postcolonial subjectivities is seminal. Two contemporary texts have dealt with transnationalism in Filipino American scholarship in innovative ways. Martin Manalansan's *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) explores the transnational construction of gay identities amongst Filipinos living in New York. He examines the various ways Filipino gay *swardspeak* or Tagalog-English code-switching became integral to producing a space of affinity between gay Filipinos in New York or continually confronted discrimination from multiple sides: homophobia and nativism. In a similar vein, Emily Ignacio's *Building Diaspora: Filipino community Formation on the Internet* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2004) critiques and expands traditional notions around "the nation" and "homeland" by describing the different ways Filipinos both in the Philippines and in the U.S. form communities through different internet technologies. One of the best examples however of contemporary transnational research linking the U.S. and the Philippines together is Guevarra's *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2010).

inside of the perspective of America or vice-versa. The notion of sliding-scales establishes connections and articulating divergences between an array of literature written from corresponding and competing positionalities, within the U.S., the Philippines, and throughout. Kramer's study on the "transnational politics of race" is one example alluding to the attention one must pay to shifting-scales and move one's frame of reference from the "familiar" to the "unfamiliar."

II. Research Questions and Methodology

Unveiling the Invisible: Ethnography of the Transnational

In order to explore how globalization is forging transnational connections and producing new urban spaces, I will employ two major cases studies: (1) the settlement of post-1965 Filipino immigration into suburban neighborhoods in Daly City, California and (2) the repatriation of these immigrants back into emerging suburban neighborhoods in Metro Manila, Philippines. I will attempt to capture these transnational processes by describing the material affects of these circulations onto the landscape, built-environment, and politics within each of these places.

Furthermore, the framework of transnational urbanism attempts: (1) to move away from a global versus local binary; and (2) emphasize the particular role played by individuals and groups composing these transnational flows. Therefore, the second component to my study, is interviewing individuals who are key to creating and reproducing what these places "mean", specifically those who are buying and selling property in these particular locales. I will be examining the ideals and practices of property ownership created and maintained by Filipino realtors and their clients both in the U.S. and in the Philippines, as well as their clients.

I began preliminary field research in the U.S. during 2007-8 during my first year as a fellow at UC Berkeley's Institute for the Study of Social Change. There I collected data and set-up primary contacts as a way of preparing for my yearlong fieldwork in both cities. I examined Census data from 1972-2006 in order to create a picture of: (1) Filipino realtors in comparison to other realtors working in both cities; as well as Filipino homeowners in both cities.

Following an enumeration of all major organizations dealing with real estate in these areas (using public directories and on-line resources), I approached individuals affiliated with these agencies. I also recruited subjects from open houses being hosted in both cities. Other publicly available lists that contained contact information for potential respondents included organizational directories of Filipino organizations, balikbayan services, newspapers, and Internet websites.

These in-depth interviews became the fulcrum of my research since I was attempting to capture how particular practices of transnational circulation are "anchored in" particular places. The subjects were contacted through referrals with earlier subjects. This snowball technique was used with both real estate agents and their clients.

I conducted 32 in-depth interviews of realtors (14) and their clients (18) in the fall of 2008. All but two of the realtors were men. However, the gender

breakdown of Filipino homebuyers and homeowners was equally proportioned between 9 men and 9 women. Almost all of my interviewees identified as first generation Filipinos who had migrated to the U.S. between 1965 and 1985. As such, all of the respondents were between the ages of 45 and 63. The period from 1965 and 1985 would witness one of the most dramatic shifts in demographics created by immigration ever experienced in the U.S. Due to the raising of quotas set on immigration from the Philippines from 100 to 20,000, from 1966 to 1975, 114,107 Filipinos immigrated to the U.S. During this same period, approximately 300,000 Filipinos relocated into the U.S. after the Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law in the Philippines in 1972.

This shift had not only turned a once predominantly male configuration of Filipino migrants into a predominantly female one due to the gendered transformation of global labor migration into the U.S. but the socioeconomic background of Filipinos in the U.S. became extremely heterogeneous. Many of the migrants arriving after 1965 were skilled, educated, and as such were capable of amassing an income that, together with other Filipinos, was statistically higher than the average American. As such, all of the participants that I interviewed identified as “upper middleclass” or “middleclass”. All of the respondents were also working professionals, who were either employed in fields such as nursing and engineering as soon as they arrived to the U.S. or had the education or familial support to find a foothold into those and other high skilled professions.

I located my respondents using a snowball method beginning with a random search of Filipino realtors listed in the yellow pages and on realty websites. After conducting in-depth interviews with the realtors I had sampled, I identified Filipino homebuyers to interview by asking the realtors for a list of clients they had sold homes to or by meeting clients during my participant observations of open houses. The majority of the respondents came to the U.S. as working adults, who were married and had children before they migrated. Only three of the respondents came to the U.S. as adolescents and, unlike those who arrived as adults, they emphasized the involuntariness of their migration. Often when asked to describe their reasons for coming to the U.S. they expressed sadness for having left friends and family in the Philippines and ambivalence with regard to their integration in the U.S. Those who migrated as adults also conveyed a sense of ambivalence about migrating to the U.S., but their intentions and goals were much clearer. They often expressed the desire to find stable work to help raise their children and to obtain opportunities that were not available to them in the Philippines.

I began preliminary field research in the Philippines during the summer of 2008. There I conducted a rudimentary survey of real estate agencies and developments throughout the area. Because I am making a different argument regarding the transformation of Philippine society, I began surveying the growth of real estate developments throughout Metro Manila. This will later be juxtaposed against other commercial and retail developments that will help me to make another argument about the particular “Americanization” of the Philippine landscape. I also began collecting and creating contacts of real estate agents who I might interview during my extended fieldwork in the Philippines. Depending on the

financial support I receive from UC Berkeley or other fellowships, I intend on living in and doing research in Metro Manila for 9-12 months.

Similar to the methods that I will employ in the U.S., I will also enumerate all major organizations dealing with real estate in Metro Manila (using public directories and on-line resources). Other publicly available lists that contain contact information for potential respondents include organizational directories of state agencies, balikbayan services, newspapers, and Internet websites. I will then approach individuals affiliated with these organizations. The client research subjects for in-depth interviews will be contacted through referrals with earlier subjects. This snowball technique will again be used with both real estate agents and their clients.

I conducted 42 in-depth interviews, 20 of which were individuals working either as executives or agents in the Philippine real estate industry or employees within the PRA. Each of the real estate corporations that were represented in the interviews were major corporations that were composed of several divisions, for which land and property was just one. The composition of real estate corporations varied in size, however all either had satellite offices or worked as independently contracted agents in other countries or included traveling showrooms in North America and Western Europe at the very least.

The remaining 22 interviewees were Filipino Americans who, having lived in the U.S. for more than 30 years, purchased property in the Philippines with the intent of either retiring there immediately or sometime in the near future. All of them also chose to reside outside of the metropolitan area and chose instead to live in outlying provinces. None of the interviewees were interested in living in condominiums, although three of them chose to purchase condominiums as investments, which they had been or planned to rent out. All of the interviewees have or were in the process of building homes on lots that they had purchased.

III. Structure of the Dissertation

There are two main parts of the dissertation: The first focuses on the transnational social field between Daly City and Metro Manila primarily through the lens of real estate ownership and development and through the businesses in both these areas. The second part features the physical migrant return to the Philippines through tourism and retirement, and how this migrant return to the Philippines shapes the built environment of Metro Manila.

Chapter 1 explains how the veil shrouded over Daly City, covering a little over a third of its residents, functions to conceal the transnational landscape connecting Filipinos with the Philippines. I argue instead that the particular settlement of post-1965 immigrants in Daly City is less concerned with creating a permanent identity and “home” in their post-war suburban neighborhood than maintaining a clear connection to both their immediate families in the U.S. and more importantly those family members that remain in the Philippines. Rather than perceiving Daly City as a Filipino enclave and thriving community of a closely-knit network of Filipinos, I argue that Daly City is a diasporic space created by a

particular group of migrants who always saw themselves as being able to return to the Philippines.¹⁹

The following chapter on Transnational Real Estate focuses on the emergence of the transnational circulation of real estate development capital that has emerged from it. The first section of this chapter introduces a concept I am referring to as the Balikbayan economy, both the historical and ongoing accumulation of capital created by the State's investment in the circulation of outsourced skilled and unskilled labor away from the Philippines. The other element for which this chapter will examine is the production of a set of subjectivities constituted through the transnational processes circulating between real estate agents and brokers operating between the U.S. and the Philippines.

In Chapter 3, I examine the role of balikbayans, specifically those Filipinos who return after living in the U.S. for several decades, in the economic development of the Philippines. It begins by providing a brief outline of the contemporary history of tourism development in the Philippines beginning with the Marcos administration up until the current period when tourism development strategies shifted towards exploiting the roles of balikbayans more forcefully. By transforming repatriating Filipinos into "retirees", balikbayans see themselves as patrons of the state who, through decades of overseas labor, patronage, and performing their duties to the Philippines, are entitled to enjoy various luxuries that they could not partake in the U.S.

This chapter also examines the production of subjectivities through which returning Filipinos uneasily straddle the interstitial space between their new and former lives as they make the choice to repatriate into Philippine society. The construction of nostalgic space constituted within various tourism and retirement projects conveys techniques which seek to attenuate a commonly felt balikbayan paranoia often exhibited by returning Filipinos who are overwhelmed by fears of crime and insecurity in the Philippines. I argue that this complexly felt and ambivalently experienced type of anxiety represents the major hurdle through which the Department of Tourism, and its intertwining partners, is actively confronting while developing strategies to entice Filipinos to return and ultimately repatriate back to their homeland.

The following chapter explores, the process through which the tourism industry has conjoined itself with the retirement and medical industries to provide balikbayans with a solution to their incessant anxiety around returning and settling back home in the Philippines. Retirement villages, therefore, represent the contemporary amalgamation of these diverse intersections. Adopting Ong's conception of "neoliberalism as exception", I describe how these "zones" operate

¹⁹ Parreñas and Siu, for example, consider the importance of studying diasporic communities within the contemporary context of globalization and transnationalism by emphasizing their ongoing connectedness with their homeland. Rather than viewing diasporic communities as permanent exiles, they emphasize the "everyday practices of sociality, collective memory, economic exchange, and the work of cultural imagination and production, to name a few" that continue to tie these communities with their homeland. See Rhacel Parreñas and Lok Siu's *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New Conceptions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

outside of the norms of local governance through the legal privileges they are afforded in order to provide to their guests with an abundance of unique luxuries.

Finally, the chapter on balikbayan urbanism examines the ambivalence that Filipinos feel about returning to the Philippines and whether or not these returnees desire to remain in the Philippines and the implication and future considerations of these trends. The major question that this concluding chapter would like to answer is: to what extent are contemporary transformations within the broader landscape and economy of the Philippines drawing Filipino Americans back to the Philippines and providing an incentive to these Balikbayans to actually stay and live in the Philippines.

Chapter 1

The Veiled City

Daly City and the Transnational Filipino Landscape

Chapter 1

“Can we imagine the U.S. as an extension of the Philippines?”

- Catherine Ceniza Choy (2005, 94)

“How does the fog of this American suburb apparently conceal – and why this concealment of the lives of people who comprise a third of its residents?”

- Benito Vergara (2009, 45)

Pointing to a tiny restaurant, nestled inconspicuously beside a local florist, Armando slows his car down and asks, “Do you see that place there? Our friends own that place...yeah that little place is owned by our friends from Batangas. We migrated here, together, around the same time because we both had family here.” The restaurant simply called “Filipino Cuisine”, the word “cuisine” printed in italics, was paradigmatic of most of the Filipino stores and restaurants around Daly City, particularly in the older part of town. Specializing in inexpensive Filipino barbecue, the inconspicuous Filipino restaurant’s sign was hidden amongst various other signs scattered around it. Wash & Dry, Senor Pedro International Market, Sigue Corp., together obstructed the small green-sign printed with the words Filipino Cuisine on the side of the restaurant facing the street.

As the car stopped in front of the restaurant, I asked Armando if the restaurant’s discrete appearance hurts their business. “Are you kidding me? The owner’s family has five restaurants in the Philippines. Filipinos visit (from the Philippines) here to eat and say hi,” Armando roars out in laughter. The abrasive jerk from the swinging of his car door opening towards the street causes the rosary dangling from his rearview mirror to sway side-to-side. “They don’t really care if they don’t get too much business here,” Armando says glibly and then jests, “C’mon, didn’t you know that we’re in the Philippines”. Armando’s sarcasm rings loudly as if to say, “This restaurant doesn’t need American clientele, just Filipinos”.

As one minor hub within a larger transnational network of restaurants spanning between the Daly City and Southern Luzon, one can finally imagine how Filipino Cuisine and the stream of Filipino visitors coming to eat there, represent how, as Catherine Ceniza Choy suggests, the U.S. is an extension of the Philippines. Likewise, one might begin to see how all of Daly City and the generation of post-1965 Filipino immigrants living there see themselves as residing in another part of the Philippines and how their everyday lives bespeak the transnational ties linking them to their homeland causing them to look back.

The Veil Over Daly City

Like most suburbs, located between the thriving metropolis of San Francisco to its north and the still booming technological sector of Silicon Valley just south of it, Daly City functions as a transnational zone for a great deal of Filipino families. Many of these families have chosen to settle within its relatively placid confines, which lies just outside of the cities where many of Daly City's population works. Yet, while the city's Filipino community comprise the largest concentration of Filipinos in any city in the continental U.S., there are surprisingly few traces demarcating the suburb as a distinctly Filipino space.

While walking through the city, one cannot help but feel overwhelmed by the sense of being nowhere and everywhere at the same time.²⁰ Panning around the uneven topography of Daly City from Mission Street's viewpoint neighborhood on "top of the hill" gives way to a panorama of these "tiny boxes", a prosaic backdrop of bungalow homes and townhouses, spreading across each of the city's two most distinct hillsides. Dotted by businesses, social services, and retail centers, the majority of the city's suburban landscape is composed of seemingly endless strings of track homes.

The syncopated repetition of its architecture, in particular, is characteristic of what has come to be known as the prototypically drab post-war suburban sprawl. Demarcated into nine distinct neighborhoods, the immediate borders of Daly City are edged by South San Francisco to its north and Colma, or the "city of the silent", just below it.²¹ The rather mundane urban life of Daly City lies in marked contrast to the bustling and congested environment of Quezon City in Manila, its "sister city". While Quezon City, the former-capital of the Philippines (1948-1976), was originally planned to become a kind of suburban escape from the urban happenings within Manila City during the 1940s like Daly City, it had since veered in another direction, being completely enveloped in the colossal urban milieu of the National Capital Region (Caoili 1988).

Quezon City has also become the legislative hub of the Philippines, housing the Batasang Pambansa or the Philippine House of Representatives, and became the location for a litany of schools, namely the two most distinguished universities in the country: the University of the Philippines-Diliman and Ateneo de Manila University. Daly City, on the other hand, while incorporated in 1911, twenty-eight years before Quezon City became a formal municipality of Metro Manila, was never meant to nor will ever be the focal point of California politics and much less the rest

²⁰ James Howard Kunstler describes the historical process of urban sprawl which he believes destroyed "such age old social arrangements as the distinction between city life and country life" and dissolved the landscape around communities like Daly City into a "geography of nowhere"; a space that had "ceased to be a credible human habitat". Although his polemical take on the historical pattern of suburban development in the U.S. tends to overshadow the unique and vibrant contributions that various communities have made within the suburban landscape, one cannot easily dismiss the characteristic images he paints: the car-centric universe of tract homes, extended parking lots, strip malls and superhighways, all of which he uses to describe an ever shrinking social sphere that is becoming more and more individualized, homogenized, and downright dull. See Kunstler, J. H., *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

²¹ Colma's distinction as having more dead residents than living ones is due to the dedication of its land to cemeteries.

of the U.S. Daly City emerged as a refuge and alternative to San Francisco and remains that way in many ways. Originally, the city was built as temporary housing for urban refugees who were seeking places to live after the disastrous 1906 San Francisco earthquake and the subsequent fire that engulfed much of the city. Lacking any kind of political significance or manufacturing prowess, Daly City's economy had always been peripheral compared to the economy of its neighbor to the north and was relegated to producing primarily dairy, cabbage, and pig farming.

Indeed, the very decision to break away from San Francisco and become incorporated conveys how Daly City's civic leaders and community members' resentment towards being relegated within the overpowering shadow of San Francisco's economy and politics. Displaced internal migrants from San Francisco, having adjusted themselves to life in the expanding dairy community, began fearing that the city would be continually deprived of social services and passed-over by the political happenings in the much larger San Francisco. As such, community leaders voted for the town to become incorporated into San Mateo County. Unlike the sweeping influences within Quezon City, which dictate in many ways the future of the larger country, Daly City plays a relatively insignificant role within the U.S. and only a supporting role as a "bedroom community" to San Francisco. As a consequence, with few industries operating within Daly City, the majority of its residents tend to work outside of the city.

This spatial division of labor within San Mateo County's economy is vividly reflected in the geography of the city. On foot, walking the Daly City becomes a daunting task with all of its winding roads and abrupt inclines. Perhaps in this singular way, the sheer inability to walk the city, does Daly City mirror Quezon City. Except where visitors are forced to compete with congestion created by unplanned neighborhoods, armies of buses and jeepneys, and daily commuters traveling by taxi or tricycles in Quezon City, one is beset with the challenge of navigating through the expansive open-spaces of Daly City. This openness was created by purposefully planned tract-neighborhoods, which are set far apart from business districts and major thoroughfares. The disconnectedness of the city's suburban design and apparent invisibility of its residents along Daly City's residential sidewalks leads Vergara (2009) to exclaim that, "One hardly sees anyone walking on the sidewalks because, one realizes, there is no place to walk to" (31). By car, one might sense that the topical terrain of the city is at odds with the distinctly suburban grid through which the city was designed. Subsequently, the sometimes illogic mapping of Daly City forces drivers to pay close attention for inconspicuous markers that might reveal their location.

The distinct familiarity brought on by the suburban landscape allows both visitors and residents within this geography of nowhere come to feel like they could be anywhere in the U.S. Particularly within the relatively newer neighborhoods of Daly City, the perfectly graded streets, regulated front yards, and matching color schemes, evokes suburban design that typifies the class ideals of postwar suburbanism.²² The homogeneity exuded from Daly City functions as yet another

²² This ideal landscape is based on pertuated a suburban model constructed in the U.S. beginning in the late nineteenth and perfected during the course of the twentieth century. Those landscapes con-

layer casted upon its residents, confining individuality and class distinction into a “look-alike, think-alike instant suburb” (Chandler 1973, 107). The production of this type of space serves to reflect a particular symbolic economy within its residents and conveys a sense (albeit entirely false) of financial security, a peace of mind, and perhaps most importantly, a visual sense of social equality. Ironically, the very attention exerted to concealing distinctions of Daly City’s residents through the design and architecture of many of the city’s kitschy and quirky suburban neighborhoods, producing in the end, vistas of “ticky tacky boxes”²³ along the city’s surrounding hillsides, has actually distinguished Daly City as a preeminent example of American postwar suburban culture (Keil 2006).

How then does one contend with uncovering the palimpsest of layers that veil, as Benito Vergara suggests, “the lives of people who comprise a third of its residents?” And more importantly, what function, if any, does this veil, the “fog” Daly City, play for the Filipinos, a clearly heterogeneous and unique group of immigrants to the U.S., who inhabit its particularly homogenized and indistinctly constructed spaces? While Filipino American scholars like Benito Vergara and James Sobredo, as well as various media journals, are quick to point-out the city’s label as the “New Filipinotown”, “Little Manila”, or even the “Capital” of Filipino Americans in the U.S.,²⁴ there are few ethnic markings that distinguish Daly City as a particularly Filipino ethnoburb²⁵ and conveys the city’s large concentration of Filipinos. Particularly when one compares the concentration of remnants and markings of Filipino American history and urbanism spread throughout the South of Market District in San Francisco, the presence of Filipinos in Daly City, like the city itself, remains reticent to reveal itself. Filipino businesses and restaurants are speckled throughout the city. Their placement lacks a coherent rationale or economic center characteristic of what one would expect to see in traditional ethnic enclaves or even

tained a very specific social organization and population of white working-class Americans who would later identify themselves as middle-class based on the exclusion of non-white communities and other communities that did not conform to hetero-normative standards such as the so-called nuclear family. See Jackson, K. T., *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

²³ Ticky-tacky, a phrase denoting sleazy or shoddy material used especially in the construction of look-alike tract houses, actually derived from the lyrics of the folk song “Little Boxes” written by Malvina Reynolds in 1962 after driving past Daly City and seeing the series of tract homes covering the hills from the freeway.

²⁴ Ethnic newspapers and magazines, particularly *Asian Week* and *Filipinas*, have been quick to identify Daly City as the “home” for Filipino immigrants and their families living outside of the Philippines. And while none of the Filipino interviewees that I had interviewed in the Philippines had heard about Daly City, some journalists in the Philippines have singled-out the city as a potential locale for overseas investment. See (Macabenta 2000).

²⁵ Wei Li, who has written several articles on the City, operationalized a theory for ethnic suburban enclaves, arguing that the ethnoburb framework “illuminates the complex coalescence of global and local, economic and political, individual and institutional, urban and suburban forces that led to the intricacies of negotiating life and future prospects for this multiethnic suburban place” (1998, 3-4). See (Li 1998).

within newer forms of contemporary suburban ethnic enclaves like Monterrey Park, California.²⁶

Regardless of that significant number of Filipinos in Daly City, nor in any of the Filipino suburbs that lie around the larger Bay Area, the history and community formation of most Filipinos continues to be shrouded beneath the veil, far away from the consciousness of most of the Americans who live around them. Given the fact that Filipinos only began settling in larger numbers during the 1980s, it makes sense that within the entire history of Daly City written by Samuel Chandler and published in 1973 there remains not one singular trace of the Filipino community in his historiography. More confounding is the erasure of the Filipino community in the recently published pictorial history of Daly City compiled by the official historian of the city Bunny Gillespie, alongside her husband Ken Gillespie, in 2003 when Filipinos had already comprised one-third of the population.²⁷ Furthermore, regardless of the fact that the Mayor of Daly City Michael P. Guingona is even descended from Filipino parents and often hosts various Filipino shows on The Filipino Channel (TFC), neither Daly City's website nor its page for City Hall conveys any trace of the ethnic community who comprises the majority of its residents. When visiting both the Serramonte Main Library and the Westlake Branch, I was startled to discover that each library lacked a section for either Filipinos or Filipino Americans. When I asked the librarians for resources on the Filipino community in Daly City, each one was at a loss and provided me with little direction.

Invisibility has often been understood and utilized in Filipino American literature as a theme that conveys the negative consequence of imperialist amnesia and cultural aphasia projected onto the history of Filipinos in the U.S. One could interpret the lack of attention paid on the Filipino community in Daly City as yet another example of this disavowal. On the other hand, one might interpret this invisibility as a kind of veil, screening and shielding immigrants, like Filipinos, from the scrutiny created by the intersectionality of racism, xenophobia, sexism, or homophobia. Bonus (2000) suggests "as racialization and invisibility have worked to marginalize or exploit Filipino Americans, they have also provided them with a protective coloration that allows them to contest those forces" (9). Perhaps, from beneath this veil, one might understand invisibility might also be understood as enabling and facilitating the transnational routes of Filipino migration between the Philippines and the U.S. How then might an entire city look when many of its inhabitants live beneath this transnational veil?

Just as apparent are the lack of non-English linguistic markers that tend to be imprinted on street names or business signs and mark an enclave as distinctly

²⁶ For a discussion on the political emergence of Monterrey Park as the first "suburban Chinatown," see (Fong 1994).

²⁷ See Bunny Gillespie's *Daly City, Images of America* (Chalreston: Arcadia, 2003). Interestingly, seven years prior, when the Gillespies were interviewed by the ethnic newspaper *Asian Week*, both were quick to discuss the emergence of the Filipino community in Daly City, explaining that beginning in the 1970s, "Filipinos were welcomed to the neighborhood". Reflecting on their neighbors from the Philippines, Bunny Gillespie suggested that "Filipinos are a community of smiles" and that "they are very family-oriented, religious people, and keep their homes beautiful". See Bert Eljera's *Filipinos Find Home in Daly City*, *Asian Week* (1996), May 3-9.

unique from the neighborhoods or cities surrounding it. Even the South of Market neighborhood of San Francisco has a particular block of streets, whose streets have been dedicated with the names of famous Filipino heroes like Rizal, Mabini, Lapu-Lapu, and Tandang Sora. This block and the mural dedicated to the Filipino community who continues to live there are crucial to contesting the narrative of Filipino invisibility. Apart from a sparse collection of stores on Mission Street and St. Francis Square in Daly City however, most of the Filipino businesses and restaurants are inconspicuously interspersed amongst others or hidden away on unfrequented street corners. It is not until roaming its windy streets for some time that an occasional visitor would begin to recognize the Filipino owned stores and restaurants dotted along inconspicuous streets or hidden amongst other stores in smaller shopping centers. Yet, fast food restaurants like Jollibee or Goldilocks and the popular karaoke hangouts like Tito Rey's restaurant, as well as the various remittance outlets strewn alongside Filipino owned grocery stores, are really codes alerting Filipino immigrants, accustomed to the veiled presence of Filipinos in the U.S., that Daly City is a distinctly Filipino space. Filipino newspapers, like the *Philippine News*, *Manila Bulletin*, *Manila Mail*, which have played a vital role to knitting together the Philippine diaspora and announcing the presence of the Filipino community to outsiders, are confined to Filipino restaurants, markets, and stores rather than being dispensed for free on city sidewalks or mailed out as community newsletters.

Daly City is distinctly *not* unique, its landscape and built-environment are unexceptional compared to other suburban neighborhoods. For example, I stepped inside of a Blockbuster video store adjacent to the Jollibee and Red Ribbon bakery, distinctly Filipino restaurants, and specifically looked to a Filipino employee working there for a section for Filipino movies. I reasoned that while I may not find a store dedicated to selling Filipino movies on Mission St., one of the major strips connecting Daly City to the 405 Freeway, I was convinced that, even if the store lacked an entire section devoted to Filipino movies, at the very least there would be a pool of Filipino titles to select from in the foreign section of Blockbuster video. Literally scratching his head and conveying a look that expressed a sense of self-dissatisfaction in his own answer, the clerk simply replied, "No" and added "And I wouldn't even know where to tell you to find them (in the neighborhood)."

Over the last decade, there has been a revelation of studies on Filipinos propelled by a host of emerging literature written to contest the perceived "invisibility" of Filipinos in the U.S. (Tiongson 2006). This literature has done much to unravel the tangled histories between the Philippines and the U.S. The following chapter rests on the shoulders of this emergent literature and attempts to explain how the veil shrouded over Daly City, covering a little over a third of its residents, conceals a transnational landscape connecting Filipinos with the Philippines.

Scholars tend to see ethnic spaces as the materialization of an ethnic community's struggle to either retain their culture or assimilate into the larger

fabric of the society around them.²⁸ On the other hand, a host of thinkers and scholars attempting to elucidate transnational practices amongst various communities continually inscribe, what Smith and Guarnizo (1998) call a “liberatory character” onto an array of transnational practices. These narratives have produced an entire discourse around the production of a “third space”, “deterritorialized nation-states”, and “counter-narratives of the nation”.²⁹ Yet, the degree of capital circulation and the reincorporation of citizens and nationals living abroad enabled by governing technologies produced by nation-state governments throughout Latin American and Asia point to a more complex form of territorialization between diasporic communities and their homelands. One that is far from the dialectical opposition extolled by writers who view transnational subjects as either oppositional to forms of governance or entirely exploited by them. Rather than interpreting Daly City’s sparse network of restaurants, remittance centers and churches as “demarcating the spatial boundaries and localization of a Filipino American community”, what are often constructed as ethnic enclaves, ghettos, and ethnic neighborhoods. Instead, as Okamura (1998) explains, “they could be more productively understood as indicating the various ways by which those boundaries are being transcended on a daily basis by transnational linkages of people, money, goods and information” (8).

By virtue of the unique settlement of middle-class Filipinos in Daly City, I argue instead that the particular settlement of post-1965 immigrants in Daly City is less concerned with creating a permanent identity and “home” in their post-war suburban neighborhood than maintaining a clear connection to both their immediate families in the U.S. and more importantly to those family members that remain in the Philippines. Rather than perceiving Daly City as a Filipino enclave and a thriving community of a closely-knit network of Filipinos, I argue that Daly City is a diasporic space created by a particular group of migrants who always saw themselves as *being able* to return to the Philippines. The veil casted onto *and* amongst Filipinos in Daly City belies the transnational network of restaurants,, banks, businesses, churches, festivals, and cultural practices that together tether Filipinos to their homeland.

Quoting a sample survey conducted on Filipinos who were issued visas to the U.S. in 1986, Espiritu (2003) explains the longing for Filipinos to return home through the context of the report’s findings, where a “substantial percentage (36.2 percent) expected that they eventually would return permanently to the Philippines, even though almost three-fourths (74.3 percent) stated that they also planned to become U.S. citizens” (94).³⁰ Travel back to the homeland is indeed a privilege and one accorded to a select number of immigrants. However, by virtue of the economic foundation that enabled a number of Filipinos to emigrate to Daly City after 1965,

²⁸ For an insightful analysis of the various ways scholars have interpreted and utilized the ethnic enclave hypothesis and model, see Roger Waldinger’s “The Ethnic Enclave Debate Revisited”, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 17:3 (1993), 444-452.

²⁹ For a particularly influential example of this discourse, see Bhabha’s *DissemiNation*, 1990.

³⁰ The survey that Espiritu is quoting derives from Benjamin Cariño’s “The New Filipino Immigrants to the United States: Increasing Diversity and Change”, *Papers of the East-West Population Institute. Honolulu: East-West Center* (1990).

many of these Filipinos can come back to the Philippines either to visit, to repatriate, or even to attempt to repatriate and return for good.

Enhanced by technological innovations and more efficient modes of mobility, Filipinos are increasingly able to maintain connections to their homeland.³¹ Most importantly, these connections are sustained through the belief that the possibility of returning is quite real. The traces marking Daly City as a Filipino space, the “meeting halls” of restaurants and bowling alleys to the slew of remittance centers, push the reader to look past the dominant narrative of suburban landscapes and imagine what a city might look like if the majority of its residents are constantly looking back and, regardless of their means, envision themselves one day returning to their ethnic homeland.

Transnational Obligations

Within the veiled urbanism of Daly City, the importance and influence of obligation and corresponding systems of reciprocity are made visible throughout the inner-workings of Filipinos who live there: the litany of Philippine banks and remittance centers and the transnational services they provide, that outnumber Filipino owned stores is an example of the proliferation and significance of these cultural commitments. Informal practices of remittance giving between Filipino business owners and church congregants and the numerous goods shipped to the Philippines in balikbayan boxes are just a few other examples. The entrepreneurship and investments produced by these transnational circulations of capital are shifting social relations and instigate transformation within sending nations (Levitt 2001).

Carla Jimenez, a nurse who migrated to Daly City in 1982 from a small town in the province of Laguna, explains the unrelinquishing presence of familial obligations vividly gripping her to her community back home.

When I first arrived, I would send at least half of my paycheck to my parents (in Laguna) each month. If I had a little bit more, I would send my younger brother and sisters some as well. But most of the time, I expected my parents to distribute it equally...There was no contract. There was no one to tell me that I had to do this, to give half of my paycheck. I just knew that it was expected. Yet even now, twenty-years later, even though I was able to bring my whole family to the States, my parents, brother, sisters, and they were able to bring their families here because (Carla’s husband) and I came here first, I still receive phone calls from family members in the Philippines. Nephews will call asking for a lot of money to start a business. Distant relatives will ask for help to pay hospital bills, you know there isn’t affordable health insurance for poor people in the Philippines right? So (Filipinos in the U.S.) have to help with that a lot. I’m not complaining, I’m not

³¹ See for instance (Ignacio 2005).

saying that it's bad. It's just that sometimes my family does not realize that I'm not made out of money.

Carla's ambivalence points to the complexities of familial obligation and the sustaining ties perpetuating the uneven relationship between Filipinos in the U.S. and those in the Philippines. Carla's experiences help to make sense of how over decades of migration from the Philippines, the circulation of financial resources between Daly City and the Philippines has transformed the built-environment of Daly City and social life of the Filipinos living there.

Remittances provide a crucial means of understanding transnational ties for various reasons. These practices help elucidate the manner in which migrant and immigrant communities continue to be threaded together by a common desire to maintain their connections with their homeland (Glick Schiller 2001; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). These flows also provide a framework for examining how the nation-state attempts to reincorporate citizens and nationals living abroad for the purpose of developing their national economies (Lessinger 1995). The transnational social field given way by practices of remittances sending and the politics of patronage it portends also provides a means of unveiling the transnational landscape of Filipinos in Daly City. Regardless of the length of time that most Filipinos have lived in the U.S., whether or not they have family members who are living with them, or have made considerable investments within their host country, Filipinos continue to uphold their obligations to family members and relatives in the Philippines through sending remittances (Menjivar 1998).

Furthermore, still awaiting reunification with their parents, siblings, and even children in the Philippines, the manner in which the first generation of Filipino immigrants in the U.S. frequently send financial support to struggling family members back home is the predominant form that looking back to the Philippines, the repeated turning described by Vergara, takes. According to data from the BSP, Filipino Americans are the largest senders of US dollars to the Philippines among overseas Filipinos. In 2005, their combined dollar remittances reached a record-high of almost \$6.5 billion dollars. In 2006, Filipino Americans sent more than \$8 billion, which represents 57% of the total amount received by the Philippines.

On Mission St. alone, there are five clearly marked remittance centers devoted specifically to sending money between Daly City and parts of the Philippines. More common are businesses that offer remittance services, which are inconspicuously marked by posting exchange rates between the peso and dollar on their store windows or on makeshift signs placed on the sidewalk outside of their doors. Philippine banks, like the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and Metropolitan Bank And Trust Company (Metrobank) and their subsidiaries compete with one another to garner a percentage of remittances sent by Filipinos, who on average, possess a household income that is substantially greater than the median household income of other Americans in the U.S. as well.³² Remittance centers also seek to take

³² Due to the strong representation of Filipino Americans in high-level, service-oriented professions such as healthcare within Daly City, apart from Asian Indian Americans, their median household income tends to be higher than other racial and ethnic communities in the U.S., including other Asian

advantage of the number of new Filipino immigrants who consistently filter through the neighborhood.³³

There is no factual data calculating the real amount of total remittances sent to the Philippines because many of these remittances are transacted informally. Filipino grocery stores and small businesses sometimes informally transact remittances. Emilio Manalakit for example, one of the few respondents I interviewed who arrived to the U.S. and struggled to find a full-time job for almost two years even though he held a engineering degree, explains how the informal transactions provided by friends who owned a neighboring grocery store was essential to providing money to his family back home.

My friends' had family in the same town where my family lived. I didn't have a good job for a long time. I couldn't send very much money back home. It was shameful. So my friends said, 'Help us with the store. You know, just small accounting things. Nothing really big. And we'll just send money for you because you're working here too.' So a portion of the money that they gave to their family was given to my family too.

Other times, owners of Filipino businesses will provide the work of remittance centers and for an informal fee, "do favors" for their clients by transacting money themselves. Then there are the formal contracts that business owners will make with banks in the Philippines and provide remittance services along with selling their goods.

Along with the remittance centers, cargo-shipping companies like Johnny Air Cargo in St. Francis Square or the Philippine owned LBC Express, are scattered throughout the city. These international shipping companies specifically cater to Filipino clientele and whose enterprise specializes in guaranteeing daily shipments of an exorbitant amount of gifts and material goods to the Philippines. Maas (2008) describes how these "door-to-door" services, prevalent within cities even in the Netherlands, and the "diffused forms of solidarity and generalized forms of

American communities. According to the U.S. Census, 2007 American Community Survey reports on the median Filipino American household income is \$65,700 and almost 40 percent of the Filipinos surveyed stated that they were employed in management, professional and related occupations. Providing an alternative perspective, Benito Vergara rightfully argues that these numbers tend to be misleading and end up erasing the otherwise intensely felt class divisions in the city. Vergara asserts that "Filipinos have the highest proportion of families with three or more income earners. Such households constitute 30 percent of Filipino households", while the throughout the rest of the U.S., the figure accounting for household earners of more than two people is only 13 percent. See Vergara, *Pinoy Capital*, 149-50.

³³ Metrobank also intends to take advantage of cross-selling opportunities in other countries for the benefit of remitters and their beneficiaries here. Metrobank's remittance services include a real-time and risk-free electronic transfer remittance service; a savings account for OFWs; and a stored value automated teller machine card for OFW beneficiaries. The bank also provides housing and business loans to OFW beneficiaries. Metrobank has an international network of eight foreign branches, 26 remittance offices, 40 remittance tie-ups, and more than a thousand correspondent banks. It has presence in the US, Canada, the Middle East, Taiwan, Shanghai, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Italy, the U.K., Spain, and Austria. See (dela Pena 2007)

reciprocity” that they encourage, are integral to the formation of the Filipino transnational community” (136).

Respondents have consistently mentioned that the largest percentage of remittances that they send are actually not processed through remittance centers, but are conveniently transacted over the internet through websites hosted by Western Union, MoneyGram, Zoom.com, and others. Rather than making their way to remittance centers, provided they are able to offer a limited amount of personal information and are willing to pay larger transaction fees, individuals can simply use their credit or debit cards to send money to Philippine banks or designated remittance centers almost anywhere in the Philippines. Roberto Cardenas describes his responsibility to his family in the Philippines by saying,

I’m the oldest in the family. That means that I’m the first person that my brothers, sisters, and my parents call if they need money. I send one of them money at least every other month. Sometimes just \$50, sometimes more. Not always a lot of money but all of that builds-up.

Roberto Cardenas and his wife, Rosemarie, met in the U.S. through friends and after Roberto found a permanent position working for the City of San Francisco as a civil engineer, both he and Rosemarie bought a home in what was then the newer part of Daly City in 1986 and had since raised three children there. “We’ve had financial difficulties before. Maybe not as bad as now,” Roberto explained while discussing the financial predicament that has forced the Cardenas to sell their home. “But it never mattered. We’ve always sent money back to the Philippines.”

At times, the obligation to send money can be met with friction between a couple who may also be struggling to save money for their children’s college tuition or manage daily expenses. “I’m going to tell you something,” Roberto hushes, directing his voice away from Rosemarie, “(Rosemarie) doesn’t get along with my family. She doesn’t like that I’m always sending money to them. But you know what, she sends as much money to her family.” Rosemarie told me later that Roberto’s family, most of whom, still reside in Antipolo City just outside of Metro Manila in the province of Rizal, have consistently found it difficult to work over the years due to an array of health problems and financial misdealing. Unlike Rosemarie’s family who has enjoyed a relatively higher level of affluence, Roberto’s siblings have been forced to rely on the success of their oldest siblings success in the U.S.

Similarly, Efren Padilla, a once hugely successful realtor who at one time owned two homes in California and one in Las Vegas until he began falling deeper and deeper into debt as the larger economic crisis in 2007 began to take shape, found remittances and the intertwining obligations around them extremely burdensome. For Padilla, familial obligations not only take the form of remittances but also involve the implications that come with sending money back to the Philippines.

It begins with sending money home. But what you are telling your family is that I am the caretaker of the family. I am the one who is responsible for their welfare. My younger brother and sisters did not bother to work in the

Philippines. It's not because they were lazy. It's because they were just waiting to come here. So they never developed any skills while they were (in the Philippines). They knew that once they came here, they would live with me and my family until they found a job. It's eleven years later and they are all still living with us! I don't need them to give me the respect. To respect me even though I was the one who helped them to come (to the U.S.). I would have liked it if they would contribute to the house by getting married or getting a job. But my wife is always reminding me, 'This is your family. You're the oldest. You're the one with the means.' So even though they don't know how bad things are right now, it still makes me happy to provide for them.

The significance that obligation entails remains vital within the lives of Filipinos throughout the diaspora, who see remittances as not only an obligation to their family members but one of the few ways that they can have a tangible presence in the everyday lives of their family and community while living away from the Philippines. The Philippine banks and remittance centers inconspicuously infused within the landscape of Daly City are vital clues that provide evidence of these commitments and struggles.

Filipino Grocery: Maintaining Ties to a Filipino "Community"

Within the literature on both immigrant entrepreneurship and Filipino Americans, it is commonly held that Filipinos in the U.S. are greatly underrepresented as businesses owners. Particularly when contrasted to the proliferation of East and South Asian entrepreneurship both in California and throughout the rest of the country, scholars have been perplexed by their level of participation in the arena of entrepreneurship, especially when viewed alongside the relatively large number of Filipino immigrants living in the U.S.³⁴

Taking on these claims, journalists have also observed, even lamented at times, the glaring lack of Filipino entrepreneurship activity in the U.S. compared to their Asian counterparts. Mercurio (2006), a writer for *Philippine News*, reasons that Filipinos generally tend towards being employees rather than owning their own businesses. Mercurio further explains this reluctance for entrepreneurship by suggesting, perhaps somewhat carelessly, that Filipinos tend to refuse to partake in the risks involved with owning a business and subsequently steer clear of the "hassles of all the licenses to get" and "the regulations to follow".

³⁴ In two separate articles, one by James Fawcett and Robert Gardner and the other by Pyong Gap Min, have cited a survey conducted in 1987 on Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (Bureau of the Census, 1991). According to the survey, Filipinos ranked fifth behind the largest Asian communities in the U.S.: Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, and Asian Indian immigrant owned businesses. Both studies compared Filipino-owned businesses with those owned by Koreans and found that Filipino businesses not only fell significantly behind in average receipts but also in the growth of new businesses. While the number of Filipino owned businesses have grown by 48 percent between 1997 and 2002, The 2002 Survey of Business Owners (SBO) finds that less than 1 percent of nonfarm businesses in the U.S. are owned by Filipinos. See (Fawcett 1994)

Min (1986-87) on the other hand, refrains from attributing the lack of Filipino entrepreneurship to the cultural tendencies of the Filipino community and instead draws from the historical context of Filipino immigration into the U.S. Gap provides an alternative insight to Mercurio by arguing that both the education and facility for speaking English allows Filipinos to pursue jobs that are not restricted to business ownership and employment with co-ethnic workers (56).³⁵ Indeed, when surveying the types of labor sectors and professions that Filipino immigrants have tended to practice, one begins to understand how such a widely dispersed immigrant community has been able to diffuse itself, almost seamlessly, into the cultural fabric of the U.S. Rather than integrating themselves into the labor market as business owners, the various waves of Filipino immigration and subsequent generations of diverse Filipinos who have settled in the U.S. are located within almost every sector of American economy.

In Daly City alone, participants have worked as engineers, office administrators, postal workers, and elementary school aids. While most of those interviewed were fortunate to begin working in higher-skilled professions, many of their spouses and siblings began in service industries working as auto-mechanics, domestic workers, and janitors, eventually making their way to more skilled professions. Other interviewees even left their careers to become real estate agents, brokers, and sales representatives for specialty items. Almost all of my participants had at one time or continue to receive more than one income and some have held more than two jobs at one time. Yet, apart from the specific business owners whom I spoke to, none of my interviewees have ventured into the entrepreneurial arena and invested money in becoming the sole owner of a business.

Regardless of the reasons, because of the lack of an ethnic entrepreneurial core of Filipino businesses, Daly City takes on a very different shape from other typical ethnic neighborhoods, enclaves, or ethnoburbs. In fact, while the majority of Filipino-owned businesses in the U.S. are located in California (47 percent), even Filipino journalists writing about Daly City from the Philippines find it curious that the number of Filipino-owned businesses in the city lacks in relation to the prevalence of Filipinos in the city (Macabenta 1999). Within this context, it was all the more interesting that when I re-visited Serramonte Mall shortly after the mall experienced a period of remodeling in 2008, the traditional epicenter of the Filipino community in Daly City, not only did a number of Filipino stores disappear but also the cluster of tables where the older generation of Filipinos would congregate had gone away.

While comparing rates of business ownership between Korean and Filipino immigrants, Fawcett and Gardner (1994) provide an observation from their findings that adds to the complexity of Filipino entrepreneurship. Both authors suggest that

³⁵ Gap goes on to argue that there are several factors contributing to the lack of Filipino owned businesses. These include the nation's long colonial history with both Spain and the U.S., which stunted the foundation of an entrepreneurial infrastructure in the Philippines and laid the foundation for the lack of economic capital that Filipino immigrants possess when arriving to the U.S. Both of these contributing factors play integral roles in the lack of Filipino business ownership within the U.S. These factors also seek to explain why Filipinos tend to participate in other sectors in the U.S. labor market rather than owning their own businesses.

while the accumulation of financial capital appears to be less important to Filipino immigrants compared to their Korean counterparts, what remains vitally important to Filipinos are their families both near *and* far. Aided by the educational capital that many post 1965 Filipino immigrants bring with them and the networks of Filipinos already living in various parts of the U.S., Filipinos find themselves in a variety of labor fields and are not constrained to self-employment. And considering the geographical, political, and economic context from which they have left, as Fawcett and Garder argue,

Many Filipino immigrants feel that they are doing very well indeed, in comparison with their life in the Philippines, when they have a stable job in the United States with good fringe benefits and an income level that gives them a standard of living that they regard as middle class (1994, 235).

What then would a city look like if the majority of its population is continually looking back; when many of its inhabitants are more concerned with maintaining their ties to and providing for the security of their both their immediate and extended families, rather than creating a core of capital investment similar to other traditional ethnic enclaves? Rather than adopting a preconfigured lens of what ethnic enclaves or neighborhoods appear like or constitute and projecting those elements onto Daly City, the remainder of this chapter contends with a community of immigrants who, while disjointed in many ways, is united in their commitment to their larger families in the Philippines.

Perhaps because there are relatively few businesses that specialize in catering to Filipino clientele around the city, the relatively few Filipino-owned businesses that do exist tend to fill a variety of needs. Selling groceries for Filipino Grocery, for example, is only secondary to the main reason drawing several generations of Filipinos to the store over the last two decades: its *kare-kare*, or oxtail and peanut stew. Armando who has been acting as both my primary informant and self-described ethnic tour guide around Daly City was the first to take me to Filipino Grocery but as I spent more time in the city with interviewees, I was continuously asked if I would like to go there for a meal. Unlike the more established Filipino restaurants within and around Daly City, where patrons might spend several hours socializing with friends while eating, customers at Filipino Grocery make brief visits and the conversations between patrons and employees tend to last only as long as it takes to buy their food items. These seemingly brief encounters makes it all the more astonishing that there is a clear feeling that everyone knows each other in the store.

As I expected, the store was located several blocks away from the nearest main street, nestled deep within the corner of residential neighborhood. Across from the Broadmoor District, on the other side of the Junipero Serra Freeway (or more colloquially, the 280), only three or four customers would come into the store at a time during the weekdays but according to those who worked there, it tends to fill-up in the evening when customers get out of work. Similar to Bonus' (2000) descriptive discussion on "Oriental stores" around San Diego, the ethnic boundaries exuded within the Grocery Store were clearly marked through sounds, sights, and

smells. Hidden from beneath a veil, these businesses and the goods and services that they sell to Filipinos in Daly City form, as Okamura (1998) suggests, the traces of the “the diasporic identity and consciousness of Filipino American communities since they signify cultural, economic, and social connections the Philippine homeland” (8).

Items like plastic *tsinelas* [inexpensive slippers popularly worn in the Philippines], Filipino magazines imported from the Philippines, were interspersed with other products marking the space as distinctly Filipino such as the piles of snack foods and candy that one can only find in the Philippines. While not a particularly large store, the sparse selection of goods gave one the sense that they were in the middle of what once was a warehouse. Towards the front of the store, next to the double-doors, was a small selection of Filipino movies, television dramas, and concert dvds. The majority of food products that were sold in the store were packaged or refrigerated on one side of the store. Apart from the packages of dried fruits on the shelves and frozen vegetables in the freezers, there was a very limited selection of produce.

The centerpiece of the store and the source of most of its patronage was a long aluminum steam table that served a variety of Filipino dishes towards on opposite side of the store exuding smells that transport Filipinos back their homeland and signal the places and memories of where they grew-up. For a relatively inexpensive price, one can take home dishes that one expects to find at any turo-turo restaurant including bistek, apretada, caldereta, pork adobo, lumpia, and kare-kare of course. Two elderly Filipinas took turns washing dishes and scooping orders from behind the food counter. As each woman made their way in-between the tiny space, avoiding the cardboard boxes filled with store orders and receipts clumped together over the years, patrons exuberantly pointed to their desired food item. Then each of the women quickly scooped servings into generic white styrofoam containers.

For the Filipinos who patron Filipino Grocery, again rekindling Bonus’ discussion, the store is a meeting place to entertain Filipino friends who visit from nearby cities with “authentic” Filipino food or to simply chat with the store’s employees whom they have become closer to over the years. This familiarity and intimacy is made apparent by the depth of topics one might overhear during the brief conversations between employees and patrons that often to run much deeper than polite chit-chat: the reluctance a parent has over the new friends their child made, the joy had over a family member finding work, or routine troubles caused by in-laws or extended family members. While it remains important to designate the function of such ethnic spaces as a form of place-making that anchors, as Bonus explains, “a kind of spatial identity” that functions to assert one’s standing and “distinct demarcation not only between whites and Filipinos but among Filipinos”,³⁶ it is equally significant to continue drawing out the manner in which these stores form transnational linkages to family members, communities, and events back in the homeland.

Aside from the engrossing discussions on familial politics and enlightening advice to be had, Filipinos also come to Filipino Grocery to keep in contact with their

³⁶ Bonus, *Locating Filipino Americans*, 2000: 60.

family members in the Philippines. Denoted by the layers of phone card ads and posters verifying calling rates, customers come to the store to get deals on calling cards and more recently to buy the computer operated “magic jack” adapter. Even the intimacy involved in having conversations and seeking advice regarding one’s family signals the importance felt by Filipinos to continually maintain their connection to their homeland. After several visits to Filipino Grocery, one begins to discern that the unsolicited advice and subtle critiques transmitted within these brief encounters are performing a very basic task. For instance, they convey a deep need for Filipino parents, who, distressed from raising children in an alien environment far away from the family and culture of their homeland, can create a space where they might share in both the success and failures of being immigrant parents. They are also a source of validating one’s ongoing presence and membership within a community that they have left long ago.

“(In the U.S.), we often come here without our parents or brothers or sisters. In the Philippines we have a large family who can give support when raising our kids,” expressed Irma Gonzalez, who moved to Daly City in 1979 and has been a patron of Filipino Grocery for over a decade.

It’s comforting to speak to the friends we have made here. To know that the problems you have when you are raising your kids here are not unique. We are not alone, it’s difficult to be alone in the U.S., to raise children here when their friends have different values than we have.

While a small pile of Filipino American newsletters and newspapers are stacked in a metal dispenser in the corner of the store, it is the Filipino magazines that are placed front and center. Like TFC, these magazines are wildly popular with Filipino customers who are eager to not only know the latest gossip on their favorite Filipino actor but to stay abreast of the political happenings in the Philippines. Recent topics like the wave of disastrous typhoons that have hit Manila and Northern Luzon, the recent passing of the former Philippine president Cory Aquino, and the coming presidential election, are a handful of examples of topics that have produced heated debates and longing nostalgia between employees and customers. The content of these newspapers and conversations are some of the initial signs pointing to the outwardly oriented politics of many Filipinos, along with those living in Daly City.

Armando agreed with Irma’s sentiments explaining that, “Filipino Grocery (and those who both worked and patron it) represents the Filipino community in Daly City, for better or for worst.” Rather than immediately interpreting “for better or for worst” to mean both the good and bad qualities within the Filipino community in Daly City, I took the phrase to mean “for richer or poor, in sickness and in health” just as it did in a wedding vow. In this way, one cannot take for granted words like “community” and even more simple words like “we” to mean only those Filipinos who live in immediate space, in Daly City or in the U.S., but the terms are purposefully outwardly expressed to mean those who live in the Philippines as well. The food, magazines, calling cards, and conversations are together traces linking

Filipino immigrants to a much larger community, to their kapamilya and kapatid in the Philippines, beyond nostalgia and into the transnational present.

“Gold in Daly City”: Transnational Investments

Mass’ (2008) research on door-to-door cargo agents illuminates how the cultural values of patronage and indebtedness have produced a transnational economy of small businesses built on linking family members across the Philippine diaspora to their families and communities in the Philippines. She explains that

Reciprocity and familial obligations between those who left and those who stayed form the bedrock for initial transnational activities, which primarily centre on the one-way-sending of money and gifts to the home front. Such primordial bonds form a lucrative base for business transactions (144)

More recently however, particularly over the last decade, the Filipino transnational economy within Daly City increasingly provides an example of how these economic ties are not isolated to the investments and transactions conducted by small Filipino-owned businesses.

Over the past two decades, Philippine corporations have been consistently exploring Daly City as a potential market for increased investment. Another element that drives others, both corporate investors and researchers, to focus their attention on Daly City is the manner in which the city’s location acts as a hub for a number of small Filipino communities and neighborhoods to circulate around. So although there are substantial Filipino communities rapidly developing throughout Southern and Central California, cities like Vallejo, Union City, Milpitas, Hercules, Pinole, South San Francisco, all cities with considerably large Filipino communities, often look to Daly City at the very least, as the *symbolic capital* of the presence of Filipino community in Northern California.

In this way, Daly City’s geographical location not only makes the city a logical place for Filipinos who work in San Francisco to settle in Daly City, but its nearness to a number of thriving and diverse Filipino communities around Northern California makes the city a natural locale for overseas Filipino businesses and corporations to target their investments. During the 1990s, Daly City became the first location for the famous Philippine fast food chain Jollibee and also one of the country’s most prominent remittance corporations at the time, the Far East Bank and Trust Company. Although restaurants owned by Filipino Americans tend to come and go, there are a number of restaurants owned by Philippine corporations that maintain a steady clientele and remain popular: Tito Rey Restaurant, Goldilocks, the first Northern Californian locations of Red Ribbon Bake Shop and Max Fried Chicken, Barrio Fiesta, and a host of other Philippine corporations.

However, the fact that most Filipinos in the Northern California tend to perceive Daly City as the “capital” of Filipinos around the West coast, which has led to Daly City becoming a focal point for overseas investment, is not merely because of its symbolic representation as such. It is also because both Filipino and non-Filipino

corporations have arduously labored to maintain these connections between Filipinos in both countries. First of all, speakers, from an array of business backgrounds, have continually traveled back and forth between both countries over the past two decades touting the potential investment worth of Filipinos in the U.S. Seminars, conferences, and gala bring in investors to target Filipino American communities, specifically those in suburban settings like Daly City, where Filipinos are believed, in a problematic fashion, to have household incomes between \$51,000 to \$100,000 (Macabenta, 1999). Marketers selling “Pinoy gold” in Daly City continually utilize the relatively low standard income of Filipinos in the Philippines as a means of luring investors to establish a foothold within the larger so-called “\$88 Billion Filipino market” in the U.S.³⁷

Conversely, American business investors from the Daly City/Colma Chamber of Commerce routinely visit the Philippines and discuss mutual business plans. One of the first examples was when the former mayor of Daly City Adrienne J. Tissier led a trade and goodwill mission to the Philippines during the first day of the 25th Philippine Business Conference (PBC) at the Westin Philippine Plaza in Manila in 1999. Tissier illustrated the transnational ties created between Daly City and Manila perfectly in her speech, explaining that, “Aside for the cultural exchange, we are looking for international investments and business opportunities here. We also want to develop and open the door for Filipino businesses to relocate in Daly City” (Conclara 1999). Tissier, a non-Filipino resident of Daly City who would later become the San Mateo County Supervisor, had by 1999, recognized the potential economic significance of maintaining the already vibrant linkage between the Filipino community in Daly City with their homeland saying, “We hope to cultivate broader communication and understanding between our countries and cultures” (ibid).

These transnational linkages between Daly City and the Philippines are formally acknowledged each year when Filipinos from around the Bay Area congregate in Daly City for a two-day Fil-Am Friendship Celebration. Organized by the Sister City Committee, who helped to establish Quezon City as Daly City’s sister city in 1994, the celebration functions as a means of materializing the ties between Daly City and the business and arts industries in the Philippines by inviting various businesses, organizations, and artists from the Philippines to the city and cater particularly to Filipino communities around North California for two-days. Speaking of the even in 2004, then mayor of Daly City Sal Torres expressed the dual-role of Daly City as a both a signifier of multiculturalism and diversity for Americans as much as it is a focal point for Filipinos in the Philippines saying,

³⁷ Most recently on 26 March 2010, the most recent financial conference focused on drawing overseas investments into the Filipino American market was organized by marketers from the Balita Media Inc. Sponsored by a host of transnationally functioning corporations from the Philippines, including the Philippine Department of Tourism, Philippine Airlines, and the prominent Philippine media corporation GMA Life TV, the gala was focused on discussing recent statistics on Filipino American buying power at the Hilton in Universal City, Los Angeles. Antonio Villegas, an instructor from the College of Alameda, attended as the key-note speaker and presented census data suggesting that the net-worth of contributions by Filipino Americans in the U.S. was worth \$88 Billion, second only to those by the Chinese American community.

This two-day fiesta attracts families and fun-seekers throughout the Bay Area...It is an event that commemorates the historical alliance between two nations. It is also an opportune time to enjoy the Filipino culture – its colorful dances and music, great delicacies, native arts and crafts. As Mayor, I am particularly proud of being part of the festival's 10th anniversary. This milestone further proves that Daly City is a true center of diversity, a community that embraces and thrives on learning about new cultures (City of Daly City 2004).

While the historical morphology of Daly City as a Filipino city is unique to the development of other Filipino concentrated locales within the U.S., like the naval communities in San Diego, Vallejo, or Jersey City, or the traditional agricultural communities in Stockton or throughout Hawaii, the intersecting confluence of historical and economic processes informing the creation of Daly City as an epicenter of Filipino settlement is *not* unique. Heterogeneous flows of Filipino migration have since 1965 increasingly come to join their *kapamilya* in what might have been otherwise typically suburban neighborhoods. Like Daly City or its Bay Area counterpart Union City, the highest concentration of Filipinos any county in the U.S. are located in Los Angeles County³⁸ and are spread throughout suburban communities like Carson, Long Beach, Diamond Bar, West Covina, and Walnut.

A Geography of Everywhere

Strolling in-between a shifting group of dancers and musicians, the magnetic Filipino icon, John Lloyd Cruz, stared out into the restless ocean of Filipino faces inside Cow Palace arena who adoringly cheered back in response. "*Sama-sama tayong lahat na magdiriwang*. [Together we celebrate as a family and you are included as we celebrate this]", Cruz expressed while standing at the edge of the stage as dozens of audience members rushed towards him in a cloud of camera flashes and screams.

"*At kung hindi dahil sa inyo, hindi ito magiging magic nating lahat*. [And if it wasn't for you, it wouldn't be all our magic]," Cruz yelled out. Reminiscent of the old traveling variety concerts, so emblematic of mid-twentieth century pop culture in the U.S., this particular show was the part of an annual traveling concert called Star Magic World Tour. Hosted by the one of the two most popular television networks in the Philippines, ABS-CBN, as well as the seemingly infinite number of sponsors that buttressed the mega-corporation, Star Magic World Tour has for the past seventeen-years, brought together a number of the most iconic Filipino actors and musicians to cities across the U.S. that have been populated by a significant number of Filipinos. In four days, Star Magic would perform in Ontario, California, but tonight, they wanted to celebrate together "as a family" in Daly City.

³⁸ 262, 000 according to the 2008 U.S. Census.

In a perfectly memorized choreography, Bea Alonzo, who has been for the moment, the undisputed national sweetheart of the country and the other-half of the “love team” with John Lloyd Cruz, followed her partner and shouted out, “Mahal po naming kayo [We love you all].” Immediately following Bea’s words, the entire cast of Star Magic, draped in symbolically patriotic yellow colors, concluded their concert with a rendition of Manny Pacquiao’s song *Lahing Pinoy*. Waves of Filipinos raised their hands at the strumming acoustic guitar and shouted out each word to the diasporic anthem, which literally means, the “Filipino race” or “Filipino people.”

Lagi kung itataas (I will always raise)
Bandila ng Pilipinas (the flag of the Philippines)
Saan mang sulok ng mundo (In any corner of the world)
Iwawagayway ko ito (I will wave it)

Kahit saan kahit kailan (Anywhere, anytime)
Basta't kung para sa bayan (As long as it's for the country)
Buhay ko ay ilalaan (I will spend/dedicate my life)
Sa lupa kong sinilangan (In the land where I was born)

Pilipino, Pilipino, Pilipino
Ang lahi ko (is my race)
Pilipino, Pilipino, Pilipino
Ang lahi ko (is my race)
Pilipino, Pilipino, Pilipino
Ang lahi ko (the Filipino people)

As I found myself overwhelmed by the sense of nationalist sentiment and singing aloud the same chorus that I had heard dozens of times playing on my mother’s television set, I was caught off guard by the hand of elderly Filipina who grabbed my arm. Pulling me closer and clutching my arm, she tenderly exclaimed amidst the singing crowd, “You would never know that (so many) Filipinos are here. *Talaga namang sa lahat ng sulok ng mundo naroroon tayo, hindi ba?* [We’re really everywhere, aren’t we?]”.

Staring out into the sea of Filipino faces, the moment especially resonated in a place like Daly City. For the night at the very least, it became a hub for Filipinos who not only composed of over 30 percent of the city’s population but a significant portion of the entire Bay Area in California. As soon as the concert was over, after most of the Filipinos had left the arena and their litany of cars had made their way out of the parking lot, the presence of Filipinos had gone away with them. And like that the veil was once again draped over the city. For decades, the Cow Palace has hosted countless Filipino celebrities from the Philippines and Filipino concerts. Each time, the arena is filled almost to capacity. In many ways, the landscape of Daly City, its businesses, churches, and social gatherings point to the ways in which Filipinos in Daly City are perpetually looking back towards their homeland, holding fast to a transnational buoy that keeps them anchored within the transnational interstitality between the U.S. and the Philippines.

Chapter 2

Transnational Real Estate

Selling the American Dream in the Philippines

Chapter 2

“For those who are living on modest social security pensions, a better option is to come back to the Philippines. Here, they can live comfortable lives, with household help, plus what people need most in their old age: relatives and friends. There should be opportunities in this dire situation for the Philippine Retirement Authority and for mid-priced real estate developments”

- Greg Macabenta, 2008.

From Crisis to Crisis

Eleanor gently tugged at one side of the ornately woven tablecloth tightly hugging the surface of her oak wood dining table. She gave it one more wave to smoothen out the remaining wrinkles, perhaps thinking to herself that they might somehow deter her guests from savoring the fresh lechon [pork] or one of her painstakingly made lumpia shanghai [fried eggrolls]. The tablecloth was just one of various ornaments decorating her small dining room, a milieu of treasures that she accumulated while working in Jeddah. The second largest city in Saudi Arabia, the coastal metropolis was home to Eleanor for three years while she worked as a nurse. Afterwards, she picked up once again and completed her dream of living and working in the U.S.

A shiny brass coffee pot wrested awkwardly atop an Islamic prayer rug in one corner of the room. The combination of its long protruding spout pointing towards a set of matching cups resting on the sacred rug evoked an image of prostrated acolytes praying towards the Aladdin lamp-like pot. In a metaphorical sense, the assortment of Arabic décor merged somewhat effortlessly with the typically “Filipino” dishes devoured by guests as each floated in and out of the room. Together, the room fused into a snapshot of a particular moment in Filipino migration, where variously skilled Filipino migrants traveled far from their homes in the Philippines after the oil crisis of the 1970s to make momentary pit stops in the Middle East before arriving to their final destinations in Western Europe and North America.

Such interstitial moments exhibit the contrasting spatial practices of Filipinos as they traverse different continents while being pulled or pulling themselves from the Philippines. The nomadic bricolage depicted by Eleanor’s elaborate dinner setting has been re-enacted in different ways throughout homes in California or the rest of North America. These practices, which attempt to recreate a sense of home in the diaspora while simultaneously expanding a network of community, distinctly contrast the vibrant and colorful fiestas that they once hosted throughout their cities, provinces, and homes in the Philippines.

However, this was not exactly a fiesta. Eleanor Acupang, a long time resident of Daly City for twenty-two years, was hosting a pair of realtors from Manila who had come to the San Francisco Bay Area to sell property to Filipinos who had been settled in the U.S. for many years. Both realtors were employees of Eton Properties Philippines, Inc., the real estate component of the much larger international

conglomerate, the Lucio Tan Group. Eleanor, who recently began supplementing her nursing income by becoming an independently operating realtor selling properties on both sides of the Bay, came into contact with Eton during one of her many return trips to Manila. While inquiring about a particular property advertisement just outside of Metro Manila, Eleanor was directed to the corporate office of Eton located in the Central Business District (CBD) of Makati.

I told them that there are a lot of Filipinos like me who are thinking about retiring in the Philippines. Many Filipinos are thinking about returning. After I convinced them that I could be a helpful contact in the U.S., we organized a time for them to come and speak to my friends and neighbors here.

Eleanor once adamantly believed that she had finally found a home in Daly City and that she would never return to the Philippines, thus ending her subjectivity as a diasporic nomad. But like many of her relatives and Filipino friends who migrated and settled throughout cities along the American west coast around the same time that she did, the ailing economy had pushed her to reconsider the stability of her lifestyle and residence in the U.S.

The emerging trend of Filipino Americans investing in property in the Philippines is a fairly recent one; a trend that only began picking up steam during the early 1990s. Once the interest for property investments around the Philippines was identified by a handful of opportunistic Filipino American realtors and entrepreneurs, global real estate firms operating mainly from Metro Manila began testing the market in the U.S. Philippine corporations began by sending out “road shows” and connecting with a network of “birddogs” that targeted large concentrations of Filipino Americans and eventually extended their advertising to Filipino newspapers and the internet.

By 1997 however, the entire region of Asia experienced a sudden financial crisis beginning in Thailand. Described as a “contagion” or the more predictably racialized version—the “Asian flu”—by several economists and policy makers, the crisis quickly spread throughout the majority of Asia, particularly Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea, and the Philippines. Driven by international speculation and investment, the real estate economy, which had been booming during the late 1980s and early 1990s, came to a quick halt. While other Asian countries struggled desperately to stay afloat after the crisis swelled, the Philippine economy rebounded relatively quickly (Balisacan and Hill 2003; Krinks 2002). While there are specific reasons that help explain why the Philippines experienced a relatively mild recession compared to its neighbors, the focus of this chapter is on a particular sector of the country’s economy that has continually sustained its financial system in the face of repeating crisis.

This chapter examines the production of a set of subjectivities constituted through the transnational processes circulating between real estate agents and brokers operating between the U.S. and the Philippines. In recent years, propped up by a continuous stream of remittance capital, business outsourcing, and exportation of labor produced with the Balikbayan economy, the Philippine real estate market has gained new momentum. Corporate interest in the potential capital investments

of Filipinos living abroad, especially in the U.S., has led to an aggressive campaign of transnational real estate advertisement and intensive property development on the part of global real estate firms in Metro Manila.

As an entire generation of post-1965 immigration from the Philippines finds itself on the precipice of retiring from various sectors of the U.S. labor force, global real estate firms are devising techniques and preparing an elaborate built-infrastructure to attract as many of these retirees back to the Philippines. This wave of property development has made real estate agents and brokers, operating both in the U.S. and the Philippines, central to the transformation of Metro Manila. Their transnational communication with clients in the U.S. and developers in the Philippines has created a transnational circuit materializing itself into massive global ad campaigns and multi-sited real estate megaprojects. Subsequently, agents and brokers act as intermediaries and conduits for Filipinos in the U.S. to transform the physical and cultural landscape of Metro Manila.

This chapter will focus on the transnational circulation of real estate development capital knitting together the aspirations of Filipinos living in the U.S. with state agents and corporate developers in the Philippines. Recently, Filipino Americans were beset by the emergence of an economic crisis that precipitated a long series of mortgage defaults, home foreclosures, and a tremendous loss of personal assets beginning in 2007. One opportunistic realty entrepreneur, writing from the perspective of Filipinos in California in the Philippine newspaper *BusinessWorld*, urged corporations in the Philippines to continue targeting Filipinos in the U.S. eagerly suggesting that, "For those who are living on modest social security pensions, a better option is to come back to the Philippines. Here, they can live comfortable lives, with household help, plus what people need most in their old age: relatives and friends" (Macabenta 2008).

This chapter captures the various ways real estate agents working between the U.S. and the Philippines are attempting to lure Filipinos in the U.S. back to the Philippines. Interweaving this discussion is Anna Tsing's (2000) notion of an "economy of appearances", particularly through the manner in which the aspirations of Filipinos living abroad has created a source of both fictional and material capital to subsidize property developments in the Philippines. I will explain how the "performance" of this speculative capital produces the context from which many Filipino families are now confronting the choice of traveling back to the Philippines and returning there permanently.

This pointed interest in attracting investments from Filipino Americans slowly evolved out of decades of economic and cultural reliance on remittance money sent by Filipinos working abroad. This web of remittances threads together the transnational and trans-historical veil beneath which Filipinos find themselves tied to both the U.S. and the Philippines. This capital flow of remittances has also been fundamental to sustaining the Philippine economy since the 1980s. While potential returnees like Eleanor slowly shore up their investments into property developments in the Philippines on one side of the balikbayan economy's pathway, multinational property developers prepare for their impending return through the construction of massive mega-project developments throughout Metro Manila's peripheries. On the other side of this pathway conveys a much longer historical

trajectory. The various developments and the web of foreign and domestic investments needed to secure these properties and construct the built-environment for which Filipinos living abroad will eventually move into has been subsidized by an accumulation of decades of exported Philippine labor, both high and low skilled, both flexible and permanent. It is both the historical and contemporary material accumulations of these investments that has produced a circuit of transnational real estate binding Filipinos in the U.S. with much larger processes of transformation in the Philippines.

Selling Appearances: Speculative Capital and the Transnational Real Estate Market

“We’ve put our house in order...There are attractive investment packages for you if you want to explore, develop and process mineral resources...Easy entry for expatriate staff...Doesn’t that sound like an offer you can’t refuse? We like multinationals. Manila’s natural charms as a regional business center have been enhanced by a special incentive package...your expatriate-managers will enjoy Asia’s lowest living costs among the most outgoing people in the Pacific...Accountants come for \$67, executive secretaries for \$148. Move your Asian headquarters to Manila and make your cost accountants happy...The country is lovely. And loaded. Beneath the tropical landscapes of our 7,000 islands lies a wealth of natural resources...”³⁹

The advertisement bought by the Philippine government and printed in the *New York Times* (28 July 1974) conveys how for almost a century, policy makers and entrepreneurs, from early pro-expansionists in the U.S. to contemporary multinational corporate executives in East Asia, have sought to turn the speculative gaze of prospective investors onto the archipelago with a confidence inspired by the *potential* of economic expansion and wealth acquisition rather than its actual presence.⁴⁰ Whether it was the serendipitous geographical location that made the

³⁹ Quoted from Tadiar, *Fantasy Production: Sexual Economies*, p. 43.

⁴⁰ For an illuminative discussion on the integral role of U.S. print media on supporting pro-expansionist venture into the Philippines, see Grey A. Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pg. 121-170. The *Overland Monthly*, for instance, through a litany of articles, accompanying pictorials, and rhetoric of Manifest Destiny, was active in informing the American public on “the Amazing jungles of the Philippines” and their various natural resource waiting to expropriated. In recent decades, English speaking countries, along with Japan, encouraged by the increased liberalization of trade agreements following the passage of the Foreign Investments Act of 1991 by the Ramos Administration (which allowed foreign equity participation of up to 100% in a number of unrestricted investment areas) and low set-up costs, established numerous corporate offices into Metro Manila. See (Cornelio-Pronove 1999). While the U.S., Japan, and countries in Western Europe have traditionally comprised the largest percentage up FDIs till 1997, over the last decade, attracted to investments in English language learning schools and relatively low costing properties, the Philippines has been experiencing a massive surge in foreign investment predominantly from Korea. In 2003, the Philippine Department of Tourism launched its English as a Second Language Tour Program. The program combines language learning activities with vacation trips. Although the program caters to primarily East Asian learners in China and Japan, “Koreans make up the bulk of its customers” (Damazo 2007).

archipelago significant to trade relations with other Asian countries, the promise of its natural and human resources, or simply the undeniable beauty inspired by its paradigmatically tropical landscape, foreign entities, state administrators, and business entrepreneurs (the latter two often being one in the same) have sold the Philippines to international investors based on a promise and a particular performance of this promise. The interaction between promise and performance in the Philippines reflects Anna Tsing's (2000) notion of an "economy of appearances", where the production and accumulation of finance capital is based on the performance of the country's *potential* rather than its current political shape or the present reality of its congested urban landscapes and glaring lack of integrative infrastructure.⁴¹

In the case of Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), the Philippines remains competitive with other Asian countries in attracting foreign investments by devoting a significant portion of government spending to increasing tourism and encouraging trade through the liberalization and deregulation of the Philippine economy. Integral to the expansion of industries and trade are those speculators who risked investing speculative capital into the Philippines during various moments of economic crisis and political transition. In a reciprocal fashion, the elaborate labor brokering industry that sends millions of Filipinos abroad to work as OFWs each year operates by encouraging migrant workers to aspire outside of the Philippines. Images of economic security and self-fulfillment induced by movies, commercials, songs, and phone calls, linger in the imagination of Filipinos who either cannot find suitable employment in the Philippines or are incapable of earning wages commensurate with their education or status. It is this continual performance of such appearances, which compels ten percent of the country's labor force to work abroad. As previously discussed, state administrators, together with private entrepreneurial groups, have absorbed a relative amount of risk in order to establish the Philippines as one of the leading nations in exporting labor by sustaining an infrastructure that both allows OFWs to continue to work abroad while redirecting a portion of their income back to the State.

Fundamentally, these divergent yet functionally interlinking processes, generated and maintained by flows of speculative capital (one drawing foreign capital into the Philippines while the other searches for it abroad), comprise the productive force turning the machinery of the balikbayan economy. As speculative investors, various entities attempt to win profits by absorbing the risk, literally

⁴¹ Perhaps one of the most pervasive practices of speculative capital throughout Southeast Asia and other parts of the Global South are those practiced by the tourism industry. As a means to provide instant foreign investment, ease local unemployment, and regulate the channeling of revenue back to the Federal Government, one of the first major implementations enforced by Ferdinand Marcos was the creation of the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), the agency Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) and the Philippine Convention Bureau (PCB) in 1973. Much of the political scientist Linda Richter's body of work, in particular, provides an in-depth analysis on how the tourism industry in the Philippines was integral to alleviating international criticism of Marcos' dictatorial regime and his implementation of martial law by presenting the Philippines through a "façade of 'normality'" constructed by the tourism industry. For a thorough discussion on the political use of tourism by the Marcos Administration, see (Richter 1989).

purchasing it, in order to stabilize a particular market, determine the price for a given commodity, and eventually accrue an enormous financial return and even the majority of the commodity's market. In both cases, there were relatively few safe guards for initial investors in the balikbayan economy, which would ensure a profit for the transactions or labor. As such, the economy of appearances is always principled upon the promise of what could be rather than what was already there.

International property speculation and real estate development, particularly in the case of transnational real estate in the Philippines, is the preeminent example of Tsing's economy of appearances. In their endeavor to discover emerging sources of financial capital, transnational real estate entrepreneurs are compelled to exaggerate the potential for capital wealth accumulation in the Philippines in order to attract the investments they need to pursue their total business plans in full. The remaining chapter describes how transnational real estate corporations look to the economy of appearances as a means of compelling Filipinos in the U.S. to invest in real estate in the Philippines.

According to Tsing's formulation, "performance here is simultaneously economic performance and dramatic performance". Whether the aspiration for profit might entail marketing a new clothing line or introducing an innovation within the food industry, the "economy of appearances...the self-conscious making of a spectacle is a necessary aid to gathering investment funds...It is a regular feature of the search for financial capital". Whether real or imagined, the attraction of capital investments rely on the dramatization and exaggeration of possibilities in order to begin operating or to commence expansion of their industries. "The more spectacular the conjuring, the more possible an investment frenzy". Tsing's notion is particularly relevant to transnational real estate, where more often the intended property or township is still in the model phase, financing capital is integral to commence building and achieving these various development projects. This is especially the case in Metro Manila where properties are commonly funded by "pre-selling"⁴² up to 40 percent of the development (Cornelio-Pronove 1999). "In order to attract companies, countries, regions, and towns must dramatize their potential as places for investment. Dramatic performance is the prerequisite of their economic performance" (118).

Tsing's "economy of appearances" is instructive for comprehending the processes producing circulations of capital investment between the U.S. and the

⁴² With "pre-sold" or "off-plan" projects, developers often deposit the funds they receive from buyers into escrow. Under this arrangement, units are sold at a lower price and with lower monthly payments (compared to completed projects). Each payment is utilized to pay off the loan debt accrued by the developer when they purchased the land and also to continue completing the project. As the project reaches each stage closer to completion, the prices of the units increase. Both realtors and buyers quickly learn that the sooner they buy the unit, the more value is added to their property, and the original owner can choose to immediately sell the unit or keep it as the value increases. According to Edgar T. Pascual, a Filipino real estate broker and agent operating in the U.S., "the guaranteed appreciation is the key that the Filipino Americans are looking for in a pre-sell or off-plan type of realty project. It is not uncommon for one to tender a low 20 percent down payment and to see that amount increase at least twice in a matter of a few months. As sophisticated investors, Filipino Americans know well that their dormant savings do not even earn a decent 4 percent in American banks or in American money market placements" (Pascual 2003, 40)

Philippines within the transnational real estate industry. Through a far-reaching and often times disjunctive network of transnationally operating realtors and developers and the various modes of strategic advertising they produce, Philippine real estate corporations attempt to lure capital investments from Filipinos living in the U.S. by making the potential for financial gain appear as real as possible. They induce investments by kindling nostalgic aspirations of Filipinos desiring to return to the Philippines while promising them a life similar to the one they would be leaving behind in the U.S. Real estate agents conjure images of vast and elegantly constructed townships and depict a picture of the Philippines without the overcrowding and insecurity that has historically kept balikbayans from staying rather than returning to the U.S. At the same time, agents carefully meld these images together with those reminiscent of childhood and allusions compelling the comfort of living alongside one's compatriot rather than the alienation brought on being an immigrant.

Before describing the performance of these appearances, it is imperative to discuss the current predicament of speculative capital within the transnational real estate industry. It should be made clear that the transnational real estate market between both the U.S. and the Philippines, particularly the one fueled by financial investments made by Filipinos looking to return to the Philippines, is burgeoning. A number of Filipino business owners in the U.S., for instance, have been following property market trends outside of Metro Manila, particularly throughout their home provinces and are eager to invest in building in their hometowns. Belen Butay is the owner of Loulen Hawaii Sports Wear as well as the co-owner of Crown Court Restaurant. He admits that he is paying close attention to the real estate market in provinces like Ilocos Norte. "I've seen the economy improve every year," Butay said. "The middle class is starting to grow. My friends are rich. The shopping centers are much better here than in Hawaii and the mainland" (Kreifels 2009). Like other Filipino investors who chose to purchase property outside of Metro Manila, Butay's newly acquired properties are located in the provinces of Batangas and Quezon southeast of Manila. While he is away, his family looks over his farms where they raise poultry.

Filipino investors, like Butay, are conscious that in order to begin seeing larger returns it is paramount that they devote a significant amount of their financial capital to building an infrastructure that will support the expansion of provincial economies, just as it did in Manila during its early period of growth. Previously, the small number of state and privately owned banks could not manage to finance individual homeowners. However, over the last two decades, the State has aggressively pursued an agenda of deregulation opening the door for foreign banks to provide more residential loans at lower interest rates. Along with the introduction of foreign banking capital, other government incentives targeting the increase of real estate investments have created a window of opportunity for balikbayans to begin investing heavily in the residential market.

At the current moment however, the majority of Filipinos who have lived in the U.S. since the 1970s and 1980s, those who arrived as highly educated immigrants and have infused themselves within the skilled sector of the U.S. labor market, continue to remain contented to reside in their adopted country. For the

moment, neither Filipinos in the U.S. have chosen to return to the Philippines *en masse* nor are the majority of real estate developments built to accommodate this return complete. In order for the transnational real estate market to draw Filipinos from the U.S and meet these returnees with real estate developments, a foundation of speculative capital investment must be introduced and the first round of massive infrastructure and real estate has to be built.

Over the past decade, imaginative entrepreneurs have increasingly invested enormous amounts of speculative capital into multi-scaled property developments and the global advertising of these developments. Already subsidized in many ways by the office property market boom of the 1980s and 90s, investors have looked to the housing market to diversify their portfolios (Cornelio-Pronove 1999). By the end of the 1990s, investors became increasingly convinced that returning Filipinos would be willing to purchase upscale housing properties, particularly Filipinos working abroad in the white collar sector. Within the residential sector alone for example, in Quezon City, a traditionally upper-classed section of Metro Manila where the first wave of suburbanization had begun in the first half of the twentieth-century, there were about 24 different private residential subdivisions with about 6000 homes in the early 1990s. Most of the homes were single detached house and each subdivision filled about 5 square-kilometers of urban space (Nierras 1992). In less than a decade, developers expanded the number of subdivisions to 500, housing over a million residents and drastically transforming the residential core of urbanism in Metro Manila towards suburbanized dwellings (Connell 1999). Multinational corporations based in the Philippines began building properties not only in high-rise condominiums in the Central Business Area (CBD) of Makati, but western bungalows and multi-purposed townships around the periphery of Metro Manila. “Eventually the wave of Filipino retirees will make their way back to the Philippines. Soon the trickle will become a river”, claimed Norman Reyes, an executive of international sales at Ayala Lands.

As these developments slowly reconfigure the social world of Filipinos in the Philippines through the transformation of the built landscape and the redirection of labor, real estate corporations are increasingly encouraged to invest more financing capital as more and more Filipinos return to the Philippines, witness these evolutions, and in turn, look to invest their finances into their future back in the homeland.

Pascual (2003) has serviced the Filipino immigrant community in Southern California for over twenty-years. He has also been one of the pioneering figures in transnational real estate between both countries. Forecasting the potential purchasing power of returning Filipinos at the end of the 1980s, Pascual firmly believes that just as “other countries have seen an influx of retirees simply because they have developed means to keep these retirees in their paternal abode. I believe that the Philippines can find ways and means to do the same for the thousands of Filipino Americans retirees” (13-14). Pascual’s informative text, *How to Profit from the \$27 Billion Filipino American Market*, describes his early partnership with real estate corporations in the Philippines in selling Philippine property to Filipinos living in the U.S. Through buyer profiles and insight that he gained while dealing

with Filipinos in both countries, Pascual argues that Filipino Americans should be the primary target for financial investments, particularly in the real estate sector.

More broadly, his handbook illustrates the dual “performance” of speculative capital that is made necessary in order to entice *both* real estate developers in the Philippines and potential property buyers in the U.S. to invest in the Philippine real estate economy. As such, Tsing’s economy of appearances occurring within transnational real estate industry operates on two simultaneous fronts: (1) garnering speculative capital for development projects in the Philippines and (2) eliciting initial investments from Filipinos in the U.S. to purchase pre-selling properties.

Most of the properties that we are selling in the U.S. market have yet to be completed. Our clients have to take a leap of faith and buy properties that they will not move into for several years. Sure it’s an investment but we also know that it’s very different than how you buy homes in the States,

explains Carlos Estel, an international real estate agent working for Robinsons Land Corporation. The global real estate corporation is the parent company to Robinsons Malls, the second largest shopping mall and retail operator in the Philippines and just one of various corporations devoting substantial resources to selling property to Filipinos in the U.S.

The biggest obstacle to selling property to Filipinos is assuring them that they’ll get what they buy. For most companies, it’s an even bigger problem because they cannot build until they secure enough investments from buyers abroad. Especially in Manila [where property is more expensive]. This is because they do not own the land they are developing on. This is not a problem for Robinsons since we own many properties throughout the Philippines.

This sentiment was mirrored by another international real estate agent operating through Eton Properties.

We are under the Lucio Tan Corporations. The corporation already owns two banks and there are many non-performing assets. Instead of idle lands, we’d rather develop it. If we are not the biggest developer in the Philippines, we are certainly the biggest land bank. For some developers, their problem is, where to buy land for them to develop. Our problem is we have so many lands, which one should we develop first. Right? Just imagine we have one thousand hectares, it will take you 20 or 30 years to develop that. For just one project. Well, we have 13 projects right now.

Yet most real estate developers do not have the luxury of owning the property they are attempting to build upon. Unlike large land owning conglomerates like Ayala, Robinsons, or Lucio Tan, smaller real estate companies are not only forced to attract speculative capital investments to purchase land and commence

initial building, but must invest more funds to advertise and attract buyers to complete their projects. For this reason and others that will be discussed in the following chapter, the vast majority of property in the Philippines is owned by a handful of corporations, which not only operate as large land banks but through the diversity of their business portfolios, own a number of banks to finance loans, real estate firms that are in charge of selling various commercial and residential property, and even media shares in order to advertise their properties through television commercials and print media.

The introduction of the Balikbayan retiree property market in recent years has made the selling of properties more complicated. Much of the confidence maintained by real estate corporations selling retirement property to Filipinos living in the U.S. is sustained by decades of migrations back and forth between both countries. For instance, when asked why corporations are willing to invest billions of pesos in develop massive amounts of land and build grand and ornate home for Filipinos who may or may not be able to afford them, Reyes laughed and quickly responded:

Well sure, those Filipinos who work in Hong Kong or Saudi Arabia as household helpers, of course they cannot afford these high-class projects. But if we're talking about Filipinos working in the U.S. Well, so many of them are working in the medical field right? Nurses and those kind. These Filipinos are the ones who can afford to live in our high-class developments.

Idealizations of the lifestyle led by Filipinos settling in the U.S. and their financial success are by now depicted in every form of Philippine media, described in popular literature and labor brokering manuals, and relayed over dinner table conversations.⁴³ Often times, Filipino migrants themselves are guilty of perpetuating the folklore of living in the U.S., glossing over their hardships, as a way of communicating their successes and brining honor to their families in the Philippines. Even statistics taken from the U.S. Census and other data paint a picture of Filipino Americans as “model minorities” whose larger achievements as an ethnic minority in the U.S even outweigh their white American counterparts.⁴⁴

Even as a resident living in the U.S. for over two decades, Pascual himself, for instance, employs data on employment statistics and educational attainment, as evidence to project Filipinos as ideal candidates for property investments to developers in the Philippines. Asserting that “the average annual family income of Filipino Americans is \$50,000, which is almost twice as much as the family income of the total American income of \$34,400”, Pascual argues that Filipinos in the U.S. “generally enjoy stable livelihood and, in most cases, hold more than one job” (19). Pascual fails to mention that often times the high cost of living in the U.S. compels most Filipinos to look for multiple jobs. The author's claim also conceals the disparities of income of different Filipinos who are employed within various levels

⁴³ See Tadiar, *Fantasy Productions*, 2004.

⁴⁴ See Bonus, *Locating Filipino Americans*, 2000.

of the U.S. labor market. Then there is the more recent problem of over consumption and credit dilemmas as evidenced by the number of home foreclosures experienced by Filipinos throughout California and the Southwest discussed earlier. Pascual's views, shared by a number of real estate executives, perpetuates a commonly held perception that the mere fact that a Filipino lives in the U.S. equates to them somehow being fiscally secure.

Such idealizations are intrinsic to the performance of appearance needed to compel real estate corporations to invest in large-scale property developments.

Everyone here knows that a domestic worker in the U.S. can make 10 times more than what they would make here. How much more nurses, doctors, and engineers? They make their homes in the U.S. The goal for us is to now convince them that they can make their home here in the Philippines too,

Carlos Estel exclaimed while punctuating his excitement with his fingers as he tapped on the large keys of his scientific calculator. Estel, who like Pascual, had traveled back and forth between both countries for over two decades, was adept at calculating numbers. He lowered his head and ushered me closer to his tiny desk, which was crammed in a small office between four of his co-workers. The eager agent, who exuded the excitement of a youthful upstart, proceeded to calculate the earnings of a typical Filipino nurse working in the U.S. and their ability to make payments on particular properties owned by Robinsons. And after that, he moved onto breaking down the purchasing capabilities of a retiring engineer. "Anyone else?" Carlos asked, his face smiling broadly. Most of the real estate executives that I spoke with were far too reluctant to calculate such figures into hard numbers. Having participated in a number of trade shows throughout the U.S. over the years, Carlos felt extremely confident that according to the numbers at least, most Filipinos living in the U.S. could afford some type of retirement property in the Philippines.

In the case of Carlos, he was one of a handful of real estate executives who were privy to the daily plight of most Americans, let alone Filipino immigrants, who experience difficulties in paying for their homes in the U.S. and making a living in the intensely competitive U.S. labor market. When compared to the potential for financial investment accrued by most Filipinos in the Philippines however, in the mind of these executives, the idea and promise of the so-called "\$27 billion Filipino American market" appears almost limitless and unfettered. It was the performance of these appearances, coupled by the increasing number of property purchases made by balikbayans, that eventually led to a surge of property development targeting Filipino American retirees in the last decade. Ayala Land Incorporated launched Ayala Land International Sales Incorporated in early 2005 to cater exclusively to OFWs and permanent emigrants, particularly professionals and retirees based in the U.S. and Europe.

Similarly, the Brittany Corporation devoted substantial resources to working with US-based realty firms and financial planners in order to gain a deeper grasp of the Filipino American market. The byproduct of these collaborations was a focus on "patriotic investments" in order to compel Filipinos who long to return to the

Philippines. In fact, all of the major real estate corporations in the Philippines have a development sector devoted to balikbayans or Filipino American retirees.

Table 1. Philippine Real Estate Corporations who have projects specifically targeting Filipino American Buyers

| Developer | Main Location/s | Main Category | % Fil-Am Buyers |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Robinson's Land | Metro Manila | Condominiums | 50% |
| Starland Properties Inc. | Subic | Retirement Villas | 80% |
| Brittany Corp. | Nationwide | Lots, House and Lots, Condos | 50% |
| D.O. Plaza Estates | Parañaque | House and Lots | 30% |
| Megaworld | Metro Manila | Condominiums | 10% |

Source 1. (Tan, Real Estate Buyer Profile and Behavior: Helps you understand the overseas Filipino workers' buyer behavior, 2007), p. 18

Home Foreclosures and Multifaceted Roles of Filipino Realtors

The language of return for most Filipinos tends to linger in ambivalence. The longing for “simple” and “easier” times casually expressed by Filipino immigrants while recounting their days growing up in the Philippines are tethered to an extraordinarily complex set of sentiments, choices, and compromises. While the idea of return continuously looms like tantalizing fruits hanging from the stems of a vivid nostalgia, decades of material and emotional investments and the memories accompanying these experience resigns most permanent emigrants to a belief that they will probably never return and settle back in their homeland. Framed high school graduation pictures hanging above stairwells, the series of gold and silver trophies from various sports competitions and elementary school blue ribbons awards stacked along the shelves and displayed in glass cases, pristinely remodeled kitchens and well-worn karaoke machines, are together sparse remnants of decades of investments and memories marked throughout the home of Filipinos.

Transnational real estate agents and brokers are not only beset with the task of convincing Filipinos to move to the Philippines, tempting their compatriots with modern conveniences, familiar comforts, and the optimistic fervor exuded by image after image of the transforming landscape of their homeland depicted on brochures and power points. The more difficult challenge is to compel Filipinos in the U.S. that

the life that they had built for themselves in the U.S., their friends and community, potential professional opportunities, and homes are certainly worth leaving behind.

Selling and leaving one's home is perhaps the most vivid example depicting the complexities tied to the decision of return. During the early part of the economic crisis around 2006-2007 however, beset with compounding debt, recent lay offs, and often lacking the knowledge of alternatives, many Filipinos had little choice but to leave their homes. Some found refuge in temporary living situations with other relatives or friends. Others abruptly returned to the Philippines. In the midst of the crisis, local Filipino realtors were uniquely positioned to assist Filipinos who were struggling to keep hold of their homes and lacked the knowledge around their basic property rights, how to implement these rights, and the various ways in order to navigate around the loss of their homes and other assets. As such, Filipino realtors provided various functions and operated along several capacities: real estate agents and brokers, legal advisors and advocates, and emotional counselors.

"I have two types of clients on both ends. I have good clients who are the doctors, lawyers, and who are professionals. I have also Filipino clients who don't know what to do with their homes and don't know how to deal with the lenders," explained Edna Mendoza, a particularly proactive Filipina realtor working throughout the Bay Area for four years. "Most of my work over the last few years has been with those clients who cannot deal with losing their homes. Who don't know how to handle the banks and so forth." A host of Filipino families were confronted with these issues, particularly in Daly City. In fact, Daly City experienced the highest rate of foreclosures within San Mateo County at about 30 percent and homes owned by Filipinos composed of a large number of this percentage (Rodis 2008; Vasilyuk 2008). Rates of foreclosures were reflected in three other cities that were composed largely by Filipino communities. Along with Daly City, Stockton and Vallejo, all cities in California, Las Vegas had the highest number of home foreclosures from 2007 till the end of 2009.⁴⁵

The real estate crisis and subsequent home foreclosures created a small window of opportunity for a small number of realtors who were capable of weathering the obliterating crash of the larger real estate industry. During 2007, property prices began to quickly plummet to a point when the value of most homes would drop to one-half to one-third of the price that homeowners had originally purchased them. Realtors, those who operated in both larger firms or independently, found it nearly impossible to sell the homes of their clients and between 2007 and 2008, the housing market was at such a fragile state, that potential home buyers, hoping to seize the opportunity of the spiraling prices, remained tentative.

Edna, who arrived to the U.S. as a bio-chemist and worked at a lab in Palo Alto for almost two decades, had only recently begun working as a realtor and even less as a full-time agent. Yet, she found that her gregarious disposition and her knack for finances easily complemented a profession in sales, particularly in the sale of property. Rather than throwing in the towel on her new-found passion, Edna

⁴⁵ With a population of 106,000, Daly City had 228 properties in default and 221 in bank ownership or up for auction.

invested more money in traveling to realty conferences in Las Vegas, Palm Springs, and as far as Florida. Eventually Edna realized that her notoriety in the Filipino community provided her with a particular niche, she integrated new strategies to marketing herself. After she successfully sold a friend's home in Union City, other friends and distant relatives in the Filipino community began asking her for advice and soliciting her services. It became apparent that more and more, Filipinos were experiencing similar housing problems.

In the first quarter of 2008, I was so excited to do this. Because we have clients who come in are so distressed are going home to the Philippines. And these clients are so paranoid. They don't know what to do. They have banks who are constantly calling them and they don't know what to do.

As Edna began recounting a series of stories, detailing the experiences of Filipinos who were on the brink of losing their homes, it became clear to me why she was capable of persisting while the real estate industry around her was falling to pieces. Her eyes glistened with sincerity and her voice cracked beneath her words as she spoke to me about her client. It was apparent that Edna felt compelled to protect and guide those Filipinos who were most vulnerable during this crisis.

I had one client who stands out. She had come to me one day. I didn't even know she was coming to see me because she didn't call. They thought they're going to go to jail. Even the husband left to go to the Philippines (while the rest of the family stayed behind). They just left their home. I had to counsel them. I told them over and over again, don't just leave your home. There is a process that the bank has to go through before they take your home.

If you're not there why don't these Filipinos look for information?

The thing is if you are going to go to an attorney, you're going to pay. And a lot of them didn't even know that there is a process. Because of the letters they received, the letters are so threatening. I know of a client in Daly City, when she got foreclosed, she really didn't know what to say. She didn't know how to communicate for herself. If you talk to someone and nothing happens, I know you have to keep going to the second level. You have to go to the next level if nothing happens on the first level. I know how to do these things, that's why so many Filipinos come to me.

Indeed, not all Filipino realtors experienced the same level of altruism. Predatory lenders worked together with a number of opportunistic Filipino realtors to take more advantage of Filipinos who were not only in danger of losing their homes because of sub-prime mortgages or job losses, but these particular Filipino

realtors promised their clients to help adjust mortgages or provide legal assistance to foreclosing their homes for a price.⁴⁶

The dire situation escalated to such a point where *The Filipino Channel* (TFC) began hosting a series on the “Filipino foreclosure crisis”. The special series titled “Payong Kapamilya sa Foreclosure” was hosted by the channel’s news show *Balitang America* in 2009. In a characteristically over the top and over sensationalized manner, the news show begins with music intended to exude a situation of panic and hysteria. For no explicable reason, a camouflaged voice reads out loud “Fact: 6 of the top cities worst hit by foreclosures are in California, followed by Las Vegas, Reno, Nevada, Phoenix Area in Arizona and Cape Coral Area in Florida”. Faith Bautista, President of Mabuhay Alliance, along with agents representing loaning agencies, were asked by a number of questions regarding what possible alternatives viewers might take in the midst of losing their homes to foreclosure.

Developing support, beginning with a number of “foreclosure clinics” hosted in various cities throughout the U.S., the Mabuhay Alliance had successfully advocated residents living in the city of Vallejo, a city that boasted the tenth highest foreclosure rate in the country at the time, to place a moratorium on foreclosures (Ehrenreich, 2009). The Mabuhay Alliance were capable of garnering much political attention to the plight of minorities, particularly Filipinos, experiencing home foreclosures that in early 2009 that, together with National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA), members successfully met with the leading members of the Obama administration finance advisors, including Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, Federal Deposit Insurance Chairwoman, Sheila Bair, Secretary of Treasury, Timothy Geithner and House Financial Services Committee Chairman, Barney Frank (Asian Journal, 2009). Both organizations met with administration members to suggest solutions to the foreclosure crisis through their collective experiences as advocates for homeowners and as real estate professionals.

Utilizing short sales was another reason why Edna was capable of surviving as a realtor. In a short sale, the bank or mortgage lender agrees to discount a loan balance due to economic or financial hardships experienced by the borrower. During the short sale process, the homeowner sells the mortgaged property for less than the outstanding balance of the loan, and the remaining proceeds of the sale go to the lender. In the climate surrounding the U.S. real estate crisis, short sales became one of the most economically prudent solutions. Banks opt to incur a limited financial loss rather than suffer greater losses due to foreclosure or non-payment of mortgages.⁴⁷

Other Filipino realtors have adopted more creative strategies in order to supplement their sales or transform their marketing strategy entirely. Like the part hosted by Eleanor Acupang in Daly City, other Filipino realtors in the U.S. have taken

⁴⁶ During the past three years, there have been a slew of cases involving Filipino real estate brokers and agents defrauding other Filipino homebuyers. One of the more highly publicized cases involved

⁴⁷ Meanwhile, homeowners are able to mitigate the damage to their credit history and partially control the debt. Also, short sales are usually faster and less expensive than foreclosures. It does not extinguish the remaining balance unless their agreement with the lender clearly indicates it on the acceptance of offer.

on more transnational approaches to the selling of real estate. Roads shows have become a common facet of the transnational real estate industry. Each Philippine real estate corporation targeting Filipinos in the U.S. devotes a significant amount of finances on advertising. One advertising practice is to send representative real estate agents to present models of pre-selling developments around the Philippines, particularly in the provinces around Metro Manila. Filipino realtors in the U.S. are valuable barometers measuring interest within their communities and if a realty organization determines that there is a critical mass of interest it will send one or two representatives to meet with that realtor. Depending on the amount of down payments received after the presentation, the realtor will receive a commission on the sales.

As I sat listening to the representative of Brittany begin her presentation at a home in Union City, just east of Daly City on the other side of the peninsula, I was immediately struck by the cover on the brochure. The cover depicted a man resting contentedly with his son draped over his chest, both sleeping together on a hammock. As I was staring at the picture of the father and his son sleeping peacefully in an open grass field, the lights dimmed and immediately similar images of people enjoying or resting in grassy fields began to fade in and out of the power point presentation. Leisure is a common theme in Philippine real estate ads. Accustomed to hearing about the demanding pace of life in the U.S., the realtor from Brittany continuously evoked intimate and romantic images of family members finally being able to spend time with their families. Pictures of tire swings and three-story wooden mansions created an environment reminiscent of the places for which the development was to be named – Georgia Club in Augusta Santa Rosa. The presentation emphasized the central location of the soon to be built development:

Georgia Club is a central development in the fast emerging industrial hub of the South. It is close to premier recreational destinations-from the top gold course to the cool mountain retreats of Tagaytay and the inviting beaches of Batangas. The country's foremost academic institutions are also close by, including the 45-hectare campus of the University of Santo Tomas. Right nearby, Paseo de Santa Rosa, the commercial center brings together restaurants, bars, shops and other lifestyle establishments.

Emma Araneta, the realtor presenting to an audience of 32 Filipinos and a handful of non-Filipinos, iterated the descriptions of the development as if having memorized it from the brochure in my hands. Later, Emma told me that she comes to the U.S. at least once a year but always to the same place because she has family members who live just north-east of San Francisco in Vallejo. "I come here each year but the company doesn't pay for all of my expenses. They pay for my plane ticket but if I didn't have family here, I wouldn't be able to come. The trip has too much expenses diba?" Each year, Emma makes a goal of selling at least 10 lots during her road shows. "I rely on my family members a lot to keep in touch with interested buyers," Emma expresses with genuine gratefulness. "They actually do a lot of the convincing for me because it's too hard to convince someone to just give me all of their savings when I'm living in the Philippines [and not in the U.S.]" The quasi-professional

relationship that Emma has with her family members is indicative of an increasingly creative network of Filipino realtors who continually collaborate amongst each other between the U.S. and the Philippines.

This growing network of realtors and real estate corporations is devoted to connecting buyers in the U.S. with property investments in the Philippines. Along with developers who operate with as many as twenty international sales-offices focused on selling to OFWs, corporations are increasing their presence in the U.S. and developing elaborate strategies to grab hold of the transnational realty market in the U.S. Edward Tan illustrates the common activities of transnational realty networks:

Having sales and marketing offices abroad with regular activities there, having their own regular road show presentations in selected countries, coordinating and having connections with Filipino realty organization abroad, advertising in the main broadsheets both in the physical newspaper and the Internet, placing ads in specialized OFW newspapers and/or Filipino newspapers abroad, quoting dollar amounts to sell their projects in their webpage, placing ads in various OFW web pages, having their own call centers, exhibits at the duty free shops and joining regular international real estate fairs organized by the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Associations, Inc. (CREBA) International Foundation, Inc. (2007, 49).

Joining in realty associations like CREBA provides real estate corporations the opportunity to participate in annual road shows organized in cities like Tokyo, London, and Los Angeles, particularly for larger corporations. Such associations provide a speculative edge to larger corporations since memberships fees are often too beyond the budget of smaller developers. Larger corporations are capable of writing off the risk of losing prospects or being unable to gain financial commitments from buyers. Smaller developers, eager to find a position within the transnational real estate market, are limited to joining local real estate exhibits or placing ads in Filipino American newspapers. While local shows in the Philippines cost between P35,000 (USD\$760) to P50,000 (USD\$1,090), participating in road shows abroad can cost each realtor more than twice that amount. According to the CREBA, membership fees for the West Coast, USA road show from September 16 to October 1, 2006 cost each member about P92,000 (USD\$2,000) for food, taxes, booth, posters, and flyers (Tan 2005). As Emma already denoted, this price did not include the plane fare or travel visa fees for travel to the U.S.

Bird Dogs and Transnational Realty Network

Unlike several Filipino families who had lost their homes in the early wake of the real estate crisis, through a mixture of foresight and fortune, the Cardenas placed their two-story bungalow in Daly City for a short sale rather than risking greater financial losses by eventually foreclosing on their home. Upon making my way into the entrance and stepping into their foyer, I noticed that apart from a few

boxes stashed to the side of the living room and the dull white sheets draped over much of the furniture, the majority of the Cardenas' packing was left for the last days before they would move out. One box in particular, partially filled with their children's primary school yearbooks and old beat up text books, created an image of a family who were not yet completely ready to leave a life they had struggled so hard to build.

Rosemarie Cardenas unwrapped the foil from a plate and placed fried tapsilog and eggs in front of me. Smells of the freshly cooked rice waffed into my nose and as the yoke of the eggs dripped along one side of the scorched edges of the freshly cooked beef cutlets, Rosemarie bursted out, "sige, sige, go ahead," insisting that I eat before I commenced the interview. Both hers and her husband Roberto's jovial affect and warm generosity concealed the slight shame they felt for losing their home and the extent to which they painstakingly decided to sell their home and return to the Philippines as they had originally planned over two decades ago. "Robert was the one who really wanted to return. He had always wanted to open a business back home. But I wasn't convinced really," Rosemarie admitted staring affectionately at her husband.

A number of health complications had taken a toll both physically and financially on the couple. With both of their children about to finish college and Rosemarie having lost her job as an office administrator at the University of California San Francisco Medical Center more than two years ago, Roberto began looking into the real estate market in the Philippines. In a serendipitous encounter, Roberto found himself in a conversation with an old friend during one of the many family parties that the couple hosted. Jeffrey Abella, was a childhood friend who grew up with Roberto in Antipolo, one of the various cities composing the province of Rizal bordering the edge of Metro Manila. Abella moved with his family to the East Bay of California and worked as a realtor in Union City since the 1990s. Realty came fairly easily to Abella since several of his family members worked in the real estate industry in the Philippines. In the early part of his career as a real estate agent, Abella would occasionally refer Filipino American clients to family members who could broker property deals around Manila.

"This is the key to buying property in the Philippines. You have to know your agent very well. It helps if they are a family member or a friend," Roberto said sternly. It was one of the few comments that he made in such a serious tone. His comment made enormous sense in the context of the real estate profession in the Philippines; particularly in Metro Manila where not only real estate agencies are still capable of operating without a license but whose armies can be easily found passing out flyers in *any* bustling area in the city, from street corners, MTA escalators, and of course the malls. And while licensed Philippine real estate agents and brokers have lobbied hard to enforce the licensure of the profession and are the first to inform potential buyers about the importance of working with a licensed agent, ill informed and easily convinced Filipinos who are eager to make investments in Philippine properties continue to fall prey to false advertisers over the internet or somewhere else.

Abella had proposed that Roberto look into purchasing a home and lot from a member of his family who sold properties in Rizal. "Buying the property was simple.

Making sure the house was built to spec was another thing entirely,"⁴⁸ Roberto continued.

Not only were Jeff's family responsible for the sale but they were responsible for looking over the construction of the home. It was harder to do that [supervise Jeff's family in the Philippines] than to take care of selling our home here. Can you imagine that? With the way that the market is here? We were lucky to get rid of our home even if it was at such a low price but it was nothing compared to dealing with the problems of building our home over there. Poor Jeff was in the middle of all of that.

Indeed, not only did Abella help to sell property to the Cardenas in Rizal but he oversaw the short sale of their home in Daly City.

He was good. I did not want to approach him with our problems at the party so I arranged to meet with him at his house later in the week. He had no idea that I wanted to talk business with him but he was really happy to help us. Not just for the money you know, he knew a lot of Filipinos were going through this and didn't know how to handle this problem. He was the one who arranged the short sale of our home here. He did such a good job that I trusted him to help us find a good property in the Philippines as well.

The versatile real estate dealing conducted by Abella points to the interweaving web of transnational labor produced in the global real estate industry. Having prospective clients desiring to purchase property in the Philippines, Abella occasionally provided leads to his family members in the Philippines and connected them with his clients in the U.S. Although Abella would never call himself such, he is *essentially* what Pascual refers to as a real estate "birddog". Like the majority of Filipino realtors operating throughout California, Pascual originally worked under a large firm, Century 21 and sold properties throughout the greater Los Angeles Area during the 1980s and 1990s. It was the manner through which Pascual aggressively targeted properties in adjoining areas that set him apart from other Filipinos. Integral to this strategy was his recruitment and implementation of "birddogs" whom he encouraged to work with other agents and expand their sales outside of their particular office listings.

"From 1988 to 1994," Pascual says, "I recruited, trained and managed a robust sales group that was predominantly Filipino Americans. Most of them are now a part of our growing network that dedicate their efforts in promoting and selling Philippine properties to Filipino Americans in the U.S." Like those hunter dogs who fetch pheasants after they are plucked from the sky, realty bird dogs scour for real estates deals and ear-mark them for investors for an agreed fee. This method of employing a widely spread network of realtors employed by Pascual is not unique to the rest of the real estate industry but is in fact, a common component

⁴⁸ The significance of having someone to look over the building of properties in the Philippines will be discussed in much more detail in the next chapter.

to creative property sales made increasingly necessary due to the current dire state of the industry.

Recognizing a potential market niche in the early 1990s, Pascual devoted his work to selling Philippine property to Filipino Americans while working as an accountant and CPA to supplement his income. He and his staff became adept in the most minute rules and procedures regarding escrow laws in the Philippines knowing full well that any hint of incompetence or malfeasance would drive potential clients, who are already reluctant, away completely.

Birddogs in the Philippines focused their efforts by prospecting for Filipino American buyers...A big chunk of Filipino American prospects prefer to buy beach lots and farm properties located in their home provinces. It is because they are so knowledgeable of what is happening almost daily in their home provinces. If a new McDonald outfit is opened there, the news is passed along to him in a matter of just days. Strangely, they are not versed with the massive development that is transpiring in the metropolitan districts like Metro Manila, unlike the minutest happening in his home province. (It is) because birddogs are aware of this, they know what to offer, what type of financing deal is ideal and when will the visit to the Philippines be done. Thus, these birddogs apparently will then notify their counterpart Philippine birddog apparently will then notify their counterpart Philippine birddog to complete the rest of the sales process" (58-59).

Transnational realtors like Pascual and Abella have become key figures within the transnational real estate industry, soliciting and selling properties throughout a wide range of realty corporations, independent property holders, and individual home owners. Their ability to physically meet and speak with clients throughout the entire transaction provides an important safeguard against the potential scams that might occur over other the plethora of realtors who solicit international sales primarily through the internet.

"Balikbayans can realize 100 percent profit in one year," claims Reynaldo Duterte, a real estate agent with RP Duterte Realty in Manila. Duterte adamantly believes that real estate in the throughout the Philippines will experience at least a 20 to 30 percent annual growth over the next five years. "Filipino Americans should look here to invest and retire" (Kreifels, 2009). Given the projections of growth in Philippine real estate and the opportunity for a new bubble of transnational real estate investments to emerge, particularly in the residential sector, networks of transnationally operating realtors have begun aggressively targeting Filipinos in the U.S. Through the practice of birddogging and road shows, Filipino realtors have adopted creative strategies to compel Filipinos in the U.S. to invest in Philippine property. These strategies have become ever-present in the transnational advertising of Philippine real estate.

"Own A Piece of the Philippines While Taking America With You": Transnational Advertising

“A new city is about to breathe life to Metro Manila’s south: Eton City,” announces an elegantly designed brochure produced by Eton Properties. The 1,000 hectares master plan of Eton City is an exemplar of the most recent type of mega township projects that are being built throughout the periphery of Metro Manila. Being constructed in mostly rural and industrial zones like Cavite, Santa Rosa, and Tagaytay, these townships are slightly different than the commercial or suburban districts that have been modeled after Makati’s CBD or the extremely affluent Forbes Park. Unlike the continuously growing Global City in Fort Bonifacio, the township of Eton City will include every amenity provided within a tourism district like golf courses and nature preserves along with the malls, business districts, and schools that one would find attached to any of the residential developments sprouting up in Metro Manila. What also makes Eton City different is that it is almost entirely catered to Filipino retirees, particularly those coming from the U.S.

“Inspired by famous lakeside communities overseas such as...Lake Las Vegas in Nevada and Foster City in California, to name a few, South Lake Village at Eton City has made cosmopolitan island living in the Philippines a reality,” boasts one page in the brochure folder. The West Wing Residences, immediately signaling the title of the popular 1990s television show *The West Wing*, is one of the suburban developments being built within Eton City and was specifically modeled after various neighborhoods in California. Raquel de Guzman, an international real estate agent with Eton, explained that

We designed this after the Western United States. It’s basically designed to be a typical western house. In fact our model houses were all named after U.S. presidents. The house models are called Jefferson, Eisenhower, McKinley...those are the different kind of house models. We designed these residences to make Filipino Americans feel like they will be owning a piece of the Philippines while taking American with them.

More accurately, Eton City is being modeled more so after the contemporary, massive enclave-style residences currently being built throughout Brazil, India, Korea, China, and other countries throughout the Global South.⁴⁹ These large-scale developments, while inspired by the architecture and city planning of traditional “American” or “Western” designs and tastes, are focused merging the these tastes with the specific familiarities that make these countries and cities “home” to repatriating emigrants. The West Wing Residences is one singular element within what Eton is calling the first “island-lot” development in the Philippines.

The master plan is actually inspired by the artificial Palm Islands in Dubai. Unlike the 520 square-kilometer beaches constructed alongside the Palm Islands, Eton City will include an artificially built 350 square-kilometer lake. Island villas will be named after island countries in the Pacific Ocean like Maui, Guam, Fiji, Bali or other centers of tourism like Ibiza, Bermuda, Maldives, and Macau. The model of

⁴⁹ Some examples include (Álvarez-Rivadulla 2007; Leisch 2002; Salcedo and Torres 2004; Caldeira 2000)

Eton City however still stands on the shoulders of the Philippines first commercial metropole, Makati's CBD. Above the first page of the folder brochure are three pictures depicting "Makati before", "Makati now", and "Eton City" now, while one can only image what "Eton City now now" is supposed to look like.

It is the work of transnational realtors to project the future of Filipinos and perform the appearances of safety, security, and happiness. Eton City is both the material and metaphorical construction of these aspirations, which expand on earlier allusions of class status and wealth of made physically visible by the construction of previous suburban subdivisions. These ideals are clearly felt in walking past elite communities like Forbes Park adjacent to Makati. Connell (1999) discusses this earlier model of gated communities that quickly emerged throughout Metro Manila during the 1980s and 90s. Connell discusses how these "fortress enclaves", which reflected urbanization trends in a number of places throughout the Global South like Sao Paulo, Brazil, was the physical manifestation of social division created by anxiety and paranoia of insecurity and crime.⁵⁰ In his study of real estate advertising in Manila, Connell argues that each of the advertisements evoked 5 common themes: value, security, exclusivity, escape, and community. Mega-developments like Eton City are a hyper-realization of these ideals and in the next chapter, I will discuss how contemporary transformations in Metro Manila are marked by a process of by-passing various social infrastructures entirely, thus dividing the world of the elite into nodes of cosmopolitanism while the lower classes are continuously neglected and forgotten.

Tucked away in the Eton City folder brochure, one can find a list of "Frequently Asked Questions" posed to Eton employees by balikbayans considering whether to purchase property in the South Lake Village, a subdivision closest to the South Luzon Expressway and adjacent to the southern part of the lake. On the list are concerns common to most Filipinos who have lived in Metro Manila regarding flooding, water supply, and even noise pollution from the freeway. There are also questions that are more particular to the concerns of balikbayans who have grown accustomed to their homes in non-tropical environments.

⁵⁰ Connell's argument around fortified enclaves in Manila is drawn directly from Caldeira's *City of Walls*. In her text, Caldeira argues that what makes this period of urbanization significant and unique is that the means through which wealthier Paulistas are self-segregating has become more elaborate and privatized. Amenities like security guards, swimming pools, gyms, and small businesses, similar to a number of enclaves in Metro Manila, have created separate worlds both within and apart from the universe of crime and insecurity in São Paulo. Furthermore, Caldeira argues that while these developments and the advertisements selling them are couched in a language of crime, this rhetoric of segregation reveals deeper fears produced by larger political processes of social democratization brought on by globalization and global progressive movements. See (Caldeira 2000).

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. Will the water be a breeding group for mosquitoes? | 9. How will you ensure aeration of the lake? |
| 2. Will the development be prone to flooding, especially during typhoons? | 10. Where will the water in the lake come from? |
| 3. How will the possibility of an overflow be addressed? | 11. How will the water discharge system for the lake work? |
| 4. Won't the river water be source of pollution? | 12. Where will the village water supply come from? |
| 5. How will the accumulation of too much algae be prevented? | 13. How will the noise pollution from South Luzon Expressway be addressed? |
| 6. How will you ensure that the water in the lake will flowing? | 14. Will lot owners be allowed to have swimming pools in their backyard? |
| 7. Will there be a garbage disposal policy? | 15. How will the water be treated? Will the water in the rivers be treated also? |
| 8. Will erosion of the island and lakeside lots occur? | 16. What will be found in the center island? |

Figure 2. "Frequently Asked Questions" listed in brochure for Eton City real estate development.

While concerns around mosquitoes, garbage disposal, aeration, swimming pools, appear obvious to some, they speak to a number of obstacles that transnational realtors confront while attempting to convince Filipinos in the U.S. to return to the Philippines.

The logic informing these concerns will be discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter, however it is important to point out that the ever-present ambivalence surrounding immigrant return is always perpetuated by a lingering desire to keep one foot firmly planted in both worlds at the same time. When one physically places themselves in the Philippines, whether it is in the rural setting of the provinces surrounding Manila or deep within its urban core, the intense polarity between one's life in the U.S. and that of the Philippines is nothing short of staggering. The expectation to be able to escape mosquitoes, refuse, the enveloping humidity, smells, and noises, elements that are inextricable from everyday life in the Philippines, speak to the transformation of the immigrant's own subjectivity while living abroad. Transnational realtors who attempt to sell property in the Philippines do so by conveying a built-environment, an entire world in fact, while literally placing Filipinos back in the Philippines, is entirely separate from it at the same time. Architecture and design exuding American sensibilities become intrinsic to this paradoxical process and signal in many ways the impossibilities of modernity itself.

In the brochure for the Georgia Club for instance, the description overtly communicates the desire of Philippine corporations to specifically attract Filipinos living in the U.S.

It's time to call this charming community your home. A 30-hectare community designed to reflect the gracious, classic architecture of the American south. With its naturally lush landscape of sprawling trees, its intertwined parkways and pedestrian pathways that link that neighborhood, Georgia Club evokes an idyllic, suburban lifestyle.

“Charming”, “American south”, “sprawling trees”, “idyllic”, “suburban lifestyle” together evoke ideas and sentiments that are almost antithetical to the visual landscape of Metro Manila. The invocation of this unthinkable world, the Georgian countryside in Manila, allows Filipinos to begin imagining a Philippines completely unlike the one that they left behind decades ago. The captions describing the “Mansions of Georgia Club” are just as provocative. “With wrought iron fences, colorful shutters on French windows, brightly colored doors, inviting front porches, and open floor plans, The Mansion of Georgia Club is a perfect combination of architecture set amidst nature’s beauty.” Invoking a television-like image of the American South, suspending the reader in time with “wrought iron fences” and “inviting front porches”, the real estate advertisement creates a world that is nothing like the Philippine environment surrounding it.

The brightly colored designs depicted in the brochure advertising Augusta Santa Rosa and the Georgia Club are part in parcel of Brittany’s new marketing campaign to sell property to Filipinos in the U.S. Brittany is the real estate development arm Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc., a multinational corporation that touts itself as the leading seller of upscale and luxury properties in the Philippines. Currently, Georgia Club located in Santa Rosa, Laguna is just one of four large-scale property developments currently being built in provinces around Metro Manila. All of which are being actively marketed to various international communities, particularly Filipinos in the U.S.

Along with inundating the internet with advertisements, transnational realtors focus much of their advertising in an array of Filipino American newspapers. Take one newspaper article advertising another of Brittany’s real estate developments printed in the popular Filipino American newspaper the *Philippine News* (18 September 2007). Brittany Bay, a multipurpose condominium development, claims to afford its residents “San Francisco Living in Metro Manila” (fig. 2). The author advertising the yet unbuilt residential complex claims that along with facilities for businesses, Brittany Bay provides its residents with “retail, clubhouses, serviced apartments and the like, creating a live-play lifestyle”. While the Georgia Club caters to the idyllic rural sensibilities of Filipinos desiring to resettle in the provinces, The Brittany Bay advertisement replicates common urban themes, which draw images of San Francisco, a major immigration hub of Filipinos, in order to convince Filipinos that they will not have to leave the U.S. at all.

The real estate conglomerate Philtown uses similar imagery to promote their developments. In a single-page layout printed in the *Philippine News* (23 November 2007), Philtown advertises their condominiums against the backdrop of the Whitehouse, Mount Rushmore, the Hollywood sign, and other paradigmatic icons of American architecture and landscape. This advertisement evades any subterfuge

that might conceal its motive. According to the ad layout marketing the Philtown corporation, “each project of Philtown *transcends* mere address into new realms of architecture” (my emphasis). Advertisers are openly marketing the trend of contemporary urban transformation in Metro Manila and the attempt that developers are making to create nodes of urbanism that allow upscale property owners the *choice* to bypass Metro Manila almost entirely.

Finally, another common advertisement in the *Philippine News* sells the Lakeshore developments by claiming “Today, ordinary folks can now take pleasure in extraordinary perks in a very family-friendly environment that espouses natural beauty, open space, and life-enhancing amenities.” Through the language of leisure and ordinary space that the advertisement utilizes, the advertisement once again reconstructs the familiarity of American suburban lifestyles, a learned sensibility, which is completely opposed to the distinctly stratified world of the Philippines. “Ordinary folks,” “extraordinary perks,” family-friendly,” “natural beauty,” “open-space,” together directly signal the transcendence of class difference exuded by the ideals of American suburbia.

Like many other Asian metropolises, Manila is reconstituting itself through global migration and trade. Americanization, embodied by the imagining of transnational Filipino migrants, becomes one vehicle whereby Metro Manila can reposition itself as a node within the larger global network. However, the urbanization produced by these contemporary developments reaches far beyond simply reproducing modes of American suburbanization. Increasingly, buyers around the globe are sharing a preference for purchasing single-family homes specifically in a suburban environment and situated amongst middle and upper class families. These preferences, particularly the ways in which mechanisms of social division are embedded within these types of suburban neighborhoods, has indelibly influenced the architecture and built-environment of Metro Manila and other urban hubs within the Global South (Leichenko 2005). These ideals of social division through suburbanization certainly mirror the history of suburbanization and suburban sprawl in the U.S. and the evolution of “American Dream”.⁵¹

What becomes apparent however, when viewing the layouts of this contemporary wave of condominiums and houses being built in Metro Manila, is that there is a particular convergence between a desire for “American” and “Filipino” tastes. Together, the cultural meanings exuded by these designs create an idea of the “global” by signaling tastes and ideals that cannot be understood as being

⁵¹ My conception of the “American Dream” within this context includes the aspirations reflected by the increase of single-family detached homes in typically suburban neighborhoods. These aspirations convey the desire for clearly marked lines of social division exhibited within the built-environment coupled together with liberal notions of property ownership and property rights. Robin Liechenko and William Solecki argue that the increasing desire for suburban style housing parallels the decrease in household size in several parts of the developing world by almost 14 percent between 1970 and 2000. According to these authors, the reasons for this decrease are indicative of patterns of economic globalization, the growing middle class and an increase of incomes within certain sectors of these societies. With these patterns comes a decline in birth rates, the personal choice to live in suburban neighborhoods, and a decline in extended family communal style households. See (Leichenko 2005).

either purely “Filipino” or “American.” This formation of a paradoxical hybridity has emerged as the trademark of transnational urbanism and the material traces of postcolonial geographies in the making.⁵² As Philippine real estate corporations hire American architects and urban planners to ensure that the contemporary built-environment will reflect an “American-style” or while a host of Filipinos return and infuse a sense of self and taste brought with them while living abroad, these ideals are easily subsumed within a culture and environment, which is by now, accustomed to transformation and hybridity. What becomes vividly etched into the landscape however, are not the “American” ideals portended by designers, corporate executives, or even the buyers. What continues to remain and emanate from the built-environment is the hybridity so characteristic of the Philippines and metropolitan core of Manila.

One way to examine this particular hybridity is through the domestic space created for maids in each of these developments. Like other homes throughout Latin America, contemporary homes built in the Philippines are almost always equipped with a room and even a separate bathroom for a domestic servant. It is almost unthinkable within a U.S. context to allocate a room and bathroom in a suburban household for a domestic servant. Not only because it becomes unaffordable to house a domestic servant within a suburban household, but it also defies the classless ideal espoused by suburban lifestyles. Throughout all of the floor plans of the Phoenix Grenada developments therefore, each household is equipped with domestic space regardless of model. In the Philippines, the employing of domestic help has been a requisite mark of class separation and visible wealth for centuries dating back to Spanish colonization. What might appear unthinkable in a sector of American society has become indispensable in Philippine society. The hybridity of contemporary Philippine urban designs are reflective of the complicated ambivalence amongst repatriating Filipinos who desire to return to the comfort of their formative years and the memories of adolescence and yet, simultaneously remain in the U.S.

Impossible Returns

I waited patiently with Ernesto Calderon at Los Angeles International Airport as he eagerly waited to board his flight for the Philippines. As he carefully folded the yellow McDonald’s quarter-pounder wrapper into an unrecognizable origami shape, I could see the anxiety written on his face dripping lowly down to his fidgeting finger as they nervously searched for something to pre-occupy them. Ernesto is a retired postal service inspector who worked at the South San Francisco branch for almost thirty-two years. Recently separated from his wife, Ernesto decided that it

⁵² Jane Jacobs’ case study on the place-making practices of Bengali immigrants in London describes the complex set of practices and subject formation that takes place within postcolonial geographies, “a sense of place which is built around vectors of connection and histories of disconnection...the post-colonial geographies have replaced the security of the maps of the past with the uncertainty of touring the unsettled spatialities of power and identity in the present”. See (Jacobs 1996).

was the right time for him to return to the Philippines. While I was visiting my mother in Southern California, Ernesto told me that he had found a deal on a ticket to Manila but had to fly out of Los Angeles rather than San Francisco. Knowing that I was in Southern California, he told me that he would just meet me at the airport to discuss his trip to the Philippines and his plan to look for a retirement home for him and his younger brother's family.

"I don't know whether it will be close to Manila or in Dumaguete". Dumaguete City has become a thriving hub on the southern coast of the Island of Negros Oriental. Ernesto had grown up there and graduated from Silliman University years before it became an attraction for tourists, both non-Filipino and Filipino alike. More than a decade ago, he loaned his younger brother \$5000 to open a business there. For several years the fish stand his brother ran had done well but more recently competition from larger businesses had slowed the profits. Rather than running a fish stand, Ernesto was fairly confident that he and his brother could open a restaurant with the money that Ernesto had saved.

On the other hand, Ernesto also had friends, returning Filipinos like himself whom he had known in San Francisco, who had opened a pizza parlor in Tagatay. The lakeside city was only 55 kilometers away from Manila and had been for many years a vibrant tourist destination for Manileños, which, according to Ernesto's friends, is slowly accumulating more business as developments are continuing to be built in the area. He didn't seem to mind the fact that Tagatay sits adjacent to Taal Lake, where the still-active Taal volcano is situated. For Ernesto, the value of moving to either place depended more on the business opportunities each place offered rather than the climate or conveniences. His trip to the Philippines is more of an exploratory visit but even Ernesto agreed that he would certainly buy a new home if he found the right situation.

There are a host of reasons why Filipinos choose to return to the Philippines. According to Ernesto, his reasons for returning were principally a matter of finance and security.

I've become unaccustomed to the weather. People say that I can move to Baguio [where the climate is cooler] but who do I know there? I want to go where I can put my savings to use and hopefully make enough money where I can hire somebody to do the day to day tasks after a few years. I'm already old you know," he says while laughing loudly.

Ernesto is actually 67, having arrived to California when he was 23. He worked as an auto-mechanic for a garage in Excelsior before finding stable employment at the Post Office. Listening to Ernesto discuss his plans upon arriving to the Philippines, one gets the sense that he had been planning this next stage in his life for a long time. His desire to become financially secure in the Philippines was more of a desire to fulfill certain aspirations that he could not achieve while he was in the U.S. "I always wanted to own a business. It gets old to go to your same job and have the same boss for years. But then I married Nancy and we had kids. So you know," Ernesto explained.

For most of the Filipinos that I interviewed, their desire to return was primarily an issue of security. Having seen many of their friends struggle with paying medical bills after being diagnosed with severe health disorders, most Filipinos did not feel that their social security benefits would be enough to cover any unforeseeable trauma. It's a common sentiment that although one has to pay for health care out of pocket in the Philippines, most health care treatments cost considerably less than they do in the U.S. And considering that most of their physicians and nurses have been Filipino and received their education in the Philippines, it makes sense that Filipinos are quite confident about receiving proper health care back home.

Then there is the idea of household help. As already mentioned, most households in the Philippines have at least one household helper. Returning Filipinos are eager to relinquish their household duties to domestic help. For instance, Alex Caday, a retired real estate agent who lived in Hawaii for 20 years, collects about \$1,500 a month in Social Security and in retirement benefits. According to him, it did not cover his expenditures in Hawaii but in the Philippines, where he retired in 1989, he can afford two maids to help both him and his wife, who also receives Social Security and retirement benefits. "I'm more secure here financially and socially," said Caday, who had retired in Ilocos Norte, his home province. "My roots are here. My old friends are here. I have property" (Kreifels, 2009).

According to a survey that Pascual (2003) and his colleagues conducted on interested Filipino American buyers in 1997 and 2002, he provided the following sample responses regarding reasons why his clientele actively pursued buying property in the Philippines and have chosen to return (13-14):

1. "Because of the tremendous infrastructure and building boom near the economic districts of Metro Manila, buying near these locations is a win-win proposition".
2. "Availability of dollar financing".
3. "Belief that the Philippine resurgent economy is moving steadily towards progress and stability".
4. "The stable and working democracy in the Philippines. Unlike in most parts of Asia where the stability of governments is continually threatened, coup d'états, while often staged in the Philippines, are considered healthy expressions of democracy".
5. "Wants to put up a business in the Philippines and therefore needs a residence and an office".
6. "Will stay on the property as a retiree while doing business on the side".
7. "Wants an extra source of income on the side".
8. "Wants children and grandchildren to establish roots".
9. "The apparent trend now is for Filipino Americans to send their college bound kids to the Philippines for studies. Tuitions are not only low, but the quality of education is excellent".
10. "Market value increases faster in Philippine investment property vis-à-vis in the U.S.".

11. "Good resale value seems present since prospective taker-buyers are plenty, including foreigners".
12. "Wants to take advantage of the best terms extended by developers such as favorable off-plan (pre-sell) prices and non-qualifying finance terms".
13. "Wants to buy prosperities with markdown prices because of over-supply of residential properties".
14. "Loves the Philippines and its people. Invest in the Philippines first rather than in other countries".
15. "They can leave the care and maintenance of their properties to *katiwalas* [relatives you can trust]. Many abhor these arrangements though, as they become counter-productive for both parties".
16. "As a second residence, they can enjoy tremendous tax breaks in their US 1040 taxes. As a rental income property, it may bring extra income while deductions are allowed in their US 1040 taxes".
17. "Retiree's pension and social security dollars can be sent freely in the Philippines. Similar to several other countries without the objection of the U.S. government. Likewise, medical coverage for Filipino Americans can easily be made to extend to cover their medical needs while in the Philippines. Blue Shield does this now, but hopefully others will follow soon".
18. "Many have found out that even big private corporations and giant pension fund like the CalPERS (California Public Employees' Retirement System) funds that has billions of dollars in portfolios have strongly considered several investments in the Philippines".
19. "Becoming a dual-citizen has advantages".
20. "As a retiree, in the Philippines would spend less money and time traveling".

All of these reasons describe a sense of optimism that has energized the dynamic transformation of Metro Manila's landscape. After decades of remitting money and material goods back to the Philippines and raising the standard of living for many of their family members, Filipinos have elevated their expectations for what their home country might offer back to themselves. Like the paradoxical real estate advertisements promising America in the Philippines, repatriating Filipinos have come to expect the impossible. What is in fact a consciousness forged through centuries of hybridity and transformation, their idealism, signaled by the notions of political stability and economic affordability expressed above, tends to overcome the contradictions and uncertainties enveloping their return.

Networks of transnational realtors navigate around these ambivalences and enable their expectations by generating a host of real estate advertisements promising Filipinos that they will never have to leave the U.S. while they are in the Philippines. As such, the contradictions of hybridity become perpetuated and built into the disjunctured landscape of the Philippines. This process is particularly dramatic in Metro Manila where contemporary real estate developments create self-contained nodes of urban life that bypass the rest of the city. Metro Manila has become a trope for globalization, as a global mega city, it is "connected externally to

global networks and to segments of their own countries, while internally disconnecting local populations that are either functionally unnecessary or socially disruptive” (Castells 2000).

However, this dynamic energy reconstituting Manila has not been propelled by the balikbayan economy alone. Economic policies aimed at opening and deregulating markets in the Philippines has created a new surge in and diversification of exported labor. Beginning with the Fidel Ramos Administration (1992-1998), motivated by trends in the global market and the success of their Asian counterparts, the country had aggressively adopted a policy of liberal economic reform. With an inspired confidence made necessary partly because of the departure of U.S. bases, Ramos’ administration resurrected the BSP in 1993 and opened the telecommunications industry to foreign and domestic competition. And unlike in previous administrations, which allowed the country’s economy to be driven largely on debt and foreign aid, Ramos’ economic policies were principled on foreign and domestic investments (de Dios 2003).

These reforms paved the way for two congruent inflows of financial capital to reinvigorate the country’s economy and transform the real estate market over the last decade. The Philippines has become a global leader in Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) with over 780 operational call centers providing salaries that are considerably higher than the average income of most Filipinos. Secondly, perennial waves of returning OFWs have also brought in increased income and have been particularly eager to invest in residential property throughout the Philippines. This dual-flow of capital created by exported labor, combined with investments made by returning Filipinos like Ernesto, have enabled a newfound momentum within the real estate market throughout Metro Manila and its surroundings.

Chapter 3

Balikbayan Paranoia

Tourism Development and the Anxiety of Return

Chapter 3

Tourism, if it is nothing else, is the kind of travel, the kind of geocultural movement, that specifically leaves the place of the traveler's home behind...The minute tourists begin to believe they have 'come home,' their identity as tourists falls into question, or, as with the *Balikbayan*, becomes plausibly deniable.

– Shelly Ann Ness (2003)

The Balikbayan Hotel

The advertisements for the Mabuhay Manor Hotel, played repeatedly on TFC in the U.S., refrain from mentioning that the hotel is located along a ubiquitous alleyway street in Pasay City. While scouring for the hotel's exact location, one quickly realizes that unlike the more prominent Sheraton or Hilton hotels that typically host balikbayans returning to the Philippines, the Mabuhay Manor is impossible to identify from either EDSA or Taft, the two major thoroughfares located at either side of the hotel. Rather, the hotel is situated along a dingy alleyway, hidden amongst a row of concrete walled apartments and bustling markets spilling out in front of the hotel's orange-granite driveway.

Apart from the vibrant pastel colors that only seem to accentuate the contours of the hotels' diminutive shape, there are few elements that distinguish the Mabuhay Manor's three-story structure as a place where tourists might be staying. The hotel's outward style, with its flat, adobe-like façade and green-tinted, fixed windows, speaks more to an American suburban pastiche rather than the modern skyscraper hotels that tend to be associated with world travel. On one end of the narrow passageway where the hotel is located is a cluttered parking lot adjacent to the Pagcor Casino Club. Local residents rather than tourists tend to visit the club, which is open at all hours of the day, to try their hands at some baccarat or partake in a small game of poker. Towards the other end is one of the many Victoria Court motels scattered throughout Manila, a franchise that is known to be a well-frequented hub within the sex industry circuit.

From the hotel's location alone, it becomes readily apparent that the Mabuhay Manor, whose advertisements tout itself as the "first balikbayan hotel in the Philippines", is far from being the "world-class for the world market" establishment depicted on its commercials aired in the U.S. Plotted in the middle of the less fashionable city of Pasay, a visitor, staying at the hotel and eager to escape from the frenetic and gritty space of Metro Manila, is forced to endure the traffic on EDSA in order to travel west to the Mall of Asia. Now the fourth largest mall in Asia, SM MOA is the nearest location where tourists can satiate their cravings for specialty foods or entertainment. More ambitious hotel guests will more likely make the arduous journey eastward and navigate through Manila's maze of streets in order to reach the vastly more popular commercial districts of Makati or Mandaluyong.

While balikbayans may not have planned to begin their return journey back to their homeland in such a fashion, attempting to navigate around the hotel's surrounding geography is a jarring metaphor of how the routs of global tourism in the Philippines is continuously hindered by sectors in the economy that are less mobile. The fractured and disjointed nature of Metro Manila alone presents a formidable challenge for a tourism industry scrabbling to draw-in foreign capital to the Philippines, particularly to the National Capital Region (NCR). As the Asian market continues to evolve and expand at light speed, the Philippine government remains steadfast to its reliance on tourism as a fundamental means of keeping the country's economy apace with its regional neighbors.

State administrators have charged the Department of Tourism (DOT) with the immense task of synchronizing a complex and disjunctive network of tourist agencies, hotels and motels, vacation resorts, and food retailers to help develop the struggling economy of the Philippines. Reconciling itself to a number of internal constraints, the Philippine tourism industry relies as much on the re-creation of older policies as it does on inventing new measures to gain a competitive foothold within the larger global economy. As the "first balikbayan hotel", the Mabuhay Manor functions as a poignant example, conveying the manner in which the contemporary tourism industry in the Philippines steers between various obstacles by seeking out overseas capital. At the same time however, there is a uniqueness presented by the Mabuhay Manor. Unlike the tourism industry operating throughout Southeast Asia that markets itself to primarily foreign visitors, the majority of the Manor's guests cannot immediately be categorized as overseas or foreign. The hotel is specifically designed for balikbayans, former Philippine citizens returning to the Philippines.

Hidden within the immediate outskirts of Manila, the Mabuhay Manor is utilized more as a welcoming point where balikbayans recover from their flights and plan the rest of their visit to family members in other parts of the Philippines. The hotel is one of four newly built hospitality centers owned by Legend Hotels International Corporation that caters specifically to balikbayans.⁵³ As a means of competing with larger and more widely recognized hotel chains, the Manor sells itself as an "alternative to the country's major-corporate hotel chains, which lack the personal and cultural charm many Filipino's seek out when traveling back to their homeland." It does this by establishing a reputation based on providing "Christian service" and running a "Filipino-owned and managed" hotel. Bearing in mind the myriad of inconveniences and difficulties that travel in Manila poses to balikbayans, hospitality centers like the Mabuhay Manor provide a unique respite from the city before returning Filipinos embark on their journey back to their home provinces. Much like the function of multi-purpose enclaves in Manila discussed in the previous chapter, balikbayan hotels like the Mabuhay Manor allow returning Filipinos to circumvent, in some ways, the immense emotional anxiety created by their return.

While the modern design of the hotel's interior layout and décor was clearly overstated, a nascent subtext of American colonialism permeated the hotel's

⁵³ Legend Hotels International Corporation, *Legend Hotels International Corporation Homepage*, 2007, <http://www.legendhotels.com.ph/hotelproperties/index.html> (accessed April 7, 2010).

nostalgic surroundings, illuviating like clay from wet sand. From the front desk, for example, the concierges differentiated themselves from the rest of the staff by communicating in impeccably constructed American accents and parlayed between guests while adeptly utilizing various American colloquialisms. One also quickly discerns the sound of *kundiman* music, so characteristic of popular music during the 40s and 50s, playing throughout the hotel lobby and restaurant.⁵⁴ From the paintings depicting Filipino farmers to jars of evaporated milk served beside the restaurant coffee dispenser, it becomes clear that the hotel is not only expressing an ideal depiction of traditional Philippine history but a particular moment in time when American colonialism still openly administrated the country's affairs. These elements purposefully reflected a very particular period in Philippine history when U.S. air-bombers had not yet ravaged the landscape of Manila and even further before the era when Ferdinand Marcos' heavy-handed administration had left many Filipinos feeling jaded and fearful of the country's future.

Visitors are transported even further into their childhoods when they enter the hotel's restaurant where amongst the buffet of typically Filipino breakfast fare is the hotel's very own *naglalako*, who waits on each table with freshly prepared traditional desserts. Like little children, patrons light up at the sight of *bibingka*, *puto*, *kutsinta*, and *cassava* nestled inside of an aluminum *bañera* lined with banana leaves.⁵⁵ I could hear whispers of conversation as parents fondly recounted their childhoods while the chef folded each banana leaf and carefully sliced their baked coconut indulgences while their children impatiently listened-on. This imaginary space, suspended in time, is illustrative of the manner in which the DOT is attempting to harness the values of leisure, economic opportunity, and patronage by providing services that allows visitors to transcend the immediate environ of Manila's dizzying tempo and vexing geography and return to an idealistic homeland.

The Mabuhay Manor provides a poignant case for conveying emerging trends in Philippine tourism that emphasize return-migration as a means of propelling economic restructuring particularly through the broader tourism industry. This chapter examines the role of balikbayans, specifically those Filipinos who return after living in the U.S. for several decades, in the economic development of the Philippines. It begins by providing a brief outline of the contemporary history of tourism development in the Philippines beginning with the Marcos administration up until the current period when tourism development strategies shifted towards exploiting the roles of balikbayans more forcefully. By transforming repatriating Filipinos into "retirees", balikbayans see themselves as patrons of the state who, through decades of overseas labor, patronage, and performing their duties to the Philippines, are entitled to enjoy various luxuries that they could not partake in the U.S.

This chapter also examines the production of subjectivities through which returning Filipinos uneasily straddle the interstitial space between their new and

⁵⁴ *Kundiman*, a genre of traditional Filipino love songs and were characteristic of Filipino music popular during the 1940s and 50s before Original Philippine Music (OPM) became popular.

⁵⁵ Filipino street vendors, or *naglalakos*, commonly carry *bañeras*, small metal pot used to store food, slung over their shoulders, often balancing the pots on each end of a long wood pole.

former lives as they make the choice to repatriate into Philippine society. The construction of nostalgic space constituted within the Mabuhay Manor for example, conveys techniques employed throughout the tourism industry, which seeks to attenuate a commonly felt balikbayan paranoia often exhibited by returning Filipinos who are overwhelmed by fears of crime and insecurity in the Philippines. I argue that this complexly felt and ambivalently experienced type of anxiety represents the major hurdle through which the DOT, and its intertwining partners, is actively confronting while developing strategies to entice Filipinos to return and ultimately repatriate back to their homeland.

State Development and the Performance of Tourism

When purchasing a ticket through a balikbayan tourism agency or registering with the balikbayan center, either in the U.S. or the Philippines, one quickly discovers the ways in which the DOT has cleverly implemented a tourism campaign formed around a “spirit” of *mabuhay*. Executives operating within and around the DOT have taken to the idea of transforming the practice of *mabuhay* and formalizing it into a “culture of tourism”, which is being taught to local governments and even *barangay* leaders in cities and provinces where tourists are prominent. For instance, many hotels and restaurants might often offer two separate sets of rates for local Filipinos and foreign tourists. The DOT and partnering agencies have attempted to organize training programs in the culture of tourism to encourage hotels and restaurants to provide all guests with a single standard rate (Villamor 2002).

The term *mabuhay*, similar to the word Hawaiian expression of *aloha*, connotes several meanings. The literal meaning of *mabuhay* is “long live”. Yet while the celebratory term is occasionally used for toasts like the word “cheers”, it is more often used to welcome guests and as such, has been adopted by the DOT to embody a larger cultural attitude towards visitors to the Philippines for not only non-Filipinos but balikbayans as well. Hotel managers in the Mabuhay Manor have confronted this dilemma, for instance, by reconfiguring the practice of *mabuhay* into a concept of *bisita sa bahay* or “visit home” to stabilize the paradox of overseas Filipino tourism. *Bisita sa bahay* represents the contemporary configuration of a processes that began three decades prior and has led to a tourism industry that is becoming more and more inextricable from its interests in drawing balikbayans back home.

When examined more deeply, one begins to see the intense complexity and ambivalently experienced cultural nuances embedded within the concept. As Ness’ quote carefully points-out, the culture of tourism is complicated by returning balikbayans. The tourism campaign around *mabuhay* immediately enables balikbayans to simultaneously feel like tourists and celebrated guests who are returning to their own homeland. As “retirees”, balikbayans are paradoxically transformed into guests in their own homeland and are forced to reconcile their ambivalence towards living in a society that is rapidly changing but is, in many ways, still the same.

Amidst visually stunning levels of poverty and the perceived omnipresence of everyday violence, the Philippine government has continuously sought out innovative means to “welcome” Filipinos back and encourage them to “visit home”. While these inequities remain vividly clear and the threat of violence continues to haunt, the touristic performances implicit within *mabuhay* and *bisita sa bahay* function together to conceal or even dispel the risks involved in visiting and investing in the Philippines. What precipitates is a glaring paradox: while but a miniscule fraction of the country’s local Filipino population is capable of experiencing the world of leisure promised by the tourism industry, balikbayans, Filipinos returning to the Philippines, are welcomed to enjoy the country’s unique offerings and elite privileges when they visit home.

One of the major vectors through which balikbayans are connected to the tourism industry occurs through property development in Metro Manila. The city, discussed in more depth in the last chapter, has become the built representation of a culture of anxiety that pushes balikbayans to confine themselves to the conveniences of all-inclusive super malls, beach resorts guarded by armed security, and grand fortified residences, in order to separate themselves from their perceived threats. Yet, the relationship between the formation of tourism and property development in the Philippines is not merely ideological. The economy subsidizing a number of these property developments is also deeply interconnected with the role of the tourism industry throughout the rest of the Philippines.

For example, from 1975-1976, between USD\$410 and \$545 million of government money was tied to the financing of hotel building around Manila Harbor (Richter 1989, 57). To provide a conceptual scale of this financial commitment, the total amount spent on hotel building was between one-seventh to one-fifth of the government’s total expenditures that year and more than the total amount borrowed from the World Bank (\$315 million). During that same year, the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) spent a “staggering \$229.29 million” on tourism projects.⁵⁶

The entwining connections linking property development and tourism together were forged by Marcos’ early political agenda to use tourism as a tool for state development. Having built an economy around debt consumption, the Marcos administration believed that a new tourism industry would provide two interdependent purposes. First, the primary role of tourism was to provide political dividends to an administration that had become increasingly beleaguered by criticism. By the time Martial Law was established, annoyed over the decades of political corruption and violent suppression of political opposition exhibited by the Marcos administration⁵⁷, the notion that the Philippines was the most democratic nation in Southeast Asia was quickly diminishing in the eyes of the international community. Confronted by this growing disapproval, Marcos was intent on assuring foreign investors that his implementation of Martial Law would not impede foreign

⁵⁶ “Asia Travel.” *The Asia Record* (December 1982): 26, quoted in Richter, “The Politicization of Tourism”, 1989: 57.

⁵⁷ In 1969, Marcos became the first president since independence to be re-elected in what was widely acknowledged to have been an unusually corrupt and rigged election.

aid or create obstacles to Philippine exports. Marcos believed that a vibrant tourism industry would ensure that international banks would continue to provide loans to the Philippine government.

As Richter (1982, 1989) explains, drawing visitors to the country was essential for establishing the political legitimacy of the Marcos government in the face of Martial Law and an accumulating body of evidence accusing the administration of civil rights offenses and political abuses. Marcos believed that if public perceptions improved, the State would attract further investments from foreign conglomerates and continue to receive loans from international banks. The administration hoped that the newly installed political legitimacy projected by his master tourism plan would also inspire confidence from international investors to invest in what would appear to be a burgeoning economy.

Around the same period, as Marcos embarked on his colossal plan of national redevelopment through the mandates detailed in the plan for a “New Society”, the vast majority of governmental resources were redirected to and concentrated on the urban renewal of Metro Manila.⁵⁸ The administration was particularly invested in shoring up the economic stability of the NCR and introducing new inputs that would generate fresh capital into the economy by attracting foreign investments into the urban core (Bello 1982). The administration believed that the reinvigoration of the tourism industry was integral to achieving his second and larger goal: the restructuring of the country’s economy. The larger mandate for a New Society, which along with the relocation of informal settlements and intensive land development through the building of commercial and residential property, eventually propelled the creation of an entire tourism industry in the Philippines. Thus, amidst the social unrest and political turmoil that had originally precipitated the declaration of Martial Law in September 1972, it makes complete sense that the administration established the DOT in May 1973 less than a year later.

As a component of the State’s larger political apparatus, the DOT was implemented to reflect other governmental institutions through its organizational structure. It was divided between policy, promotional and regulatory roles. The DOT composed the executive arm of the tourism industry and oversaw all issues related to tourism in the country including, planning, licensing, tariffs, inspection, accounting procedures, promotion, and representation abroad. In order to maintain local control over the right to inspect, supervise, and license any establishment catering to tourists, Marcos also established two other branches including the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) and the Philippine Convention Bureau (PCB). The PCB, later renamed Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation (PCVC), was responsible for providing the main thrust of advertising for tourism in the country. The Bureau worked closely with the DOT to promote various island locations that were viewed as prime investments for tourism capital. The PTA, on the other hand, was in charge of maintaining relations with the private sector and managed the development of land for tourist purposes throughout the Philippines. Yet since

⁵⁸ Marcos claimed that martial law was the prelude to creating his *Bagong Lipunan*, a New Society based on new social and political values. For a discussion on Marcos plan for a New Society, see (Lico 2003).

much of the commercial and residential building throughout the country already overlapped with the tourist industry, the PTA has continually played a vital role in the building of properties in the Philippines.

Although the tourism industry would eventually become a pivotal force within the development of the Philippine economy, the product of Marcos' early endeavors in tourism development proved to be counter to his larger goal of stabilizing the country's ailing economy. As an instrument for economic development, the introduction of tourism development by Marcos into the Philippines reflected, as Richter (1982) suggested, "an almost cavalier disregard for the economic costs of such an endeavor...indicative of the imagination as well as the vanity of the New Society" (115). Like a number of the former President's mega-projects, the new tourism industry that Marcos implemented was costing the country an overwhelming amount of state resources.

The first clear example of this cavalier disregard occurred in 1974 when the Philippines won the bid to host the International Monetary fund-World Bank Conference in October 1976. The administration immediately seized the opportunity to embark on their tourism master plan. Having acquired new funds, the expectation of hosting 5,000 international guests and potential investors pushed developers to hastily engage in a number of projects. The rebuilding of the country's tourism infrastructure had begun well ahead of the original tourism master plan. What was originally conceived as a ten-year endeavor became a massive development scheme that led to the resurrection of 12 luxury hotels within a span of 18 months. "In the rush to build the hotels, normal loan procedures were shelved," explained Irieno Aguirre, the Director of the Bureau of Tourism Services during that period (Richter 1989, 56).

It quickly became clear that the tourism master plan would function as a perfect conduit to expedite the implementation of Marcos' larger "New Society" blueprint. Marcos was compelled to construct a built environment that depicted a vision of modernity throughout Metro Manila, which exuded ideals of stability, prosperity, and beauty. Marcos funneled international loans into the construction of luxury hotels and convention centers, designed to draw in investments from international financiers. While several members of the administration had acknowledged that the hotels built in 1976 would cease being economically viable within 15 years, the government continued to extend financing to the hotels as a means of drawing more capital into the State and siphon taxpayer money with each ensuing tourism project. By 1983, the DBP had accrued 80 percent of the responsibility for repaying the nation's debt through more than 70 tourism related projects (Richter 1989, 57).

Another component to assuaging the negative perception around Martial Law and attracting foreign investment through the administration's tourism master plan was the fiscally mismanaged *Balikbayan* program established in 1973. As previously discussed, the *Balikbayan* program, which subsidized the visitation of Filipinos living abroad to the Philippines through a number of travel incentives and customs concessions was originally implemented by Marcos to provide preferential treatment to balikbayans. Because the Marcos administration, through all manners of financial mismanagement and political corruption, had built an economy that was

entirely dependent on debt accumulation, he strategically implemented the program as a secondary means of securing the flow of foreign aid and remittance money (Szanton Blanc 1996; Rodriguez 2002). It was at this moment that balikbayans became integrally linked to the country's tourist economy.

The true value of the Balikbayan program rested however, not in the material financial capital drawn from individual balikbayans who returned to the Philippines, but in the performance of various state and local agents whose labor depicted the country as politically and economically stable. Like his political use of tourism, Marcos was more interested in making certain that the Philippines appeared economically viable to investors rather than addressing the inequalities that had been sparking violence throughout the country and perpetuating the very lack of confidence had by others in the international community towards his ability to bring stability to the Philippines. For these reasons, it is difficult to assess the early successes of the program. According to key figures in the establishment of the program, the economic losses brought on by the program were insignificant to the political role that the program had played. Echoing the economic fiasco of hotel financing during the World Bank Conference, figures sympathetic to Marcos' program acknowledged its heavy burden on taxpayers but found consolation with its ability to inspire positive public sentiments. As a fervent supporter of Marcos' project, Assistant Director of the DOT's Research and Statistics Division claimed that

The government of course, has lost and is losing a rather substantial amount of revenue from the program. But the benefits derived by the country are not only from the foreign currency spent here...it is also an effective means of rebutting through actual experience the lies they have spread about this country in foreign lands.⁵⁹

The role performed by the economy of appearances within the DOT clearly illustrates the manner in which development schemes rely on manufacturing and regulating public perceptions as a means of drawing speculative capital that will hopefully transform into larger economic returns. For example, the ideology implicit within these performative techniques were made patently clear by the country's "Reunion for Peace", launched in early 1977. Inspired by similar initiatives implemented by the authoritative government in South Korea to inspire favorable reviews amongst compatriots living abroad, the program specifically subsidized the return of former World War II servicemen and their families living abroad. By funneling them into nostalgic tours of old battlegrounds and memorials such as those in Corregidor and Baatan, the administration hoped to present the country as an independent and democratic nation-state that was committed to peaceful reconciliation. By 1978 alone, nearly a million Filipinos had utilized the governmental program and more importantly, the positive reviews of various balikbayans were successfully transmitted to their Filipinos residing in North America, Europe, and Australia (Richter 1989, 60).

⁵⁹ Interview conducted by Linda Richter in *Land Reform and Tourism*, p. 193.

In the face of ever-present poverty, pollution, and shortages in energy, water, and housing, along with the public shame around the country's thriving sex industry, and ongoing fiscal mismanagement by the Marcos administration, subsequent presidents have been challenged by the task of propping-up tourism in the Philippines and maintaining the façade of prosperity that led the country into enormous debt. One of President Corazon Aquino's primary tourism policy agendas was to cut the budget of the DOT and ensure that the management of its finances were focused on national development rather than perpetuating a structure that had spent exorbitant amounts of taxpayer money and shifted economic gains towards private corporations and individuals.

In particular, state administrators were keenly aware of the perception created by the country's historical complacency towards foreign sex tourism in the Philippines. State-directed policies and publicly-endorsed initiatives were focused on transforming the face of Philippine tourism by ridding the nation's capital of the majority of its most visible sex establishments while simultaneously refusing to allow the industry to function along the margins (Tadiar 2004). From 1991 to 1994, under the direction of Aquino and her successor Fidel Ramos, city governments led the closure of sex establishments around Manila's Tourist Belt, particularly in Ermita and Malate. For example, the first appointed Secretary of Tourism appointed by Aquino, Jose "Speedy" Antonio Gonzalez, quickly implemented a tour program that brought upper-class Japanese women to tour the Philippines and partake in its thriving import economy. Gonzalez hoped that such tours would project an image of the country as a wholesome destination rather than a major node for sex tourism.⁶⁰ As such, Manila's municipal government transformed previously bustling commercial sex districts, spaces that were deemed integral to the urban economy of the NCR, into vibrant commercial leisure districts that fell seamlessly into the emerging infrastructure of malls and high-rise projects already being built throughout Metro Manila. At the same time, the sex industry did not disappear but were relegated to those cities and districts less significant to the core economy of Manila instead.

However, to the dismay of the NCR's administrators, efforts to generate tourism within Metro Manila have consistently failed for the various reasons alluded to earlier in the chapter. Executives throughout the tourism industry were increasingly convinced that development would have to take place around the periphery of Metro Manila and beyond it into the less frequented regions of the country's provincial spaces. By the mid-1990s, state commitments to tourism shifted in focus towards developing provincial cities and towns throughout the Philippines as a way of linking the Philippine economy to growing ASEAN trade network. The DOT began establishing tourism sites that would draw an array of visitors, both local and foreign. In order to meet these larger goals, the DOT installed offices not only within every tourist hub throughout the Philippines but extended its presence internationally in offices situated throughout North America, Europe, China, Japan, India, and Korea.

⁶⁰ (Baguioro 2002).

Along with visitors from around the globe, balikbayans continue to play an integral role within the economic plans of the Philippine tourism industry. The Mabuhay Manor provides a small, yet illuminating example of these emergent strategies. The DOT's partnership with Legends Hotels International on the presentation for the Mabuhay Manor and the corporations' other balikbayan-focused hotels provides the most recent example of the Department's international presence. Led by representatives from both Legends and the DOT, one of the first presentations were held at Roberto's, a Filipino restaurant in Daly City, in 2008. Rene De Los Santos, the Northern California Director for the DOT, addressed the importance of balikbayan-focused industries, mentioning "The Department of Tourism is also planning to give out incentives for the Filipino specialists...This is also an opportunity for travel agents to expand their market, as well as to earn more income" (von Wettberg 2008).

In 2009, during a meeting between the Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA) and executives from the Philippine Retirement Industry (PRI), the representative to the private sector, leaders discussed the significant role that balikbayans played in improving the tourism industry and developing the larger Philippine economy. Leaders explained that the entrepreneurial vision behind the creation of a retirement industry is to "become a large organization composed of multi-sectoral members from different lines of business relating to the housing, health, and lifestyle needs of retirees in the Philippines" explained the PRA's chief Edgardo Aglipay (Alave 2007). Executives clearly acknowledged the notion that balikbayans would be crucial to the emergence of this multi-sectoral industry.

The PRA chief also discussed the hindrances constraining the growth of both the tourism and retirement industries in the Philippines. He stated that media reports continually portrayed a picture of the Philippines as a crime-laden, chaotic, and dirty country teeming with kidnappers. "We have a bit of a problem here, because of perception," he explained to members of the Philippine media. These "negative impressions," the Philippine Retirement Agency (PRA) general manager Fernando Z. Francisco agreed, "have hampered efforts to get investors and retirees to visit." "It's the negative impression. That's our biggest concern," Mr. Aglipay said, "in trade missions abroad, the common question is how safe is the Philippines. More often than not the doubters have never been to the country" (Alave 2007).

These are but a small segment amongst a host of examples conveying the significance of balikbayans within the Philippine economy and the role that the tourism industry plays in harnessing their investment potential. Yet, the unease created by fears of crime and insecurity, continue to impact the tourism industry and acts as a major impediment for balikbayans returning to live in the Philippines permanently, particularly in Manila. Ironically, one of the dominant responses adopted by the Philippine administration to counter these negative perceptions and anxieties around travel in the Philippines is to exploit them.

Balikbayan Paranoia

Back in Daly City, I eagerly agreed to assist the Cardenas with some of their packing before they departed to the Philippines. They designated a small section of their dining room for *pasalubong* and *padala*.⁶¹ One set of which would be shipped directly to the Philippines while the remainders they hoped to fit into their tightly-packed luggage on the flight back. Much like the condition of their disheveled home, the majority of the boxes were left unsealed and stacked awkwardly atop the next. The top of old lamps and corners of used appliances protruded from the boxes, earmarked for specific family members in the Philippines by a small, string-tied paper tag or a bright yellow post-it note. The majority of the boxes however were filled with clothing: second and third-hand t-shirts that were clearly passed along the line of Cardenas family from sibling to sibling. "They love name brands back home. So I told the kids to give me their old clothing but designer clothing. Roxy, Hurley, especially Gap," Rosemarie mentioned. The delicate penmanship that Rosemarie applied to each box, which clearly stated the address of her sisters back home in black permanent ink, appeared misplaced amongst the disarray of corrugated boxes scattered around the tiled floor.

Several of the boxes were yellow, marked by the trademark logo of the cargo sender ALAS. Over the past decades, door-to-door sending companies, benefiting from the various incentives created by the growing balikbayan program, have become a popular means of transporting goods and remitting money to the Philippines not only from North America, Europe, and Australia but other destinations populated by balikbayans and OFWs like Dubai and Singapore.⁶² The *Philippine News*, reporting on the significance of remittances and "balikbayan boxes" to the Philippine economy claimed that by 1989, the balikbayan box

⁶¹ Padala means "consignment" or more accurately, "a item that is consigned". The word conveys a common cultural practice, *magpadala* or the tradition of accumulating goods to take back home and give to family members, friends, and neighbors. Like *pasalubong* or gifts, *padala* comprises one facet along with financial remittances, remittance and cargo companies, that helps initiate the Balikbayan economy.

⁶² Individuals or families are allowed to fill balikbayan boxes with a number of non-perishable and legally permitted items including household products, appliances and small electronics, canned goods, toys, and most often clothing. Typically, these corrugated boxes proceed through three steps: First, once a box is registered for delivery or picked up by the cargo forwarder, they are consolidated with other shipments and placed in container vans. Depending on the season or volume of shipments, cargo senders typically ship their cargo once a week. On the way to the Philippines, shipments will often stop at a number of global shipping points before it is finally delivered to the sender's designated warehouse where the consignee will be able to either pick it up or have it delivered to their home. An entire industry of selling items shipped from balikbayan boxes has been created through the proliferation of boxes sent from abroad. *Ukay-ukay* is the thriving industry devoted to selling second-hand clothing through smaller independently owned bodegas, larger retail stores, church fundraisers, and even e-Bay. *Ukay-ukay* provides yet another example of how formal and informal industries operate simultaneously throughout the Philippine economy. See Rina Locsin, "Fashioning a Culture through Baguio City's Ukay-Ukay," in *INTER: A European Cultural Studies Conference in Sweden* (Norrköping: Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS), 2007), 1-9.

business had been contributing 4.2 billion pesos (USD\$ 190 million) annually to the overall economy. Of these particular forms of remittances, 3.3 billion pesos worth went directly to families in the Philippines as basic material goods, while 155 million pesos had been contributed to the State through payments for custom duties and shipping taxes, and the remaining monies had gone to shipping companies (Maas 2008; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). Many of these businesses are concentrated in areas with significant Filipino communities, particularly in California and Nevada. Along with Daly City, Alas Cargo has shipping centers in Las Vegas and eleven other Californian cities. Alas has become a preeminent example of the global circulation of goods and services produced throughout the balikbayan economy. The small company alone sends 100-200 boxes during weekdays and up to 400-600 boxes on weekends (Alas Cargo 2007).

Legitimate cargo sending companies, like Alas Cargo, provide a valuable service for Filipinos who are eager to uphold their familial duties and give senders the assurance that their *pasalubong* and *padala* will arrive safely to their designated addressees (Szanton Blanc 1996). Cargo boxes have notoriously been delayed in government warehouses, particularly when sending relief for disaster events. Other times, recipients have complained that boxes have been lost or stolen. Reorganizing the contents of one of her balikbayan boxes, Rosemarie pulled out a light-blue suede purse with its tiny metal buttons sewn to its base protruding towards me. She held the frilled leather tassel hanging from the large silver zipper between her fingers and explained:

See, you never know with Filipinos in customs. It's easy to pay somebody off and we don't have the money for that. Can you imagine? It's easier to pay the USD \$150 to send three boxes then to have the items stolen. The last time I was in the Philippines, my niece asked me, 'Tita, can you send me one of your Coach bags, *nagpadala na lang po* [please just send it in a balikbayan box]'. They're obsessed with designer things. It's easy to put many things in a box. Just hand-me downs from the kids. They don't use them anymore, they've out-grown them. We put them all here and also send them with cds and dvds. Things they can't buy in the Philippines. I know that this way [sending it through Alas], it will arrive there.

Utilizing the services of sending companies also provide an alternative for carrying items during a trip to the Philippines. Under these perceived threats of corruption, violence, and murder, balikbayans sometimes refrain from traveling back home with precious jewelry or expensive electronics. "When I return to the Philippines, I give all of them my used designer stuff. You know, like Gucci or whatever. Bags, sunglasses, cell phones, shoes. But I can't carry all of that with me. I'll get robbed for sure. So I just send it to them." While Rosemarie justified the reasons why she utilized the sending service, her words clearly expressed her regret and anxiety. Compelled by an equally pervasive sense of obligation and indebtedness, many Filipinos faithfully continue to send shipments home, visit their families in the Philippines, and often hope that by fulfilling their responsibilities,

they are somehow ensuring the welfare of both their *kapamilya* and themselves if they choose to return to their homeland for good.

While in its everyday usage paranoia tends to be interpreted as feelings of persecution or threat that are unjustified in reality, as Burgin (1991) explains, these feelings, whether actual or fictional, “produce real effects in the present.”⁶³ For all of its problems, Freudian theory, utilized in Burgin’s analysis, is helpful in teasing-out the ways in which, paranoia becomes an act of projection that lies rooted in fears and anxieties deep inside of individuals who are seen as being paranoid. While these fears and anxieties may or may not be grounded in reality, what becomes critical to understanding paranoia are the ways in which the tensions exuded from these feelings are projected onto others regardless of whether or not these projections are true or not.

In using the phrase balikbayan paranoia, I am *not* attempting to make the argument that crime and violence are non-existent in the Philippines or even to say that these occurrences are not prevalent. My concept of balikbayan paranoia lies in the ways in which returning Filipinos have, like other elite and privileged communities, created a world for themselves built around these fears and anxieties that govern in many ways how they act in relation to Filipinos in the Philippines.⁶⁴ The phrase balikbayan paranoia allows me to emphasize the rationalizations and behavior exhibited by returning Filipinos and the exploitation of this logic by a litany of businesses in the Philippines, which together makes the paranoia a very real thing regardless of the *actual* violence that exists throughout the Philippines.

Balikbayans are often adamantly convinced that their status as privileged returnees makes them targets for con artists and thieves. The price that balikbayans will pay for security represents both the financial commitment *and* emotional duties that many balikbayans justify having to pay in order to return and live in the Philippines. It is one of the hidden costs that deter many Filipinos from visiting their homeland and returning to live in the Philippines permanently. Even television shows played on TFC and Philippine newspapers marketed towards Filipino Americans constantly perpetuate these fears. For instance, the *Philippine News* (March 1989) printed a list of “tips” for balikbayans returning to NAIA and suggested that, “in Manila, minimize advertising yourself as balikbayan. Those boxes with the balikbayan letters emblazoned on them can be your discomfort or death.”

These tales of airport dangers are widespread. Upon arriving to Manila, Ezmeralda, who herself admits she is not immune to the paranoia, remembers feeling startled when her brother jokingly passed a warning along to her for when she arrived to Manila. According to Ezmeralda, while saying good-bye to her family members and making her way to the airport’s security gate, her brother pulled her by her shoulder and joked, “You know there are only two things that you need to watch out for Ate, dengue and dengoy.” “I slapped him when he said that,” she

⁶³ While discussing the ways in which nationalism and racism create “paranoid structures”, Victor Burgin returns to psychoanalytic theory in order to convey how paranoia represents the space between perception in consciousness, concepts that have become “frozen in opposition” like fantasy and reality (Burgin 1991, 22).

⁶⁴ Again Caldera’s (2000) work on fortified enclaves and the culture of hyper-segregation produced by them within São Paulo is particularly illuminating.

laughed. Periodically, the Philippines becomes a host to outbreaks of dengue fever and subsequently tourists are advised to take precautions for it before flying back to the Philippines.⁶⁵ Dengoy, on the other hand, is the colloquial term for swindling. Exemplifying the characteristic fondness that Filipinos have for puns and other forms of word play, Ezmeralda's brother was comparing the threat of dengue with the ongoing threat of local Filipinos cheating balikbayans of their money or dengoy.

The balikbayan paranoia that drives Filipinos to continuously seek guarantees against criminal malfeasance, corruption, extortion, and violence has long been characteristic of the Filipino journey back to the Philippines. This intense anxiety around the possibility that poor Filipinos will "take advantage" or "harm" balikbayans, predicated by and deeply enmeshed within very old notions of class difference, have been a continuous hurdle through which the Philippine state and the country's tourism industry has been vexed by. And upon arriving to the Philippines and witnessing the ever-present security economy and its legion of security guards, poorly crafted shotguns and handguns, and attack dogs, the apparent paranoia around returning to the Philippines might appear, at first, well founded.

While cautions like "watch out for your valuables" posted along the walls of public restrooms, or the ominous warning to "beware of pickpocketers" clearly marked throughout the city's Metro stations, or even the flyers encouraging passengers to "call this number to report erring taxi drivers" handed out at taxi *stands* may be common to the uncertainty and anxiety induced within any thriving metropolis, there is a particular culture of fear exuded throughout the Philippines and perpetuated in many ways by both balikbayans and local Filipinos. As I already mentioned, this spectre of danger is enabled by a host of media outlets in the U.S. However this spectre also includes newspapers, television shows, movies and especially news broadcasts *in* the Philippines, which sensationalize violent events and make them appear as if they were happening everywhere and everyday around the country.⁶⁶ "It's become so bad that I never take a taxi without my husband," Ezmeralda explains, pointing out the particularly gendered nature of these anxieties. At the moment, Ezmeralda is staying in a two-bedroom condominium that she purchased with her husband Rosario, near Quezon City.

I don't go anywhere without him. I don't know how any woman would make the decision to come back her and retire without their husband. I don't trust the people here. Without my husband, they would easily take advantage of me. You hear about it all the time on the news [in the Philippines]. My brothers and sisters in the Philippines call me all the time. Yes, *in the Philippines*. Even they are worried about how I am here. So I wonder if this

⁶⁵ Bum D. Tenorio Jr., Dulce Arguelles and Florencio P. Narito, "30,000 Balikbayans Stay Away," *Manila Standard*, September 24, 1998.

⁶⁶ A recent example appeared in a New York Times article reporting on the number of senseless murders capitulated by perpetrators incensed by their victim's poor karaoke rendition of Frank Sinatra's classic song "My Way". See (Onishi 2010).

was the right choice for me to come back. But I would never do it without my husband.

She freely admits that the transition to living in the Philippines has been difficult. Still without a car, she rarely travels at night. It is a glaring comprise and stark difference to the life she lived as a woman in California when she would frequently take evening dance classes with her husband or occasionally venture to the casino and play blackjack with friends till early in the morning.

Ezmeralda is hopeful however that the retirement villa in Tagaytay that she and her husband purchased will bring back some of the familiarity that she lost when returning to Manila. Even though they have another year to wait before they can move into their new residence, the all-inclusive amenities, constant security, and “good neighbors” are all elements that compelled Ezmeralda and Rosario to invest a majority of their savings into the developments.

Before we moved here, we thought we made a good plan. Now I see it’s more difficult to start a business here than I thought. Now that I might be able to open a store here, well, we’re banking on our new home [in Tagaytay]. I just want to have the life we had in the States back. But we can’t go back there so we just hope we can have it here, Ezmeralda expressed, her voice dimming with doubt.

The emotional toll that return makes is extraordinary. Filled with uncertainty, the journey home is wrought with enormous unseen costs. While difficult to capture in their entirety, these anxieties are also manifested differently, not only across the differentiated class lines of balikbayans and OFWs returning but are also felt different between Filipino men and women who are returning. What had begun for Ezmeralda as a bright new business venture, confronted by a very real sense of anxiety and fear of failure, her return had ironically propelled a new desire to once again go back; not back home in the Philippines but back to the U.S.

At first, it would appear that enabling balikbayan paranoia would be counterproductive to luring balikbayans to visit on holidays or even return to the Philippines permanently. However, intertwined with sentiments of obligation and indebtedness, the balikbayan economy maintaining and regulating the flow of goods and Filipinos to and from the Philippines is also sustained and perpetuated by a culture of anxiety and paranoia. Not only are Filipinos in the U.S., compelled by these innumerable fears, moved to ensure the basic safety of their family members by giving them money to pay for the construction of huge metal gates and other security services; but for the balikbayans who do return, they easily rationalize the excess expenditures for various services and goods in order to ensure their own safety. Balikbayans continually fear the corruption of police officers and taxi drivers, the probability of having to bribe a public servant, or even the chance that they will be kidnapped.

For those who can afford it, Filipinos who are forced or make the choice to return will gladly pay high prices for luxurious hotel and resort accommodations, private drivers, and body guards, in order to ensure their safety. At the same time,

developers, private investors, and state agencies are actively exploiting these compulsions, literally banking on the paranoia and balikbayan's desire for security. Various agencies and programs have been developed to ensure the security of balikbayans who desire to return to the Philippines and enjoy various amenities without the fear of being robbed or swindled. The DOT and partnering agencies have gone to great lengths, establishing international booths and ad campaigns, aimed at luring financially attractive Filipinos living abroad to invest a substantial amount of money and retire in the Philippines. Built on promises of security and world class service, selling retirement to those who are capable of affording it has, over the last ten years, become an entire industry that functions specifically to develop the larger Philippine economy.

Framed above the concierge's desk at the Mabuhay Manor, the title of an article reads, "Welcoming Living Heroes at The Mabuhay Manor". The news article continues to say:

TIME and again, the Philippines has hailed their Balikbayans as modern day heroes of the country. With over millions of dollars worth of remittance each year, Filipinos living abroad continue to help their families in the Philippines in particular and the nation in a general way. The Mabuhay Manor, the first Balikbayan Hotel in the Philippines has geared all their efforts and best intentions to welcome the Philippine balikbayan in a most special way by no less than giving their guests genuine Filipino hospitality evident of our timeless and valued traditions.

In the end, by successfully convincing balikbayans to return and live in the Philippines, the State has effectively achieved something that Marcos never could through the tourism industry. Where balikbayans once embodied as Rafael (2000) suggests, "the fulfillment of Filipino desires realizable only *outside* of the Philippines", the retirement industry reconfigures the Philippines as the ending point in which the true realization of these desires happen.

Chapter 4

Spaces of Balikbayan Neoliberalism

Touristic Zones and Special Resident Retiree Visas

Chapter 4

The political and legal rhetoric that at times homogenizes the two most significant groupings of Filipinos living abroad, permanent Filipino emigrants and OFWs, conceals the important economic functionalities, and more importantly, the distinctly different lived experiences of either collective. Recent highly publicized cases involving abuses against domestic workers have had the dual-effect of casting OFWs as both highly vulnerable “victims” and often exploited “low-skilled” laborers regardless of their diverse and oftentimes college educated backgrounds or the numerous transnational feminists movements that have been led partly by these same domestic workers (Law 2002; Parreñas 2001; Rodriguez 2002). Unlike their balikbayan counterparts who are capable of claiming rights granted through the citizenship they gained from other countries, by nature of their temporary status, the rights of OFWs are subsumed and regulated within a Philippine political system that will more often choose to safeguard its economic relationship with other countries rather than defending the rights of citizens who encounter human or labor rights violations in their country of employment (Ong 2006).

Relying on Aihwa Ong’s theory of postdevelopment, Rodriguez (2010) argues that by contracting Filipinos to work throughout a number of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) particularly through the trading network of the ASEAN states, the Philippine state gives a portion of its sovereignty to corporate entities. At the same time, however, local elites are allowed to maintain their economic sovereignty due to their entrenched positions within the long-standing land tenure system and their monopolization of capital holdings. According to Rodriguez, exporting Filipino labor abroad facilitates a number of state interests:

Migration absorbs the excess of laborers that is necessarily produced when the state abandons its sovereignty to multinationals’ and multilaterals’ demands for export-production; migration is also a ‘biopolitical investment’ providing employment and income to citizens and thereby preserving the political and economic status of the elite (16).

Although on the surface, the Philippine state has espoused a rhetoric of protecting the rights of OFWs around the world, even passing the Republic Act No. 8042 on June, 1995 which would apparently concretize the government’s commitment to protect the rights and promote the welfare of migrant workers, their families, and other overseas Filipinos in distress, numerous cases of assault and murder of OFWs have been met with little repercussion on the side of the Philippine government (Guevarra 2006).

Recognized by now as a pivotal actor featuring within the country’s development policies, the DOT has in recent years begun working closely with land developers and real estate corporations in order to facilitate and channel the

financial capital of balikbayans back into the Philippines.⁶⁷ By linking the interests of state agencies together with private investors, the Philippine government is inventing new ways to persuade balikbayans to continue being patrons of the state, not only by drawing overseas Filipinos to visit their homeland but also through investing in property and retiring in the Philippines.

The accumulation of these investments has financed the construction of retirement villas: massive property developments, which are being viewed by many as the future of the Philippines' tourism economy. The final section of this chapter is devoted to discussing the process through which the tourism industry has conjoined itself with the retirement and medical industries to provide balikbayans with a solution to their incessant anxiety around returning and settling back home in the Philippines. Retirement villages, therefore, represent the contemporary amalgamation of these diverse intersections. Adopting Ong's concept of "neoliberalism as exception", I describe how these "zones" operate outside of the norms of local governance through the legal privileges they are afforded in order to provide to their guests with an abundance of unique luxuries.

Both Foreign and Local: The PRA and Special Visas

In 2007, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, made an appearance at the unveiling of the Imperial Silver Town Retirement Village project and toured a portion of the 35,100 square meters property, including a number of the Village's model units. Partnering with the Korean firm, Seyhun Development, the PRA believes that their flagship retirement village will generate up to USD\$44 billion into the Philippine economy by 2015. Until the mid-2000s, balikbayan tourists and retirees only constituted less than 10 percent of visitors to the Philippines. Members of the tourism and retirement industry believed that if they could create a lifestyle free of the anxieties and insecurities that Filipinos experience *both* in the U.S. and the Philippines that balikbayans would overcome their paranoia and decide to purchase property in the Philippines and retire there. Along with drawing foreign retirees, Arroyo, together with partnering agencies and the project's managers, believe mega-retirement projects like the Village will become instrumental in drawing balikbayans back to their homeland for retirement.

For the PRA, the retirement industry is integral to improving the country's economic and by making the Philippines a global "retirement haven", the state will finally be able to reverse labor migrations back to the Philippines and solve the perennial crisis of "brain drain" (Marcelo 2006). Crucial to this economic development strategy, Arroyo has charged the PRA with bringing together the tourism, retirement, and health industries onto a singular economic platform. Speaking at a press conference held after her visit to the Village, Arroyo was clear about the significance role that the retirement industry played to developing the Philippine economy asserting that

⁶⁷ In the 1970s, the Philippine state sought to harness tourism as a strategy of economic and urban development and as a tool for attracting foreign investment by focusing tourist-related development in the NCR and Metropolitan Manila in particular. See (Rieder 1997).

The PRA should find ways to boost the growth of the booming retirement industry in the Philippines, noting the world's graying population is rapidly increasing...The Philippines is in a very good position to take advantage of this potential because we have the facilities and the manpower. As one of the flagship projects of the Philippine government, I want [the] PRA to boost its efforts to develop and promote the Philippines as a retirement haven and contribute to the increase of foreign investments (Pelovello 2008).

Situated in the coastal city of Nasugbu, in the province of Batangas, the Village features a number of amenities common to retirement villas, including condominiums, spas and gyms, health clinics, tennis courts, swimming pools, parks, and gardens. "Climate, safety, proximity to medical supplies, highly skilled and caring people, low-cost living, natural attractions, and desirable facilities" represent, according to Edgardo B. Aglipay, the PRA's chairperson, fundamental reasons why balikbayans will begin returning to the Philippines for retirement. Aglipay, controversial as he was prominent, was once the heralded Chief of the National Police and was, in a curious fashion, offered the position to head the PRA by Arroyo after his retirement in 2005.⁶⁸ As part of his duties as Chairperson, Aglipay is responsible for coordinating both the government and private sectors to work together to concentrate on the development of retirement villages throughout Baguio, Trinidad, Subic-Clark, Metro Manila (Alabang, Muntinlupa), Laguna, Batangas, Cavite, Cebu, Samal Island and Cagayan de Oro.

While the agency continues to be referred to as the PRA, originally, it had been called the Philippine Retirement Park System, after it was established through Marcos' passage of Executive Order 1037 in July 1985. In August 2001, pursuing Arroyo's policy of conjoining tourism, retirement, and health industries together, she consolidated the agency under the Board of Investments (BOI) and officially renamed the agency the Philippine Leisure and Retirement Authority (PLRA). Yet it continues to be called the PRA in most discussions and within the media. The PRA exemplifies yet another facet within the Philippine political-economy where the distinction of public and private sectors is unclear and in many ways one in the same. As an agency devoted to drawing private investments together with governmental initiatives, the PRA uneasily straddles between the private and state sectors. For instance, while the agency had been moved away the PRA had officially been transferred away from the Office of the President, it continues to function as a subset of the State's Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) directly underneath the Bureau of Industry and Investments (IIG). While its official primary task is to promote the Philippines as a "retirement haven" and attract foreign investments from balikbayans and foreign nationals, its actual aims are clearly to accommodate the shared interests of both the private and public sectors. The overlap between both sectors becomes increasingly necessary when the government officially only sponsors 1 percent of the overall funding for retirement villages. While the Philippine government continues to support the expansion of the retirement

⁶⁸ Fel V. Maragay, "GMA Won't Extend Aglipay's Term," *Manila Standard*, January 21, 2005.

industry, the PRA is responsible for providing innovative solutions to finance the building of these multi-billion dollar mega-projects.

PRA executives optimistically believe that the Philippines will be home to almost 1 million retirees by 2015 (Mollman 2007). Projections also suggest that retirees will contribute USD\$16.56 billion to the Philippine economy. In order to achieve this goal, one of the innovative solutions adopted by the PRA to help gather financing for the building of retirement villages was to initiate the formation of Philippine Retirement Incorporated (PRI). While the PRA's primary function is to promote the country as a retirement haven, the PRI regulates the quality of retirement facilities, health care providers, and leisure services in order to ensure that they meet "global standards". "[The] PRI is the private sector. The private sector is addressing all the necessary requirements for us to be able to be globally competitive," explained Mr. Aglipay (Buco 2006).

PRI members include a plethora of services and retailers registered as "operators of retirement facilities", including leisure and resort destinations, condominium and housing developers, hospitals, health insurance providers, transport and travel services, care-giving training schools, health management organizations, financial institutions, tourism advocates, brokers, builders, health and wellness organizations and other service providers in the country. According to the PRA, there are 109 accredited merchant facilities and 44 accredited retirement facilities. As the membership and collaboration between the PRA and PRI continues to expand, agency officials are capable of lobbying the State government to lower the price of realty properties, add more incentives, and even make improvements to the general infrastructure of the country.

Speaking at Philippine Retirement Industry Investment Summit in 2006, PRI's President Ernesto M. Ordonez explained that "this is the first time different market players - hospitals, subdivision developers, golf clubs, etc. - are united, are one" in achieving that shared goal (Gulane 2006). Ordonez admitted that the continual congruency between public and private interests is essential to successfully compete with Malaysia and Thailand, countries which had been receiving almost 20,000 retirees yearly, and making the Philippines a retirement haven. Amongst the multinational real estate corporations partnering with the PRA various initiatives are Ayala Land, Inc., Robinson's Land Corp., Filinvest Land, Inc., SM Dev't Corp. and Megaworld Corp., and a multitude of insurance firms, transportation companies, and privately subsidized hospitals and clinics.

Depending on the source, there is somewhere between 15,420 to 20,000 registered retirees already within the Philippines. The total investments made by retirees in the country reached USD\$107.8 million as of January 2010. The DOH estimates that between the years 2010 and 2020, around 500,000 to 3 million retired Filipino-Americans will settle in the Philippines (*Philippine Daily Inquirer* 2006). With the potential USD\$4 billion of total investments in the retirement industry at stake, the Philippine government has acted quickly and included the development of a number of retirement villages to the governmentally sponsored 2006 Investments Priority Plan (IPP). With the expanding Philippine Medical Tourism Industry and the growing need to employ the growing surplus of educated and skilled Filipino physicians and nurses, developers are also keen to establish

hospitals or clinics within each retirement village. Governmental agencies hope that through the synchronization of the tourism, retirement, and medical industries that balikbayans and other foreign nationals form will choose to retire in one of the country's "world class" retirement villages.

The idea of developing exclusive retirement villages focused towards drawing foreign nationals and former Filipino citizens to retire in the Philippines is by no means a recent concept. One of the first retirement projects was established in 1995. Together with the RN Development Corporation, the PRA invested \$USD65 million in renovating Clark Air Base and allowing former personnel of the Base, mainly foreign nationals, to invest their pensions into the development and enjoy the luxuries of living in one of the country's first retirement focused projects. Inducing foreigners to invest their pensions into foreign economies has since become a priority for state development. According to the rationale of state agents, the significant low cost of living in developing countries provides an enormous economic incentive for foreigners to spend their pension in the Philippines rather than in their home countries. Meanwhile, building retirement projects on properties like Clark Air Base, which had been depleted of the majority of its American inhabitants after Mount Pinatubo erupted in 1991, would reinvigorate the local economy and provide Filipinos with much needed employment.

Once members of the Philippine government understood the immense economic potential posed by linking balikbayans directly to the retirement industry, they immediately began shifting their economic strategies and support towards building retirement villages that would not only cater to foreign nationals but balikbayans. Significant to the economic plans of the PRA was the fact that balikbayans are both foreign *and* local. Balikbayans would become a primary target for the retirement industry for three major reasons: (1) their familiarity with the Philippines meant that their expectations and standards for luxury would remain reasonable to the overall environment of the Philippines. (2) Most Filipinos believed that balikbayans have maintained a significant level of wealth while living and working abroad and are seen as possessing serious potential as investors. Aglipay, himself, had been quoted various times saying that the PRA was focused on Filipinos "baby boomers" born after World War II mainly because they possessed "a great deal of income" (Apelacio 2007). Finally, (3) balikbayans already desire to return to the Philippines and according to many developers, only need to be convinced that returning is the right decision. Manuel Agripe, an executive with Belle developers, said, "They only really need to be nudged. Who Filipino would choose to not return if you didn't give them a good reason."

In December 2003, the Washington D.C. based Filipino American firm Philippines Real Estate Center (PREC) was utilized to head the marketing and promotion of the Subic Holiday Villas specifically to Filipinos living in the U.S.

Subic Holiday is targeting retired Fil-Ams as potential clients and we only need 1% of over 2.8 million Fil-Am population for them to be part of this project. It is just our way of saying that Subic Freeport is a good place to welcome balikbayans and continue the quality of life [here that] they are

enjoying in the U.S.," suggested PREC Chairman Michael Gaviola (*BusinessWorld* 2003).

Like the retirement community established in Clark Air Base, governmental agencies felt that the property around the former military base in Subic Bay was poorly utilized. When the Villas opened in 2006, retirees were able to utilize exclusive amenities including schools and recreational amenities like scuba diving, hiking, jet skiing, through their investments in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone (SBFZ). Residing in the special economic zone also entitled them to utilize the Subic Bay Medical Center, where their health care would be subsidized by a number of prominent American HMO's such as Tri-Care, Veterans Standards, Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The primary condition for membership in the SBFZ or any other demarcated zone exclusive to retirees is the obtainment of a Special Resident Retiree's Visa (SRRV). The PRA is delegated the responsibility of issuing this special visa which provides its holders with the privilege of staying in the Philippines permanently and a multiple-entry status. The privileges also include a one-time exemption from customs duties and taxes, and tax-free pensions and annuities remitted to the Philippines. The SRRV also provides a litany of tax-free incentives and benefits from a host of partnering establishments such as hotels, resorts, retirement facilities, and restaurants. According to the regulations, the minimal requirement for applicants state that foreign nationals between the ages of 35-50 were required to deposit the minimal amount of USD\$75,000 with a number of PRA affiliated banks. Those older than 50 were required to deposit a lesser amount, USD\$50,000. The PRA added that those who qualified for SRRV's were allowed to bring a spouse and up to two children, provided that they were under the age of 21 and single (Philippine Retirement Authority 2007).

Those however who are able to maintain a stable income after retirement through their pensions are required to invest a considerably less amount. For those 50 years old and above, the deposit amount is USD\$10,000, \$3,000 of which is kept for funeral expenses while the rest can be converted for a variety of retirement investments. The minimum pension requirement for a single individual is \$800 per month and if one has a spouse, the amount increases to \$1,000. According to the PRA, under the "brain gain" program, retired scientists and scholars are allowed to have their deposits waived as long as they are willing to teach within their areas of expertise (Daquiz 2006).

More recently, the SRRV was modified specifically to cater to former citizens of the Philippines or balikbayans. According to the stipulations passed in 2003, the Investors and Retiree Resident (IR2) balikbayan visa allows balikbayans to deposit a minimal amount of just USD\$1,500. This visa also provides holders the privilege of own real estate up to 5,000 sq. meters, whether it is residential, urban or agricultural property. Along with this modification, the Philippine government encourages balikbayans to act as entrepreneurs through the Republic Act No. 9178 or Act to Promote the Establishment of *Barangay* Micro-Business Enterprise. Balikbayans are also entitled to purchase \$1,500 worth of goods from any of the number of government regulated duty-free shops located around the Philippines.

Asked why the Philippine government instituted a stipulation for balikbayans specifically, J. Antonio Leviste, the PRA Chairperson in 2003, explained,

While working abroad, most of them have remitted money to their relatives at home, thus helping bolster our country's foreign exchange reserves...It's the least we can do for our former compatriots, who are rightly dubbed the modern heroes of our country...Balikbayans are also being enticed back to their country of origin because after earning hard-earned currency abroad, they deserve rest and leisure with some considerations from their countrymen who have benefited from their remittance of foreign currency (BusinessWorld 2003).

Legislation authorizing the passage of different visas was essential to facilitating the investments of balikbayans into the Philippine economy. However, the duties that balikbayans are obligated to pay did not cease once they return to the Philippines. Instead, many balikbayans were torn on deciding how much they were really willing to invest in the future of their homeland.

"Paying Your Dues": Retirement Associations and Financial Mismanagement

Between 2006 to 2015, PRA and PRI executives optimistically expect that the cumulative earnings of the 859,250 retirees that are guaranteed to settle in the Philippines alone will amount to USD\$44 billion (Philippine Retirement Inc. 2007, 9). This is a lofty ambition given that up until 2006, governmentally sponsored programs maintained by the PRA have only been able to entice about 12,000 individuals to retire in the Philippines since the agency was established in 1985 (Gulane 2006). Yet, since 2006, the overall total of SRRV's issued to foreign nationals and former Filipino citizens have been steadily increasing (fig. 1). This positive trend has inspired agency executives to continue aggressively targeting retirement communities particularly in Asia and Filipinos living in the U.S., publishing pamphlets and sending representatives to organize retirement fairs to elicit even more interest. Given the long history of political corruption and graft in the Philippines, concerns have continually arisen regarding the management of retiree investment funds.

| Total Enrolment for Special Retirement Resident Visa (SRRV) Program | |
|--|-------|
| 2009 | 3,120 |
| 2008 | 2,600 |
| 2007 | 2,396 |
| 2006 | 1,271 |
| 2005 | 1,259 |
| 2004 | 818 |
| 2003 | 732 |
| 2002 | 593 |
| 2001 | 352 |
| 2000 | 131 |

Source 2 Philippine Retirement Authority

For balikbayans however, the concerns over financial mismanagement is grave particularly for those who are convinced that corruption is unavoidable in the Philippines.⁶⁹ Tensions first came to a head in 1995, when investigative reports discovered that the PRA had lost P45.9 million in investment funds. In danger of his administration being mired in controversy so early into his tenure, Fidel Ramos refused to allow the PRA to be dissolved and chose arbitration instead. President Ramos chose Ramon M. Collado as the attorney who would lead the arbitration process and save the PRA from certain demise. Political accountability had long been an issue of concern for people interested in investing in the Philippines.

While I interviewed Gary Lazaro about the PRA, he glibly suggested that he had become an investor in the PRA when most of the SRRV recipients were “European diplomats, Japanese corporate execs, or American retired servicemen”, and not the balikbayan retirees like him who have been increasing in number since the mid-2000s. Retiring in the Philippines in 1990, the 69 year-old golf aficionado persevered his way into becoming a top-level executive at Metlife during the 1970s and 80s. He decided to leave his plush position at Metlife when a unique opportunity to work alongside his long-time friend, Manuel Pangilinan, the Chairman for

⁶⁹ Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr. notes the tremendous reluctance and at times a blatant apathy that many former Filipino citizens possess towards Philippine politics often derives from the government history of corruption in electoral politics and financial graft. “By income standards and access to telecommunications technologies, middle class Filipino immigrants in the U.S. are potentially the “most connected” to the homeland. As it turns out, they are the least likely to get involved in Philippine elections. The disinterest in Philippine politics appears to be the result of a deliberate shunning of the kind of politics that migrants hold in their memory about the homeland, a memory of ‘dirty’ politics and ineffectual governance—even by emigrants who affirm their Filipino identity, such as the man who never bothered to become a naturalized U.S. citizen yet considered absentee voting as nonsensical (*kahibangan*). The distrust of Philippine political institutions is most palpable”. See Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr.’s “Political Transnationalism and the State’s Reincorporation of Overseas Filipinos,” in *Exploring Transnational Communities in the Philippines*, 157-163 (Quezon City: Philippine Migration Research Network and Philippine Social Science Council, 2007), p.160.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) and a fellow colleague from Wharton Business School where both had graduated in 1969, had emerged.

Gary could easily be spotted perfecting his golf game at the Alabang Country Club, just a few blocks away from his home in the Ayala Alabang Village. Now retired, he frequented the popular club in Muntinlupa four times a week and was happy to respond to any of my questions provided I was open to spending an evening with him on the golf course. Tapping shreds of grass away from the bottom of his shoe against the shiny metallic hosel of his 9-iron, "Boboy", as his friends called him, expressed his views on Philippine politics with a healthy mixture of humor and disappointment. "Corruption is in the blood here. It's not like in the U.S. where there are checks and balances. Don't get me wrong, there's plenty of [corruption] in the U.S. But at least over there, they try to hide it," Gary murmured through the lit-cigarette that he was trying to keep from dribbling out of his mouth as he talked.

You asked me if I would still come here if not for Manuel offering me the job with PLDT. Maybe...but I also had a very good life in New York. My wife didn't come to live with me here until years after I first came back. Until 1998. And that was only because of the investment opportunities that came up. Otherwise, I would have just invested my money, you know, bought property in Makati or Palawan like all the other foreigners and returned to the U.S. after I stopped working [at PLDT]. I would just manage my properties from the U.S. It's actually much easier to make money in investments in the U.S. [than in the Philippines]. But then we had bigger opportunities to make investments. I decided to retire in Muntinlupa. But I was still very cautious about putting my money with the PRA. You know, they can be very tricky. They tell people that with the visa you can withdraw your deposit at any time. But it wasn't true. You have to know who to talk to. Just like everything here. You always have to know who to talk to. But what if you don't know who to talk to. You're going to lose a lot of money.

Ramon Collado's original recommendation to the Philippine government was reflected within Greg's comments. Investors, both foreign and balikbayan, desired more control over maintaining their investments. Collado was convinced that his main priority was to garner government support for the creation of an association composed of both foreign and balikbayan retirees who would be responsible for holding the PRA accountable. Through Collado's successful mediation, the Philippine Retirement Authority Members Association Foundation Inc. (PRAMA Foundation) was established. According to published reports⁷⁰, PRAMA was instituted to

Advocate for the rights of the elderly people in the Philippines. It conducts forum, workshop, and seminars on Ageing with the collaboration of other non-government organizations and individuals. It aims to develop the Retirement Industry in the country and help consolidate services such as

⁷⁰ Description taken from report presented to the U.N.

healthcare, geriatric clinics, activity centers, leisure clubs, training center for caregivers and social works, memorial assistance, and others for the benefit of the elderly people. Prama participates in meetings internationally and locally to gather new information on situations and best practices concerning the elderly people. It also occasionally supports activities for the elderly people through grants.

In less than ten years, PRAMA enrolled 6,189 foreign retirees, including doctors, engineers, lawyers, management experts, bankers, financial analysts, businessmen, amongst other professions, from 53 different countries. Apart from its misleading use of the phrase “elderly people”, notably absent from the organizations’ mission statement are any type of specificity regarding the exact role that PRAMA would eventually play in partnering with state and private entities in developing the retirement industry or the precise manner in which it would “consolidate services”. Most importantly, the statement is silent about its foremost role as a non-governmental organization responsible for holding the PRA and its partnering agencies’ use of retiree money accountable to retirees. The precise motivations that help to explain these strategically placed absences are illustrative for understanding the apparatuses through which a myriad of governmental and private organizations collude into utilizing tourism as means for economic development and individual profiteering.

Collado also recognized that the PRA continued to lose money because retiree deposits were being dispersed amongst 23 different banks. In order to gain a more competitive interest rate, the attorney convinced the PRA to concentrate the deposits between only four banks. The value of SSRV deposits immediately increased after their interest rates were modified. After incurring operating losses amounting to P\$45.9 million in 1992, due to Collado’s efforts, by 1996, the total net income gained by retiree deposits amounted to \$45.6 million. Previous to that, the retirees were losing as much as \$25,000 a day and about \$18 million a year in interest income alone (Cruz 2002). In recognition of PRAMA’s successful interventions, the remaining four banks offered the Foundation a one percent management fee, which PRAMA decided to share with the PRA.

The PRA and PRAMA officially signed a memorandum of agreement in May 1999, both parties agreeing to “ensure the effective and efficient promotion and implementation of the Philippine Retirement Program administered by the PRA.”⁷¹ The agreement had also set into motion a number of plans to develop business partnerships between investors and local enterprises through small and medium sized projects backed by the signatures of the PRA and the Bureau of Investments (BOI). Already early into the establishment of PRAMA, the lines between state, private, and individual investors became muddled and several of PRAMA’s early financial investments had already become convergent with the very entities that they were suppose to keep accountable. Such is the history of Philippine political-economy, where, like the development of skyscrapers and condominiums along

⁷¹ The memorandum is quoted in the *BusinessWorld* article, “MoA seeks to develop RP as ideal retirement haven,” *BusinessWorld*, June 21, 1999.

Manila's built-landscape, the development of the retirement industry could only be made possible through the shared interests between political elites and private developers. Again and again, the checks and balances instituted to protect private individuals from governmental fraud had been all but eliminated.

By 2002, the PRA had accumulated \$200 million, of which \$60 million had been earned by the association. Yet, not all members were satisfied by PRAMA's leadership. PRAMA had become the only governmentally recognized association representing the interests of foreign and former Filipino citizen retirees. In May 2001, a group of retirees, discontented about several leadership issues, splintered from the association, formed a group called Concerned Philippine Retirees Group, and brought their concerns to Malacanang to formally file a case against PRAMA. Group members expressed grievances over Collado's apparent authoritarian leadership and his exclusion of a number of association members from voting, which led to his invalid re-election as president. Finally, the most serious of all the grievances, was that P\$87 million of the membership funds could not be accounted by the association's treasury. While the splinter faction could not resolve the financial crisis of their lost investment funds, investors were relieved to remove the mandatory requirement for membership in PRAMA (General 2002).

While mandatory association memberships are common in the U.S., particularly with property ownership, the formation of proprietary associations was largely an advent of the liberal economic movement that emerged in the Philippines during the 1990s. Given the number of complaints against the association including this most recent one, several retirees have expressed a clear disinclination to joining PRAMA. "I never believed that membership should be mandatory. Especially when you look at both (PRAMA and PRA). They're the same. You can't tell one from the other," Gary complained. While PRAMA does advocate for various measures, including improvements in health care for instance, Gary went on to express his annoyance with the association.

Really, their one and only real job is to make sure that the funds that retirees invest into the PRA isn't mishandled. They're suppose to make sure that our money isn't stolen. To make sure that when retirees need the money, they can get it. But when you can't even get your money from PRAMA, well what good are they? What's the difference between them and the government?

When examining the business dealings of PRAMA one begins to see some truth in Gary's concerns. The *Manila Standard* reported as far back as 1998, the PRAMA Foundation was already financing plans for the construction of retirement villages in Batangas, which executives wanted to call the Golden Village. Plans were made to build the retirement village on a 120-hectare property and would include amongst a number of sports facilities, several medical and dental centers, a market and a shopping arcade, school, and a church.

Critical to PRAMA and the PRA in particular was the common usage of the term "world-class" to describe the services and amenities offered within the Gold Village retirement project. According to the organization's representatives, the Village is a "world-class self-contained resort and residential community that offers

health services, affordable and convenient housing, active lifestyle amenities such as a marina, a golf course and swimming pools and even a business and commercial center, and investment opportunities to retirees with a monthly pension of \$1,200 to \$2,000 (in U.S. currency)" (Macabenta 1998). "World class", a phrase constantly repeated throughout retirement brochures and advertisements denotes both the clear attempts that the Philippine retirement industry is making to attract overseas investments and to entertain notions of balikbayan paranoia by creating a counter-distinction between retirement villages and the immediate environment surrounding them.

There was nothing different between the Golden Village and any of the projects planned by PRA except that PRAMA would call this one its own. Meanwhile, court proceedings continue to persist between PRA and PRAMA over obstruction placed between PRAMA from withdrawing investment funds and "elbowing PRAMA out of the interest generated from retirees' funds" at the same time (Locsin 2002).

"There's something to be said for politicians acting like they're good people. Here, politicians act with impunity. How do you trust people like that? How do you do business with someone like that? How can you entrust thousands, hundreds of thousands of dollars of your hard earned money with people like that," Barry Fuentes, another balikbayan retiree, asked me in a rhetorical tone.

You know when you meet with your agent at the PRA, they act like it's an honor to have [balikbayans] invest their money with them. But after a while, you understand it's just another way to get more money out of us. You think it's all expenses paid for, like an all-inclusive vacation, like a cruise. That's how they sell it to you at those conventions. But when you're finally here, it's one thing after another...you wonder, where's all this money going.

Regardless of their displeasure with PRAMA and the myriad of problems that persist within the retirement industry, both Barry and Greg enjoy living in Alabang Village, a quasi-retirement village along the outskirts of Metro Manila in Muntinlupa. In the end, both consider the duties they pay as a "necessary evil" for assuring the ease of lifestyle in the Philippines. While one might measure the affects of balikbayan paranoia by observing the ways its ideology facilitated the patterning of Metro Manila's dissonant landscape and fragmented built-environment of patchwork developments, the clearest example of the ways in which the Philippine state's exploits balikbayan paranoia is through the construction of its retirement landscapes.

Retirement Landscapes: Hybrid Zones of Immigrant Exceptionalities in Tagaytay

During the inaugural oration for the Free University, while presenting narratives on China's ever expanding economic network of overseas labor contracts and usage of foreign concessions throughout Southeast Asia and Africa, Nyíri Pál noted intriguing observations he recorded while visiting the Golden Boten City, a

retirement village adjacent to the border of Northern Laos.⁷² Opened in early 2008, the “most internationalized modern city in Laos” was financed and developed by the Chinese investment company Fu-Khing and is situated on 4000 acres of leased land that occupies one of China’s numerous designated special economic zones (SEZ). The retirement village’s facilities, which include common retirement amenities such as a shopping district, condominiums, and a golf course, are designed to highlight the hotel-casino complex that lies at the center of the village. More intriguing to Pál however, was that apart from the sparse number of Thai and Laotian tourists strewn around the village landscape, the vast majority of the complex’s staff, from the store merchants to its militarized security, were composed of Chinese contracted labor.

One can imagine the look of surprise on the face of the anthropologist as he was asked to pay with Chinese yuan rather than the inflated Laos kip currency. It would seem from Pál’s descriptions that even the minutest detail of the village bespoke the presence of Chinese governance including the village’s electric sockets, which even conducted Chinese owned electricity. The entire retirement village and the special economic zone that it resided within had become characteristic features of China’s political and economic practice of extraterritoriality.⁷³ Pál’s experiences in Laos are pertinent to discussing the intermingling of economic interests emerging between economically demarcated regions in Asia clearly. The intertwining of these interests are represented throughout the production of economic zones in the Philippines’ retirement landscapes. Yet, unlike Chinese retirement zones such as the Golden Boten City, the particular element distinguishing retirement zones and their outlying communities in the Philippines is the unique heterogeneity of their residents and the national interest these various communities represent. As migrants who have been specially designated by the Philippine government as privileged citizens, these retirees are afforded a set of rights dissimilar to those held by the local Filipino population. Subsequently, the distinct privileges enjoyed by balikbayans and foreign residents have had the effect of constituting retirement villages and their surrounding environ into a contested hybrid zone of exceptionalities.

Before discussing the emergence of retirement landscapes, their designation as SEZs by the Philippine government, and the evidence that these broadening forms of Philippine governmentality are pointing towards the country’s quickly shifting policy away from U.S.-centric economic dependency, it is worthwhile to

⁷² Nyíri Pál’s lecture on the Golden Boten City is part of a larger chapter that he wrote in Nyíri Pál and Chris Lyttleton’s “Dams, Casinos and Concessions: Chinese Megaprojects in Laos and Cambodia,” in *Engineering Earth: The Impacts of MegaEngineering Projects*, (New York: Springer, 2007), forthcoming.

⁷³ For a concise introduction to contemporary patterns of Chinese extraterritoriality, see Aihwa Ong, “The Chinese Axis: Zoning Technologies and Variegated Sovereignty,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 17, no. 4 (2004): 69-96. The political history, Eileen Scully describes the historical practice of extraterritoriality in Chinese political-economy in Eileen P. Scully’s “Taking the Low Road to Sino-American Relations: Open Door Expansionists and the Two China Markets,” *Journal of American History* 82, no. 1 (1995): 62-83.

juxtapose these contemporary developments to larger discussions around governmentality and economic zones. Much has been written about the contemporary emergence and use of economic zones as a zone of political exception and variegated sovereignty throughout regional spaces like East Asia, the Caribbean, and West Africa.⁷⁴ Ong (2007) discusses, for instance, how various Chinese corporations and individuals, within these particular zones of exception, procure a set of exceptional rights due to their role in producing capital for both the local government and their home government in China. These individuals and corporations, who through complex multilateral agreements conducted between nation-state governments, operate with legal immunities due to their role in providing capital accumulation for various countries. Along with economic privileges such as exemptions of taxes and duties on trade goods, Ong argues that the lack of accountability that Chinese individuals had towards the local legal system represents a new form of State control practiced by the Chinese government. As Nyiri's experience in Laos poignantly demonstrates, conversations around these types of extraterritorialized spaces bare enormous weight on not only conceptions of citizenship and nation-state sovereignty, but the creative measures governments take in order to draw-in capital to sectors of their economy that would otherwise be unsustainable and maintain control of the profits accrued by these economic sectors.

The structure of retirement landscapes in the Philippines complicate conceptions of extraterritoriality implicit within zones of exception. Though they are administrated by the intersecting interests of a number of multinational corporations, many owned by Korean or Japanese investors, the retirement landscape in the Philippines, particularly retirement villages themselves, continue to be highly regulated by Philippine governmental policies and its own liberal economic objectives. In this way, retirement landscapes represent the manner in which the Philippine government continues to maintain control amidst catering to flows of competing foreign investments.

Once investors and developers believed that they had developed a successful model retirement villages that would finally convince balikbayans to retire in the

⁷⁴ Immersed in conversations around Giorgio Agamben's illuminative concepts of "bare life" and "zones of indistinction", these theorists have begun exploring the relationship between nation-state sovereignty and the variegated rights of communities inhabiting them. According to Agamben, a zone of indistinction is a territory where individuals who reside there possess no claim to the rights of that territory. Because citizenship has the effect of bestowing humanity through the rights it infers, the exclusion of national citizenship for undocumented workers, asylum seekers, and war refugees reduces these figures to the inhuman condition of bare life. Thus, the sovereign state is "the producer both of modern humanity, by giving protection to citizens, and of bare life, by denying it to noncitizens." See (Agamben 1998). Unlike Agamben's analysis of particularized zones where individuals were stripped of rights in places where state law had been suspended, a number of scholars on the other hand, namely Aihwa Ong, were interested in articulating the other side of exception. Ong's (2007) recent work examines how Chinese neoliberal economic policies are producing zones of exception whereby Chinese corporations, investors, and labor migrants utilize SEZs to expand the Chinese economy throughout East and Southeast Asia. See (Ong 2006). For a related discussion on economic zones created by resource extraction in West Africa, see (Ferguson 2005; Watts 2004)

Philippines, all that was left was for the PRA and developers to lobby the Philippine government to institute measures that would further facilitate the settlement of balikbayans into retirement settings. These measures had the effect of granting village owners, operators, and retirees a number of special rights that were precluded from local Filipinos, including those who worked at the retirement facilities. Yet, while facilities continue to be owned and managed by Japanese or Korean corporations, their services are not limited to either Japanese or Korean clientele. The benefits bestowed to the Philippine government by partly catering to balikbayans keeps the government from being inextricably linked with the interests of foreign investors.

In many cases, the commitment by Chinese officials and corporate executives to commence building projects in different countries in Africa have entitled the Chinese to all manners of future economic privileges between countries (Lee 2009). In the case of the Golden Boten City, entrepreneurial partnerships between Laos and China have the effect of strengthening an already sturdy linkage between both countries. In the Philippines however, unlike the Golden Boten City, which had become a tourism configuration of primarily Laotian, Thai, and mostly Chinese visitors, these retirement zones were produced in such a way that they catered to an array of visitors. The DOT and PRA projected that retirees would not only consist of balikbayans or other Americans but would also facilitate the flow of elderly populations coming from China, Japan, and especially Korea.

They rely on the confluence of economic agendas between the tourism, retirement, and medical industries in order to produce highly competitive touristic environments, which the Philippine government hopes will attract the elderly populations of a number of developed countries and eventually make the Philippines the global retirement haven. As of 2009, out of the two-hundred and seven fully-operating SEZs in the Philippines, eleven are specifically demarcated as Tourism Economic Zones (TEZ) or Medical Tourism Centers (MTC) (fig. 1 and 2). While most are concentrated around the periphery of the NCR, retirement landscapes exist in Northern Luzon, the Visayas and in Cebu in particular, and in the vacation resorts around the Palawan Islands. Other TEZs are being developed around the provinces of Camarines Sur and two are being developed in Cavite. Furthermore, plans to continue demarcating SEZs and creating TEZs in places Davao and Mindanao has become more crucial as means of buttressing economic relations with emerging economies in the Southeast Asian network (Ness 2003, 110-111). The political economic use of TEZs becomes even more apparent with discussions around developing zones in Mindanao through which administrators hope to quell threats of terrorism (Ness 2005).

At the same time however, in order to achieve these goals, the Philippine government is carefully balancing the investments of various foreign groups. While the retirement industry is aggressively targeting former Filipino citizens especially in the U.S., it is also going to similar lengths to cater to foreign investors, particularly those in other Asian countries. For instance, in Tagaytay, Koreans have established several restaurants and an international school designed specifically for English

language instruction.⁷⁵ Adding to this trend, in February 2001, the Korea-Philippines Friendship Hospital was established just outside of Tagaytay in the major metropolitan city of Cavite. The hospital was largely funded by members of the Korean Investors Association Cavite, a group of Korean businessmen who have benefited from tax incentives created by the CALABARZON economic zone (Kelly 2001).⁷⁶

This growing community of Korean immigrants have largely benefited from special accommodations like the SRRV, study permits, and tax incentives that help to motivate entrepreneurial growth. The rise of Korean investments throughout the region has been received with mixed reviews from local Filipino communities. At the same time however, Tagaytay is quickly becoming home to a growing number of balikbayans who are benefitting from the same incentives and are also building homes or settling into the vibrant retirement communities within Tagaytay. This mixture of local Filipinos, balikbayans, and Koreans is producing an unwieldy geometry of shifting economies. In towns throughout the Philippines, like Tagaytay, government initiatives emphasizing foreign investments are creating an environment where the needs of immigrant communities, which include balikbayans, are taking precedence over the local Filipino community. An undulating murmur of discontent continues to be expressed amongst a portion of the local Filipino business owners and workers beneath the surface of communalism and celebratory overtones expressed by state administrators within the media circuit.

One of the reasons why local Filipinos are resentful towards this incoming group of immigrants are the various exceptions immigrants experience while retiring in the Philippines. One of the privileges included in retirement zones are governmental incentives that support retirees who do *not* want to retire. Marisol Estrella Calagñan Dalley, a recent “retiree” residing at the Tagaytay Lakeview Estates, adamantly believes that almost all balikbayan retirees are inclined towards not retiring.

At first it seems like a good idea. But if you have spent many years abroad, you’ll go crazy if you don’t work here. You have to find things that will keep

⁷⁵ It is outside of the scope of this paper to discuss the historical waves of Korean immigration into the Philippines that began in sparse increments beginning in the 8th century and took a new economic form after the 1980s. Annual Report of Statistics on Immigration and Emigration Control of the South Korean Ministry of Justice, from 1985 to 2001, the annual number of registered Koreans immigrating into the Philippines has increased by 16 percent. See Virginia A. Miralao, “Understanding the Korean Diaspora in the Philippines,” in *Exploring Transnational Communities in the Philippines*, 24-39 (Quezon City: Philippine Migration Research Network (PMRN) and Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC), 2007).

⁷⁶ Philip Kelly might argue that the development led by Korean investors in CALABARZON is endemic of continuous attempts made by key investors and developers to elicit means in order to compete with the NCR as the region’s leading economic producer. While commercial and residential projects find it difficult to compete with the market attractiveness of the NCR, the retirement industry is increasingly looking to CALABARZON as a potentially successful alternative. See Philip Kelly, *Landscapes of Globalization: Human Geographies of Economic Change in the Philippines* (London: Routledge, 2000).

you busy. I thought, well, it would be nice to have a change of pace. I've been working all my life...for almost five decades! I came here and we bought a retirement package here in Tagaytay. I started to get a little crazy and then I told my husband that I wanted to go back to work. Then he said, 'I thought you want to relax, why did we end up coming back to the Philippines'. I told him, 'Well what do you expect, I've been working all of my life'. I'm an independent woman! I can't just sit around the house and make food for my husband," Marisol said, her words blurted out in between intermittent bouts of laughter.

Marisol was fortunate that her husband had cashed in his investments before they deteriorated in the recent stock market crash. Having worked primarily as a caregiver, Marisol had made her way along the outskirts of Rome and London at a young age before finally settling in South San Francisco where she met her husband George. Her husband, being a native of Utah with roots that go back several decades, had never stepped foot outside of the country until he married Marisol and only then to visit his in-laws in the Philippines. George never imagined that he would retire in his wife's home country. However, because of Marisol's multinational employment history and inability to find full-time work throughout her years in the U.S., her income did not accrue enough social security to sufficiently supplement George's income. Once both Marisol and George were introduced to the idea of retiring in the Philippines, both began carefully planning their future investments in the Tagaytay Lakeview Estates. "Our children were settled, they were married, and even had kids. So they were happy to come and see us once a year. Times are tough (financially) but at least one of our children gets to come during Christmas time", George says while looking compassionately at Marisol. "That's the hardest thing for us, but especially for Mari."

However, the couple refused to stay retired for very long. Benefiting from a lenient bank financing program, the Dalleys were able to use money that George accrued through investments he had grown through company stock options and opened an Italian restaurant on one of the major boulevards leading overlooking a picturesque view of Mount Taal. Decorated with tiny white Christmas lights, the French paneled window gave way to a charming restaurant that seated at most thirty or so customers. "It's not practical because when Filipinos come to eat, they bring everyone with them. But it's o.k. for now because we don't get a lot of customers. Mainly foreigners and [balikbayans]," George mentioned as he prepared a steaming cup of espresso. "That's the only decent cup of espresso that you'll find for miles," he exclaimed while laughing loudly.

Fortunately for Marisol (and George), balikbayans who are looking to invest in a small-business are encouraged by recent measures passed in 2002 by the Philippine Congress. According to R.A. No. 9178, the government, "promotes the establishment of barangay micro business enterprises (BMBEs)." Small businesses like the Dalley's restaurant are loaned between P\$100,000 to \$500,000 by designated banks to keep their establishments afloat. While the BMBEs are focused on rejuvenating businesses in the agribusiness and aquaculture, wood and handicrafts, information technology and biotechnology, health care, and education

and training sectors, George was careful to mention that the banks had afforded Marisol and him some leeway because they were “retirees”. While the assistance provided by the government through the BMBE measure might appear minor, it made an extraordinary amount of difference to the Dalleys.

It meant that Marisol and George would not have to chance losing a portion of their savings to start the business. Borrowing money from Marisol’s family in the Philippines, as another alternative, was unconceivable. It would have been a terrible shame for her to borrow money from her impoverished siblings who still lived in Cebu. As a balikbayan who was also married to a white American, it would have been a tremendous humiliation for her and loss of face to ask for money from family members in the Philippines when her status as an American citizen meant that she was the one who should patron her family in the Philippines. Instead, now Marisol and George received the loan from a Philippine bank, Marisol could continue sending money to her relatives even though she and George no longer lived in the U.S. and as such, had no obligation to remit any more money. With less than USD\$2,000, the minimal amount offered through the BMBE initiative, one can easily pay the local mall operator and start-up dues in order to open a DVD stand or a number of other small operations. That amount of money also far exceeds the annual salary of most Filipinos including those who operate in small businesses. Yet, accommodations like these are more easily accessible to balikbayans and foreign retirees who had officially intended to come to Philippines to become retirees. Retirement, in the Philippine context however, is a legal status and not one that precludes individuals from significant employment as it is in the U.S.

On a much larger scale, retirement villages are afforded a tremendous amount of leeway by financing institutions and the Philippine government. SEZs operate in such a way that public entities sometimes operate unofficially as private entities and likewise, private entities often work closely with public ones, making them quasi-private entities. This blurring between sectors lends itself to the tourism and retirement industries, which often depend on the shared interest of both sectors in order to build developments, attract various types of businesses, and function properly. Since the emergent popularity of retirement villages became increasingly recognized by the Philippine government as a means of increasing economic development, Aglipay was quick to lobby the government for including retirement villages within the jurisdiction of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), the governmental agency responsible for determining and overseeing the incorporation of foreign investments under the Special Economic Zone Act⁷⁷ (Ng 2006).

According to its website, PEZA is a government agency that is responsible for promoting “investments, extend assistance, register, grant incentives to and facilitate the business operations of investors in export-oriented manufacturing and

⁷⁷ Enacted by the Ramos administration in 1994, R.A. No. 7916 is an “act providing for the legal framework and mechanisms for the creation, operation, administration, and coordination of special economic zones in the Philippines, creating for this purpose, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA, and other purposes” Philippine Economic Zone Authority, *Special Economic Zone Act*, 2010, http://www.peza.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=55 (accessed March 3, 2010).

service facilities inside selected areas throughout the country proclaimed by the President of the Philippines as PEZA Special Economic Zones” (Philippine Economic Zone Authority 2010). Projects approved to be exempted from taxation through the SPZ include petrochemical distributing, transport oil depots, health care services, palm oil refining, information technology facilities, abaca pulp processing, aircraft maintenance for foreign airlines, and soon retirement villages.

Once retirement villages were either included within the provision of economic zones or constituted themselves as a SEZ, they garnished several privileges including generous tax breaks and the luxury of importing equipment and resources from other countries duty-free. Edgar Habalo, a realtor with Landenmore Properties, a real estate corporation that specializes in selling properties throughout the CALABARZON growth corridor (which includes Tagaytay), explains that these duty-free incentives were critical to the success of retirement villages.

I’m sure that Fil-Ams enjoy bathing with Neutrogena products and having other specialty items available to them. Right? Well, all of those things aren’t available in the Philippines. We have to have them imported and just having them come through customs is very expensive, let alone just shipping them here. Everything that you enjoy, from the coffees to the detergent. The retirement villas are very aware that foreigners want quality items. And that means items that are from back home in America or Europe. From the U.S. or from Italy. Not the Philippines. That’s the only way that you can entice people to retire here is if they can get all the best things from home here.

Indeed, Edgar’s insights were valid on a number of levels. When the PRA attempted to emphasize homestay⁷⁸, a feature of tourism where travelers could stay at the homes of local residents and enjoy eating and interacting with locals rather than being secluded to vacation resorts, the governmental agency’s innovation was short-lived. The PRA quickly realized that the resources and conveniences requested by tourist from their hosts became way too costly (BusinessWorld 2005). Soon, Filipino households were spending two to three times the amount of money they had made in housing a single tourist.

I know from living in the U.S. for many years that one of the worst things about the Philippines is to need to use the bathroom but there is no sanitary napkins. You know, no toilet paper. Am I right? Well tourist appreciate that in all of our bathrooms we have nice soft toilet paper. But where do you think we get all of those nice fluffy toilet paper. We import it from Hong Kong.

While Edgar posed his rhetorical question, he rubbed his thumb against the ends of his two-fingers as if to say, “Money, it takes lots of money”.

It would seem that the entire retirement industry rested uneasily on the truth of Edgar’s words. The DOI and PRA have spent a great deal of energy convincing the President, congressional members, and corporate executives that an

⁷⁸ Similar to homesteading in other countries.

extraordinary financial commitment is necessary in order to entice foreigners, and particularly balikbayans, to retire in the Philippines. The overwhelming confidence and belief exuded from individuals like Aglipay was redundantly printed in newspapers and speeches. While, he, like the rest of his colleagues who cheer-led the formation of the retirement industry continued to convince potential investors that the “good nature of Filipinos” was enough to make foreign nationals and balikbayans feel comfortable enough to retire in the Philippines, the DOI and PRA continued to fervently push for more investments from the private sector.

By including retirement villages within the protected list of SEZs, the Philippine government is gambling on the enclaves attracting various forms of foreign investments. Once PEZA was established, various touristic enterprises began applying to be categorized as SEZs and included within its umbrella of privileges. On the agency’s website, there are a number of downloads allowing various businesses to apply. All that is needed is for business owners to literally download a document from the website and fill-it-out. The deliberation process is long and inclusion fees are expensive. Yet, the apparent accessibility of the agency’s website represents the exuberance through which governmental agencies are receiving the growth of the leisure industry. It also mirrors the overextension of public commitment previously paid to Marcos’ early tourism projects which overestimated the daunting costs of building at such an accelerated pace. On the one hand, PRA lobbyists are trying desperately to reduce the cost of initial dues for retiree visas, while on the other, the PRA is trying to reduce the operating costs of retirement villages. Given the history of Philippine political-economy, the final costs will more than likely be placed on the beleaguered shoulders of Filipino tax-payers.

A recent, yet critical, inclusion into the expanding leisure economy is the emergence of the Philippine Medical Tourism Program (PMTP) and special medical zones. Statistics and research conveying both the enormous expenses accrued by medical care in the U.S., and the potential that Americans would be willing to be treated by physicians in the Philippines due to lower costs, has meant that the members of the Philippine government have pushed Congress to open the doors for the existence of the PMTP. Eager to offer much needed quality medical services to foreign and balikbayan retirees, the PRA took this opportunity to merge the PMTP with the retirement village industry. Quoting a study conducted by the Deloitte Center for Health Solutions on 3,000 Americans, agency executives from the DOT ecstatically presented news that about 750,000 US citizens traveled abroad to get medical care. Furthermore, the report suggested that number was expected to increase to 6,000,000 by 2010 (*BusinessWorld* 2008).

Banking on the report’s further conclusion that at least two-out-of-five Americans would be willing to travel abroad for healthcare, agency executives commenced plans for opening state-of-the-art hospitals in retirement villages. Various executives in the PRA lobbied for congressional support by citing evidence that by opening hospitals in the Philippines, the government could finally solve the problem of “brain drain” forcing many skilled Filipinos to work abroad because they could not find work in the Philippines. While discussing the prevalence of Japanese citizens retiring in Southeast Asia, Toyota (2006) explains how as part of the provisions detailed Free Trade Agreements between Japan and the Philippines in

2006, Japanese sought the services of health care workers and nurses to help provide care to the exponentially growth of the ageing population in Japan. These initiatives had the effect of allowing a limited number of highly qualified Filipinos to enter Japan beginning with 400 Filipino nurses and 600 qualified caregivers starting from 2006 (521).

In 2009, pushed by the crisis of the growing number of elderly people in Japan, Japanese corporations developed plans to open health facilities that would facilitate the movement of the Japanese elderly outside of Japan and into places like the Philippines. For example, the Japanese firm Tokushukai Medical Corporation agreed to invest \$100 million into the establishment of a 60-hectare health care zone to be placed on reclaimed land. Yet while the hospital is planned to be named the Benigno Aquino Memorial Hospital, concerns grew when the corporation stipulated that the health care facility would only employ Japanese health care staff and serve primarily Japanese clientele (Flores 2005).

More than tourists from Japan, visitors from South Korea have in recent years comprised the majority of tourism flows to the Philippines, exceeding the number of visitors from the U.S. including returning OFWs. By 2006, over 570,000 South Koreans visited the Philippines and according to governmental figures, up to 100,000 South Koreans have settled into the country as permanent residents. Local Filipinos have ambivalently received this infusion of foreigners. While the tourism and immigration produced by South Koreans, who come to Philippines usually as part of the increasingly popular English learning programs, Christian missionaries, or aspiring small business entrepreneurs, are contributing almost half of the financial investments (accounting for USD\$1.2 billion of the \$3.5 billion in investment capital that entered the Philippines in 2006) to the Philippine economy, some Filipinos have become unsettled by their increasing presence (Damazo 2007). A litany of news reports and editorials have latched onto a range of events, from legal incidents to anecdotal evidence, involving local business owners and residents who have are increasingly resentful towards South Korean business operators for allegations over improper conduct and discrimination towards Filipinos and tourists who are said to treat local Filipinos badly.⁷⁹

One particularly well-known and reactionary editorialist, Butch del Castillo (2009a, 2009b), wrote a two-part commentary on the “invasion” of tourists and migrants from South Korea. The former president of the much widely circulated *Manila Bulletin* suggested that the presence of Koreans is reminiscent of the foreign occupation of Japanese soldiers on the archipelago during the World War II and are setting up “beachfronts” in the Philippines in order to exploit the country through a number of shady resource extraction projects. Slightly puzzled by the xenophobia ensconced within this analogy, Norman Castro, a Fil-Invest real estate agent, openly welcomed the influx of South Koreans to the Philippines. I first met Norman when

⁷⁹ Recently, there has been a spate of articles published in Philippine dailies discussing the “invasion” of South Koreans into the country. See amongst others, Jet Damazo, “Korea Invades the Philippines,” *Asia Sentinel*, 2007: 11-July; Bernardo Lopez, “UPSHOT; Korean Invasion,” *BusinessWorld*, January 17, 2008: S1/4; Manila Standard, “Korea Invasion,” *Manila Standard*, March 4, 2006. Ronald Meinardus, “‘Korean wave’ sweeps the Philippines,” *The Japan Times*, December 2005, 2005.

he approached me at Shangri-la Plaza, one of the more upscale malls in Mandaluyong and a destination most frequented by foreign tourists, including South Koreans, who opportunistically scour the mall hoping to spot deals on clothes from Hugo Boss or shoes from Salvatore Ferragamo.

Unlike del Castillo, fully aware of the negative sentiment that many Filipinos internalize towards South Koreans, Norman's sympathy towards the feelings of his compatriots were clearly measured by a sense of defiant optimism.

I think [Filipinos] might be tired of everyone benefitting from our resources. Maybe it's like when a guest overstays their welcome. Then they stay for a few days longer then the days become months, *Na parang nagiging free loaders na lang sila* [they have become free loaders already]. I think some Filipinos think that way. *Iyon siguro ang dahilan kung bakit nagsasawa na sa kanila ang ibang Pino* [Maybe that's why Filipinos have become fed-up with them]. Kasi parang iniisahan tayo ng mga koreano [Because the Koreans are taking advantage of us], so it's like the Filipinos think that they're just ending up getting the short end of the stick, *diba?*

Norman, on the other hand, appreciated the South Korean clientele who were more likely to purchase the more lavish units that he and his co-workers offered than his compatriots. His ambivalence represents in many ways, the divergent interests between the Philippine state, which is aggressively marketing the Philippines to investors in South Korea, and many of the local population who find themselves excluded from the benefits of the changes created by these migrations and dismayed to see social inequity in their country remain largely the same.

Changes in demography are especially felt amongst Filipinos living in smaller provincial towns like Tagaytay City. Here, the influx of Korean students have opened opportunities for Filipinos to find work tutoring English or even teaching the language at the Korean headed international school. In Talisay, a tourist area adjacent to Tagaytay City, plans laid by South Korean owned Jung Ang Interventure Corporation for a spa resort around the city's main tourist attraction, the Taal Volcano, have caused controversy amongst local communities who are arguing that the corporation is violating environmental restrictions.⁸⁰ While tensions created over the developments by the leisure industry are directly related to continuous conflicts over land tenure and the sustainability of local livelihoods, they are symptomatic of a much larger history of conflict from foreign occupation. Having already dealt with the centuries long stratification and oppression unleashed by Spanish and Chinese foreign elites, many Filipinos are wary about the increasing presence and economic interests of Koreans in Tagaytay.

⁸⁰ Public demonstrations led mostly by local residents, fisherman, and farmers, fearing that the developments would further deplete the livelihood of Talisay local economy, were eventually met with by officials from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DNER) who deemed that Jung Ang's claims over the land were valid at first. However, after several prominent figures stood in support of the activists including Archbishop Ramon Arguellas, the DNER invalidated Jung Ang's permit to build their resort in Talisay. See Marlon Alexander Luistro, "Lipa bishop wants total stop to Taal spa," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June 30, 2007: A21.

On the other hand, while the purpose of tourism and retirement between South Koreans and balikbayans might be the same, the reception of balikbayans by Filipinos is markedly different. Filipinos often see balikbayans as returning compatriots who have a personal investment to developing the Philippine economy. And their permanent presence in the Philippines functions as evidence of their commitment to improving the country rather than as a means of exploiting its resources as opposed to Koreans, Japanese, and especially the Chinese who are depicted as taking advantage of Filipinos.⁸¹ The complex and sometimes contradictory political rhetoric constituting balikbayans as “heroes” has had a similar affect on the ways through which balikbayans perceive themselves.

“Why would they resent us? We’re Filipino!” Janette Quinoveva, a balikbayan who had built a vacation home in Tagaytay two years ago, exclaimed. Janette has traveled back and forth to the Philippines each year for the last decade and like a number of balikbayans, she built a retirement home in Tagaytay, which she uses as a vacation home at least once a year.

Of course they don’t think of us like the Koreans because we’re not Korean. Who can blame Filipinos for being angry with Koreans. They come here to the Philippines to learn English and are so, what you say, kanya-kanya [stick to themselves]⁸². But I am coming home. I didn’t grow up [in Tagaytay] but they still know me here.” she responded glibly.

Helping Janette lift bag after bag of groceries out from inside of her family’s brand new Toyota SUV and onto the driveway of her expansive property, I could not help to feel the irony of the moment. As she attempted to convince me that the Filipinos around her felt no different around her as they would any of their other neighbors simply because they were all born in the Philippines, her lack of awareness kept her from acknowledging the impoverished families whose shanty-housing resided directly beside her property. This lack of recognition vividly illustrates the paradox of balikbayan subjectivity and thus the strength of drawing balikbayans into the country as retirees. The material and financial wealth represented by having an SUV or an estate in Tagaytay alone does not exclude Janette or any balikbayan like her from being able to seem themselves as one in the same as Filipinos in the Philippines, it is the fact that this wealth and the various visa privileges she enjoys together represent her ability to be a transnational subject, a balikbayan who can come back and leave as much she is financial capable of doing so. This ability to

⁸¹ Various writers in the Philippines have discussed the long-held historical prejudice held towards Chinese Filipinos. See, for instance, Teresita Ang See’s *The Chinese in the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives* (Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, 1990).

⁸² *Kanya-kanya* is a common expression within Tagalog vernacular that means “unto themselves”. Interestingly, while a number of respondents used the expression to discuss the perceived insular settlement of Korean, Japanese, and Chinese immigrants into the Philippines, many of the respondents were just as quick to describe Filipino politics using the same expression. As such, the expression also denotes a disinterest in the larger politic of Philippine society or who other interviewees called the *masa* or masses of Filipinos.

return and exit the Philippines alone produces the exceptional subjectivity which constitutes returning Filipinos into balikbayans.

It would appear paradoxical at first that one can be a tourist while simultaneously be at home and yet the homogenizing forces epitomized by the discourse swarming around the retirement industry constitutes balikbayans into just that. Through a number of measures and privileges, the retirement industry forcefully creates an imaginary, a retirement landscape, where balikbayans can experience a variety of exceptions unlike any of the Filipinos living, or even struggling, around them. These discourses are in no way passive, inconspicuous, or hidden, but made blatantly clear as a way of countering the balikbayan paranoia that inhibits Filipinos from wanting to return to the Philippines. Yet, it is only in relation to non-Filipinos and other Asians, that balikbayans can really effectively become transnational Filipinos returning home.

After decades of committing to their duties by faithfully sending home remittances and continuing to invest financially in the Philippines, many balikbayans feel that they are entitled to experience the privileges that come with returning home. However, not every balikbayan can partake in all of the exceptionalities granted through the retirement industry and the following chapter will describe the various choices balikbayans make principally because many of them cannot afford the costs entailed by being a member of the retirement industry in the Philippines. Recently, a survey conducted by the PRA noted that while the total number of registered retirees amounted to 2,396 in 2008, there were as many as 20,000 Filipino retirees who had settled throughout the Philippines (Alanguilan 2008). For most balikbayans, the minimum financial commitment is far more than they could afford, even as Filipinos laboring in developed countries. The status afforded by adopting a life in the retirement village is only one type of urbanism for balikbayans.

Retirement villages do, however, represent the aggressive manner through which the Philippines continues to regulate migration and utilizes tourism (through the retirement industry) as a major tool for economic development. In order for the Philippine state to successfully achieve this effect, it depends on the collusion of a number of governmental agencies to create and adopt innovative measures that perpetuates this paradox. As such, balikbayans can no longer be seen as a formation through which one primarily accords to one's self, but one that is also construed, codified, and most importantly, economically enabled by the Philippine state itself.⁸³ The retirement landscape has become the hyper-realization of yet another paradoxical unity: the simultaneity of being at once a tourist and hometown hero.

⁸³ This continues the discussion on the construction of *balikbayans* in the Philippines had in Chapter 5. Vicente Rafael argues that the status of *balikbayans* is denoted by "one's relationship to the Philippines is construed in terms of one's sentimental attachments to one's hometown and extended family rather than one's loyalty to the nation-state. At the same time, being a balikbayan depends on one's permanent residence abroad. It means that one lives somewhere else and that one's appearance in the Philippines is temporary and intermittent, as if one were a tourist". See (Rafael 2000)

TOTAL OF 207 ECONOMIC ZONES *

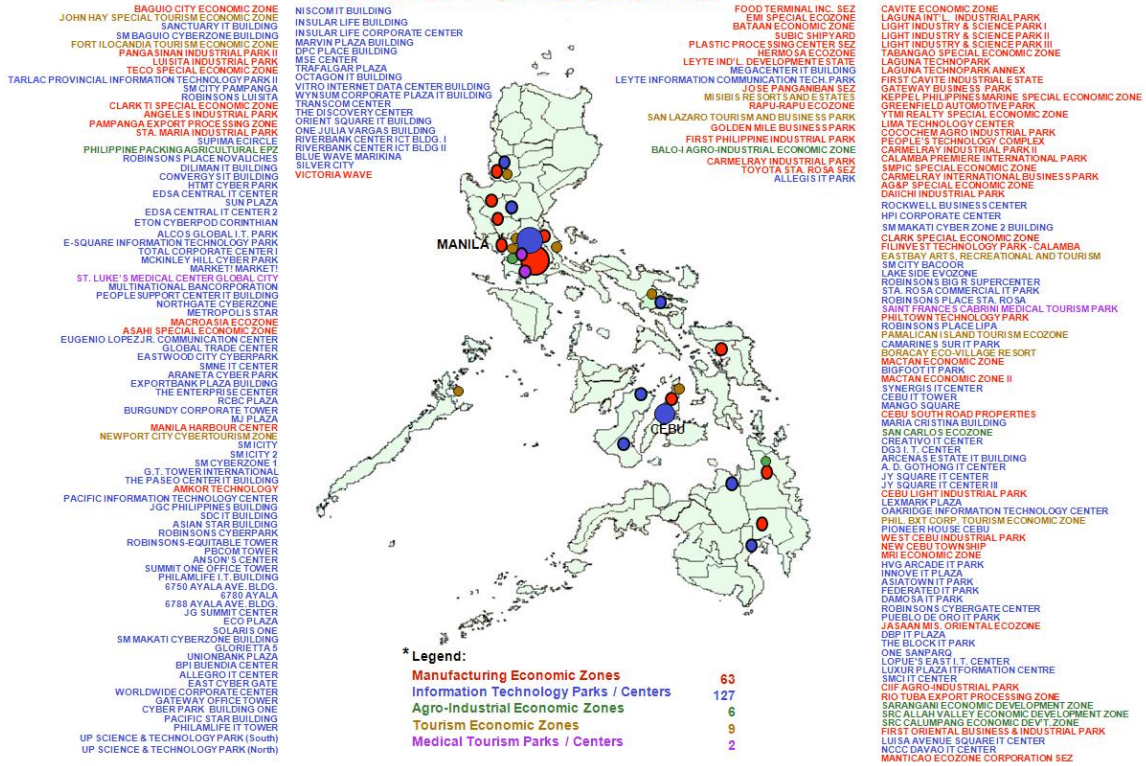


Figure 3. Philippine Economic Zones operating through 2009, (Philippine Economic Zone Authority 2009).

9 TOURISM ECONOMIC ZONES

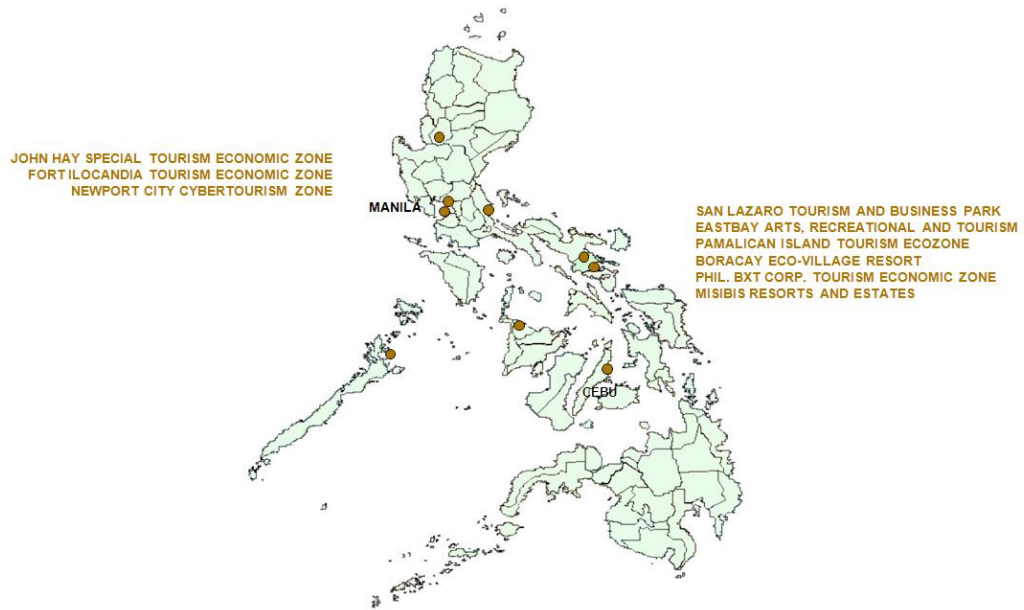


Figure 4. Philippine Economic Tourism Zones operating through 2009, (Philippine Economic Zone Authority 2009).

Conclusion

Balikbayan Urbanism

Manila's Balikbayan Landscape and Ambivalent Returns

Conclusion

"*Mahirapangbuhay (doon) peromasaya (naman)*" [(In the Philippines) Life is hard but it was good].

- Various Interviewees

"The act of traversing political and geographic borders more often than not conferred cosmopolitan modernity on the returnee... However, these formulations or ideas about diaspora and return were unable to capture the nonlinear and messy itineraries that deviate from the ideal norm".

- Martin Manalansan 2011, *forthcoming*

It is not uncommon to hear Filipinos, who, having lived in the U.S. for several decades, express an intense sense of ambivalence upon returning to the country where they spent their formative years. What tends to be capitulated through superficial irritations, when read more closely, one notices that these sentiments are actually steeped within a complexly interwoven cloth of emotions. The veil, draped over Filipinos in the U.S., does not disappear when they return to the Philippines.

Deep feelings of regret, embarrassment, and anger tend to be shrouded by seemingly trivial concerns over traffic, dirtiness, clichés of bureaucratic corruption or threats of crime, and of course, the oppressively brutal tropical humidity. Never more does the difference between the U.S and the Philippines become more distinct than when balikbayans return home. Often and inevitably these bitter disappointments and intensely felt anxieties become displaced onto taxi drivers who drive too fast or not fast enough, extended family members who fail to arrive to the airport at a timely fashion, or cashiers and waiters who are too rude or seem too eager to exploit them over their privileged statuses. In fact, much of the literature written about Manila, by Filipinos, Filipino Americans, and non-Filipinos alike, are wrought with dystopic allusions that bare the effect of heightening these tensions even before most balikbayans re-enter their homeland.

For Filipinos who return to Manila, at times, the superficial bespeaks the deeper force of a swelling sense of disillusionment. From inside of one of the nicer *karinderias*, a small restaurant, along Katipunan Avenue, Ezmeralda attempted to explain her first impressions of her life back in Manila. Having just turned the retirement age of 65, it came time for her to leave the U.S. and her adult aged children and make her way back home to the Philippines. A few meters from outside of the window beside our table stood a weathered signboard much like those one would see at an old public high school anywhere in the U.S. The letters read Ateneo de Manila University in faded blue, block letters. Ateneo, as most Filipinos refer to it, has historically been the site where most of Manila's elite students were educated and was where Ezmeralda received her degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting. This degree eventually became her "golden ticket" to the U.S. And ever since her arrival to that country thirty-six years ago, she longed to

fulfill her dream of returning to the Philippines and starting a business somewhere in her hometown of Quezon City.

Her manner as pristine as her dress, Ezmeralda attempted to hide her dissatisfaction with the environment surrounding us but with little avail. While she spoke, her body inched side to side ever so discreetly in her chair as if to avoid any of the dirt that might be lurking around the table. Back now for five months, she began speaking to me of her time in the Philippines as she diligently rubbed her metal utensils clean. The sound of disappointment was distinct in her voice. "You think that with all the money we send back to our families and put into this country, that it would be better. I don't know if it will ever get better here. I don't know if I can live here anymore." Having grown unaccustomed to the reality of her old world, it was clear that her youthful exuberance had dimmed.

Along with several of my interviewees, it is common to hear Filipinos living in the U.S. repeat yet another common refrain: "*Mahirap ang buhay (doon) pero masaya (naman)*" [(In the Philippines) Life is hard but it was good]. This dissertation continues the conversation begun by scholars such as Benito Vergara and Rick Bonus and the discussion around Filipino transnationalism and the spaces it produces. It explores the ambivalence haunting the return of Filipinos to their homeland. I have argued that not only has the veil allowed Filipinos to produce spaces in the U.S., such as Daly City, where they can settle and thrive unbeknownst to the non-Filipinos living around them but that this veil has also transformed themselves.

Manalansan (2011) vividly demonstrates how traditional concepts around diasporic return become complicated by the experiences of gay Filipino returnees where within their

Vexed relationship with home and the complex erotic underpinnings of the act of returning to the homeland...(Here) the erotic functions not as a travel signpost leading to a definitive destination, but instead, it opens up to messy entanglements and engagements with sexual, gendered, familial, national and transnational affinities (48).

In a similar fashion, I underscore the complexities and contradiction around the "desires and expectations for the diasporic elsewhere" that Manalansan's interviewees ascribe onto balikbayans (2011, 60). It is not that the experiences of balikbayans mirror those of Filipino gay male returnees. To make that assertion would be tantamount to turning a blind eye to the significance extending from these separate and unique experiences and would dismiss any opportunity challenge the hegemonies around normative masculinities that acknowledging the differences would initiate.

In a larger way, this dissertation argues that, regardless of the case, return migration and diasporic return is never replete of ambivalence or even unease. The imaginary constituting the formation of balikbayans was premised by a set of legal privileges and ideals around mobility and U.S. citizenship, which for all of its problems, should have transformed balikbayans into a kind of ideal Filipino. Models, for which, the architects who laid the foundation for such an ideal hoped many

Filipinos would aspire towards and help lead the country to national uplift. And yet, most of my interviewees found that in moving away, sending money and other materials back to the Philippines, and ultimately returning to their homeland, had done little to bring the changes balikbayans hoped would take place. Return, by its very nature, is always, to use Manalansan's words, nonlinear and messy.

The discontent brought on by being transformed into balikbayans becomes most unsettling when Filipinos find themselves back home and the memories of how good life was in the Philippines cannot match the realities of their present. For example, upon arriving to the Philippines, after picking up your luggage and exiting Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), one is immediately struck by a number of disconcerting images. An army of tour buses and jeepneys speeding pass you, the blaring sound of their incessant honking breaching through the glass of the taxi windows. Everywhere, cars, taxis, buses, and motorcycles, zigzag through medians or avoid driving in lanes entirely. A truly discombobulating scene for someone conditioned to stay strictly within the margins of lines and lanes. Then there is the series of dilapidated homes and the shoddy structures of businesses adjacent to the main streets of Parañaque, the town closest to the airport, which appear as poorly built as they were decades ago. Finally, the uncomfortably familiar encounter with the dirt covered faces of children meandering in-between moving cars, their hands held out for money in exchange for the sampaguita (jasmine flower) or chewing gum dangling from their palms. Altogether, these images alone force most balikbayans to sympathize with Ezmeralda's disappointment. Has anything changed in Manila at all? After all, balikbayans have been remitting their money and material goods en masse back to the Philippines for over five decades. Where had all of this money gone?

The year 1973, when Ferdinand Marcos had institutionalized the balikbayan program, marked the moment when balikbayans became integral to the future development of their homeland's economy. This paved the way for the institutionalization of a balikbayan economy whereby Filipinos living abroad could more easily send money or material goods to the Philippines. Decades later, the rhetoric around patriotism and familial obligation, endlessly communicated through a throng of Philippine media transmitting itself through U.S. cable television and newspapers, has not diminished at the least. Now confronted by these disconcerting images, many Filipinos feel perplexed: weren't the duties contributed by balikbayans doing anything to change the country for the better?

Changes *are* happening all around. As apparent as the poverty and underdevelopment so vividly present in towns everywhere like Parañaque are the newly built high-rises and malls emerging throughout Metro Manila. A sprawling landscape composed of concrete, glass, and cables only begin to allude to the economic and cultural transformations that are occurring throughout the city. In fact, one only need to begin their examination from the point in which they literally landed and witness the changes made to the NAIA itself. After over two decades of political controversy and fiscal mismanagement, NAIA 3, the third terminal was finally added to the international airport in 2008 in order to meet a tremendous spike in transportation demand over the last two decades. It was built to service a

capacity of just over 33,000 more passengers, daily. And in true Manila fashion, the terminal has a four-story mall built on top of it.

This dissertation conveys the interweaving layers that together produce the balikbayan economy in the Philippines. Whether it be governmental agencies, private real estate developers and transnational real estate agents, or balikbayans, I have shown that the production of the balikbayan economy takes place at a transnational scale, operates through a various sets of processes, and is enabled by deep-seated cultural beliefs in familiar obligation and responsibility. The transnational circulation of this economy has become so integral to the Philippines that even the NAIA itself, the main transportation hub of the country, was forced to expand to help further facilitate the transformation of the Philippine economy. Throughout the Philippines, transformations within the built-environment reflect the need to accommodate the flows of capital created by the balikbayan economy. The transformation of the airport, as well as the overall visual landscape of Metro Manila, are just traces of the larger ways an entire city, having been sustained by the formation of a this economy, is dramatically changing. At the same time, these transformations purposefully create and are perpetuated by a kind of vertical segregation from other neighborhoods that are disinvested from and left to denigrate, wherein these impoverished communities are forced to make due.

Finally, this dissertation is one attempt to introduce complexities within the literature on the kind of social transformation that is produced by processes of transnationalism. Oftentimes, individuals and communities effect transformation simply because their actions are conjoined with or contribute to, as Vertovec says, processes of transformation that are already ongoing. In an attempt to better themselves and the lives of their family members, processes of Philippine state-led transnationalism sought out to exploit such sentiments. As such, the investments made by balikbayans often have the effect of actually exacerbating the dilemmas harboring over Manila's urban poor. Ironically, the perplexities sewing the veil of ambivalence communicated by balikbayans like Ezmeralda, continue to be directly linked to the duties that balikbayans are asked to pay back to the Philippines.

Manila's Balikbayan Landscape

Contemporary Metro Manila is more accurately a conglomeration of districts, cities, and municipalities rather than one geographically distinct urban center. Originally four larger cities (Manila, Pasay, Caloocan, and Quezon City) and thirteen municipalities, Metro Manila integrates into a total area of 63,600 hectares. Its population exceeds just over 11.5 million. While the actual size of Metro Manila composes of only 0.2 percent of the country's total landmass, almost 13 percent of the country's total population has come to situate itself into the region's densely compacted and dynamically structured space. This number is compounded each year by a growth rate of 2.8 percent.

Since its role as an economic region was officially established in 1976, Metro Manila and the rest of the National Capital Region (NCR) has continually outperformed other regions in the Philippines. For instance, the NCR's GDP is twice

the size of the national average. It makes sense then that the focus of the country's internal migration remains pointed towards this region and that this overwhelming concentration of internal labor migration and economic production has also made Metro Manila the focus for many of the country's development projects.

At the same time, it becomes difficult to reconcile the overwhelming omnipresence of poverty, much of which compelled most balikbayans to leave in the first place, with the images of innovation and wealth inspired by such transformations. Metro Manila has become uneasily constituted by these two opposing yet simultaneously interlinked images: poverty and wealth, deterioration and renewal, an ever-growing paradoxical unity. Reflecting the dialectical dilemma of creative destruction presented in Berman's (1988) eloquent critique of modernity, much of Metro Manila is shaped by a state of perpetual construction, sleek new office buildings and towering condominiums protruding throughout Metro Manila's concrete landscape, one after another.

Spurred-on by this growth, corporate investors and land developers have linked together with state administrators to target the region for a number of commercial and residential projects aimed at generating more investments from overseas. Gavin Shatkin (2008) utilizes the concept of "bypass-implant urbanism" to describe the increasing complicity between large developers and governmental partners through the privatization of planning. He argues that:

In this context of unusually inert and deferential government, private developers have been granted considerable power to reengineer cities to create new spaces for production and consumption, and to facilitate the flow of people and capital between these spaces, by 'bypassing' the congested arteries of the 'public city' and 'implanting' new spaces for capital accumulation that are designed for consumerism and export-oriented production (384).

Mirroring in many ways models of core and periphery, the built environment created by bypass-implant urbanism throughout Manila's landscape acutely signifies the various stratifications within its own society. The manner in which this process occurs is represented in the construction of these multi-purpose enclaves and hyper-segregation it creates. Within Metro Manila itself, the suburban model, so popular between the 1950s through the 1980s, of detached bungalows nestled within a gated community is being put to the side. In its place, developers have banked on the model of the all-inclusive high-rise condominium, which are less expensive for homebuyers and where its residents can, ideally, seclude themselves, never having to leave the boundaries of the development at all.

Rather than depending on financial capital from foreign investors however, for the first time in the country's history, development plans have focused on drawing investments from Filipinos working or sending their labor overseas. Along with the coffee products sold at Starbucks, Coffee Bean, Tea & Leaf, and Seattle's Best, one can also find organically produced body soap at Lush or red velvet cup cakes at Tea Cake in malls throughout the Metro Manila. Franchises that one would

find in one of the more upscale malls or neighborhoods in the U.S. are finding its way in more and more commercial districts and malls throughout Manila.

Increasingly less visible are the old sari-sari stores or karinderias that once spilled-out into city sidewalks. Commercial and mall developments have largely replaced most of these businesses or pushed them into less frequented malls. These commercial districts and giant-sized malls sprouting around Manila have become conduits for not only foreign investments but also a circuit of cultural exchange that is transforming everyday life in the Philippines. Consequently, Metro Manila has become a disparate patchwork of residential and business condominiums straddled together by commercial and business districts.

Malls have also become an intrinsic to the balikbayan landscape throughout Manila (Connell, Pinches). With little public space left, malls have become so much more than a space of consumption but one of distinction as well. Here, the French *flâneur* strolling through the streets and plazas of Paris⁸⁴ has been replaced by upper class Filipinos, with shopping bags and *yaya*, or maid, in tow strolling through malls and attracting the gazes of all those who can only afford to look and enjoy the air-conditioning. Some developers have taken this type of enclave development to another level by physically attaching condominium buildings with MRT stations. Already, most MRT stations are located adjacent to malls or include a type of swap-meet-mall amalgamation. In order to reach the transfer point linking the MRT and board the LRT line for instance, one must in fact, wander through two separate malls to reach their destination. Malls are fundamental to the daily life of Manileños in a way that is incomprehensible to one socialized within the nuclear and individualized ethics driving the disappearance of communal space in America.

Balikbayan Urbanism

Fueling this urbanization is not only the material capital being invested by balikbayans but a deeply embedded need to physically dislocate themselves from the world that they had left and locate themselves within the ranks of the elite. The host of American franchises and their encroachment on locally owned businesses convey the proliferation of by-pass implant urbanism. The condominiums and commercial districts created to attract balikbayan consumers have become nodes of urban life for elite Filipinos who are physically demarcated from the rest of Manila's disorienting poverty.

The multi-purpose enclave, for instance, is not unlike a resort, which contains shops, swimming pools, tennis courts, or as Jerry, a Filipino real estate agent suggests, "You name it, it's there!" Selling the condo as a resort is utilized again and again for potential balikbayan retirees. Yet, the enclave is much more than an all-

⁸⁴ The figure of the *flâneur*, aristocratic gentlemen who made an art form out of strolling aimlessly through Paris, is emblematic to images of modernity. As subjects that were at once a part of and apart from the city, both observers of and common figures within the landscape of city streets, the *flâneur* is to the Paris imaginary during modernity as *yayas* and maids are to contemporary Manila. See Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

inclusive resort, it portends to be a world within itself. As such, coupled together with a host of leisure amenities, these enclaves are also replete with daycares, elementary schools, clinics, and cafes. When one includes the world of the mall and its churches and theatres into this configuration, a world from where all of Manila life revolves, the possibilities appear endless.

Loosely affiliated local real estate agents, that is to say those agents who concentrate on selling condominiums and lots, commonly surround mall entrances or congregate around show rooms for emerging real estate developments plotted along numerous locations throughout the city. I use the term loosely affiliated because the contract under which many of these agents are employed do not constrain them from selling property independently and are responsible for paying for their own expenses, such as transporting potential buyers to view various condominiums. They hand out flyers, which they make themselves and have their personal contact information listed beside their names since almost all of the agents are not provided with an office or work phone by the corporation in which they are affiliated.

As soon as an agent hears someone speaking English, whether it be a balikbayan or a local Filipino, agents are trained to focus their attention on selling to them. "You don't need to ask, just speak English and they'll find you!" Sherry Pairez explained with a mixture of humor and seriousness. Sherry is a relatively young balikbayan who, like Ezmeralda, grew-up in Quezon City and had thought about purchasing property around Manila even before she left to work as a teacher in Daly City. When her daughter started college and expressed some interest in going to school during the summer in the Philippines, Sherry felt it was an ideal opportunity to visit family in Manila and test the water in terms of buying property.

It seems like a really easy process in the beginning. The agent at the mall, in my case the Mall of Asia (in Pasay City), brought me to the show room on the third floor. Then I spoke to an older man and told him that I was looking for a condo near Quezon City and that's why I picked this one because it was located near Miriam College where my daughter can take classes.

She was expressed her surprise that the agent expected her to purchase a condo right then and there, without even seeing the condominium built. Yet, the vast number of condominiums sold to buyers in Manila have been purchased as "pre-sold" units. Realtors convince buyers that because the units have not yet been built, buyers can purchase units at a remarkably reduced price. "It's a common tactic with these agents," Emerson Agulto, a retired postal worker who returned to Manila after working in Union City, California for several decades, grunted restfully. Emerson, who was convinced to purchase two pre-sold units in Mandaluyong, was dismayed at his discovery that the condos did not meet the expectations he had when being presented with the models and colorfully designed pamphlets.

They'll walk you into an office and almost immediately show you a graph of all the units that have already been sold. Remember nothing has been built yet! You see that there are 2 units left with balconies and if you don't guy

them now, you'll lose the opportunity. Once you show any kind of excitement because you feel you're getting a good deal, they say that they need to talk to someone. Then the agent comes back and says that they talked to their supervisor and the supervisor said that something else just opened up. And if you purchase two units, you basically get the second one at a-third of the price. So of course I did it. I only had to put \$2,000 USD down to reserve both of the units.

Several balikbayans express some sense of displeasure having purchased pre-sold units around Manila. Interviewees felt disappointed to realize that the design of their units produced poor outdoor lighting or air circulation. Several already built units that I visited marketed to balikbayans were designed in such a way that the only air circulation that the condominium received was through a single window in each of the bedrooms while the majority came in from the main entrance when the door was opened and closed.

Emerson continued to explain that he had no idea that the units that he purchased did not come with hot water, for instance.

I knew that I had to purchase air conditioning units and a new stove. Things like that. But I thought that 'installation fees' covered not only the electrical wiring but also hot water. Can you imagine that? I had to purchase a separate water heater for four bathrooms! It's like being back in the house I grew-up in, where we didn't have any hot water.

Emerson's resentment helps to illuminate the ambivalence and ultimate failure of return. When many balikbayans return to the Philippines and actively consider residing there permanently, they realize that their memories of home cannot be returned to and that the Philippines of their childhood is nothing like the one of present day.

"In many ways you expect things to change," extols Miranda Magaña, a corporate office administrator who purchased a condominium in the Quezon City neighborhood of Cubao for her mother and oldest brother.

How can you not? Rather than having to take the taxi or jeepney, like we did when we were kids, my mother has a driver and she's driven around in a SUV. These are the things that I always hoped that I could give to my parents when I moved to the States. But you don't think that life will necessarily change a lot, you just think that by having better things, it will change for the better. But it doesn't matter whether you're being driven in an SUV or not, we all still have to deal with being in traffic right? Whether I'm driving or I'm sitting in a jeepney, we're all stuck here together. The traffic doesn't change and it never will.

These unrealistic expectations for change are perpetuated by periodic returns to the Philippines where balikbayans enjoy hosting family members for dinner at fine restaurants in the city or are immediately deferred respect by various service

providers. Returning periodically for vacations and holidays, balikbayans can ignore numerous inconveniences and allow themselves to bask in the bliss of their memories visiting old adolescent haunts or childhood friends. However, once balikbayans purchase property in the Philippines with the intent of living there, they experience the limits that one cannot surpass simply through their status as balikbayans. Simple inconveniences, such as hot water or poor ventilation become untenable.

For these reason, a number of balikbayans have chosen to use the properties that they purchase in the city as a means of financing payments for building a home in the provinces outside of Metro Manila. Once an individual purchases a unit, as long as they continue to pay their monthly amortization (which many real estate corporations oversee “in house”), there are no regulations restraining owners from leasing their condominium to renters. A number of my interviewees lease their condominiums in Manila to Filipinos who work in near-by call-centers, OFWs, or even temporarily contracted foreigners who travel back and forth to the Philippines for work assignments. One of my interviewees even rents her unit to two Australian-born Filipinos who relocated to Manila in hopes of striking an acting career with either one of the two major media groups: ABS-CBN or GMA.

Returning to Suburbia

Even Manila itself has become an obstacle in enticing balikbayans to invest in property in the Philippines and return permanently. As the congestion of urban space increases and more capital investment drives the development of yet more commercial and residential structures in Metro Manila, it also becomes difficult to continue arresting the anxiety of balikbayans and find new ways to attract them to city life. As previously discussed, many developers have chosen to veer away from metropolitan centers and construct mega-projects throughout provinces and rural areas throughout the Philippines. Other developers have chosen to innovate the old model of suburbanization and establish mega-townships where the most elite of Filipinos can live peaceably in the periphery around Metro Manila rather than its frantic core.

The Ayala Corporation, the most successful land developer in the Philippines, is in the middle stages of achieving this shift away from developing property in the center of Metro Manila. The corporation has laid out plans to build a new mega-township within the Santa Rosa-Tagaytay area called Nuvali. In a location southwest of Metro Manila, Ayala plans to literally build a “new valley” plotted on 1,600 hectares of property. This mega-project represents the complete realization of bypass-implant urbanism. In other parts of Manila, plans are underway to extend highways along more projects mirroring Nuvali. Here in these townships, balikbayans and other elite Filipinos can experience what property developers are calling “world class living” merely by never having to step-foot in the rest of Manila.

What becomes extraordinary when viewing the plans for the Nuvali are not the amenities that have become common throughout the Metro Manila condo-enclave landscape. The singular element of mobility becomes the concept shaping

the design of this particular zone of exception. Advertisements for the development read that Nuvali is designed for a "future that veers away from the severe sprawl of conventional urban development." For instance, Joel Luna, the chief architect of the Ayala Land Innovation and Design Group and the Nuvali project, says that central to the design is the building of wider sidewalks. Such a seemingly minor design concept forces a significant shift within the culture of mobility in Manileño society by encouraging "more people to walk rather than take their car. This is also safer and more pedestrian friendly. We are also building narrower pavements...so there's more room for natural landscaping. There will be double-rows of trees instead of the typical single row."

What one sees in the urban core of Manila while *attempting* to walk the city, is not exactly the picture of congested spaces, the power of crowds, and the mixing of social groups that Rafael paints of the sidewalks of the city.⁸⁵ As I have conveyed, certainly class division is demarcated by one's ability to avoid all of the intermixing of space between classes so poignantly marked by the creation of condos that are physically located beside malls and the MRT. It is true that the condo-enclave is fundamentally shaped by the desire of the upper class to mix as little as possible with the general social environment of Manila. However, one of the practical reasons why one builds above the city is also because it is extremely difficult to walk through it. What had constituted the classic cities of Europe represented by the strolling *flaneur* and for which modernist architects like Daniel Burham⁸⁶ would attempt to replicate or the more recent revanchinist city of renewal and gentrification⁸⁷ could *never* be possible in Metro Manila.

Most sidewalks in Manila are not filled with people simply because most people do not walk. This is why there are five types of privatized means of public transportation congesting the city's streets (the MRT is the only form of public transportation). The bus system in Manila alone is overpopulated by a slew of monstrous tour bus sized vehicles more than 400 bus companies operated in Metro Manila, including more than 100 that ran along the inner ring road of EDSA alone (Guariño 2001). The intense competition for passengers dictated that the most profitable strategy for any given bus was to idle along the side of the road waiting for passengers, thus clogging the road and slowing traffic to a crawl. Competition also dictated that bus companies purchase the cheapest used buses available on the international market-inevitably, older models that emit more pollution.

⁸⁵ Rafael characterizes the congested nature of Manila's landscape, painting an image of "packed commuter trains, traffic-clogged roads, crowded sidewalks, teeming shopping malls", which together "characterize everyday life in the city, slowing travel from one place to another at nearly all hours of the day. These conditions affect all social classes. And because there is no way of definitively escaping them, they constitute the most common and widely shared experience of city life." See Vicente Rafael's *The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines*, *Public Culture* 15.3 (2003) 399-425.

⁸⁶ See, for instance, David Brody's *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁸⁷ See Neil Smith's *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

The sidewalks are made impassible by various parked cars, informal street vendors selling candy or frying fishballs, but not so much by crowds of strolling masses, unless one is passing within the vicinity of a mall of course. Altogether these impediments create a space where it is almost impossible for two people to walk side-by-side each other on the city sidewalks. The project of Nuvali is moving towards a model of urbanization that has only begun to pick up steam in other so-called developed countries. The forward thinking of Ayala is not simply replicating Eurocentric or modern models but attempting to create its own through re-inscribing designs being adopted in various regions in the world including Asia and Southeast Asia driven by the necessity of combating the shared problem of “overcrowding”.

The Manila Yet to Come

There is a deceptive aura of optimism that exudes amongst the current administrations’ optimism around the future of the Philippines. A litany of articles printed on the front pages of Manila’s newspapers mix with televised public announcements that together express a common rhetoric of economic stability and a confidence that might appear naïve during a period of global economic crisis. Governmental agencies and media constituents point to various indicators, most notably surges in property and foreign business investments, as a means of sustaining a tone of hopefulness in the face of growing national debt and global insecurity. This attitude was emblemized by the Millennium Development Goal, in which Arroyo projected that policies directed by her administration would effectively reduce poverty by half in the Philippines by 2015.⁸⁸

Of course one of the central goals of relaying such a tone is to restore and maintain the confidence of the lending institutions that had, for decades, tightened its hold on the political-economy in the Philippines particularly after Marcos’ expenditure of state funds. Furthermore, a general improvement in incomes as well as an increase consumer spending, poignantly evidenced by the continual building of mall and condo-enclaves, also helps to bolster attitudes that believe that Metro Manila and the Philippines as a whole is benefitting from immense economic growth.

On the other hand, recent studies convey a contrary and much more bleak economic profile. For instance, Balisacan, a professor of economics at the University of the Philippines, claims that the Philippines had only experienced “modest economic growth in recent years but it did not prevent poverty from rising. Things have really gone worse in the last six to seven years” (Remo 2009). Balisacan’s conclusion reveals a much “darker side” of economic globalization and increased

⁸⁸ In a State of the Nation Address given in 2007, Arroyo was optimistic that the Philippines would successfully confront poverty in the country and achieve their 2015 deadline, saying "Hangarin kong mapabilang ang Pilipinas sa mayayamang bansa sa loob ng dalawampung taon (I believe that the Philippines will be one of the wealthy countries within 20 years). By then poverty shall have been marginalized; and the marginalized raised to a robust middle class”.

market liberalization. Rather than producing economic equality, various scholars tend to believe that globalization actually widens the distance between social classes.

Future research is necessary in order to make sense of the ways in which the balikbayan economy has facilitated a downward pressure on wages through the continual dependence on remittances, the ongoing devastation of the local environment by various development projects and new infrastructures, and the further displacement of poor communities. As such, the negative impact of the balikbayan economy is disproportionately felt by the urban poor and a tone of optimism based on economic indicators of growing incomes and increased spending is clearly deceiving. Regardless if the poor might have increased access to consumer goods like electronic equipment or household items like washing machines, they continue to lack the basic necessity for economic stability, centrally located urban space (Shatkin 2004).

Attempts to generate urbanization along Metro Manila's periphery has further propelled the process of dislocation of the urban poor. Along with the ruinous effect created by flooding onto these families, is the compounding problem created by a concerted effort by corporate developers to keep families from returning to their homes. For example, the recent catastrophic effects of Tropical Storm Ondoy in 2009 have taken a number of communities by surprise and left an enormous number of families homeless, particularly in the cities of Pasig and Marikina. While many communities living along coastal regions or adjacent to the two larger rivers around Metro Manila, such as those living in Malabon, are accustomed to flooding, communities such as those in the inner regions of Pasig and Marikina were less prepared. Lacking alternative housing, many of these families were forced to reside in temporary housing with families. If money permitted, other families moved to rented condominiums in other areas around the city. While others had little choice but to stay in the devastated remains of their old homes and neighborhoods.

Exploiting opportunities produced by the evacuation of families from areas throughout Pasig, opportunistic investors have been pressuring the local government to bar families from returning for the purpose of developing the land for industrial, commercial, and even residential usage. For the past two months, a group of community leaders who once resided along the banks of the Pasig River have been organizing a campaign to resist this eviction process. Central to their argument is that governmental agencies had continually ignored demands made by community members to repair dilapidated infrastructure that would hold off the effects of persistent precipitation and floods or even provide subsistence to relocate impoverished families to socialized housing closer to their workplaces in the city core. With the unforeseen catastrophic effects of the storm that had flooded 80 percent of Metro Manila, a rather serendipitous opening was created for developers to seize more property surrounding the city's periphery.

When I visited Marakina to witness the devastation created by Ondoy and help with rebuilding projects months after the storm, I was pleased to see that one of the major levees separating one of the barangays most effected by the flooding of Pasig river had not only been repaired but extended in both length and height. I was

told that the financing costs were paid by several family members who lived around San Francisco. They did not come from Daly City but resided in the Bay Area nonetheless. As soon as the storm had passed, Filipino church congregations had worked to raise funds for victims in Ondoy and family members were instrumental in helping to repair townships throughout Marikina.

The irony was palpable and its contradictions lie at the center of my research. While Filipinos in the U.S. remitted money to help ensure that their family members could return to their homes and rebuild them, at the very same time, real estate corporations, assisted by state agents and legislation over land use, were quick to partition land for development in order to make money from the same group of balikbayans. From this single example, one can see how the balikbayan economy provides for the welfare of Filipinos in the Philippines and at the same time, sustains the very trappings that keep the country from transforming the very structures that jeopardizes the welfare of the very same Filipinos.

Bibliography

- Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Alave, Kristine L. 2007. Retirement Haven Scheme Hampered by Image Issue. *BusinessWorld*, February 22, 2007 S1/1.
- Álvarez-Rivadulla, María José 2007. Golden Ghettos: Gated Communities and Class Residential Segregation in Montevideo, Uruguay. *Environment and Planning A* 39 (1):47-63
- Apelacio, Cathy. 2007. RP best retirement haven for foreign nationals, says Gen. Aglipay. *Manila Standard*, March 29, 2007.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis ; London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Baguioro, Luz. 2002. Never mind the rising crime, let's go shopping; Manila will pitch brand-name shopping in Makati to affluent Japanese women in its latest push for the tourist dollar. *The Straits Times*, October 25, 2002.
- Balisacan, Arsenio M., and Hal Hill. 2003. An Introduction to the Key Issues. In *The Philippine Economy. Development, Policies, and Challenges*, edited by A. M. Balisacan and H. Hill. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Bascara, Victor. 2006. *Model-minority imperialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Basch, Linda G, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc. 1994. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. New York: Routledge.
- Battistella, Graziano. 2004. Return Migration in the Philippines: Issues and Policies. In *International Migration: Prospects and Policies in a Global Market*, edited by D. S. Massey. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bello, Walden F.; Kinley, David; Elinson, Elaine. 1982. *Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines*. Oakland: Food First Books.
- Benjamin, Walter. 1999. *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Berman, Marshall. 1988. *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Viking Penguin.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1990. DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation. In *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge.
- Bonus, Rick. 2000. *Locating Filipino Americans : Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Space*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Brettell, Caroline. 2003. *Anthropology and Migration: Essays on Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and Identity*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Brody, David. 2010. *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines*. Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Buco, Benjamin V. 2006. SPECIAL REPORT: Philippine Retirement Industry; PRA and PRI: Hand in hand in promoting the Philippines as a retirement destination. *BusinessWorld*, December 21, 2006.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1991. *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burgin, Victor. 1991. Paranoiac Space. *Visual Anthropology Review* 7 (2):22-30.

- Caldeira, Teresa. 2000. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Campomanes, Oscar V. 1992. Filipinos in the United States and Their Literature of Exile. In *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*, edited by S. G.-I. Lum and A. Ling. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Caoili, Manuel A. . 1988. *The Origins of Metropolitan Manila: A Political and Social Analysis*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.
- Cariño, Benjamin V. 1990. *The New Filipino Immigrants to the United States: Increasing Diversity and Change, Papers of the East-West Population Institute*. Honolulu: East-West Center.
- Castells, Manuel. 2000. *The Rise of the Network Society*. 2nd ed. Malden: Blackwell Publishers.
- Choy, Catherine Ceniza. 2003. *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Choy, Catherine Ceniza. 2005. Towards Trans-Pacific Social Justice: Women and Protest in Filipino American History. *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8 (3):293-307.
- Conclara, J. 1999. Daly City looking for Filipino investors. *BusinessWorld*, October 21, 1999, 6.
- Connell, John. 1999. Beyond Manila: Walls, Malls, and Private Spaces. *Environment and Planning A* 31 (3):417 – 439
- Cornelio-Pronove, Monique; Cheng, Chemerie. 1999. Metro Manila. In *Cities in the Pacific Rim: Planning Systems and Property Markets*, edited by J. M. Berry, Stanley. New York: E & FN Spon.
- Damazo, Jet. 2010. *Korea Invades the Philippines 2007* [cited January 12 2010]. Available from http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?Itemid=34&id=575&option=com_content&task=view
- Daquiz, Ma Suzette R. 2006. SPECIAL REPORT: Philippine Retirement Industry; Who do we want to come? *BusinessWorld*, December 21, 2006.
- de Dios, Emmanuel S.; Hutchcroft, Paul. 2003. Political Economy. In *The Philippine Economy: Development, Policies, and Challenges* edited by A. M. H. Balisacan, Hal. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University.
- dela Pena, Gerard S. 2007. Metrobank sets up California remittance unit. *BusinessWorld*, August 24, 2007.
- Delmendo, Sharon. 2004. *The Star-Entangled Banner: One Hundred Years of America in the Philippines*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Eljera, Bert. 1996. Filipinos Find Home in Daly City. *Asian Week*, May 3-9.
- England, Sarah. 1999. Negotiating Race and Place in the Garifuna Diaspora: Identity Formation and Transnational Grassroots Politics in New York City and Honduras. *Identities* 6 (1):5-53.
- Espiritu, Augusto Fauni. 2005. *Five Faces of Exile: The Nation and Filipino American Intellectuals*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. 2003. *Home Bound: Filipino Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Fawcett, James; Gardner, Robert. 1994. Asian Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Non-Entrepreneurs: A Comparative Study of Recent Korean and Filipino Immigrants. *Population & Environment* 15 (3):211-238.
- Ferguson, James and Akhil Gupta. 2005. Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality. In *Anthropologies of modernity : Foucault, governmentality, and life politics*, edited by J. X. Inda. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Fernández-Kelly, María Patricia. 1983. *For We are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Flores, Alena Mae S. 2005. \$ 100m Japanese Medical Facility Rising at Reclaimed Land. *Manila Standard*, February 5, 2005.
- Fong, Timothy P. 1994. *The First Suburban Chinatown: The Remaking of Monterey Park, California*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Fujita-Rony, Dorothy B. 2003. *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gillespie, Bunny. 2003. *Daly City, Images of America*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia.
- Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Glick Schiller, Nina and Fouron, Georges Eugene. 2001. *Georges Woke Up Laughing: Llong-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Glick Schiller, Nina, Linda G Basch, and Christina Szanton Blanc. 1995. From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration. *Anthropological Quarterly* 68 (1):48-63.
- Go, Julian, and Anne L. Foster. 2003. *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Gonzalez, Joaquin L. 1998. *Philippine Labour Migration: Critical Dimensions of Public Policy*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Grewal, Inderpal. 2005. *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*. Durham: Duke University Press.
<http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?clio6661590>.
- Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. 1994. *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Guariño, Domingo L. . 2001. A Study into the Viability of Consolidating Bus Companies Operating in Metro Manila. unpublished master's thesis, School of Urban and Regional Planning, University of the Philippines, Dilliman.
- Guarnizo, Luis. 1997. The Emergence of a Transnational Social Formation and The Mirage of Return Migration Among Dominican Transmigrants. *Identities* 4 (2):281-322.
- Guevarra, Anna R. 2006. Managing Vulnerabilities' and Empowering' Migrant Filipina Workers: The Philippines' Overseas Employment Program. *Social Identities* 12 (5):523-541.
- Guevarra, Anna R. 2010. *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers*. New Brunswick: Rutgers.

- Gulane, Judy T. 2006. Plan positions RP as retirement haven. *BusinessWorld*, May 30, 2006
- Gupta, Akhil. 1992. The Song of the Nonaligned World: Transnational Identities and the Reinscription of Space in Late Capitalism. *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1):63-79.
- Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson. 1992. Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference. *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1):6-23.
- Hannerz, Ulf. 1992. The Global Ecumene as a Network of Networks. In *Conceptualizing Society*, edited by A. Kuper. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Hing, Bill Ong. 1993. *Making and remaking Asian America through immigration policy, 1850-1990*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Hoganson, Kristin L. 1998. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press.
- Ignacio, Emily. 2005. *Building Diaspora: Filipino Community Formation on the Internet*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. 1999. Imperial Amnesia: Teddy Roosevelt, the Philippines, and the Modern Art of Forgetting. *Radical History Review* 73:117-127.
- Jacobs, Jane M. 1996. *Edge of empire : postcolonialism and the city*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Kearney, M. 1995. The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:547-565.
- Keil, Rob. 2006. *Little Boxes: The Architecture of a Classic Midcentury Suburb*. Daly City, CA: Advection Media.
- Kelly, Philip F. 2001. *Landscapes of Globalization: Human Geographies of Economic Change in the Philippines*. New York: Routledge.
<http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?clio5377144>.
- Kramer, Paul A. 2006. *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Kreifels, Susan. 2009. Economic Boom Pulls Balikbayans Back Home. *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, October 26, 2009.
- Krinks, Peter A. 2002. *The Economy of the Philippines: Elites, Inequalities and Economic Restructuring*. New York: Routledge.
- Law, Lisa. 2002. Sites of Transnational Activism: Filipino Non-government Organisations in Hong Kong. In *Gender Politics in the Asia-Pacific Region*, edited by B. S. A. T. Yeoh, Peggy; Huang, Shirlena. New York.
- Le Borgne, Eric. 2010. *Remittances and the Philippines' Economy: the Elephant in the Room*. World Bank 2009 [cited March 3 2010]. Available from <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/remittances-and-the-philippines-economy-the-elephant-in-the-room>.
- Lee, Ching Kwan. 2009. Raw Encounters: Chinese Managers, African Workers and the Politics of Casualization in Africa's Chinese Enclaves. *The China Quarterly* 199 (-1):647-666.
- Leichenko, Robin M.; Solecki, William D. 2005. Exporting the American Dream: The Globalization of Suburban Consumption Landscapes. *Regional Studies* 39 (2):241-253.

- Leisch, Harald. 2002. Gated Communities in Indonesia. *Cities* 19 (5):341-350.
- Lessinger, Johanna. 1995. *From the Ganges to the Hudson: Indian immigrants in New York City*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Levitt, Peggy. 2001. Transnational Migration: Taking Stock and Future Directions. *Global Networks* 1 (3):195-216.
- Levitt, Peggy. 2001. *The Transnational Villagers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Li, Wei. 1998. Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement: The Chinese Ethnoburb in Los Angeles. *Urban Studies* 35 (3):479-501.
- Lico, Gerard. 2003. *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Liu, John M.; Ong, Paul M.; Rosenstein, Carolyn. 1991. Dual Chain Migration: Post-1965 Filipino Immigration to the United States. *International Migration Review* 25 (3):487-513.
- Louie, Andrea. 2004. *Chineseness Across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Maas, Marisha. 2008. Door-to-door Cargo Agents: Cultivating and Expanding Filipino Transnational Space. In *Tales of Development: People, Power and Space*, edited by P. S. Hebinck, Sef; Smith, Lothar. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Macabenta, Greg B. 1998. Retiring in the Philippines. *BusinessWorld*, September 9, 1998.
- Macabenta, Greg B. 1999. Gold in Daly City. *BusinessWorld*, October 20, 1999, 4.
- Macabenta, Greg B. 2000. A Filipino Town in California. *BusinessWorld*, July 12, 2000, 4.
- Macabenta, Greg B. 2008. Hard Times in America. *BusinessWorld*, June 18, 2008, S1/4.
- Mahler, Sarah J. . 1998. Theoretical and Empirical Contributions Toward a Research Agenda for Transnationalism. In *Transnationalism from Below*, edited by M. P. Smith and L. Guarnizo. New Brunswick: Transaction.
- Manalansan, Martin. 2003. *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Manalansan, Martin. 2011. Wayward Erotics: Mediating Queer Diasporic Return. In *forthcoming Media, Transnationalism, and Asian Erotics*, edited by P. Mankekar and L. Schein. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Marcelo, Samantha Leslie L. 2006. SPECIAL FEATURE; Old is in (Could RP be the next retirement haven?). *BusinessWorld*, June 9, 2006.
- Margolis, Maxine L. 1995. Transnationalism and Popular Culture: The Case of Brazilian Immigrants in the United States. *The Journal of Popular Culture* 29 (1):29-41.
- Markowitz, Fran, and Anders H. Stefansson. 2004. *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.
- Menjivar, Cecilia; DaVanzo, Julie; Greenwell, Lisa; Valdez, R. Burciaga. 1998. Remittance Behavior among Salvadoran and Filipino Immigrants in Los Angeles. *International Migration Review* 32 (1):97-126.
- Mercurio, Philip Dominguez. 2006. Interesting Asian American business stats. *Philippine News*, September 27, 2006.

- Min, Pyong Gap. 1986-87. Filipino and Korean Immigrants in Small Business: A Comparative Analysis *Amerasia Journal* 13 (1):53-71.
- Mitchell, Katharyne. 1997. Different Diasporas and the Hype of Hybridity. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15 (5):533-553.
- Mitchell, Katharyne. 2004. *Crossing the Neoliberal Line: Pacific Rim Migration and the Metropolis*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Mizukami, Tetsuo. 2007. *The Sojourner Community: Japanese Migration and Residency in Australia*. Boston: Brill. <http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?clio7187249>.
- Mollman, Steve. 2007. The Perfect Place. *The Wall Street Journal*, April 6, 2007.
- Münz, Rainer, and Rainer Ohliger. 2003. *Diasporas and Ethnic Migrants: German, Israel, and Post-Soviet Successor States in Comparative Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Ness, Sally Ann. 2003. *Where Asia Smiles: An Ethnography of Philippine Tourism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Ness, Sally Ann. 2005. Tourism–terrorism: The landscaping of consumption and the darker side of place. *American Ethnologist* 32 (1):118-140.
- Ngai, Mae M. 2004. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America, Politics and society in twentieth-century America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Nierras, Jaime; Casanova, Lilia; Hornilla, Linda. 1992. Improving the Urban Planning and Management Process and Performance: Metro Manila. *Regional Development Dialogue* 13 (1).
- Okamura, Jonathan Y. 1998. *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora: Transnational Relations, Identities, and Communities*. New York: Garland Pub.
- Okamura, Jonathan Y. 1998. *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora: Transnational Relations, Identities, and Communities, Asian Americans*. New York: Garland Pub.
- Olds, Kris. 2001. *Globalization and Urban Change: Capital, Culture, and Pacific Rim Mega-Projects*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ong, Aihwa. 1999. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ong, Aihwa. 2006. Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ong, Aihwa. 2007. Neoliberalism as a Mobile Technology. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32 (1):3-8.
- Onishi, Norimitsu. 2010. Sinatra Song Often Strikes Deadly Chord. *New York Times*, February 6.
- Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar. 2001. Transgressing the Nation-State: The Partial Citizenship and "Imagined (Global) Community" of Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 26 (4):1129-54.
- Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar, and Lok C. D. Siu. 2007. *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New Conceptions*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Pascual, Edgar T. 2003. *How to Profit from the \$27 Billion Filipino American Market*. Quezon City: Giraffe Books.

- Pelovello, Roy. 2008. Retirement Agency Gets Extra Function. *Manila Standard*, February 5, 2008.
- Portes, Alejandro, Luis Guarnizo, and Patricia Landolt. 1999. The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and Promises of an Emergent Social Field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (2):217-237.
- Posadas, Barbara M. 1999. *The Filipino Americans, The new Americans series*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- Rafael, Vicente L. 2000. Your Grief Is Our Gossip: Overseas Filipinos and Other Spectral Presences. In *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*, edited by V. L. Rafael. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rafael, Vicente L. 2003. The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines. *Public Culture* 15 (3):399-425.
- Remennick, Larissa. 2009. Former Soviet Jews in Their New/Old Homeland: Between Integration and Separatism. In *Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in a Comparative Perspective*, edited by T. Tsuda. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Remo, Michelle. 2009. RP gains said to translate to rise in number of poor people *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 15, 2009.
- Richter, Linda K. 1982. *Land Reform and Tourism Development: Policy-making in the Philippines*. Cambridge: Schenkman Pub. Co.
- Richter, Linda K. 1989. *The Politics of Tourism in Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Rieder, Ludwig G. 1997. Philippines: The Development of Philippine Tourism in the Post-Marcos era. In *Tourism and Economic Development in Asia and Australasia*, edited by F. M. Go and C. L. Jenkins. London: Cassell.
- Rodis, Rodel. 2008. The 'F' Word. In *AsianWeek*.
- Rodriguez, Robyn. 2002. Migrant Heroes: Nationalism, Citizenship and the Politics of Filipino Migrant Labor. *Citizenship Studies* 6 (3):341-356.
- Rodriguez, Robyn. 2010. *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Roth, Joshua Hotaka. 2002. *Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Rouse, Roger. 1991. Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism. *Diaspora* 1 (1):8-23.
- Salcedo, Rodrigo, and Alvaro Torres. 2004. Gated Communities in Santiago: Wall or Frontier? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28 (1):27-44.
- Sassen, Saskia. 1996. *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sassen, Saskia. 2001. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. 2nd ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Shatkin, Gavin. 2004. Planning to Forget: Informal Settlements as 'Forgotten Places' in Globalising Metro Manila. *Urban Studies* 41 (12):2469-2484.
- Shatkin, Gavin. 2008. The City and the Bottom Line: Urban Megaprojects and the Privatization of Planning in Southeast Asia. *Environment and Planning A* 40 (2):383-401.

- Smith, Andrea L. 2003. *Europe's Invisible Migrants: Consequences of the Colonists' Return*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Smith, Michael P. 2001. *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- Smith, Michael P.; Guarnizo, Luis. 1998. *Transnationalism From Below*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Smith, Neil. 1996. *The New Urban Frontier: gentrification and the Revanchist City*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Smith, Robert C. 2003. Diasporic Memberships in Historical Perspective: Comparative Insights from the Mexican, Italian and Polish Cases. *International Migration Review* 37 (3):724-759.
- Smith, Robert C. 2006. *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stack, Carol B. 1996. *Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South*. New York, NY: BasicBooks.
- Szanton Blanc, Cristina. 1996. Balikbayan: A Filipino Extension of the National Imaginary and of State Boundaries. *Philippine Sociological Review* 44 (1-4):178-193.
- Tadiar, Neferti Xina M. 2004. *Fantasy Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Takaki, Ronald. 1998. *Strangers from a Different Shore: a History of Asian Americans*. Updated and rev. ed. Boston: Little Brown.
- Tan, Edward L. 2005. *Real Estate Buyer Profile and Behavior: Helps You Understand the Overseas Filipino workers' Buyer Behavior*. Mandaluyong City: Miracle Pub.
- Tiongson, Antonio T.; Gutierrez, Edgardo V.; Gutierrez, Ricardo V. 2006. *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse, Asian American history and culture*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press.
- Tölölyan, Khachig. 1996. Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment. *Diaspora* 5 (1):3-36.
- Toyota, Mika. 2006. Ageing and transnational householding: Japanese retirees in Southeast Asia. *International Development Planning Review* 28 (4):515-531.
- Tsing, Anna. 2000. Inside the Economy of Appearances. *Public Culture* 12 (1):115-144.
- Tsuda, Takeyuki. 2003. *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Return Migration in Transnational Perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tsuda, Takeyuki. 2009. *Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in a Comparative Perspective*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Vasilyuk, Sasha. 2008. Daly City Foreclosure Rate Highest in County. In *Examiner*.
- Vergara, Benito Manalo. 2009. *Pinoy capital: The Filipino Nation in Daly City*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Vertovec, Steven. 1999. Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (2):447-62.
- Vertovec, Steven. 2004. Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation. *International Migration Review* 38 (3):970-1001.

- von Wettberg, Nicholas. 2008. Legend Hotels Woos, Wows Balikbayans. *FilAm Star*, June 16-30, 2008.
- Waldinger, Roger. 1993. The Ethnic Enclave Debate Revisited. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 17 (3):444-452.
- Watts, Michael. 2004. Resource Curse? Governmentality, Oil and Power in the Niger Delta, Niger. *Geopolitics* 9 (1):50-80.